Co-creating a visual thesaurus for the role of design thinking in management decision making

BEAUSOLEIL Angele* and QUAYLE Moura

* University of Toronto, Canada
b University of British Columbia, Canada

* e-mail: angele.beausoleil@rotman.utoront.ca
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Introduction and Aim:
The workshop will engage participants to co-create concept maps and a visual thesaurus associated with ‘design thinking’. For design researchers, scholars and practitioners this workshop aims to expose the epistemological challenges and opportunities associated with ‘design thinking’ in management and leadership contexts. Concept mapping is a tool and technique that aims to enable visual thinking and knowledge organization skills. It offers a way to externalize understanding of complex topics (i.e. design thinking) in terms of both intra- and inter-personal relationships (i.e. within the management domain). A visual thesaurus displays semantic connections using pictures or images, not words. It aids in recognizing visually similar events or visual synonyms. Workshop participants will be guided through a series of visual thinking and design techniques to develop concept maps and a visual thesaurus for ‘design thinking’ and design-related terminologies within the management discourse. The outputs generated from the workshop will reflect a multidisciplinary understanding of the subject for knowledge translation and identify future research goals.

Outline and Format:
The 90-minute workshop will engage participants in an active design research session. The facilitators will:

• first present a set of proposed theories and practices associated with design thinking and its role within a mixed economy system (30 min);
• then present a series of design prompts and probes to critically explore and capture the participants’ diverse visual and semantic views on design thinking in relation to management resulting in a series of concept maps (30 min); and,
• guide participants to co-create a visual thesaurus of ‘design thinking’ (30 min).

Participant Benefits:
Participants will benefit from contributing their a priori knowledge of design-related terminology, to the workshop resulting in two co-designed artefacts – a visual thesaurus and a summative concept map. They will be introduced to visual thinking techniques such as concept mapping and visual thesaurus making. Participants will receive a final graphical representation of the collective output generated from the workshop.

Workshop Relevance:
This workshop proposes both an active learning experience and action research framework, to gain a deeper understanding of design thinking’s perceived meaning and value in relation to managerial decision-making. Furthermore, the artefacts (i.e. visual models) generated from this workshop aim to inspire more research on the use and value of visual models in design-based decision studies.
Figure 1 Basic Concept map https://thesweetsetup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/4-basicmindmap.jpg

Figure 2 Sample Visual Thesaurus using photographic data sources https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcT5QioJ5-cuiKiVO4l2Iu2CG6SAIunpH8t99j46i7qaAgvuRXBBxQ