

OCAD University Open Research Repository

Faculty of Design

2022

Constructivist Approaches to Sense-Making About Design Theory

Mages, Michael Arnold

Suggested citation:

Mages, Michael Arnold (2022) Constructivist Approaches to Sense-Making About Design Theory. In: Proceedings of Relating Systems Thinking and Design, RSD11, 3-16 Oct 2022, Brighton, United Kingdom. Available at https://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/4558/

Open Research is a publicly accessible, curated repository for the preservation and dissemination of scholarly and creative output of the OCAD University community. Material in Open Research is open access and made available via the consent of the author and/or rights holder on a non-exclusive basis.

The OCAD University Library is committed to accessibility as outlined in the <u>Ontario Human Rights Code</u> and the <u>Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)</u> and is working to improve accessibility of the Open Research Repository collection. If you require an accessible version of a repository item contact us at <u>repository@ocadu.ca</u>.

THE JAPANESE CONCEPT OF ば ba and and There are such as 和 wa 所 tokoro knowledge-mobilizing relational space location space negative space inspired by an in-between space that affords a space that provides an awareness a space where an arrangement of the site of a location or state of being dissimilar things to coexist expressed of harmonious interpersonal elements create connections, inspire Buddhism's ideas of as a pause in time or an interval of an actor in a specific environment Shinto's ideas of Asian religious an indigenous connection knowledge and experiences emptiness and Japanese religion harmony in relationships selflessness as evidenced in Japanese Writing & Poetry **Japanese Culture** Design **Japanese Arts Architecture** where it's where it's where it's where it's

where it's personal

> A deliberate pause when performing お辞儀, Ojigi - or the Japanese bow, where lowering one's head or the upper half of one's chest as a sign of salutation, reverence, apology, or admiration is commonly

for example

employed in social and religious situations • Quiet reflection, thoughtful observation

· Comfortable silence, silent expressions or gestures

> communal for example

—as well as

- The community is greater than the individual where every action, choice, and intention is carefully and deliberately taken considering the community versus the self
- As the community takes precedence over the self, destructive actions such as over-consumption and waste are slowed down considerably, **respecting** $M\alpha$ in nature, focusing on restoration, rehabilitation

but can be—> restrictive

• In Japanese culture, Ma influences every aspect of life. The world is divided into three concentric circles: the **inner circle**, *uchi* (one's own family, friends, and colleagues; **the middle circle**, *seken*, (the public or people);

for example

and **the outside circle**, *soto* (strangers). • Here, *Ma* can be restrictive to the self through the social obligation *giri*, where one cannot act in ways that lead to disgrace before the *seken*

an invisible energy for example

• Noh theater is the pinnacle of the art of ma, uniting all of Ma's characteristics into an one grand symphony. It exemplifies traditional Japanese artistic concerns with dynamic equilibrium between object and space, action and **inaction**, sound and **stillness**, movement and repose

• Senu tokoro ga omoshiroki is a Japanese term that describes *Noh* theater and refers to what the performer **does not do**

intentional

Large expanses of space are purposefully left unpainted in *sumi-e* brush painting

for example

 Proficiency is defined not only by learning the characters' forms, but also by understanding the link between **form** and **non-form**

When it comes to *sumi-e art*, the dimension of time is crucial. The marking of **rhythm in time** is appreciated in the form of traces of movement and brush speed

· Here, the energy contained behind each brush stroke is intentionally amplified by a large amount of empty space

nuanced for example

- *Ma* has been skillfully employed in Japanese cinema to reinforce the story and character(s)
- Silence, pauses in dialogue between characters, and no camera movement are purposely used by Akira **Kurasawa**, Kenji Mizoguchi, Yasujiro Ozu, Studio Ghibli, and modern directors to channel Ma's invisible force, delivering cinema's defining moments

purposeful

for example

- The *Kanji* character for *Ma* (間)**combines the** characters for "gate" above with "sun" below an image of light beaming through the gaps/ empty spaces of a doorway
- In architectural terms, Ma is the dimension of space between the structural posts of an interior
- Empty space **energy** brimming with **potential** is purposefully incorporated

minimalist -strictly

for example

- Ma's architectural design is exemplified by the traditional Japanese **tea-house**.
- There are no ornaments or decorative fixtures. Here, structural barriers alone lay the groundwork for life to function well and harmoniously
- The interior's emptiness heightens awareness for the fleeting experiences that pass by the fleeting gatherings of people and items.
- The house is devoid of material attachments, focusing on people and their experiences

multi-dimensional

• The One-Dimensional Realm: 梁間 hari-ma: Beam span where *Ma* stands for a line in space that represents a measurement of length or distance

for example

- ・ The Two-Dimensional Realm: 六畳の間 roku jo no *mα*: a Six-tatami room (tatami area) where *Mα* and a number of tatami mats denote area
- The Three-Dimensional Realm: 空間 ku-kan: Space (empty place) where *Ma* determines the form and function of a spaces within a structure
- The Four-Dimensional Realm: 時間 ji-kan: Time (time-place) where *Ma* denotes stretches of time

intentionally incomplete

for example

- In Japanese traditional music, dance, poetry, literature and drama, *Ma* refers to a **pause** in speech or a brief interval **between** phases or events, or an intentional slowing or abandonment of rhythm and speed
- This is especially **vivid** in writing and poetry, where thoughts and words are left **incomplete**, to be filled in with *Ma* invoked between the reader and the work

structure ←—and steeped in for example

- Japanese Buddhists adopted *Ma* to describe emptiness or the void. In the 12th century, the poet-monk Saigyo purposefully uses 絶え間 tae-ma: a pause, gap (discontinuous place) compound in his poetry structure
- The use of *tae-ma* in Saigyo's poems alludes to the Buddhist concept of ku (空), or emptiness; the first uses a spatial metaphor, while the second uses a temporal one - the expressions of a poet and mediator
- Similarly, *Haiku*, a Japanese genre of short-form poetry, has a set structure: three phrases with a *kireji*, or cutting word, on (phonetic units equivalent to syllables) in a 5, 7, 5 pattern, and a *kigo*, or seasonal allusion
- Award-winning Japanese poet and author Hasegawa Kai says, 'The purpose of haiku's *kire* (cutting) is to generate *Ma*, which is more eloquent than words. While a good haiku may appear to be just describing a object, *Ma* imparts *kokoro* (emotion).'

western -inspiring even---> literature for example

- W.B. Yeats incorporated structural ideas from Japanese **Noh** into his own plays after his two 'best friends' Ezra Pound and Ernest Fenollosa exposed him to it
- In 1923, Yeats was awarded the **Nobel** Prize for **Literature**, which he attributed to his plays

heterogenous

for example Yoko Akama, an award-winning design researcher entangles *Ma* with actor-network

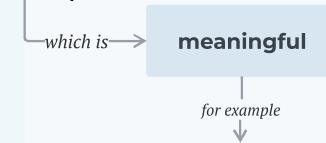
- which have yet assembled or put into effect • They call this entanglement co-designing, an activity based on **emergence** where constituents are mutually changing towards purposeful outcomes
- They draw *Ma's* 'between-ness' to explore how we are transforming and becoming together among heterogeneity

spiritual discipline

 Designing with Ma encourages designers and design thinkers to regard the design process as a spiritual **discipline** where active listening and **intentional** observation leads to products and solutions that are creative, innovative and **empathetic** to the needs of the user

for example

• Whether it's physical products, systems solutions, or digital experiences, designing with *Ma* creates **opportunities** to deepen relationships (*wa*), generate new knowledge (ba), connect to the world around us (tokoro), and allow moments of quiet and integration (*ma*), all of which **enrich** our own and others' **experiences** of the world



 Decluttered design that embraces Ma's negative space ensures each element or feature serves a meaningful, specific function generating enduring, impactful experiences

- clarity and consciousness
- Breaks between thoughts and actions, pausing before making a decision, and curbing impulses helps live a life that is **devoid** of **distraction** but full of intentional experiences

1. Geist, K. (1983). West Looks East: The Influence of Yasujiro Ozu on Wim Wenders and Peter Handke. Art Journal, 43(3), 234–239. https://doi.org/10.2307/776712

2. Joines-Novotny, L. (1996). Czech Town Squares: Ten Spatial Patterns. Journal of Architectural Education (1984-), 50(1), 22–31. https://doi.org/10.2307/1425286 3. van Dam, R. M. (2019). Home Within Movement: The Japanese Concept of Ma (\parallel): Sensing Space-time Intensity in Aesthetics of Movement. In G. Bracken (Ed.), Ancient and Modern Practices of Citizenship in Asia and the West: Care of the Self (pp. 241–258). Amsterdam University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv9zcjxq.15

4. Kondo, M. (2008). "ILL SEEN ILL SAID" AND THE JAPANESE SPATIAL CONCEPT "MA." Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui, 19, 67–74. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25781820

5. McCARNEY, P., & Tutu, D. (2013). JAPANESE ATTITUDES TOWARD ANIMALS. In A. Linzey (Ed.), The Global Guide to Animal Protection (pp. 29–31). University of Illinois Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt2tt9r9.18 6. NELSON, E. M. (2014). Love, Pain, and the Whole Japan Thing: Dancing MA in Doris Dörrie's Film Cherry Blossoms/Hanami. In Q. SHEN & M. ROSENSTOCK (Eds.), Beyond Alterity: German Encounters with Modern East Asia (1st ed., pp. 190-214). Berghahn Books. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt9qd93f.14

7. Akama, Yoko. (2014). Attuning to Ma (between-ness) in designing. 10.13140/2.1.3189.0565. 8. Matsumoto, K. (2020, April 24). Ma-the Japanese concept of space and Time. Medium. Retrieved from https://medium.com/@kiyoshimatsumoto/ma-the-japanese-concept-of-space-and-time-3330c83ded4c

9. Ma « Unique Japan. (2022). Retrieved from https://new.uniquejapan.com/ikebana/ma/

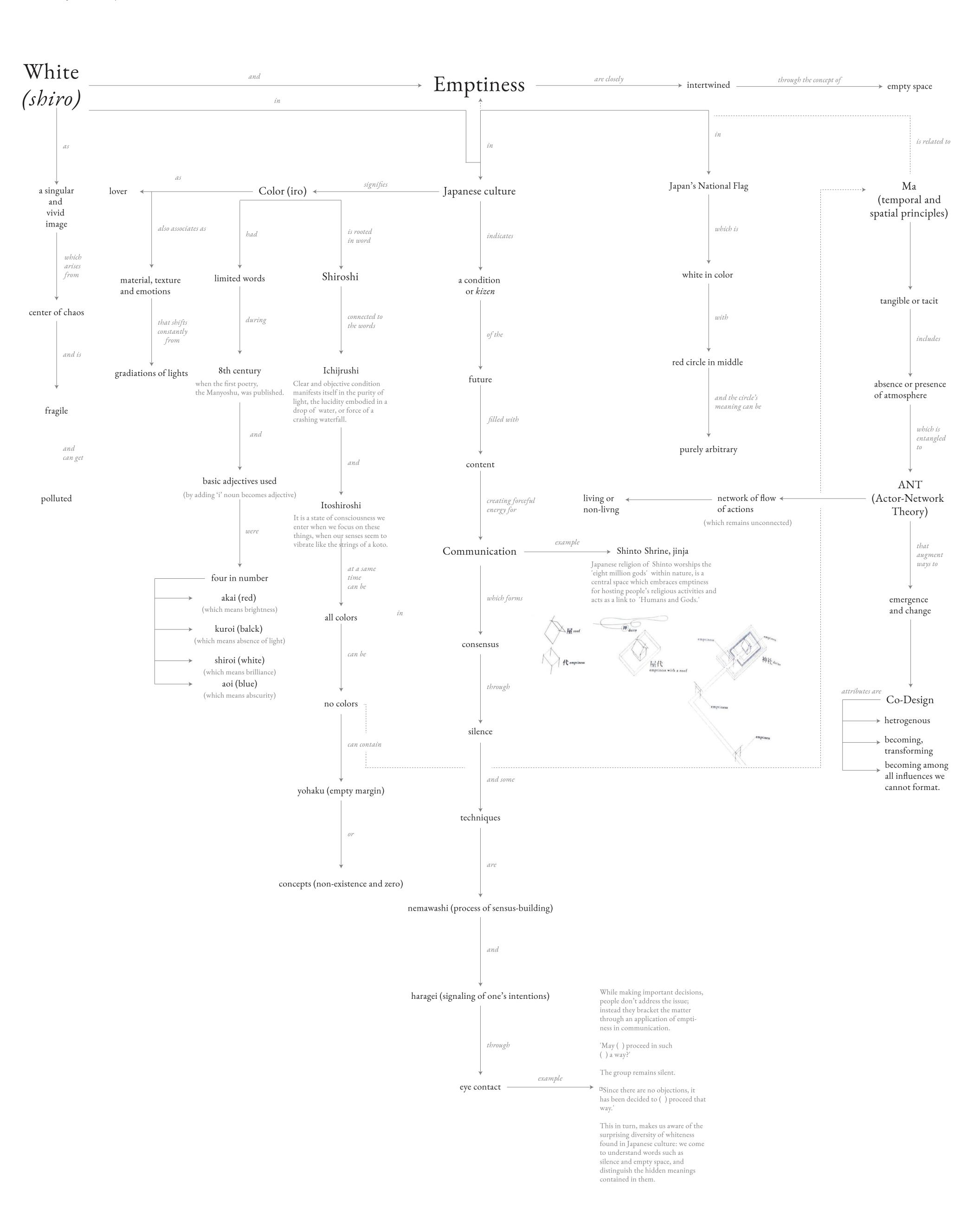
 $10. \ \textit{MA: Place, space, void.} \\ \textbf{Kyoto Journal. (2020, September 27). Retrieved from } \underline{\textbf{https://www.kyotojournal.org/culture-arts/ma-place-space-void/new.kyotojournal.org/culture-arts/ma-place-space-vo$ 11. The Space in Between | A Perspective on the Japanese Concept of "Ma."(n.d.). JAPAN HOUSE (Los Angeles). Retrieved from https://www.japanhousela.com/articles/a-perspective-on-the-japanese-concept-of-ma/#;~:text=The%20character%20for%20%E2%80%9Cma%E2%80%9D%20 12. Writing.colostate.edu. 2022. Sands - The Influence of Japanese Noh Plays on William Butler Yeats. [online] Available at: https://writing.colostate.edu/gallery/phantasmagoria/sands.htm

WHITE 白

Kenya Hara

There is no such thing as 'white.' Rather, 'white' exists solely in our perception. Therefore, we must not attempt to search for 'white.' Instead, we must search a way to feel that whiteness. Through this process, we gain an awareness of a white that is slightly whiter than the white we experience normally.

This in turn makes us aware of the surprising diversity of whiteness found in Japanese culture: we come to understand words such as silence and empty space, and distinguish the hidden meanings contained in them.

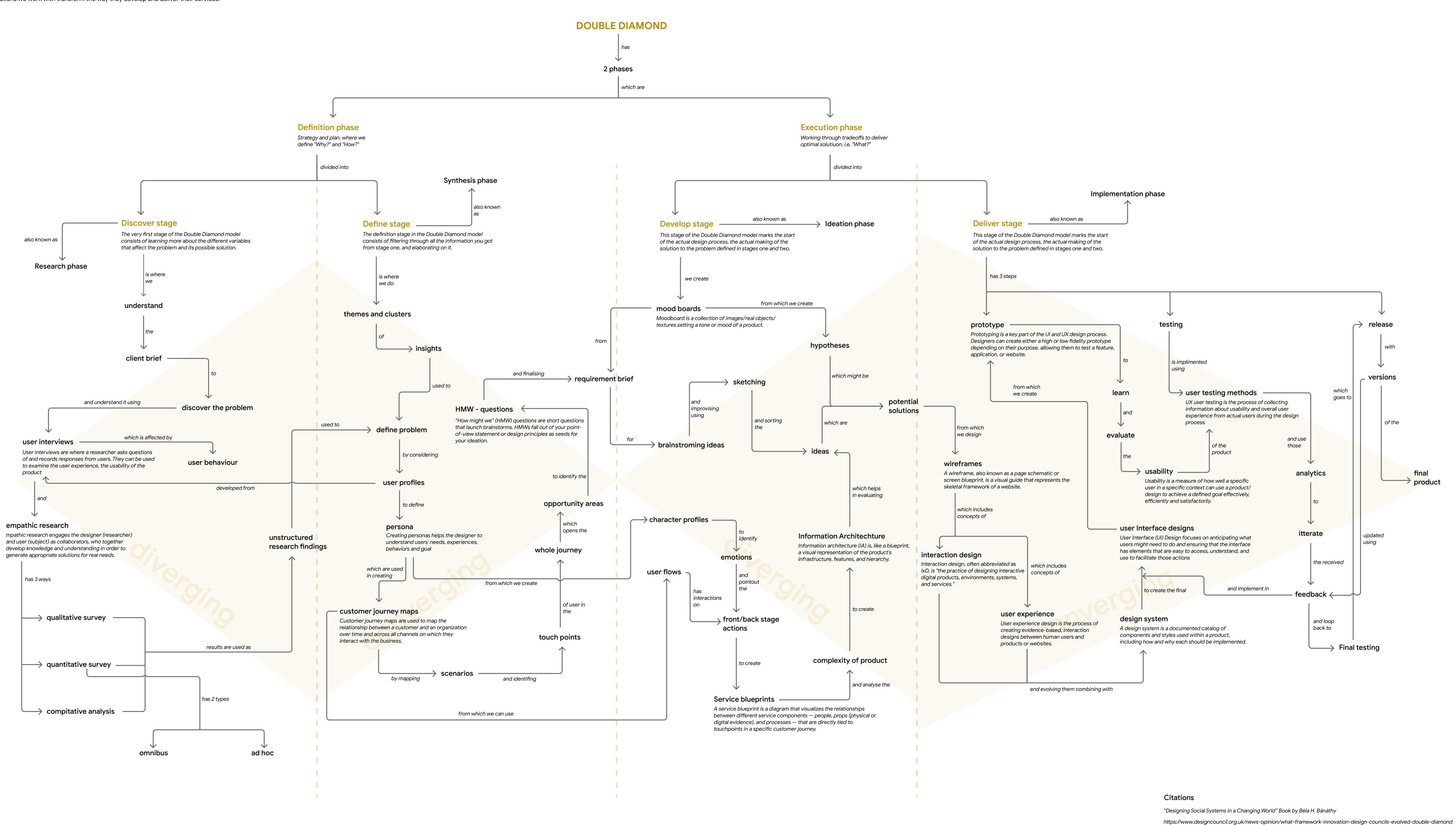


https://www.justinmind.com/blog/double-diamond-model-what-is-should-you-use/

https://www.designorate.com/the-double-diamond-design-thinking-process-and-how-to-use-it/

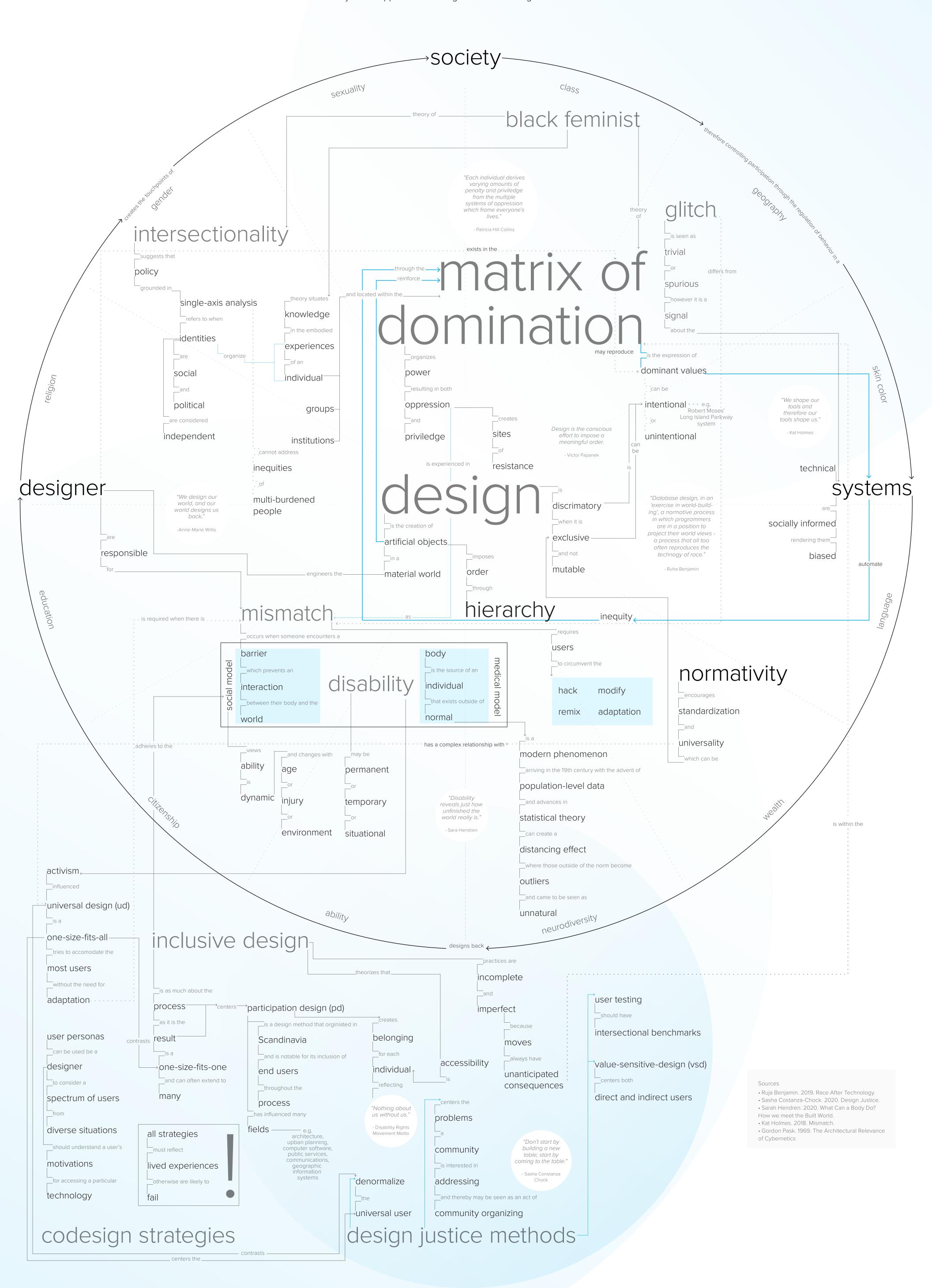
The Double Diamond design model is a system designers can follow in their creative process. The British Design Council made it official following a long study that involved corporate giants such as Microsoft, Starbucks, Sony and LEGO.

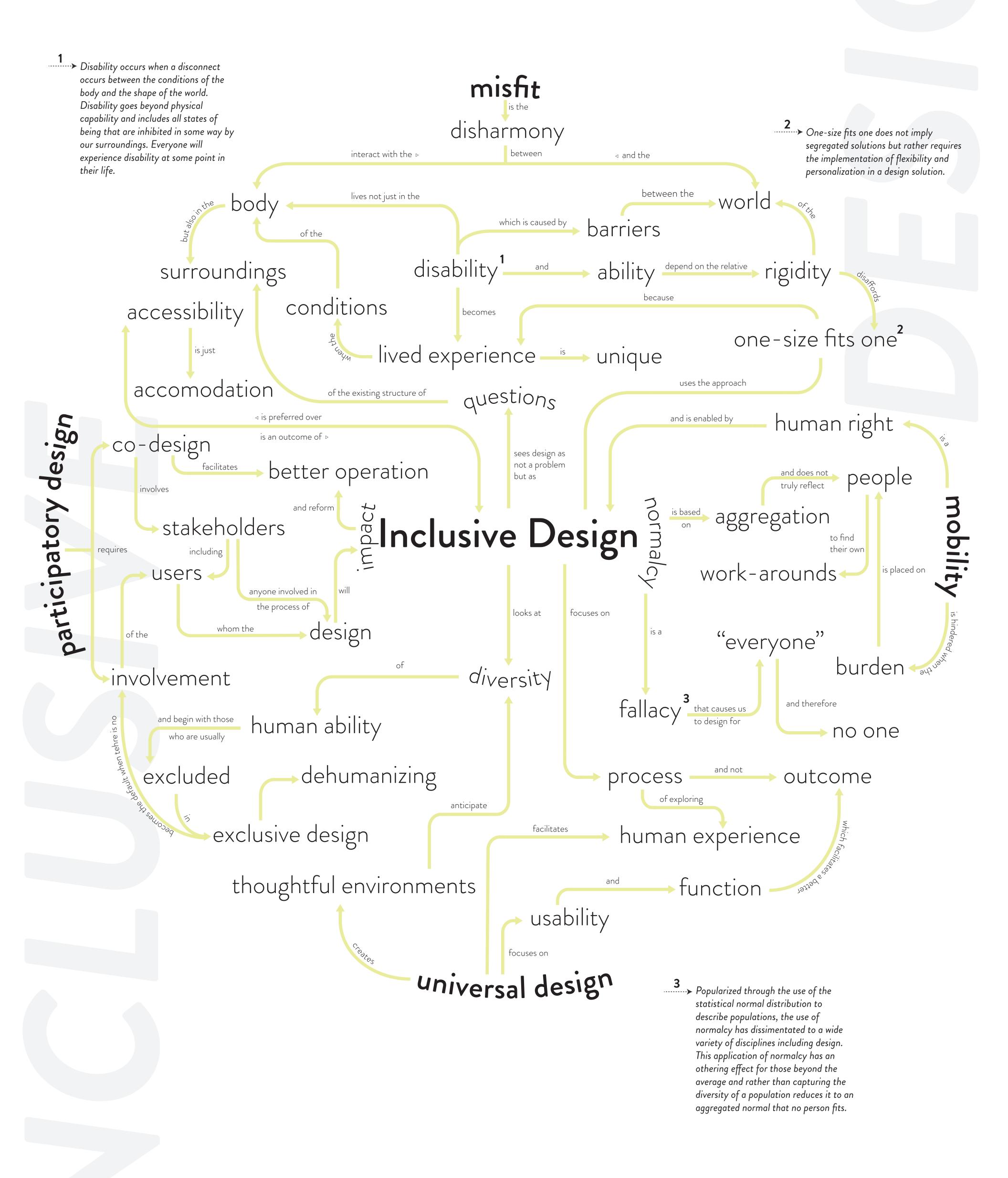
Design Council's Double Diamond clearly conveys a design process to designers and non-designers alike. The two diamonds represent a process of exploring an issue more widely or deeply (divergent thinking) and then taking focused action (convergent thinking). This framework helps designers and non-designers across the globe tackle some of the most complex social, economic and environmental problems. It is a fundamental part of our work: enabling us to support the public, private and third sector organisations we work with transform the way they develop and deliver their services.



TOWARDS INCLUSITIVITY

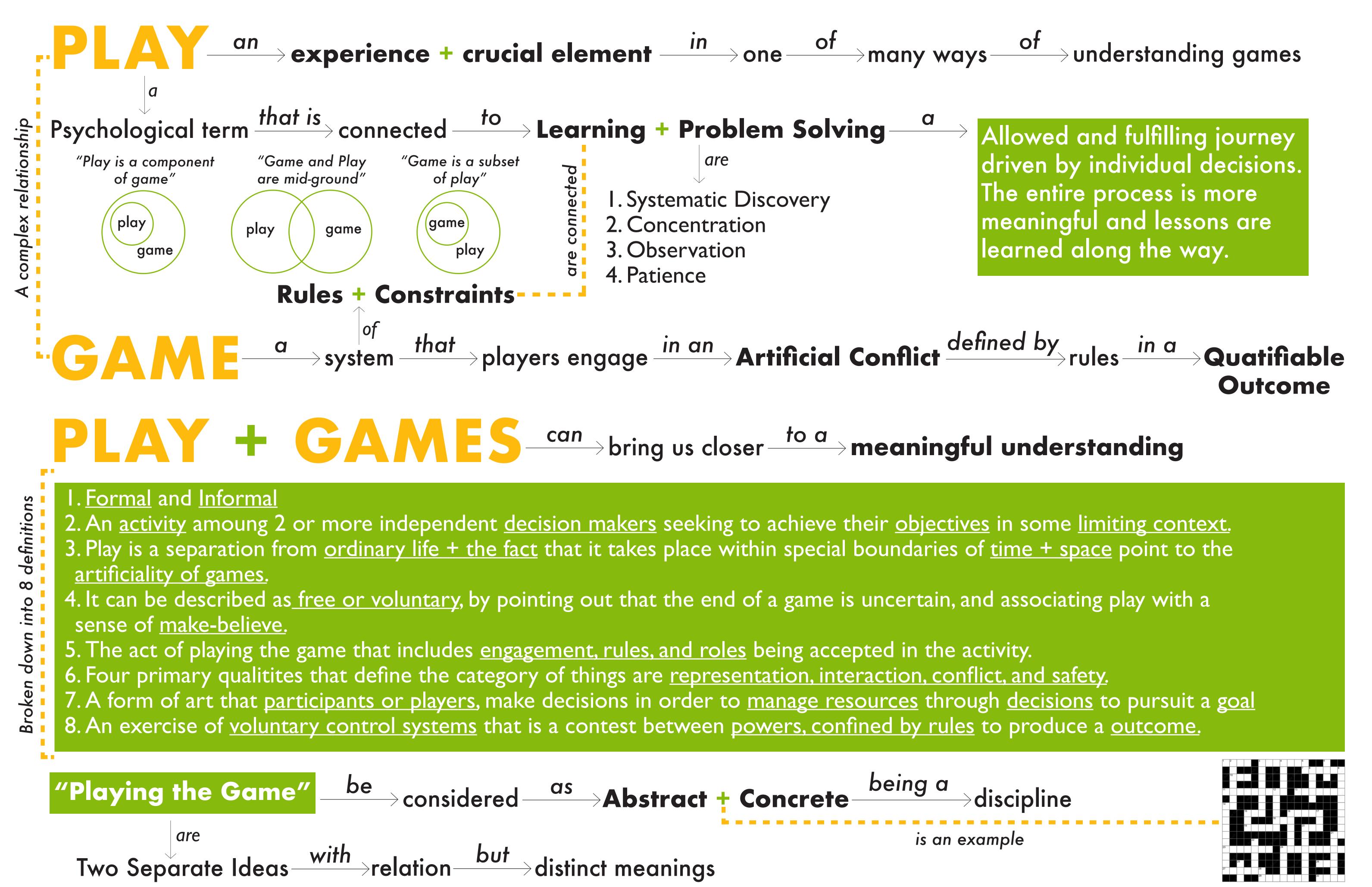
systemic oppression in design and methodologies of inclusion





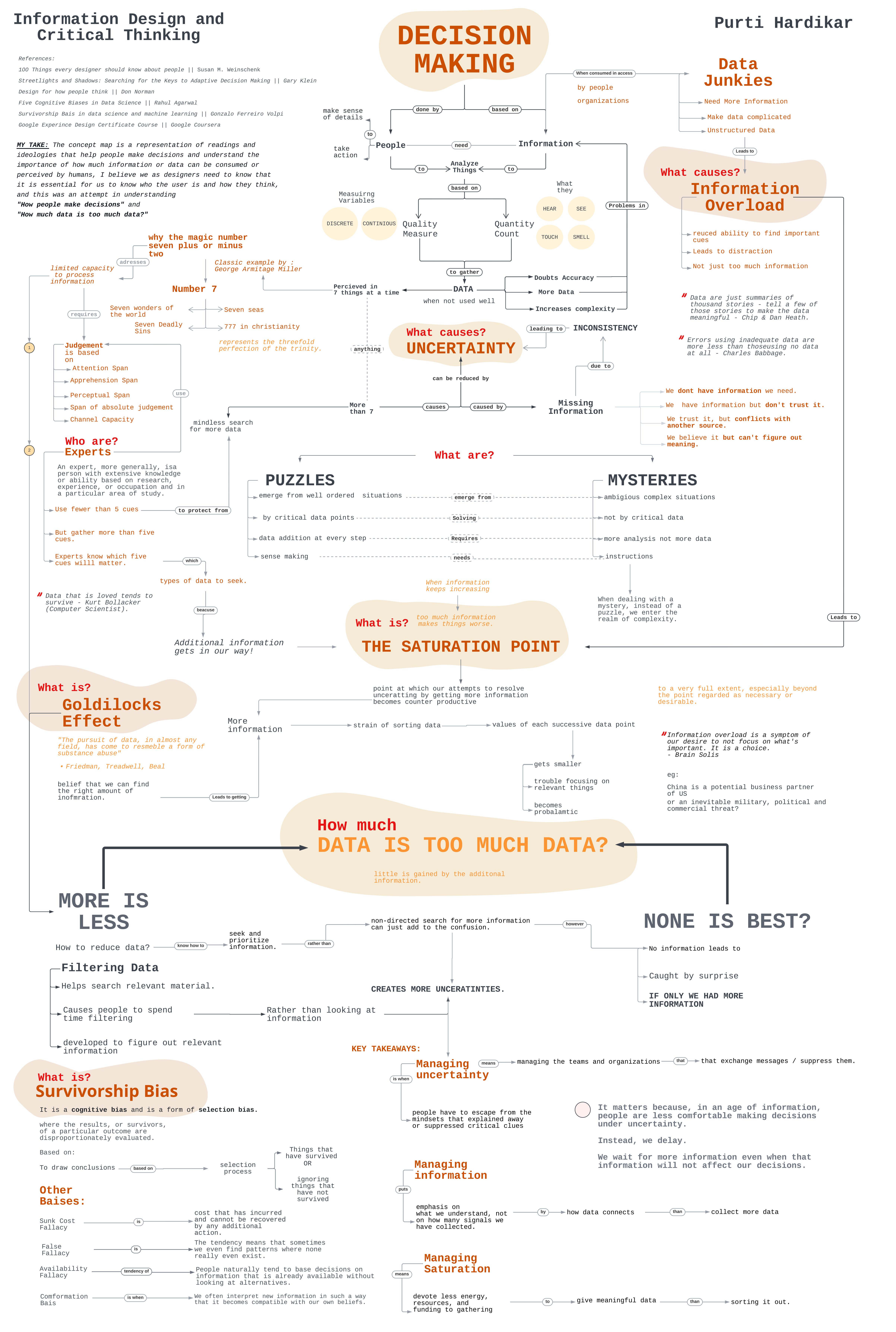
ludwig mies van der rohe less is more adolf loos ornamentation is crime maximize the data-ink ratio above all else, show the data edward tufte make complex data simplified content-free decoration distracts adolf loos decoration wastes effort and time clarity of the design is most important use familiar forms to avoid taxing readers stephen few visual embellishments can obfuscate nuance minimalist designs help highlight data's details visual embellishments can distort and mislead embellishment leads to a quicker obsolescence decorations can be cluttered and unprofessional data should be presented neutrally and objectively edward tufte visual decorations are superfluous to the message certain visual encodings are more precise than others aesthetics is merely a byproduct of the display of data the design should disappear in favor of the information embellishment competes with and undermines the data embellishment can imbue designs with value judgments people have to spend more time on an embellished design there is a science to the visual communication of information

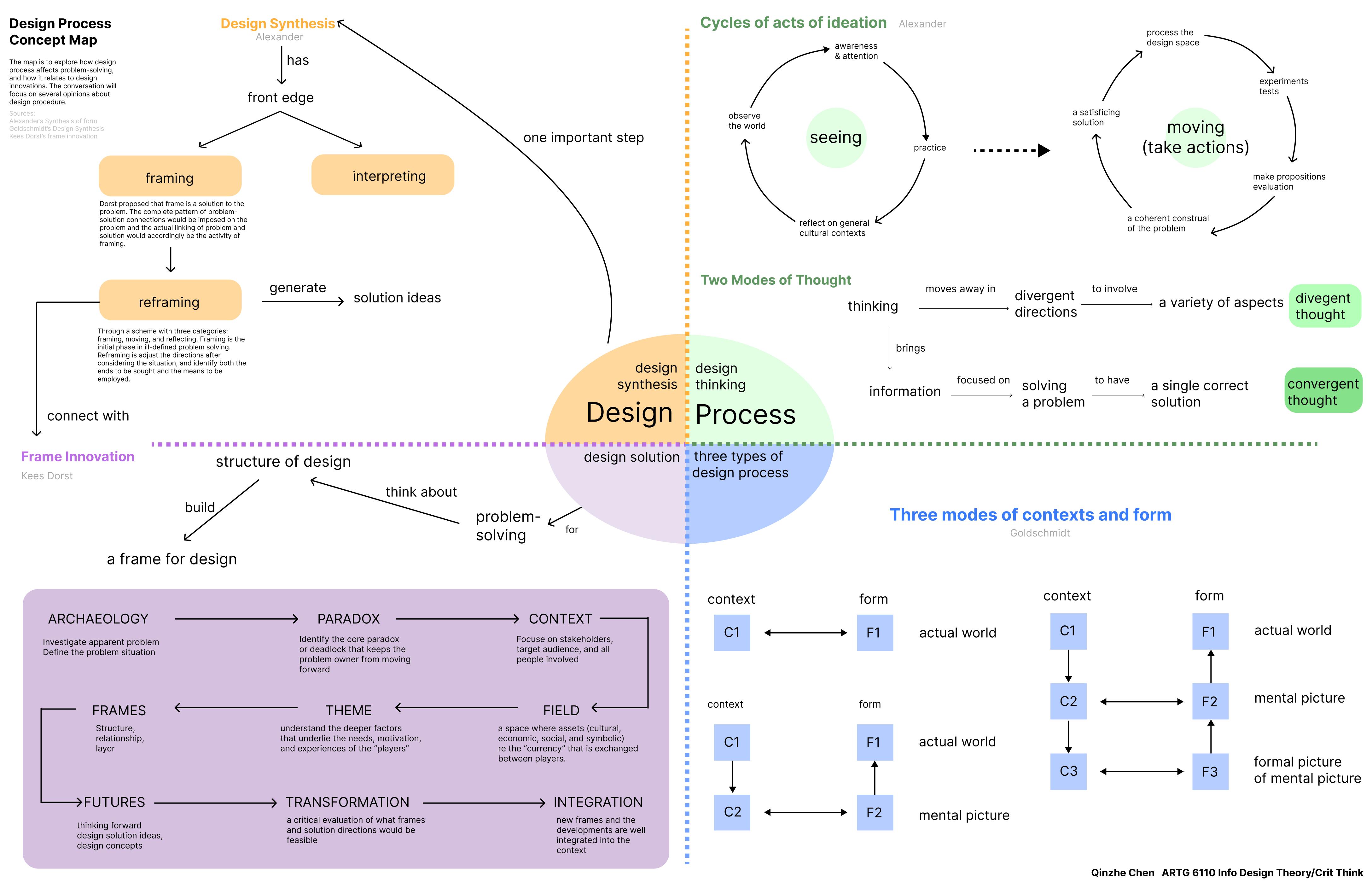
less is a bore denise scott brown & robert venturi ornamentation is eye-catching nigel holmes be deliberate with all decisions giorgia lupi above all else, invoke a reaction nigel holmes show the complexity in the data giorgia lupi decoration boosts reader engagement steve haroz, et al decorated forms better express meaning denise scott brown & robert venturi aesthetics of the design is most important annemarie quispel, et al inspire readers with new visual metaphors giorgia lupi decorated designs help build visual metaphors stephen few embellishments highlight elements for emphasis stephen few embellishments boost information memorability michelle borkin, et al a lack of ornamentation merely leads to emptiness denise scott brown & robert venturi decoration can help convey the themes of a design huiyang li, et al data is not and cannot be truly impartial or neutral paolo ciuccarelli embellishment can make some designs more accessible keke wu, et al certain visual forms can be more expressive than others enrico bertini aesthetics should be integral to the functions of a design victor papanek the design can bolster the accuracy of information recall scott bateman, et al meaningful embellishments can benefit working memory dake zhang, et al people tend to find designs with decoration more enjoyable scott bateman, et al people want to spend more time on an embellished design huiyang li, et al there is an art to the visual communication of information alberto cairo

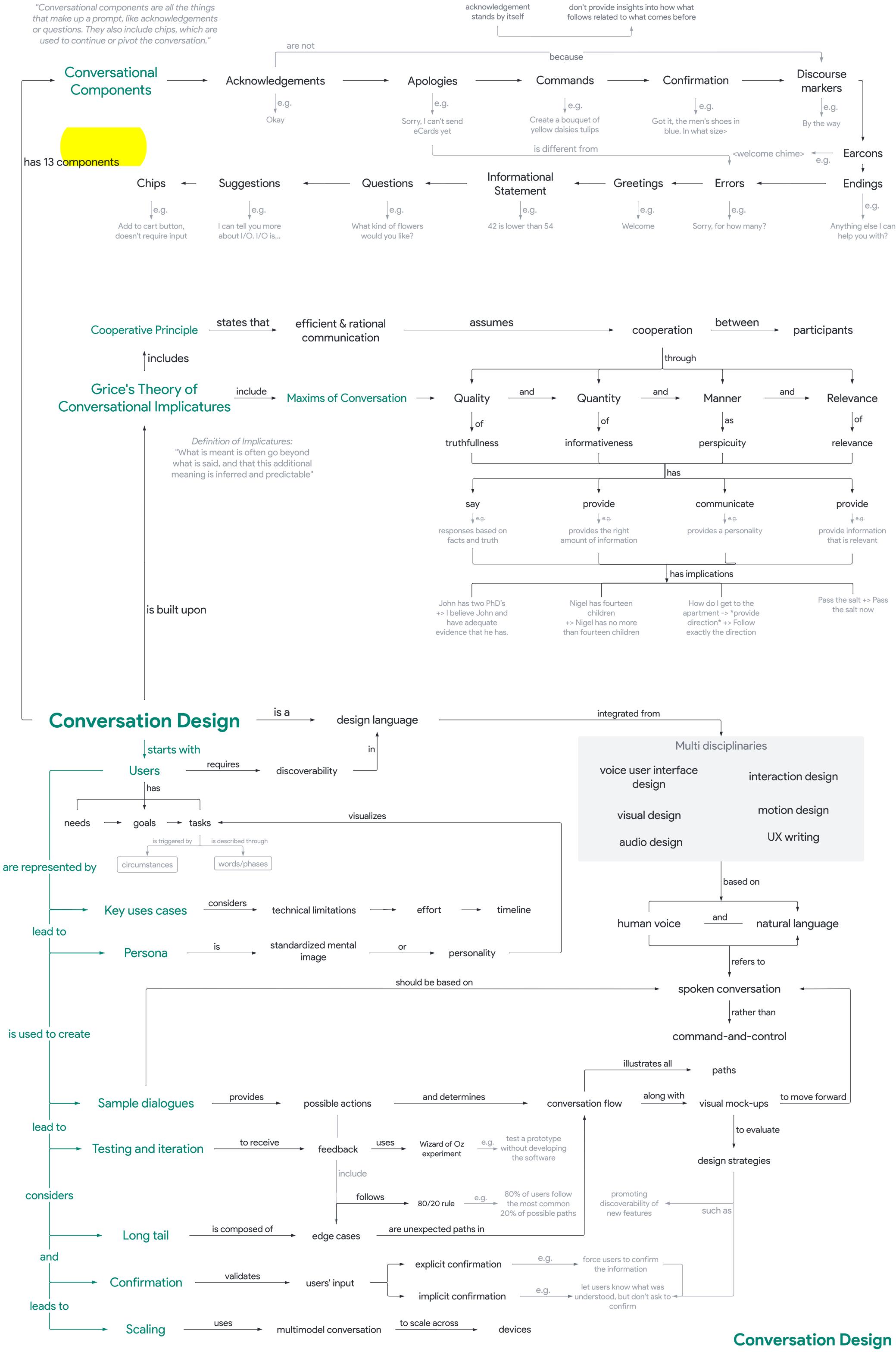


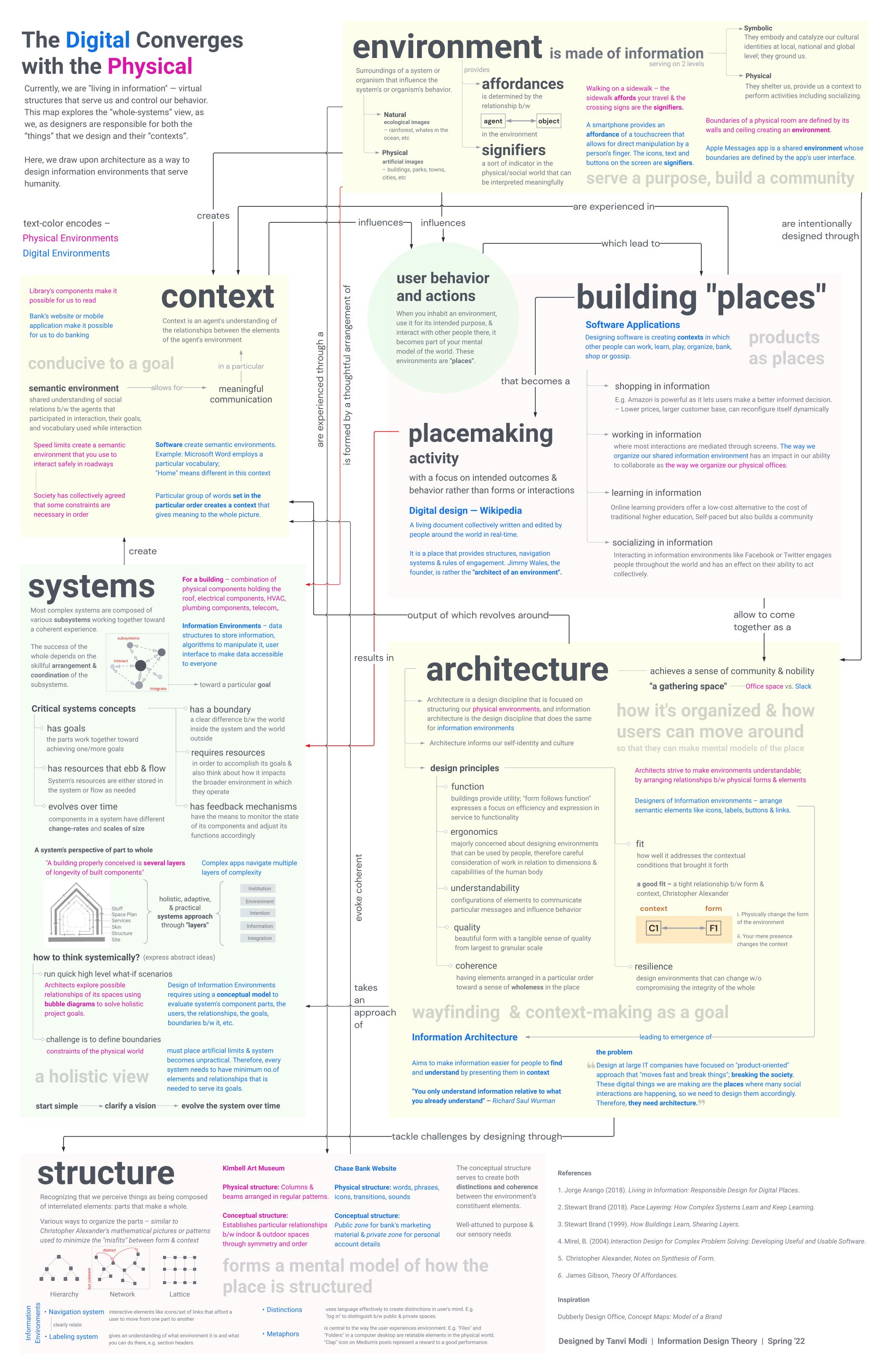
+ Final Poster

Dominique Alvarado









How does design principles help in nowadays world

