



# Concept Mapping

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**ac4d**

# Concept Map

A representation of a system that sacrifices accuracy for comprehensibility; a tool for sensemaking.

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## A CONCEPT MAP/

1. Visualizes both the forest and the trees
2. Rarely has a "beginning" and "end"
3. Helps people find their way
4. Provides direction and instruction
5. Forces selectivity, abstraction, prioritization and hierarchy
6. Is visual (a tool for perception)
7. Is semantic (a tool for cognition)
8. Represents the user's mental model of a how a system might work
9. Can also represent the designer's manifest model of how a system might appear

# Concept Map

We'll use a concept map to understand the organization and boundaries of a complex system.

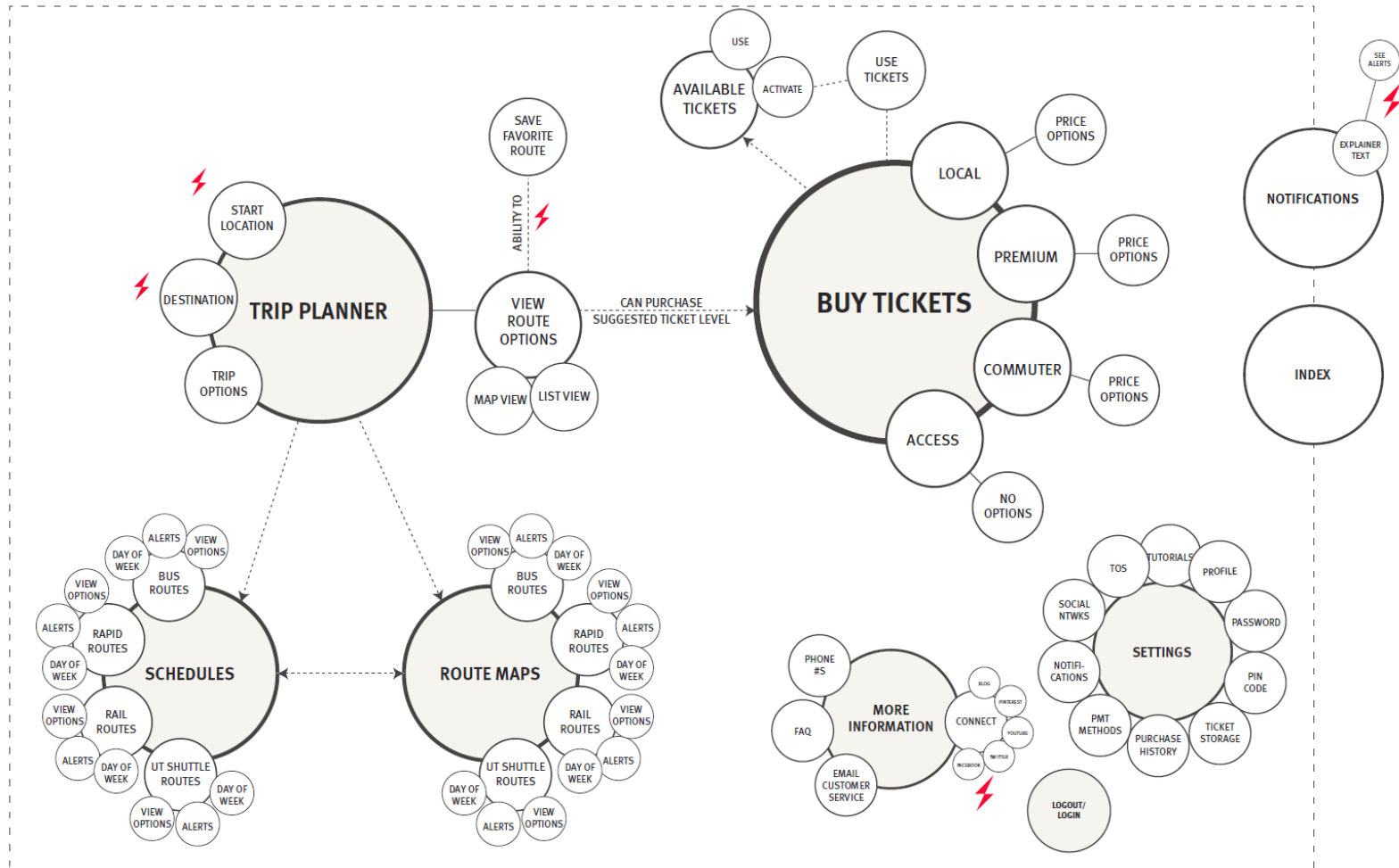
Think of it as a translation between words and visuals – a way of jumping from a set of written requirements to an initial design schema.

# Creating a Concept Map

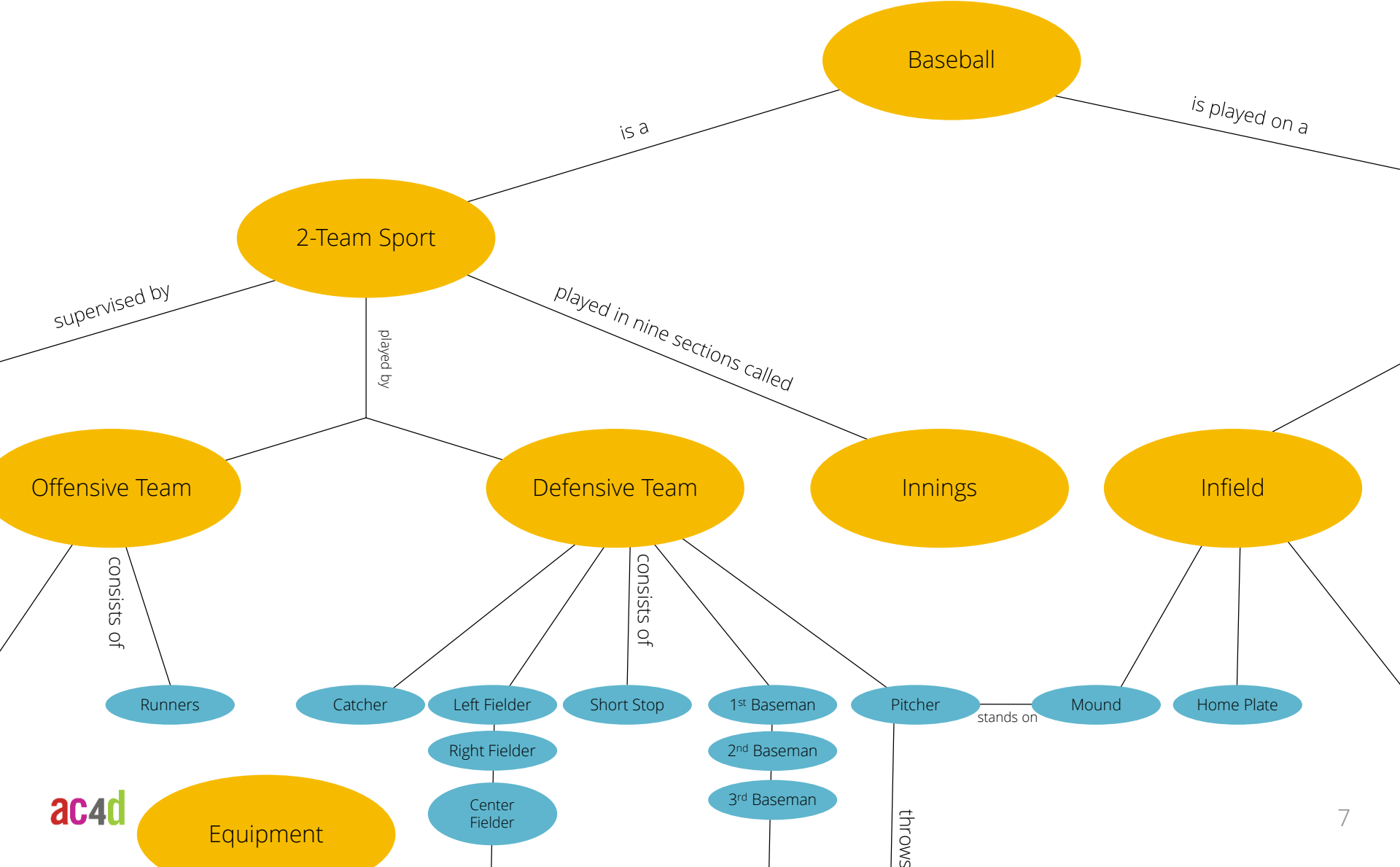
Two different approaches:

1. Representative of navigation and information architecture structures
2. Representative of the relationship between words and ideas

# Representative of navigation and information architecture structures

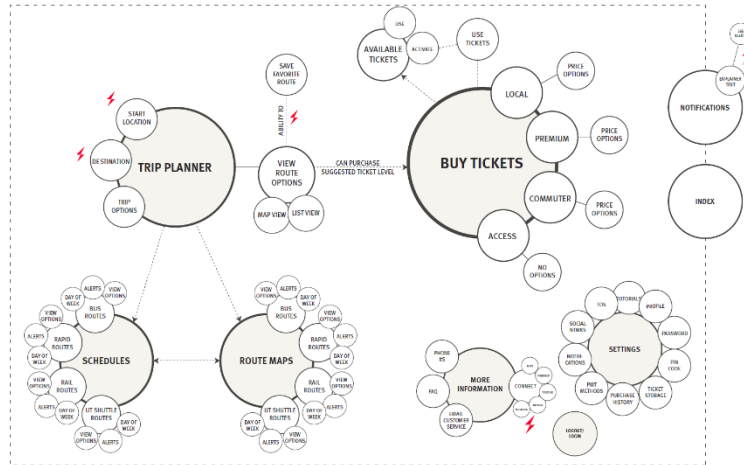


# Representative of the relationship between words and ideas

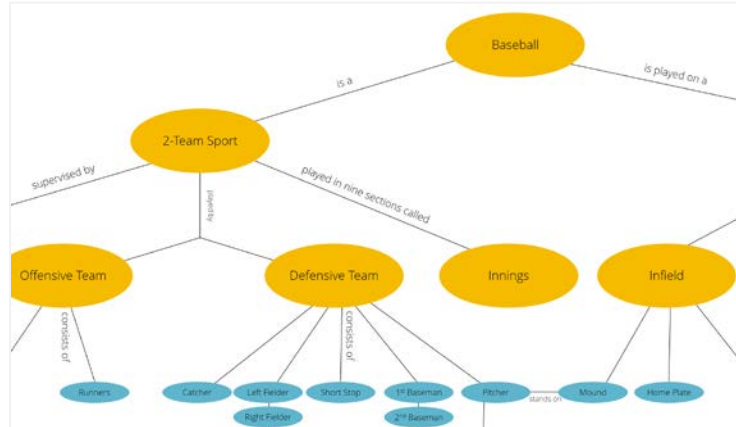


# Comparing styles...

Representative of navigation and information architecture structures



Representative of the relationship between words and ideas





# Creating a Concept Map

We'll focus on highlighting the relationship between words and ideas.

## 1. Create a matrix showing the relations of terms

List terms. Identify the main elements that make up the system; lean on your contextual research to understand the words that matter to the users the most.

Create empty matrix, plotting the words against themselves.

Identify relationships; these are qualitative and require interpretation.

# Creating a Concept Map

## 2. Identify the main branches of the map.

Use frequency of connections, as well as common sense. Create the backbone or structure of the map so that it makes a cohesive sentence.

# Creating a Concept Map

## 3. Fill in the rest of the structure

Be sure to represent all of the elements in the system.

# Creating a Concept Map

## 4. Enhance with visual design

Use visual design to clarify and make the content more accessible .

# For example...

## Making a concept map of AC4D.

Social Entrepreneurship	Autonomous	Confidence	Project Management
Sketching	Branding	Roadmaps	Strategist
Behavior	Impact	Sarcasm	Visual Design
Creativity	Theory of Change	Jon Kolko	Wicked Problems
Fun	Beer	Whiteboards	Mobile

	Soc. Ent	Autonomous	Confidence	Project Mgmt	Sketching	Branding	Roadmaps	Strategist	Behavior	Impact	Sarcasm	Visual Design	Creativity	Theory of Change	Jon Kolko	Wicked Problems	Fun	Beer	Whiteboards	Mobile	
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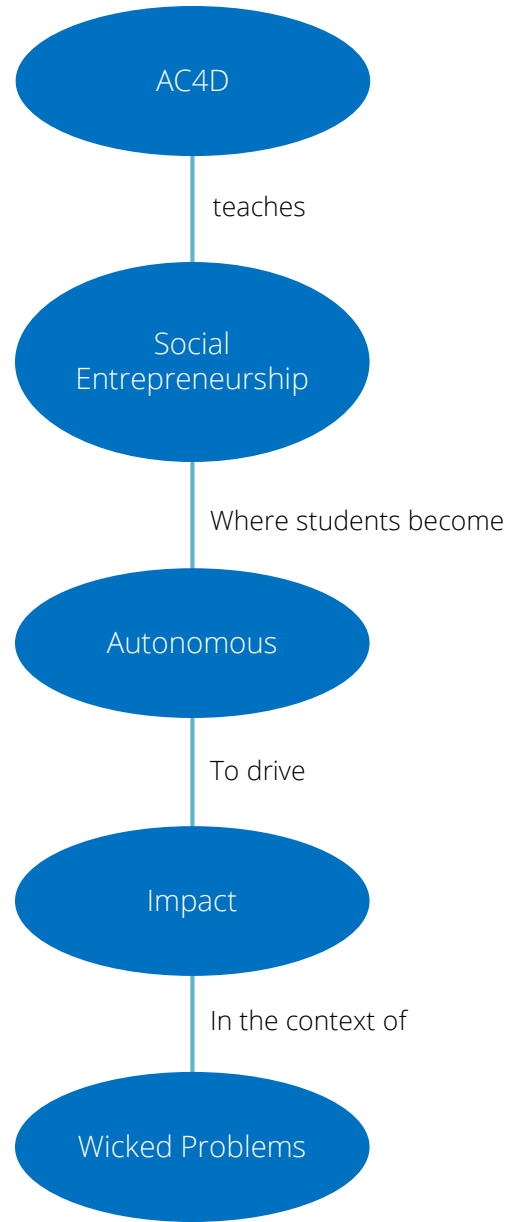
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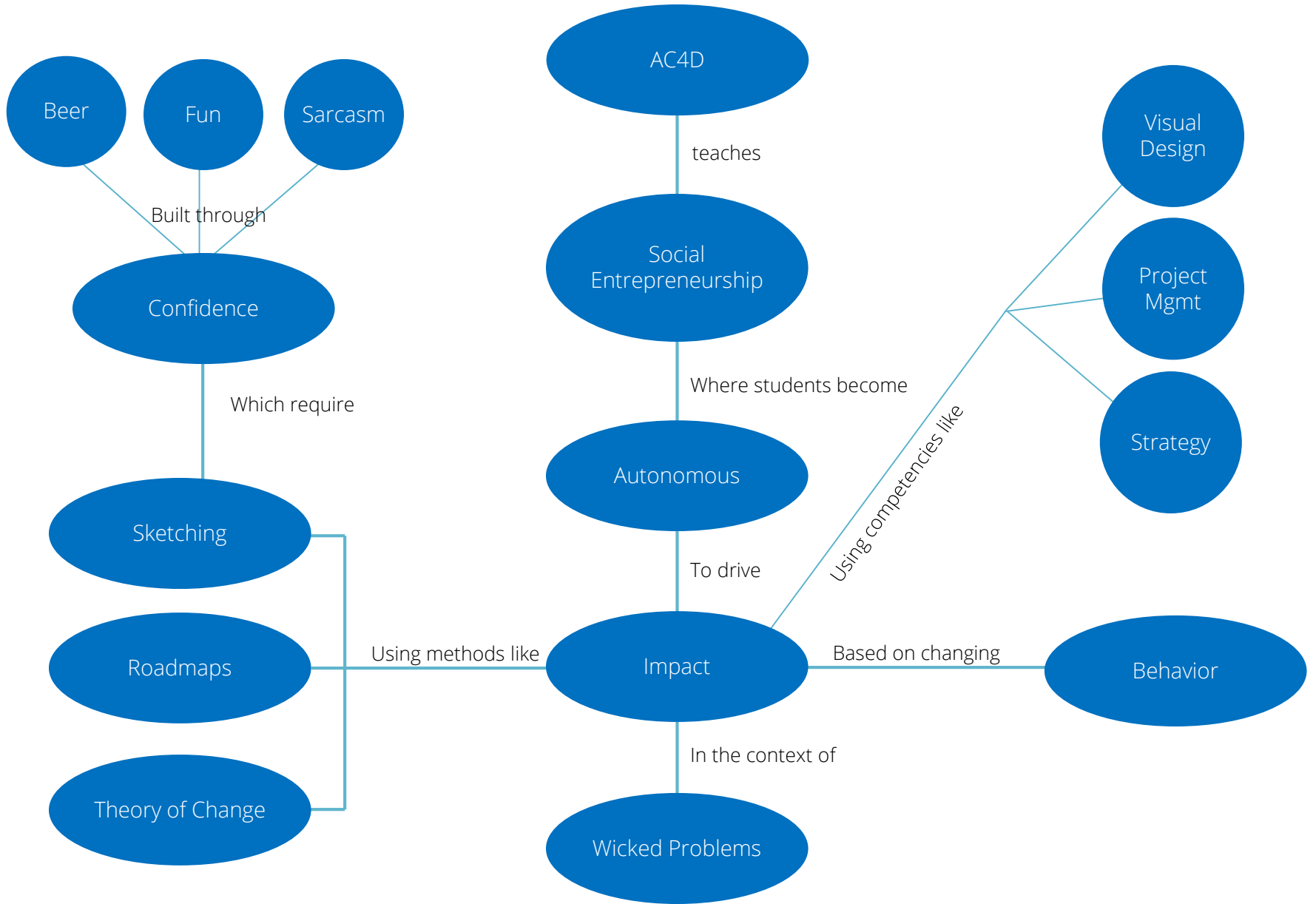
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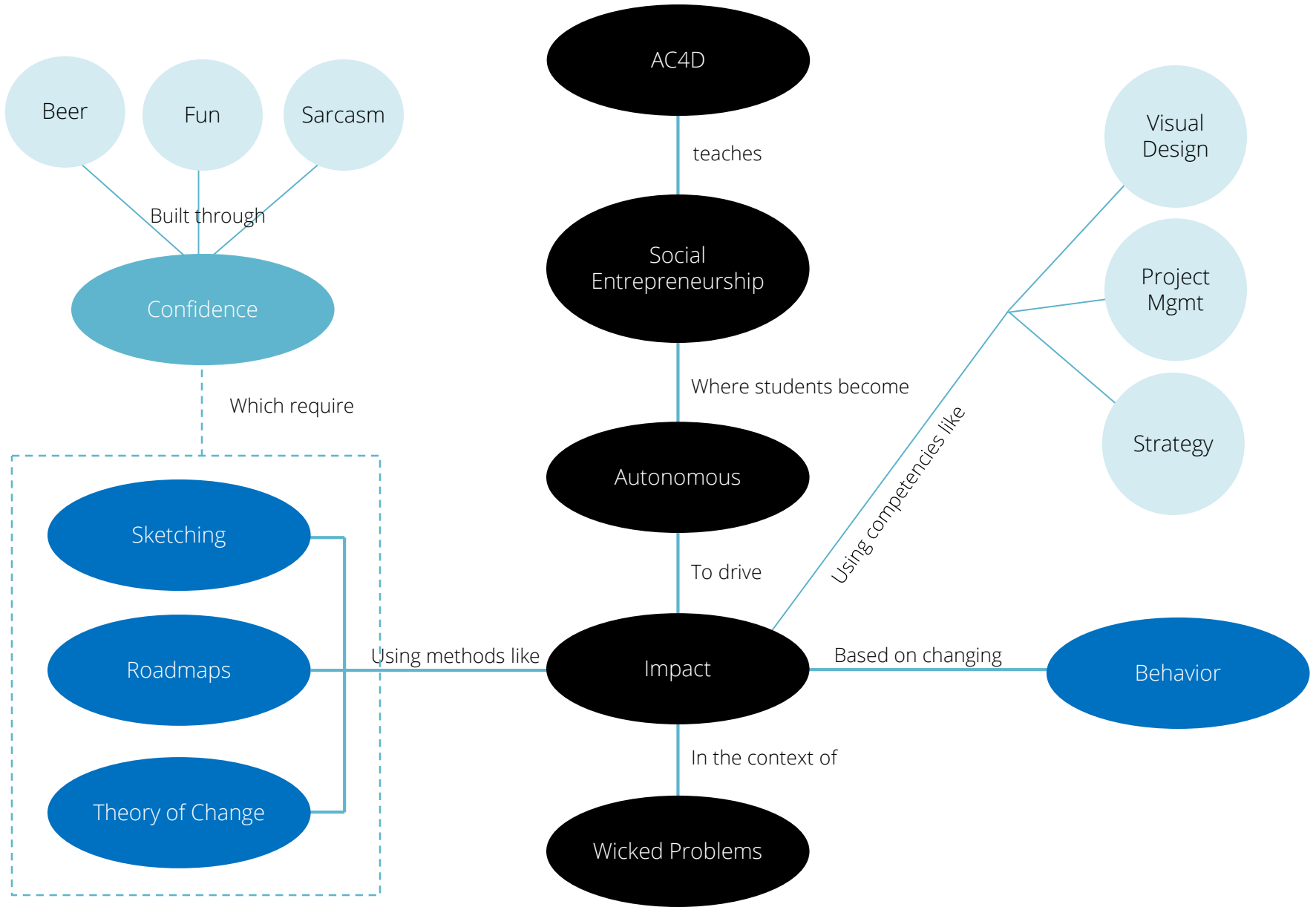


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# Concept Map, Recap

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## HOW TO MAKE IT/

1. Create a matrix showing the relations of terms
2. Identify the main branches of the map
3. Fill in the rest of the structure
4. Enhance with visual design

# ac4d

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Download our free book,  
Wicked Problems: Problems Worth Solving,  
at <http://www.wickedproblems.com>