


# “ You Are A Wicked Problem ”

Collaborating, Questioning, and Engaging with Wicked Problems



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## Anticipation Guide

Directions: For each of the following 3 sentences,

- Agree
- Disagree
- Edit into agreement

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## Anticipation Guide

1. Most of the questions I answer on any given day have direct answers that never vary.
2. I have learned my best problem solving through trial and error, policy manuals, and professional development.
3. Learning is easier when we can make meaning, apply information, and solve problems.

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## Meaning-Making



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## Words

Meaning is always inside out.

Tired      ~~Sleep~~      Comfort  
                  Bed  
 Awake      That's all!      Wake  
                  Eat  
 Dream      Slumber      Night

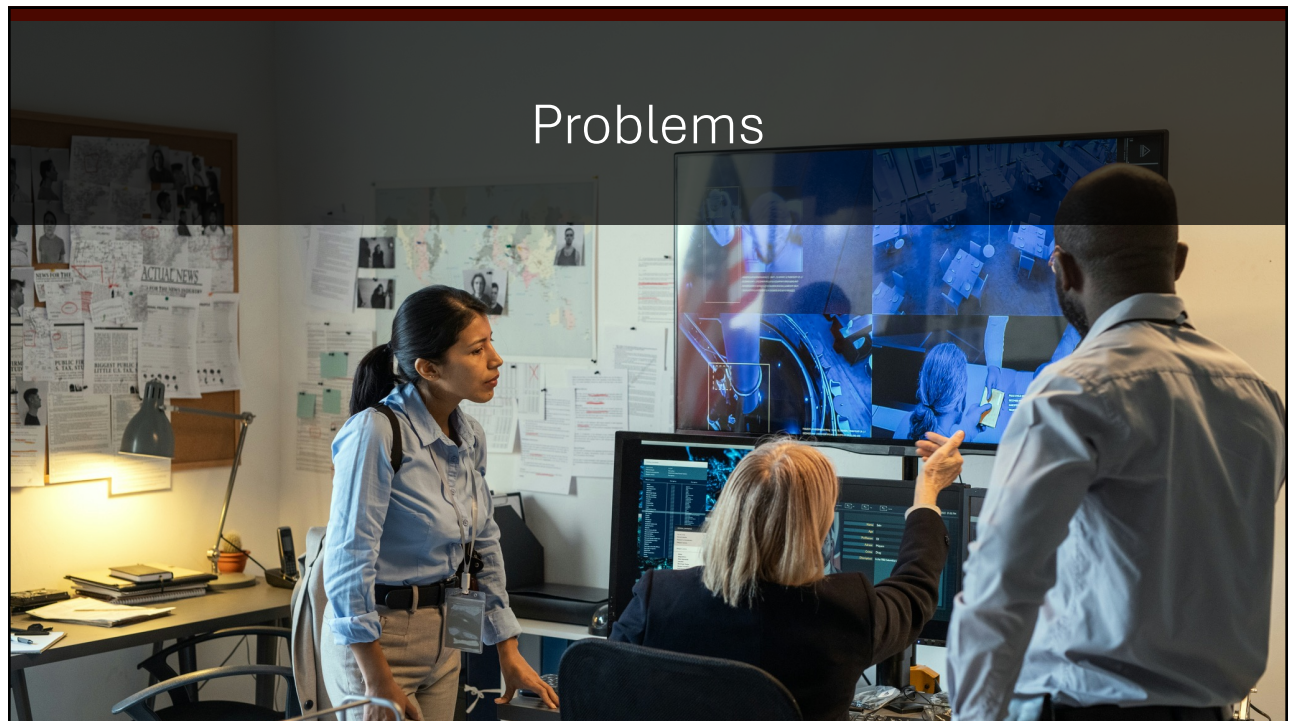
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scíthe      snor      fuaim  
 tuirseach      leaba      compord  
 dúiseacht      ithe      úisigh  
 aisling      pillín      oíche

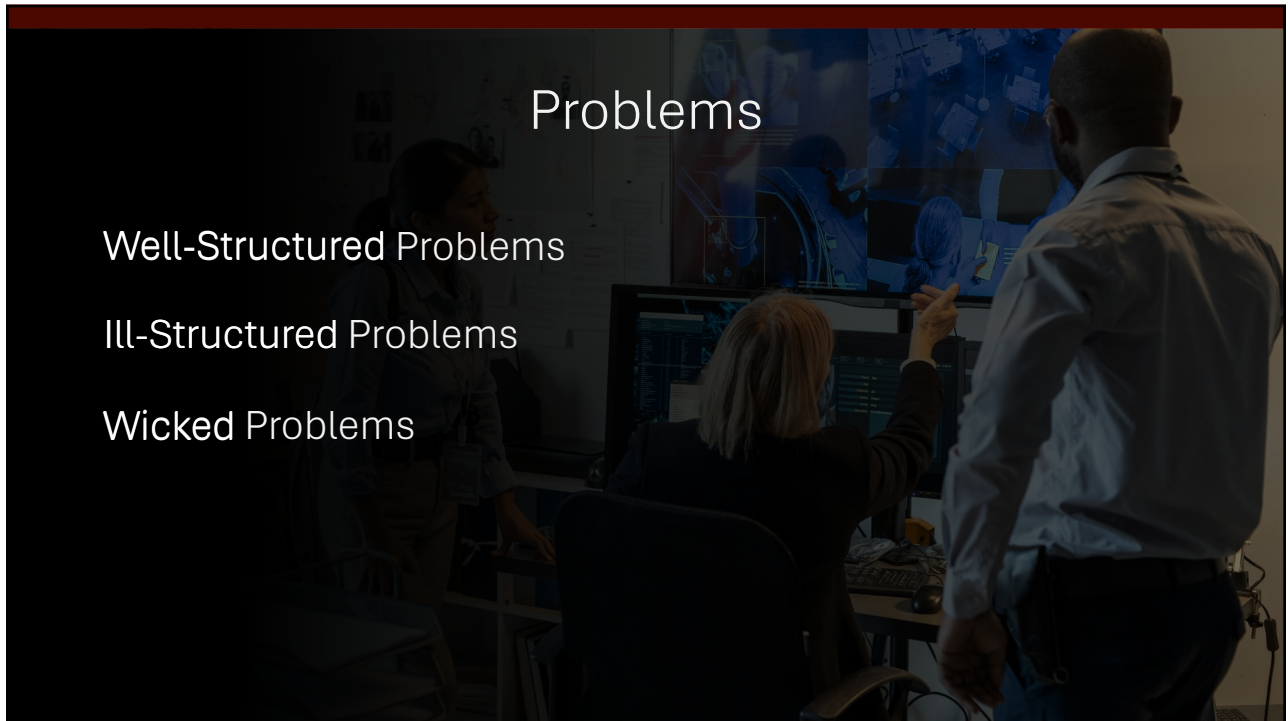
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Engaging with wicked problems  
requires the making of new meanings.

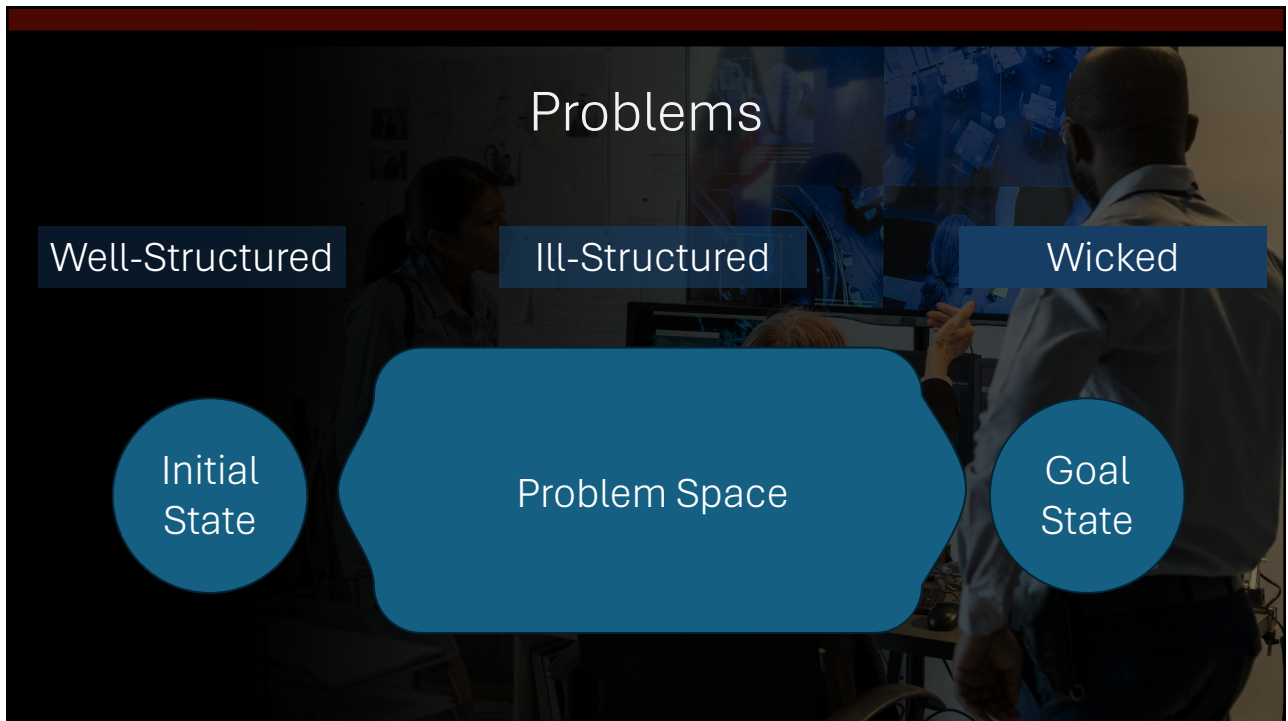
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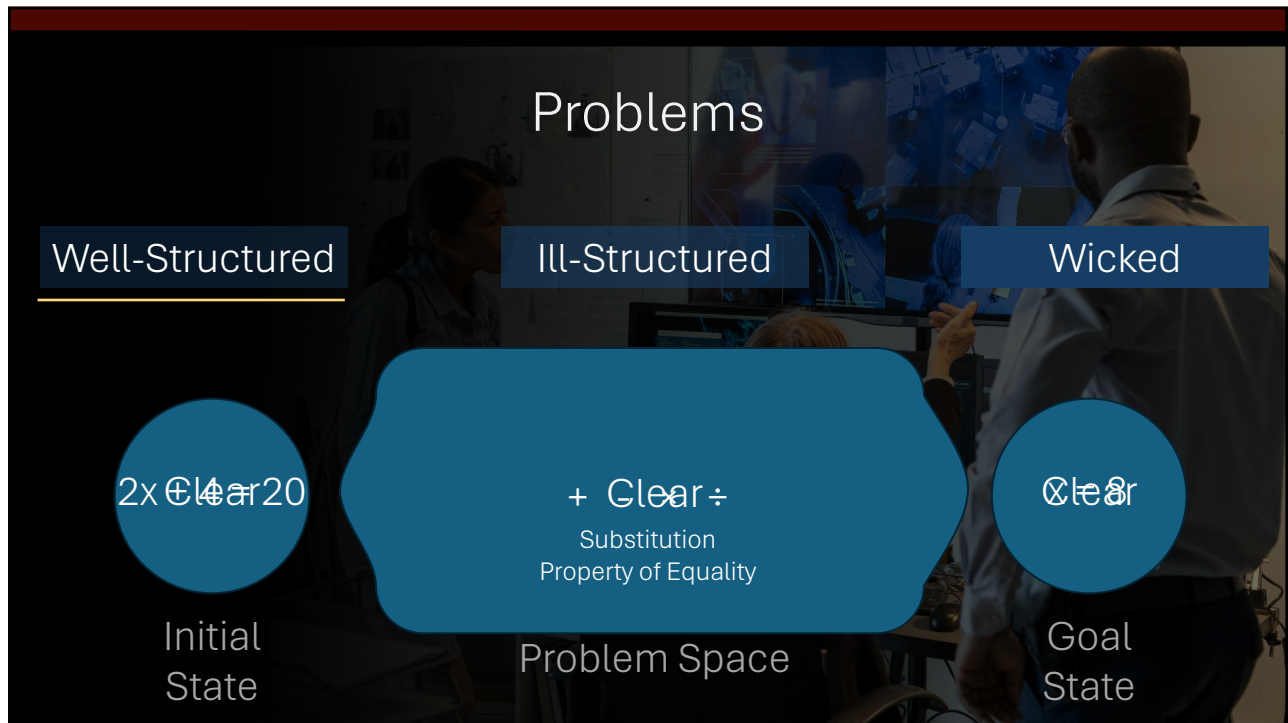
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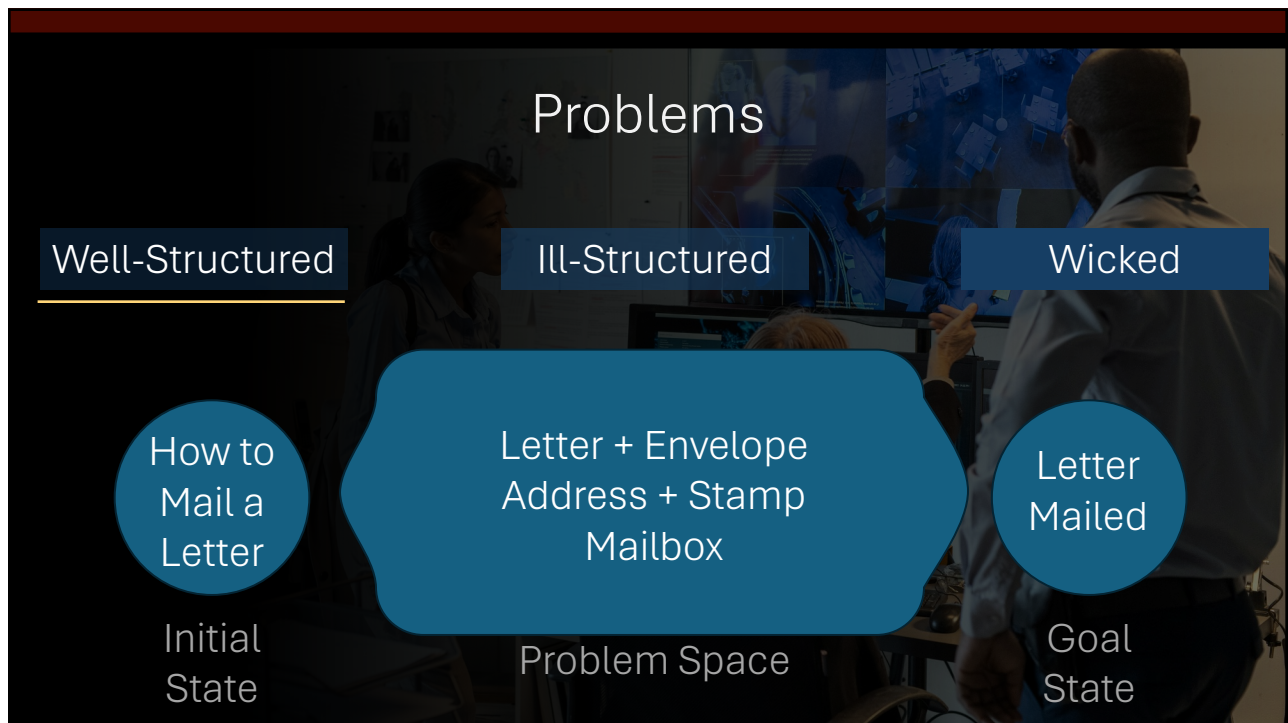
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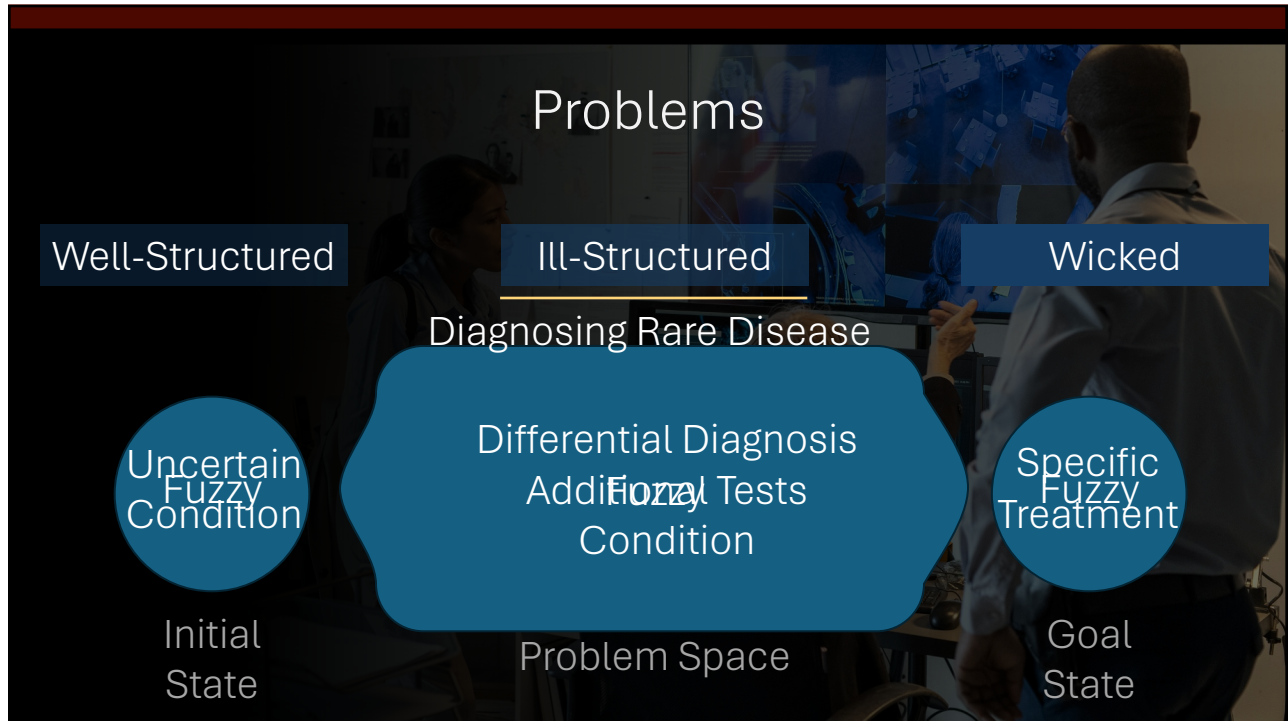
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## Wicked

Virginia Tech's proactive closure is necessary to protect the Blacksburg community

Alex Picadas, opinions columnist Mar 22, 2020 0

CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

***University extends spring break, moves classes online, and more in response to COVID-19***

## COVID-19 Guidelines

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## Wicked

Well- and ill-structured problems ask for answers.

Wicked problems ask for judgment and leadership

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## Wicked

- 1a. Defining the Problem Shapes the Potential Solutions
- 1b. Different Stakeholders Will Define the Problem Differently
2. No “Problem Solved” Declaration... No Stopping Rule
3. Solutions are Better/Worse, Not Right/Wrong
4. No Immediate Test of a Solution... Solutions Resonate in Time
5. Every Solution Changes the Problem... there’s no going back

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## Wicked

### The World

1. Climate Change
2. Economic Inequality
3. Homelessness
4. Refugee Migration
5. Misinformation / Public Trust

### Higher Education

1. The Purpose of HE
2. Equity, Inclusion, Belonging
3. Faculty Workload, Productivity
4. Student Mental Health
5. Generative AI

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## Are You A Wicked Problem?

1. Is your understanding of the world shaped by your history, culture, relationships, and hopes for the future?
2. Is your understanding of yourself the same now as it was in high school? College? Five years ago?
3. Have you learned something new in the last day? Week? Month? Year?
4. Are your knowledge, beliefs, and motivations the same as all of your friends?

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The meaning you make of your life  
is not the solution to a problem;  
it's your current understanding  
of who you are, which will change  
with time, experience, and reflection...  
and it never ends.

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## Learning and Meaning Making



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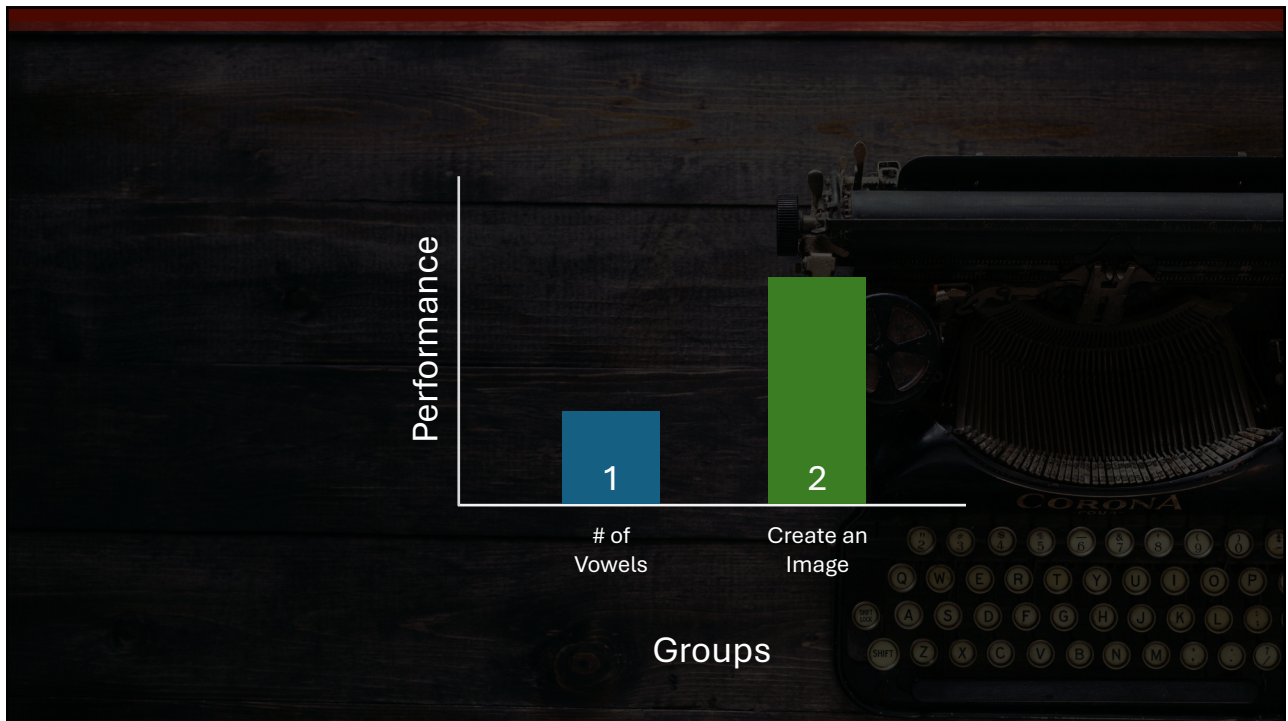
Learning and meaning making:  
some is well-structured,  
some is ill-structured, and  
some is wicked.

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## Wicked

### What is Wicked?

AI: Research, Learning, Thinking  
 Leadership & Excellence  
 Change & Technology  
 Inclusion, Generations, Access  
 Assessment

### Wicked Problems

1. Defining the Problem
2. No Stopping Rule
3. Solutions are Better/Worse
4. No Immediate Test of a Solution
5. Solutions Change the Problem

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## Teaching Wicked

1. Teach Problem Classification
2. Teach Multi-Perspective Capacity
3. Teach Ambiguity Tolerance
4. Teach Iterative Hypothesis Tests
5. Teach Critical Reflection
6. Teach Collaboration/Networking
7. **Design for the Long Term**

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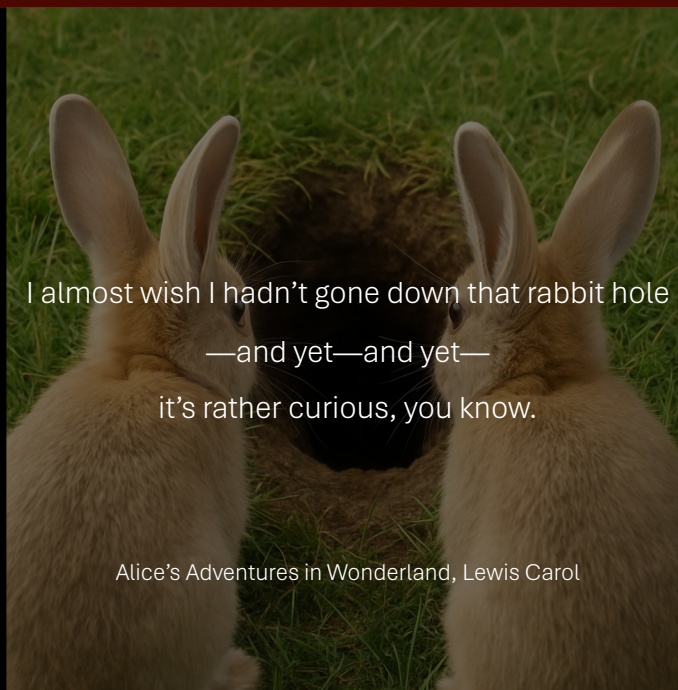
## Wicked and You

What is one problem in your VT world that is wicked?

### Wicked Problems

1. Defining the Problem
2. No Stopping Rule
3. Solutions are Better/Worse
4. No Immediate Test of a Solution
5. Solutions Change the Problem

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I almost wish I hadn't gone down that rabbit hole  
—and yet—and yet—  
it's rather curious, you know.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carol

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