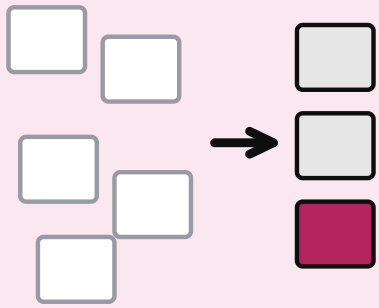
Concept

# Design synthesis

The process of organizing, grouping, and interpreting what has been researched until patterns, insights, and design opportunities emerge.



In Spanish
*Síntesis*

Origin
Sensemaking: Weick (1995); in design, Kolko (2010)

## What problem it addresses

Explains how you go from a pile of data to a clear direction for design.

## An example

After ten interviews, the team has hundreds of notes.

### A data report



All the answers are listed, question by question. **A lot of information.**

### Synthesis



The notes are grouped by theme, connections and contradictions are sought, and insights are formulated. **A direction.**

Synthesis does not summarize: it interprets and proposes what the findings mean.

## Why it happens

1 

**Get all the information out** while it is fresh.

2 

**Group and regroup it,** looking for patterns and differences.

3 

**Interpret it** until insights and opportunities are formulated.

## Applications in design

### Use it like this

Take the information out of notebooks and screens onto a wall or a board, where the whole team can see it.

### Avoid

Jumping from data to solutions without going through interpretation.

### Don't fall for it

Do it as a team and explain your groupings to others: they will see connections you do not.

# Abduction

### What the research says

Kolko describes synthesis as abductive reasoning: proposing the most plausible explanation for what was observed, rather than just deducing or generalizing from the data (Kolko, 2010).

●●○ **Debated evidence.** It is a theoretical framework about how designers work, not an experimental result.

## Connections

Used in

- How might we...?
- Design thinking
- Affinity diagram
- Double Diamond
- Five whys
- Design principles

Related to

- Insight
- Triangulation

## Authors and works

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1995 | **Karl Weick** | Studied sensemaking: how people and organizations make sense of what happens to them. |
| 2010 | **Jon Kolko** | Described synthesis as the engine of design, based on sensemaking and abduction. |

### Sources

**Original sources**


- Weick, K. E. (1995). Sensemaking in organizations. Sage.
- Kolko, J. (2010). Abductive thinking and sensemaking: The drivers of design synthesis. Design Issues, 26(1), 15–28. View source (https://doi.org/10.1162/desi.2010.26.1.15)


Last reviewed: October 22, 2026

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