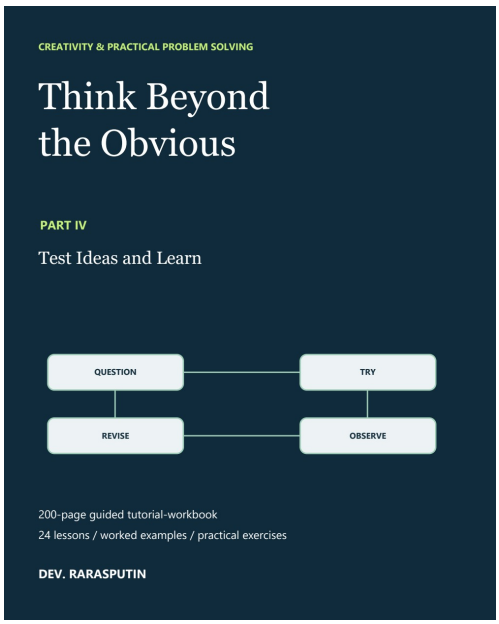
CREATIVITY & PRACTICAL PROBLEM SOLVING

Think Beyond the Obvious

Part IV / Test Ideas and Learn



Turn promising concepts into prototypes and useful evidence.

First edition / 2026 / 200 numbered pages

READ FIRST

How to use this tutorial-workbook

Each of the twenty-four lessons has eight purposeful pages: a principle, a worked fictional case, a guided sequence, an alternatives comparison, a practice brief, an evidence plan, a review and a transfer task. Read the explanations before using the writing areas.

The 200 pages include substantial guided writing, planning and comparison space. This is not 200 pages of continuous prose, a video course or an interactive fillable form. Write in a notebook, annotate a personal copy with your own tools, or print selected pages.

Choose one ordinary, low-risk challenge. A completed worksheet is not the goal; a clearer next action or useful observation is. You can skip a method that does not fit. Revisit the brief when evidence changes your understanding.

All named people, situations and outcomes in the worked examples are fictional teaching illustrations. They are not testimonials, measured results or promises. Adapt proposals with the people affected and the person responsible for the decision.

Creativity methods are tools for thought, not guarantees of innovation, confidence, income or success. This series develops practical learning skills; it does not provide clinical treatment or specialist advice.

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SOURCES CHECKED NOVEMBER 27, 2026

References and original work

The lessons, cases, exercises and schematic diagrams are original instructional material. These practitioner resources informed the general method references. They are further reading, not an endorsement of this series.

Design Council: Framework for Innovation

https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/framework-for-innovation

A reference for expanding an investigation and narrowing toward a useful next action.

Nielsen Norman Group: Using How Might We Questions

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-might-we-questions/

A reference for keeping creative questions connected to observed needs while leaving room for several approaches.

IDEO.org Design Kit: Brainstorm

https://www.designkit.org/methods/brainstorm.html

A reference for focused idea generation and separating initial suggestions from later evaluation.

The series organizes common creative practices into its own learning structure. It does not reproduce a paid course, claim affiliation with its creators, or promise recurring updates, lifetime service or a refund policy beyond the seller terms actually displayed at purchase.

LESSON 01 / PRINCIPLE

Choose what the test should teach

A test is more useful when it answers one consequential question. Separate learning from presenting a finished idea. Decide what the result could change before making the prototype.

The central question

What would you change after either possible answer?

The skill in action

Write one learning question for a leading idea.



Original schematic: a reminder to separate the question, available options and next check. It represents a reasoning relationship, not measured performance.

Where this skill would help in my current challenge

LESSON 01 / WORKED EXAMPLE

Follow the reasoning in a case

Fictional starting situation

Asha wants feedback on a new arrival guide but asks only whether it looks nice.

The reasoning move

The real question is whether a newcomer can locate the entrance using the guide.

A plausible next direction

A simple walkthrough can inform the design before visual polishing.

Why this is still a proposal

A vague request for feedback often produces polite opinions.

The case shows a possible reasoning path. It does not establish that the proposed action will work in your setting. Check the actual people, resources and constraints before acting on the same idea.

Known fact / inference / information still needed

LESSON 01 / GUIDED SEQUENCE

Work through the method

Move 1

Name the uncertainty.

Move 2

describe an observable task.

Move 3

state the decision the answer informs.

Use this sequence on the case before applying it to your own challenge. Write a concrete artifact for each move: a sentence, a small list, a comparison or an observation. If you discover missing information, name the question instead of manufacturing an answer.

Move 1 / record

Move 2 / record

Move 3 / record

The point where I need evidence or another person

LESSON 01 / ALTERNATIVES LAB

Compare two routes deliberately

An unhelpful shortcut

A vague request for feedback often produces polite opinions.

A more useful response

The real question is whether a newcomer can locate the entrance using the guide.

Create two responses to the case. Route A should show the shortcut or an untested assumption. Route B should apply the reasoning move. Compare the mechanism, likely burden and information needed. Do not make Route A absurd merely to make Route B look good.

Route A / mechanism and limit

Route B / mechanism and limit

What makes the routes meaningfully different?

A fair reason to prefer one / a reason to reconsider

LESSON 01 / GUIDED PRACTICE

Try the skill on your challenge

Practice brief

Write one learning question for a leading idea.

Quality check

What would you change after either possible answer?

Use the starting brief or another ordinary situation. Keep your work specific enough that someone could understand the next action without hearing a long explanation. Where another person is affected, distinguish a suggestion from an agreed change.

Situation / intended outcome / relevant boundary

My application of the method

A gap I need to resolve before acting

LESSON 01 / FIELD APPLICATION

Plan the evidence you need

What this lesson should help clarify

What would you change after either possible answer?

Choose a proportionate way to check your reasoning. It may be a neutral question, a review of an existing record, a paper walkthrough or a small agreed trial. Name what you would observe, what would challenge your expectation and how the result would change the next decision.

Keep the commitment clear

Write the scope, who needs to agree, the responsible person and a review point. A thought exercise requires no implementation; an actual change requires the appropriate agreement.

My expectation / what would count against it

Check method / people involved / scope and fallback

Observation to record / review point / decision it informs

LESSON 01 / LEARNING RECORD

Review the work honestly

Return to the lesson question

What would you change after either possible answer?

If you tried the exercise, separate what you did from what happened afterward. A useful review can conclude that the method needs adapting or that the original frame was wrong. If you have not acted, review the draft as a plan and clearly label every prediction.

Action taken, or draft prepared / date and context

Observation or feedback / source / what remains uncertain

Interpretation / another possible explanation

Keep, adapt, stop or investigate next / reason

LESSON 01 / NEXT CONTEXT

Transfer the principle with care

The principle to carry

A test is more useful when it answers one consequential question. Separate learning from presenting a finished idea. Decide what the result could change before making the prototype.

Choose a different setting: home, learning, a creative project or a shared task. Transfer the underlying reasoning move, then inspect differences in authority, resources, access and consequence. A method can transfer even when the same solution cannot.

One limit to preserve

A vague request for feedback often produces polite opinions.

New context / what remains similar / what changes

Adapted method / evidence needed / next useful action

My decision: continue this practice, adapt it or set it aside