

The Social Labs Experience

June 23, 2016





Reos Work: Countries & Topics

In:

Argentina
Brazil
Canada
Colombia
Guatemala
Indonesia
South Africa
Sudan
Thailand
United Kingdom
United States
Zimbabwe

On:

Development
Drugs
Education
Energy
Health
Finance
Insurance
Justice
Mining
Peace
Politics
Transportation



Check-in

- Name + Role
 - *What is your proudest achievement over the last year or two?*
 - What do you hope to understand, or understand better, by the end of today's workshop?
-



Today's Objectives

- To introduce and try out social innovation tools and approaches that can be applied to current and future work in BC's community-based sector
- To surface new, actionable ideas and insights for how members can move their current work forward
- To build relationships amongst leaders in a diverse and broad sector

Innovation as a verb, not a noun



Agenda

- 10:30** Framing & Purpose
Introductions
Objectives, Agenda, & Ground Rules
Complex & Simple Challenges and the Social Labs Approach
Two Creative Processes for Navigating Complex Challenges
- 12:15** Lunch
- 1:00** Tools & Approaches for Working Collaboratively
Tools & Approaches for Working Systemically
- 3:15** Break
- 3:30** Tools & Approaches for Working Experimentally
- 4:45** Check-out
- 5:00** End
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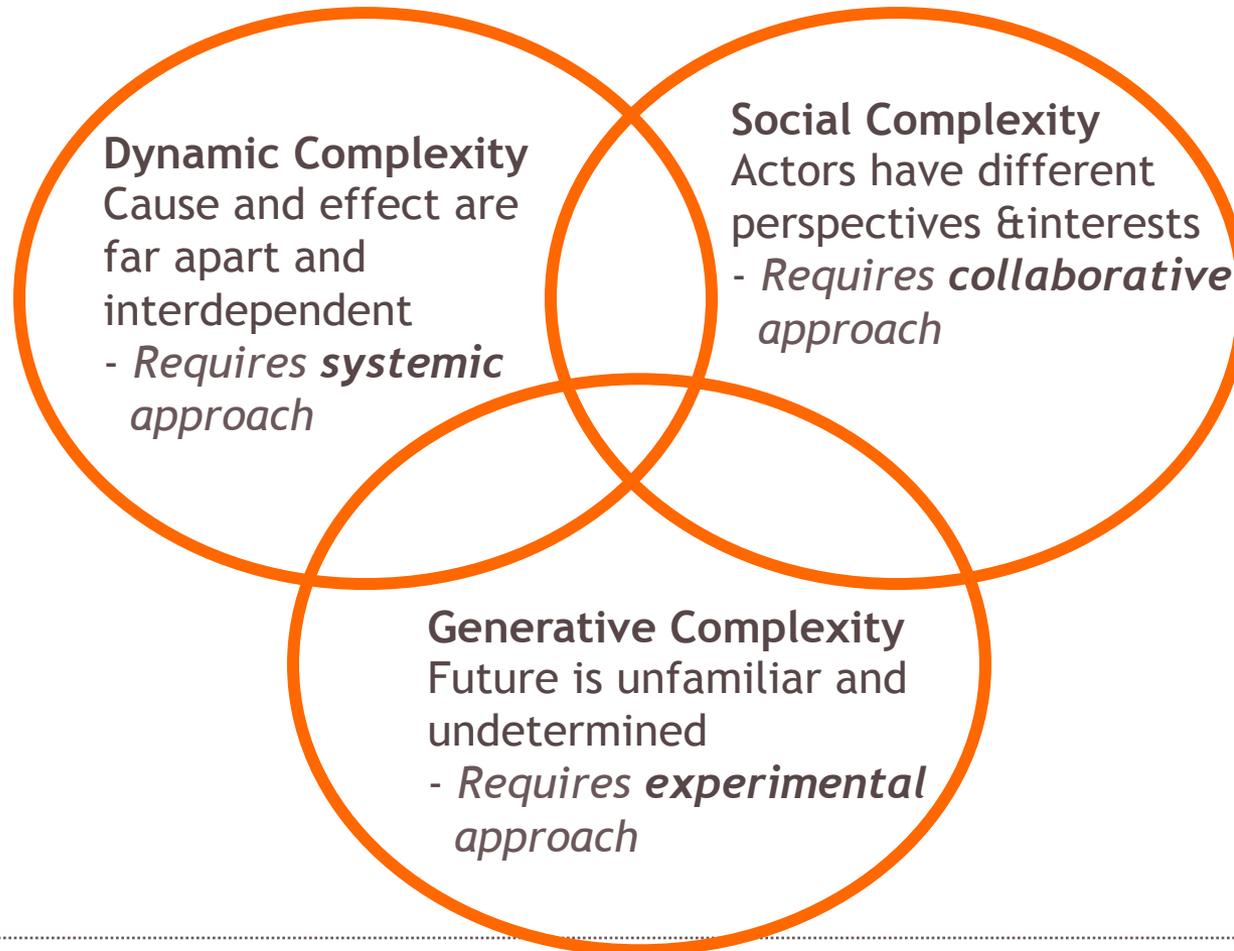
Ground Rules

Be Present: be punctual, use your phone outside the room, & explain your absence

Keep Confidences: what is said in the room can be repeated, but not with attribution unless permission has been given



Three Types of Complexity





Approaching Complex Challenges As If They Are Simple Challenges Creates Stuckness

Dimension	<i>Simple challenges</i>		<i>Complex challenges</i>		<i>Reason for Stuckness</i>
	Definition	Approach	Definition	Approach	
Dynamic	Cause and effect are close together	Piece by piece	Cause and effect are far apart	Systemic: attending to interconnectedness	Fragmentation



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Approaching our Work Together Differently

From....	To.....
Fixing symptoms	Addressing root causes
Making recommendations on paper	Developing solutions in practice
Relying on experts	Involving all key stakeholders
Learning then doing (policy preceding implementation)	Learning by doing (policy arising from implementation)
Implementing one chosen solution	Iteratively incubating, prototyping, and managing a portfolio of promising solutions
A once-off project	A stable and growing <u>platform</u> that delivers results over the short to long term

Social Lab Strategy

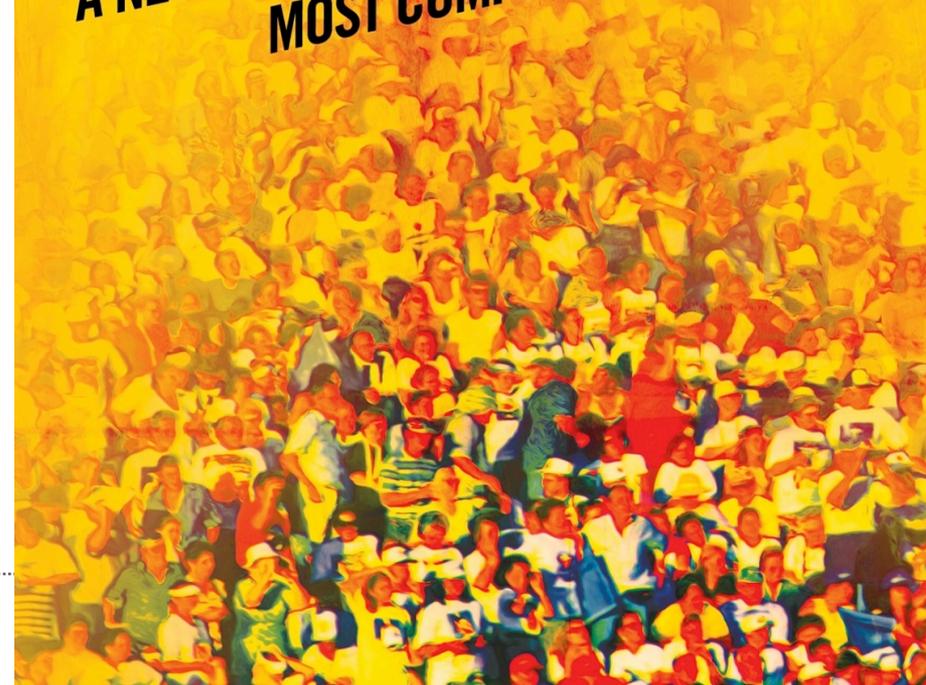
“A Social Lab is a strategic approach towards addressing complex challenges... Bring together a diverse, committed team and take an experimental, prototyping-based approach to addressing challenges systemically... Keep going. That’s it.”

- Zaid Hassan

ZAID HASSAN Foreword by **JOI ITO**
Director of the MIT Media Lab

THE SOCIAL LABS REVOLUTION

A NEW APPROACH TO SOLVING OUR
MOST COMPLEX CHALLENGES





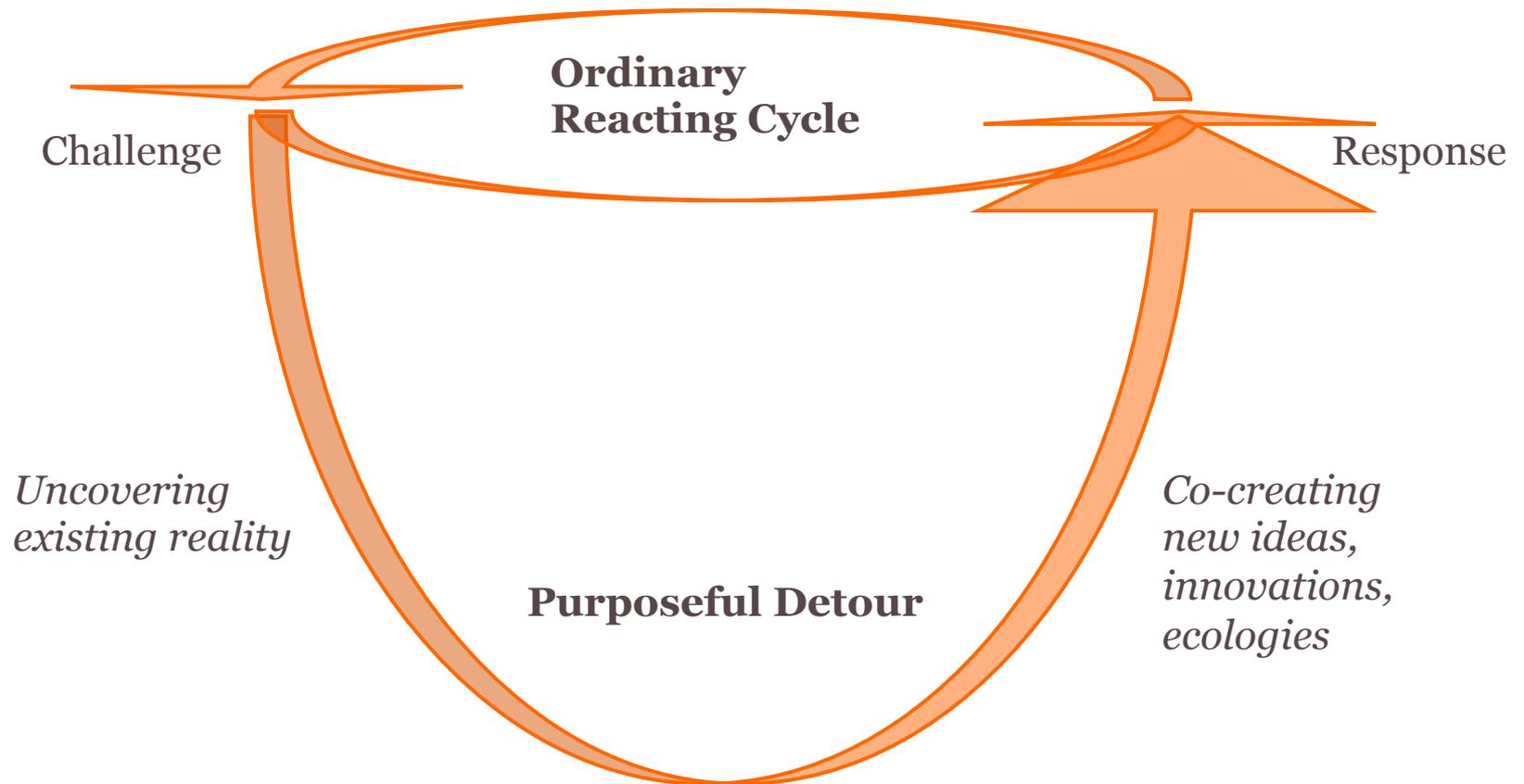
Debrief: Simple & Complex Challenges

Individual Reflection: In your journal.

- *What questions does this framework bring up for you?*
- *When have you been involved in a ‘stuck’ situation, perhaps because a complex challenge was being addressed as though it were simple?*
- *What happened? How did you feel? How might you approach it differently?*

In Pairs: Share your reflections with someone beside you

Two Creative Processes for Addressing Complex Challenges





Creative Process #1 - U Process

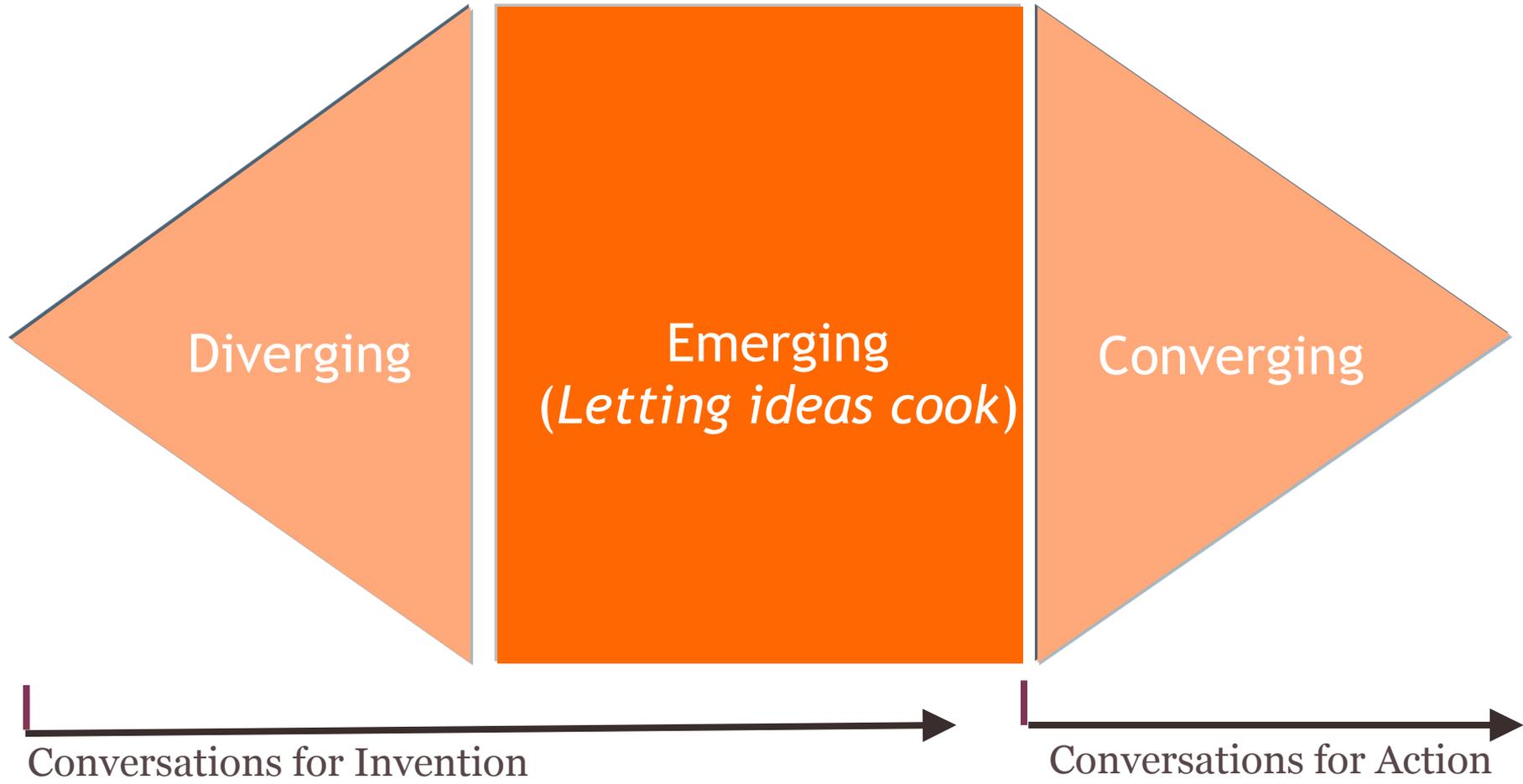
Co-Sensing:
Developing a common understanding of the current situation

Co-Creating:
Prototyping new innovations; producing new initiatives & new ecologies

Co-Presencing:
Retreating to access deeper knowing; developing new commitments



Creative Process #2





Debrief: Two Creative Processes

Individual Reflection: In your journal

- *Reflect on a time when you were in the ‘groan zone’. What happened? How did you feel?*
- *Given this framing of creative processes, what would you do differently?*
- **In Pairs:** Share your reflections with someone near you (but different than before)



Four Ways of Talking (T) and Listening (L)





Individual Reflection

What do I need to suspend to do my best work and lead an innovation agenda in our sector?



Paired Walk

What is a complex social challenge, that you really care about, which you believe requires a new approach?

- Consider telling a story in order to answer the question
- *This does NOT have to be related to your current job or job description.*



Debrief

Individually: On the hexagon shaped Post-it in front of you, write down a pithy description of the complex social challenge you spoke about (point up)

Plenary: Debrief your paired walk

- Highlights from your paired walk
- What did you notice in yourself using this framework for talking and listening?



The Iceberg of Systems Thinking

Events

"What happened?"

Patterns

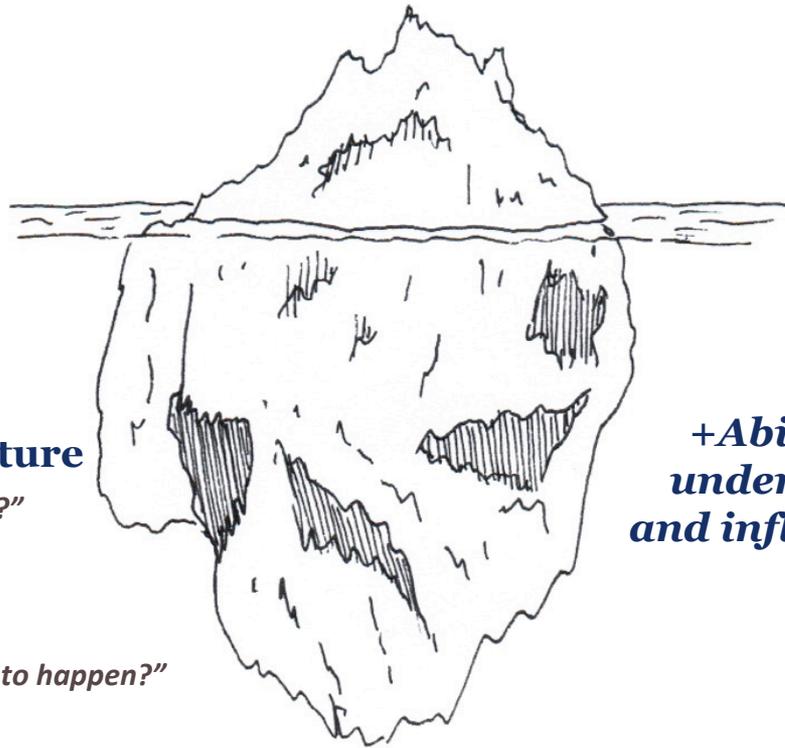
"What is happening?"

Systemic Structure

"Why is this happening?"

Mental Models

"What logics allow this to happen?"



*+Ability to
understand
and influence*





Tools and Approaches for Working Systemically

Using the Iceberg Model for Systems Thinking

- Identify a relevant event regarding the topic/ theme of your group
 - Individually, identify 3 patterns, 3 structures, 3 mental models. Record these, one per Post-It note
 - Present to each other, cluster, keep adding to the iceberg model
 - Identify a “high impact” leverage point, Something, that if changed, would contribute to “unsticking” your challenge
-



Tools and Approaches for Working Experimentally





The Marshmallow Challenge

- Build the tallest freestanding structure
- The entire marshmallow must be on top
- Use as much or as little of the kit
- Break up the spaghetti, string, or tape
- The challenge lasts nine minutes

Tom Wujec has run this same
marshmallow experiment
hundreds of times and found
some interesting patterns.

**Business students
and lawyers
built about half the
average height
of 20 inches.**



Engineers and
Architects did the
best (and so they
should)!



BUT here is the really interesting thing...

Kindergarten KIDS usually do as well as architects and engineers!





HUH?

MBAAs and lawyers want to

PLAN

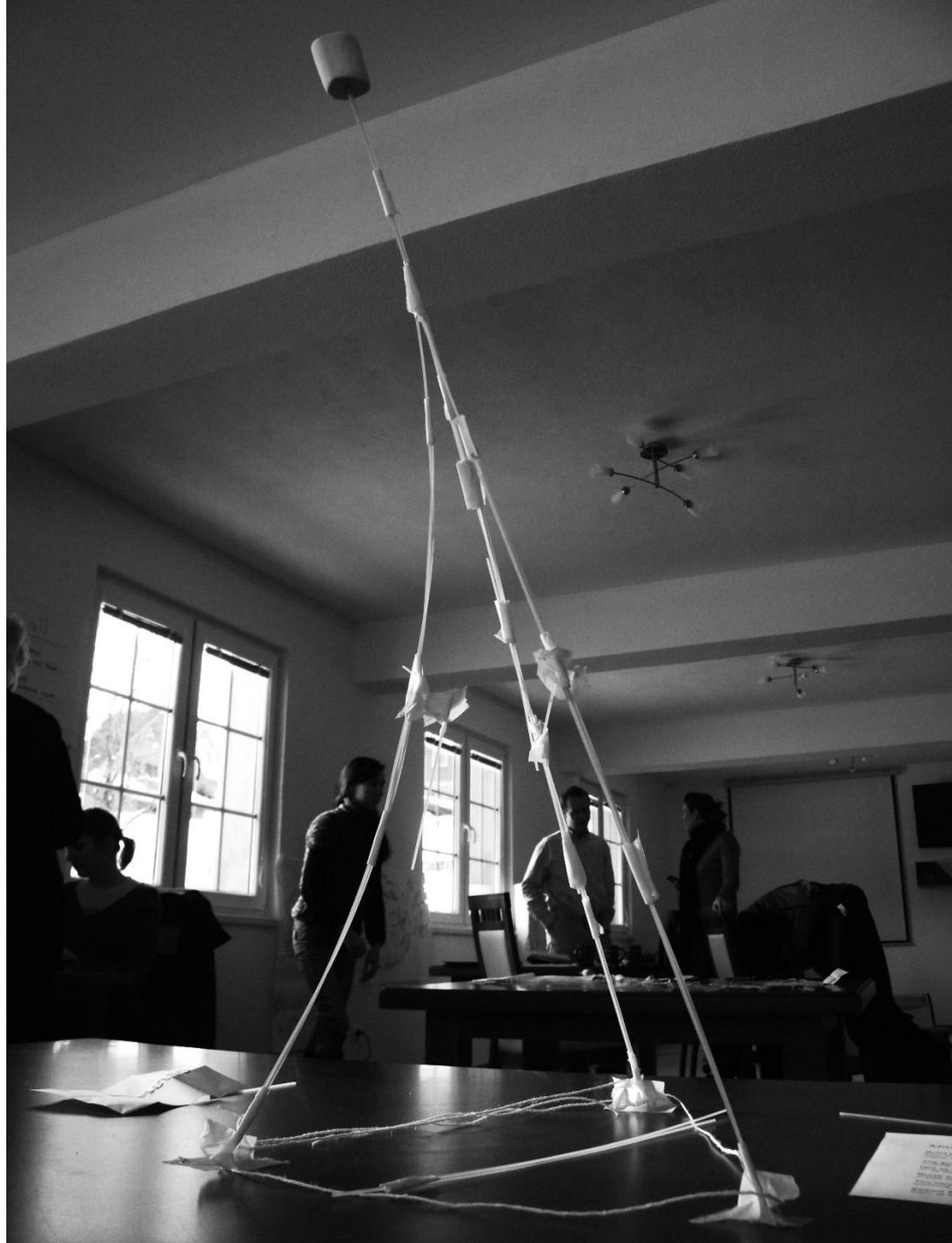
**their way to an optimal
outcome and then execute on
the plan.**

Instead of using time trying to make a plan or establish who is in charge, kindergarten kids simply

EXPERIMENT

over and over until they find a model that works.

On virtually every measure of innovation they create taller and more interesting structures.



Under conditions of ambiguity, where outcomes are unknown, most people fall back on a planning mindset.

**A planning mindset increases
your chances of failure
because you use time
devising strategies
instead of trying out ideas.**



Tools and Approaches for Working Experimentally

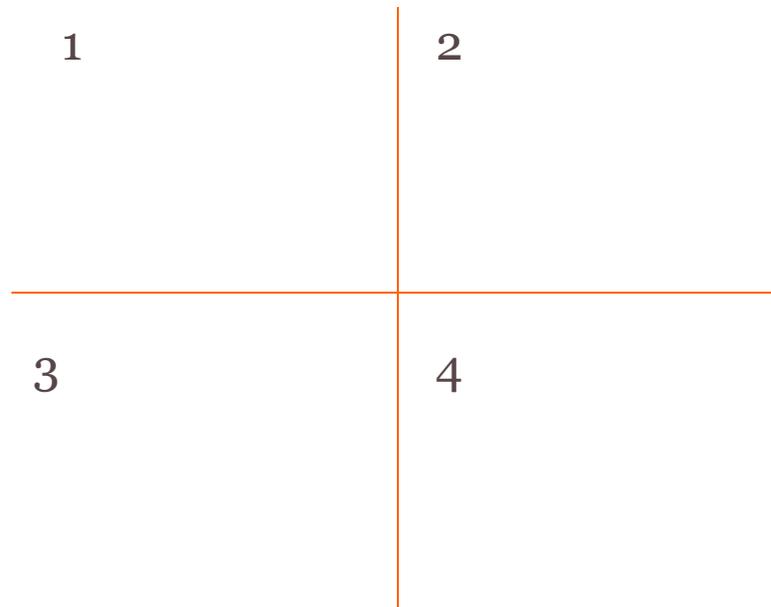
Design Work: Finding Leverage to Become Less and Less Wrong

- Review the “high impact” leverage point from your Iceberg Model
 - Individually, develop a storyboard for an intervention that you think would shift that leverage point (10 minutes)
-



Tools and Approaches for Working Experimentally

Design Work: Outline for Your Storyboard



What happens if your idea fails?

What happens if your idea is wildly successful?



Tools and Approaches for Working Experimentally

Design Work: Prompts for Developing Your Storyboard

What is your hypothesis about what you need to do, in what order, to shift the leverage point you've identified? If I want 'x' to happen, what should I do?

Remember, “every project has its marshmallow”. What are the assumptions and mental models you are testing? How can you represent these in your storyboard?

(Most of these are implicit and hard to identify!)

Where is the most appropriate place to focus my energy and attention?



Tools and Approaches for Working Experimentally

Design Work: Finding Leverage to Become Less and Less Wrong

- In your group, share the story of each storyboard (10 minutes)



Tools and Approaches for Working Experimentally

Design Work: Finding Leverage to Become Less and Less Wrong

- Draw one storyboard (on large flip chart paper) that combines the best elements of each individual storyboard



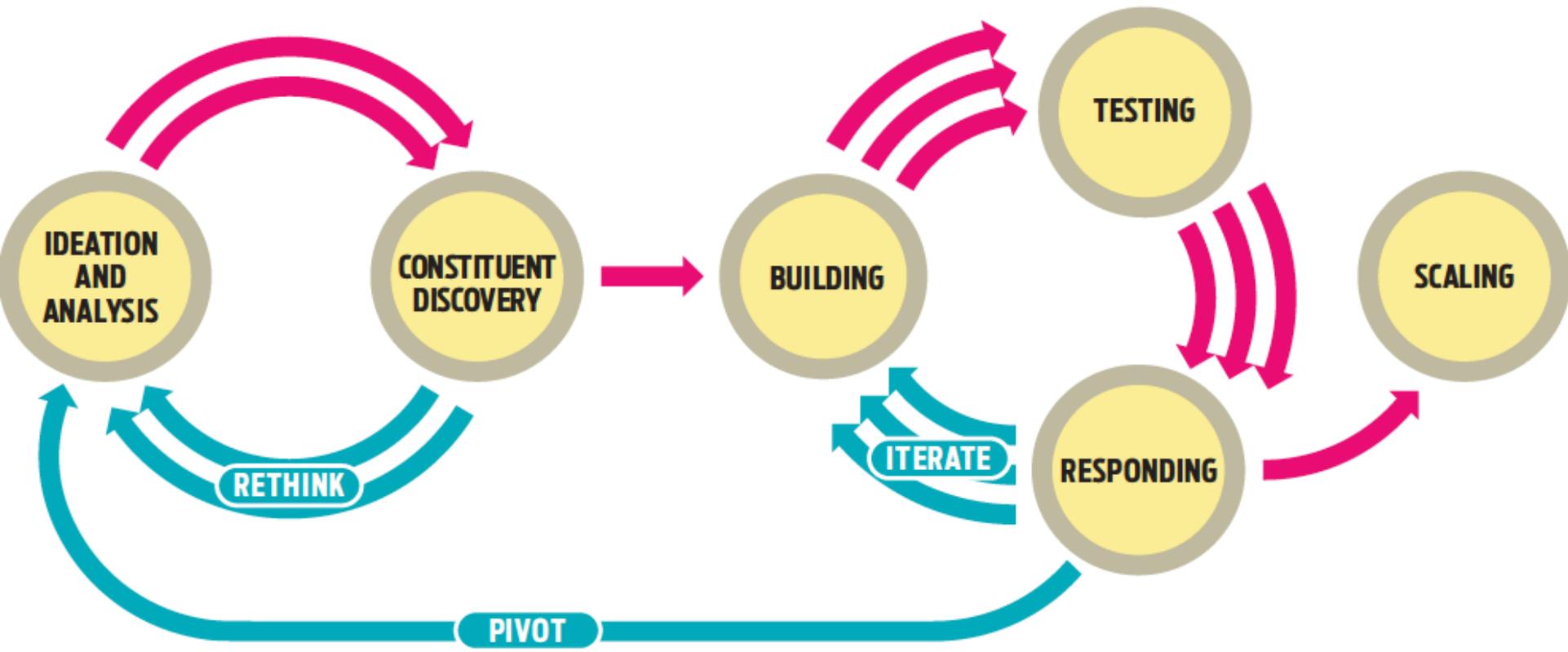
Tools and Approaches for Working Experimentally

Design Work: Finding Leverage to Become Less and Less Wrong

- One team to present their storyboard
- Receive coaching and clarifying questions



The Lean Experimentation Process



From: *The Promise of Lean Experimentation*. Stanford Social Innovation Review. Summer 2015



Check Out

On the card in front of you:

**What is your most significant take away
from today?**



Summary of Tools You Learned Today

Tools and Approaches for Working...

Collaboratively	Systemically	Experimentally
Check-In & Check-Out	3 Kinds of Complexity	U-Process
Ground Rules	Iceberg Model for Systems Thinking	Diverge - Emerge - Converge
4 Ways of Talking & Listening		Marshmallow Challenge
Paired Walk		Prototyping & Coaching