

I found the 10-step innovation process to be extremely helpful because it not only helps me think about design more holistically, but it also provides a structure for practicing ideation and learning to communicate with parties involved in a design process. The 10-step innovation process can also be applied to designing our life. For the next ten years of my life, I am uncertain of whether I want to go to graduate school right out of my undergraduate studies or if I want to go to industry and work first. I can conduct the Needs and Assumptions Analysis to help me better understand what I am truly uncertain about and which path might lead to bigger short-term fulfillment. I can start by asking myself “Why do I want to go to graduate school/get a job first?”, “What might I get/have to sacrifice from getting an advanced degree in a certain field/work for a few years?” and “How would this decision change the current direction of my life?”. At the current stage of my life, because I have been a student for as long as I can remember, I think it would be nice to be financially independent and experience what industry is like. Therefore, I identify my current needs as gaining professional skills and becoming financially independent. The next step I could do is do some research on these two options to fully discover and understand them. I can google, ask around, or network with people who are either in academia or working in industry. I can also apply for a research internship or an industry internship to experience it myself. The stakeholders in this scenario would be my family, me, my friends, and the industry/the school I decide to attend. I might be more reliant on my parents if I decided to go to grad school, and I would produce more scientific research in academia. But if I chose to go into industry, I would have a better work life balance and probably have more time to hang out with my friends and family. There wouldn’t be necessarily any hazard with either option, and which path I choose really depends on the desired outcomes. As for now, I do not know if having a stable career in industry would be more desirable than being a graduate student for six years and then becoming a research scientist. Thus, I think I can do more Research & Discovery to see which path would work best for me.

Concept Generation: If I were to go to graduate school, I would probably finish taking courses within the first three years and propose my dissertation in the third or fourth year of graduate school, and then I would spend the rest of the time researching full time and trying to produce research of great significance. Meanwhile, if I chose to go into industry, I might try to get a promotion or get a professional degree in business management after working for a few years. Concept Downselection: Industry and graduate school are two very different paths and it’s hard or even impossible to evaluate which one is objectively better, but based on my current needs, I think working for a few years after graduation might be a more attractive option for me. Concept Articulation: I can share my thought processes with my friends and family and get feedback from them, or I can also externalize my ideas by tracking how much progress I’ve made to achieve my goals in either scenario.

Uncertainty Reduction: For the graduate school scenario, I think an uncertainty is whether I will be able to stay and persevere through it because I might get burned out and decide to leave after a few years. At the same time, I might want to get an advanced degree and come back to school if I worked first. To reduce uncertainty, I could try to experience these two options through internships and try to collect as much information as possible to make the best informed decision. Lastly, for Stakeholder Testing, I could talk to my family and friends and ask how my decision might impact them and if they have any thoughts about which option could be potentially more beneficial to me at this point. I could reconsider if their advice is helpful.