



DISRUPTIVE CURIOSITY

Council On Innovation 2015



MVIFI
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INSTITUTE FOR INNOVATION

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WELCOME

Moment.
You have arrived at an extraordinary moment.

We are not interested in red tape, fixed mindsets, low expectations, or blending in. We are interested in solution seekers, ethical decision-makers, communicators, creative thinkers, collaborators, and innovators.

We are building something exceptional here. We need the work of your hands, the wisdom of your mind, and the discernment of your heart.

Dr. Brett Jacobsen
Head of School



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Continuously innovating ourselves, MVIFI provides leadership in transformational learning and school redesign in a number of ways. We share thought leadership. We host dynamic learning events. We run innovative educational programs. And we consult with schools and organizations working for their own transformation and innovation.

The Mount Vernon Institute for Innovation is a team of maverick leaders and educational designers who are helping schools transform through people-centered design. MVIFI grew from the thought and action leadership at Mount Vernon Presbyterian School and maintains a symbiotic relationship as outgrowth, accelerator and amplifier of the School's work.

WHAT IS COUNCIL ON INNOVATION?

The Council on Innovation comprises about 20 members -- experts and visionaries in entrepreneurship, education, business, and community leadership. Called together as a league of advisors, the Council provides insights and inspiration to Mount Vernon Presbyterian School and the Mount Vernon Institute for Innovation. The Council serves as a major spoke of Mount Vernon's efforts to lead in practitioner research and design for K-12 education. As a school of inquiry, innovation, and impact, Mount Vernon believes inviting such perspective and partnership enhances the School's capacity to develop learners who engage in real-life challenges and contribute as strong citizen leaders in a complex and rapidly changing world. The Council, inaugurated in 2013, focuses annually on a specific topic or theme -- this year's theme is Disruptive Curiosity.

SCHEDULE

- 8:15a Arrival and Greeting
- 8:30 Welcome, Breakfast, and Introductions
- 9:15 Curiosity Article Discussion
- 10:00 BREAK
- 10:15 Disruptive Curiosity: Co-Designing Impact
- 11:45 BREAK
- 12:00 Networking Lunch & Salons
- 1:00 BREAK
- 1:15 Design Thinking Flashlab
- 3:00 King Of Pops at the Horseshoe
- 3:15 Wrap-up, Reflection, Thanks

MVNORMS
START WITH QUESTIONS
FAIL UP
SHARE THE WELL
ASSUME THE BEST
HAVE FUN

TALKING POINTS

COI impacts the School by holding us to the highest standards of success in the world beyond the classroom. Interaction with external experts provides students with opportunities to formulate solutions to real-life challenges which require deeper curiosity and the courage to disrupt established norms.

Lisa Drake, M.D., Mount Vernon Board Chair



PARTICIPANTS

2015 Council on Innovation



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The Weather Company



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Not Photographed

Regina Maddox
Executive Director
Next Generation Manufacturing

TWEETBACK

We shouldn't be surprised when in 20 yrs @MVPSchool graduates are running the world (altruistically, of course!)

Chris Jackson
@cjacksonj13

2013 COI Virtual Participant

@MVIFI #MVIFI

PREVIOUS MEMBERS

2014 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Lisa Ford - Author and speaker
Anthony Tuggle - Vice President for Consumer Marketing, AT&T
Stan Deans - President of Central Region, UPS
Brent Reid - President and CEO, Winter Construction
Jennifer Hale - Vice President Talent Development, Assurant Specialty Property
Michelle Dobbins - CFO/CCO, Masters Capital Management
Randy Geoghagan - Founder and Owner, Tracepoint Consulting
Amanda Schab - Director of Global Communications and Media Relations, The Coca-Cola Company
Tom Mallory - President, Acadia Associates, Inc.
Jim Collins - Director, Talent Acquisition and Strategy-Services, Ultimate Software
Stephen Schoen - President and CEO, Schoen Insulation Services, Inc.
Darren Short - Head of Southeast Institutional Equity Sales, RBC Capital Markets
Renay Blumenthal - President, Grady Health Foundation
Deborah Von Kutzleben - SVP Group Account Director, BBDO Atlanta
Laura Flusche, Ph.D. - Executive Director, Museum of Design Atlanta
Rusty Paul - Mayor of Sandy Springs
Brent Herd - Industry Director Telco, Travel & B2B Twitter
Charisse Williams - Director of Advancement and Advocacy, The Woodruff Arts Center
Randy Latimer - VP of Marketing, United Way of Atlanta
Terrance L. Dixon - Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management, Morehouse College
Carl Streck - Co-founder of Mountainseed

2013 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Amir Farokhi - Chief Operating Officer, College Advising Corps.
Laura Dames - Senior Vice President of Business Operations, Turner Entertainment Networks
Eric Levitan - Chief Operating Officer, Sintecmedia Inc
Doug Kruep - Founder, Lift / Retail Marketing Technology
James Calleroz White - Head of School, Louisville Collegiate School
Ellen Dalton - Chief Marketing Officer & Executive Vice President, Medecision
Larry Drake - Chief Executive, LEADership
Russell Kohl - President/CEO, Freud America, Inc.
Drew Clayton - Co-op Student, Winder Construction
Julie Seitz - Director, Workplace 2020, The Coca-Cola Company
Beth Friese - Library Media Specialist, Gwinnett County Public School
Monica Mirro - Vice President of Sales, Spanx Inc.
Michele Molden - Executive Vice President and Chief Transformation Officer, Piedmont Healthcare
Jeff Hilimire - President and Chief Digital Officer, Engauge and Dragon Army
Russell Todd - IT Solutions Architect, North Point Ministries
Tiffany Hendryx - Senior Strategist, Crane Metamarketing
Scott Sanchez - Vice President of Innovation, First Data

TALKING POINTS

“If we could take what is happening at Mount Vernon and apply it on a national level we could affect the overall GDP in my opinion. The most valuable aspect of COI is that it is a movement that can truly affect how our children think about solving problems ranging from our everyday to the most complex.”
Brent Herd, Industry Director for Twitter



FACILITATORS



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Curiosity Is As Important As Intelligence

By Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic
[Harvard Business Review](#) // August 27, 2014



There seems to be wide support for the idea that we are living in an “age of complexity”, which implies that the world has never been more intricate. This idea is based on the rapid pace of technological changes, and the vast amount of information that we are generating (the two are related). Yet consider that philosophers like Leibniz (17th century) and Diderot (18th century) were already complaining about information overload. The “horrible mass of books” they referred to may have represented only a tiny portion of what we know today, but much of what we know today will be equally insignificant to future generations.

In any event, the relative complexity of different eras is of little matter to the person who is simply struggling to cope with it in everyday life. So perhaps the right question is not “Is this era more complex?” but “Why are some people more able to manage complexity?” Although complexity is context-dependent, it is also determined by a person’s disposition. In particular, there are three key psychological qualities that enhance our ability to manage complexity:

1. IQ: As most people know, IQ stands for intellectual quotient and refers to mental ability. What fewer people know, or like to accept, is that IQ does affect a wide range of real-world outcomes, such as [job performance](#) and [objective career success](#). The main reason is that higher levels of IQ enable people to learn and solve novel problems faster. At face value, [IQ tests](#) seem quite

abstract, mathematical, and disconnected from everyday life problems, yet they are a powerful tool to predict our ability to manage complexity. In fact, IQ is a [much stronger](#) predictor of performance on complex tasks than on simple ones.

Complex environments are richer in information, which creates more [cognitive load](#) and demands more brainpower or deliberate thinking from us; we cannot navigate them in autopilot (or Kahneman’s [system 1](#) thinking). IQ is a measure of that brainpower, just like megabytes or processing speed are a measure of the operations a computer can perform, and at what speed. Unsurprisingly, there is a [substantial correlation](#) between IQ and working memory, our mental capacity for handling multiple pieces of temporary information at once. Try memorizing a phone number while asking someone for directions and remembering your shopping list, and you will get a good sense of your IQ. (Unfortunately, [research](#) shows that working memory training does not enhance our long-term ability to deal with complexity, though [some evidence](#) suggests that it delays mental decline in older people, as per the “use it or lose it” theory.)

2) EQ: EQ stands for [emotional quotient](#) and concerns our ability to perceive, control, and express emotions. EQ relates to complexity management in three main ways. First, individuals with higher EQ are [less susceptible](#) to stress and anxiety. Since complex situations are resourceful and demanding, they are

likely to induce pressure and stress, but high EQ acts as a buffer. Second, EQ is a key ingredient of [interpersonal skills](#), which means that people with higher EQ are better equipped to navigate complex organizational politics and advance in their careers. Indeed, even in today’s hyper-connected world what most employers look for is not technical expertise, but [soft skills](#), especially when it comes to management and leadership roles. Third, people with higher EQ tend to be [more entrepreneurial](#), so they are more proactive at exploiting opportunities, taking risks, and turning creative ideas into actual innovations. All this makes EQ an important quality for adapting to uncertain, unpredictable, and complex environments.

3) CQ: CQ stands for curiosity quotient and concerns having a [hungry mind](#). People with higher CQ are more inquisitive and open to new experiences. They find novelty exciting and are quickly bored with routine. They tend to generate many original ideas and are counter-conformist. It has not been as deeply studied as EQ and IQ, but there’s some evidence to suggest it is just as important when it comes to managing complexity in two major ways. First, individuals with higher CQ are generally more [tolerant of ambiguity](#). This nuanced, sophisticated, subtle thinking style defines the very essence of complexity. Second, CQ leads to higher levels of [intellectual investment](#) and knowledge acquisition over time, especially in formal domains of education, such as science and art (note: this is of course different

from IQ’s measurement of raw intellectual horsepower). Knowledge and expertise, much like experience, translate complex situations into familiar ones, so CQ is the ultimate tool to produce simple solutions for complex problems.

Although IQ is hard to coach, EQ and CQ can be developed. As Albert Einstein famously said: “I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious.”

A CURIOUS MIND

Much of the programming of the 2015 Council on Innovation comes from the thought work of Brian Grazer. Grazer is an Academy Award winning film and TV producer (Apollo 13, Arrested Development, 8 Mile) and author. In his most recent book, *A Curious Mind*, Grazer recounts weekly “curiosity conversations” that have influenced his career and creative process. [Take a moment to listen to his interview with Harvard Business Review.](#)



4As PROTOCOL

What ASSUMPTIONS does the author of the text hold?	What do you AGREE with in the text?
What do you want to ARGUE with in the text?	What parts of the text do you want to ASPIRE to?

USING THE 4As TOOL

The Four As Protocol, adapted from National School Reform Faculty, is a protocol used in both educational settings and beyond, to help facilitate rich discussions with a group. This particular protocol is intended to spur questions and healthy debate among participants who all read or watch the same text or video and respond using the four As: assumptions, agreements, arguments, aspirations.

To move through the protocol, the facilitator begins by asking what were the underlying ASSUMPTIONS the author or speaker makes in the argument. From there, the facilitator will move the conversation on to ideas that you AGREE with, which will be different for many. The group should be challenged to build on each other’s comments and ideas. Next the discussion moves to points where one might ARGUE with the author. Pay attention to the nuances of the author, keeping an open mind, and be specific.

To close the dialogue, the group will identify ideas from the reading to ASPIRE to live out. This protocol is meant to spur healthy discourse and asks participants to question their own beliefs to begin understanding and empathizing other perspectives.

TWEETUP 

How Do You Foster Curiosity In Your Workplace?

@MVIFI #MVIFI



DEEP Design Thinking

Design thinking (dt) is human-centered problem solving. It's optimistic. Full of empathy. It uses iterative prototyping to learn by doing and to meet the needs of a user or users. You don't have to be a pro. You just have to care.

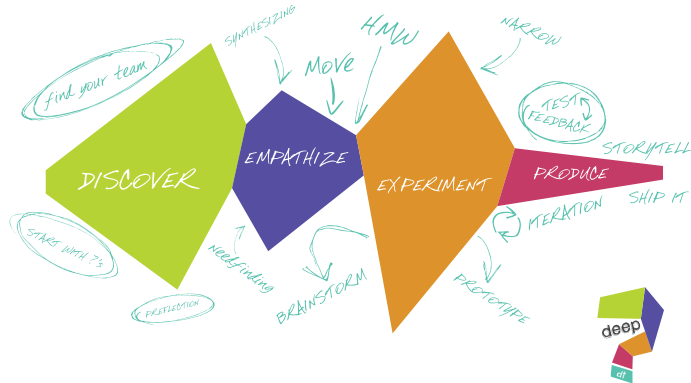
DEEPdt, developed at Mount Vernon Presbyterian School and the Mount Vernon Institute for Innovation, provides a phased methodology for design thinking -- Discover, Empathize, Experiment, and Produce. And while that may seem linear, it's actually messier than that - which is part of what makes it fun and interesting. The phases -- or modes -- help a design thinker embrace the messiness and leverage a system for honing in on the roots of a problem and meeting the needs of the user(s).

At the core of DEEPdt is finding a thing that really connects designer and user and makes them MoVe. By flaring and focusing repeatedly through the DEEPdt process, a Moment of Visible Empathy unlocks countless possibilities for addressing challenges and making a dent -- a positive difference in the world.

In 2014, a team of MVIFI designers embarked on a design challenge to scale the DEEP methodology into tools for design thinkers to use. Inspired by IDEO and Stanford's d.school, our playbook has been used all over the country in various industries to inspire people-centered problem solving. We have decided to offer our playbook, which includes a design thinking introduction called a Flashlab, free of charge, under Creative Commons License.

Download at www.mvifi.org/deepdt

Jump in. Embrace the mess. MoVe.
Make a difference. Oh, and have fun!



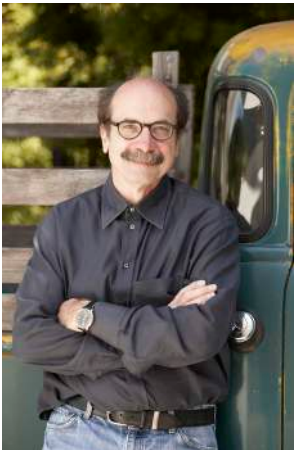
Curiosity + Empathy

When we are able to combine curiosity and empathy, we are facilitating the identification and definition of problems. Heightened empathy only comes through interacting with others, and being truly curious about another person's story. Curiosity expands our empathy when we talk to people outside our usual social circle, encountering lives and worldviews very different from our own out of sheer wonder. This intersection between our own curiosity and the story of another person is what can lead to breakthroughs in design and innovation. Through intense observation and wonder, we get to experience the problems and opportunities as if they are our own; at the heart of every successful innovation is empathy. In order for innovators to create something of value, they need to develop a product, experience, or process that puts the users and their needs front and center. The less wrapped up we are in our own thinking, the more we notice about the world.

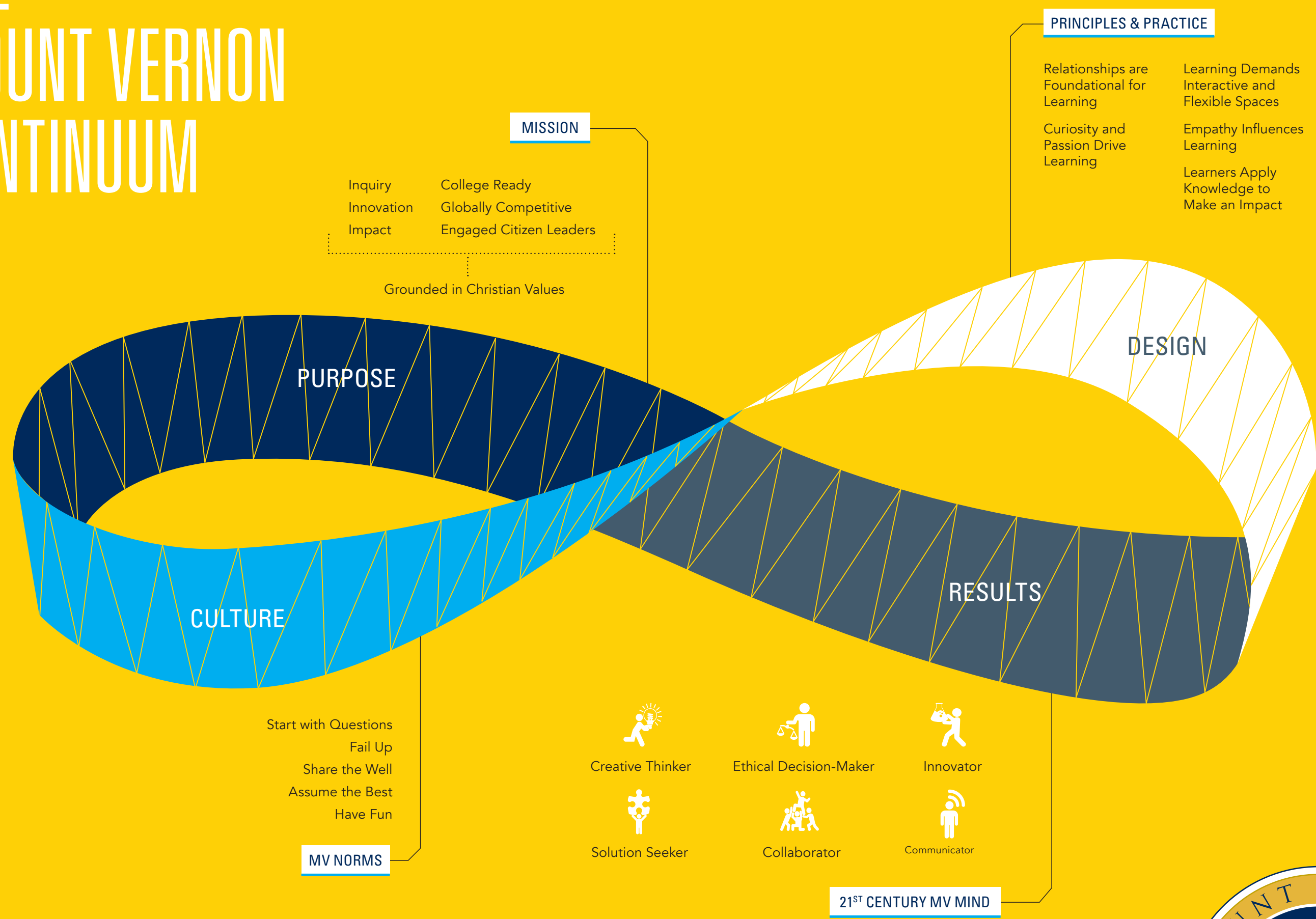


CURATING DESIGN THINKING

Partnering with Dr. Laura Flusche, Executive Director of MODA (Museum of Design Atlanta) and 2014 Council Member, students installed a design-thinking, pop-up exhibit. A centerpiece was the iconic glasses and mustache of IDEO founder David Kelley. Kelley is notably the most influential practitioner of human-centered design methodology.



THE MOUNT VERNON CONTINUUM



If school is meant to prepare students for real life, then why doesn't it look more like real life?

MVIFI DESIGN BRIEFS

ALLOW YOUR REAL WORLD TO INTERSECT WITH OURS

What if students engaged in school work that was not only similar to real-world work, but *was* real-world work? What if businesses and community members shared their challenges, problems, and projects to get fresh perspectives, potential solutions, and (hey, let's face it) a bit of free labor? What if citizen leaders in business contributed to education by empowering young people not only to prepare for the future but to contribute now through authentic learning experiences.

Well, Mount Vernon Presbyterian School and the Mount Vernon Institute for Innovation practice just such barrier-blurring between “school” and “real life.” Through various engagements, our students take on real-world work shared by business and community partners. Our early work in this area is referred to by terms like “Consultations” and “Design Briefs.” Our students have consulted with such organizations as **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Association of Energy Services, the Community Action Center, and MODA (the Museum of Design Atlanta)**. Using their growing expertise in design thinking, our students take on real-world challenges as “reverse mentors,” a term coined by a 2014 Council on Innovation member when he experienced the power of this student-business partnership for himself.

Invite us to address a problem or project you are facing. Let's help each other. Connect with us at mvifi.org/designbrief.

TALKING POINTS

Council on Innovation was one of the most exciting and eye-opening experiences that I have had in all the twelve years I have been a part of the Mount Vernon Community. Being able to spend the day with these industry leaders, working on real-world challenges, has changed the way I look at my own life.

Megan, Grade 9 2014 COI Participant

