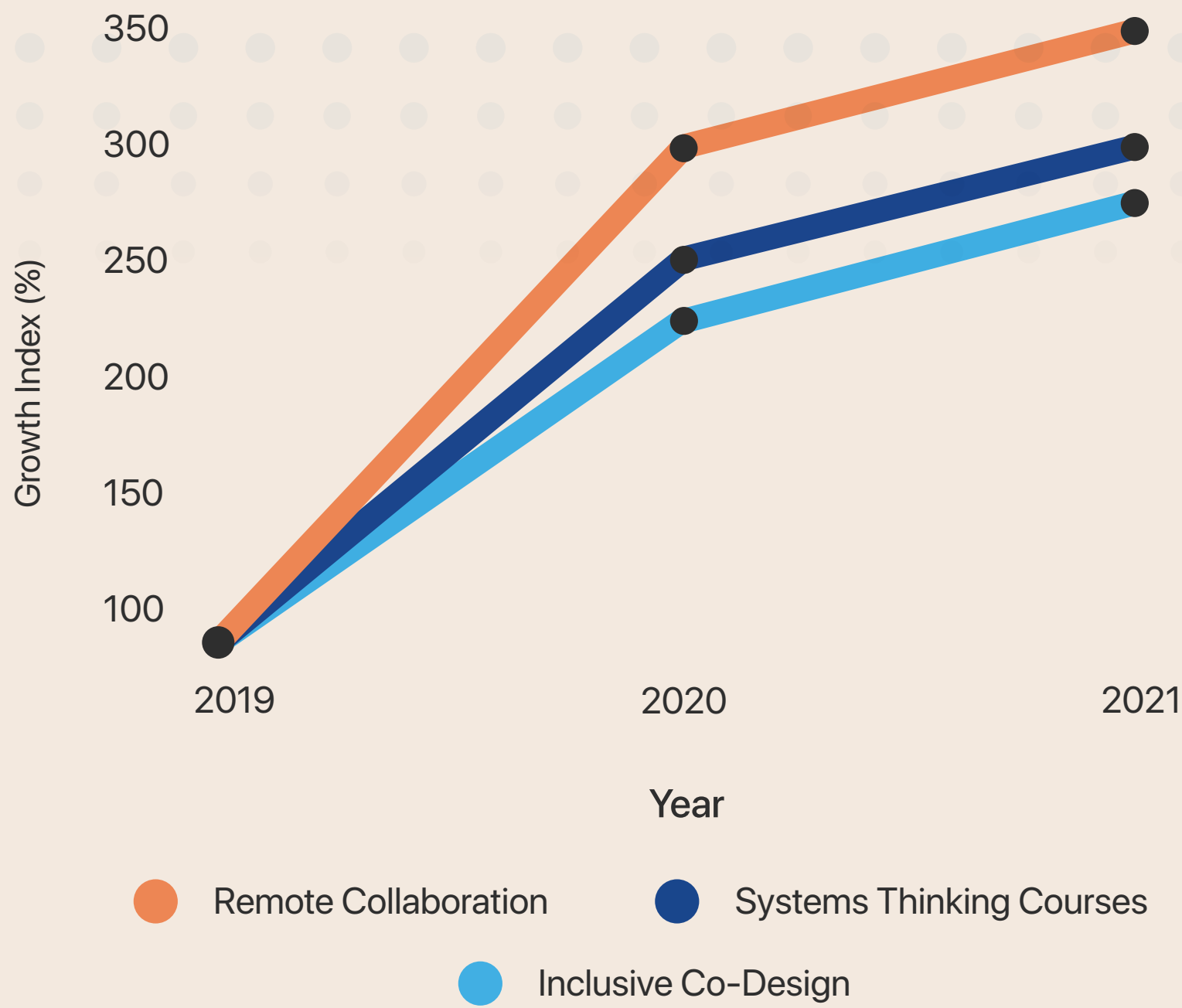


Evolution of Design Thinking

an exploration of design thinking paradigms

Post-2020 Surge:

Remote Collaboration, Inclusivity, and Design Thinking in the US.



IDEO Design Research Team, IDEO, 2020, "Design for Impact: Global Adoption of Design Thinking", IDEO Publications.

Having an Idea.

- Buchanan explains that the most basic definition of Design Thinking is the ability to have creative ideas.
- This can evolve into executing the ideas and turning plain thoughts into reality.

Cognitive Approach.

Design thinking is a mode of information processing that, when applied effectively, leads to better decision-making about how we shape the world and act within it.



Richard Buchanan

Case Western Reserve University

Richard Buchanan is a thought leader and scholar who has inspired the world through his contributions to the design industry. He has previously served as Dean of Design at Carnegie Mellon University and is now a professor at Case Western Reserve University. He is an editor of "Design Issues Magazine" at MIT Press.

1

Foundation

Buchanan's influential 1992 article "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking" helped redefine how complex challenges are approached in design practice.

2

Expansion

Has expanded design thinking beyond traditional creative fields into business & organizational strategy, emphasizing its power to foster innovation and improve decision-making.

3

Framing

Buchanan defined design thinking in 4 different ways. This poster seeks to analyze how defining events in the evolution of design thinking coincide with his definitions.

Culture Permeation.

- Design thinking is a spirit that spreads through a community, an instinct to see and think creatively, and challenge convention.
- This sets a design-thinking organization apart: not just in what it creates, but in how it sees.

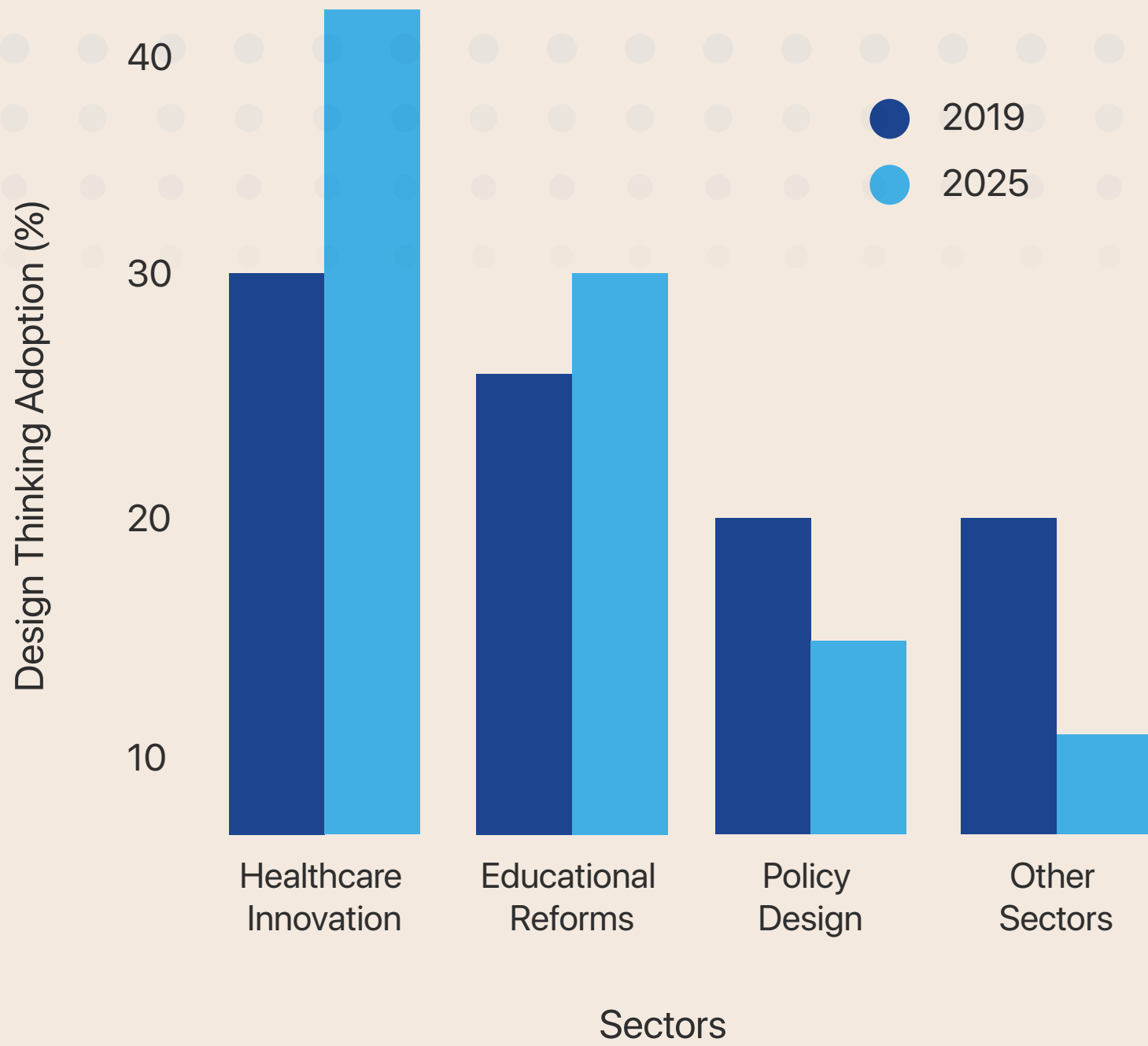
A Dogmatic Discipline.

- A deliberate practice that shapes how we engage with problems and possibilities.
- Unlike a mindset/ method, it grounds creativity in consistent action, cultivating habits that turn bold ideas into lived reality.

★ Buchanan's Favourite Principle

Post-2020 Surge:

Adoption of Design Thinking within Different US Sectors (2019–2025).



McKinsey & Company, McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), 2021, "The Future of Work after COVID-19, McKinsey & Company.

01

IDEO Sets the Stage 1991

IDEO was founded by David Kelly, Bill Moggridge, and Mike Nuttall, blending human-centered design with innovation—pioneering the practical application of design thinking in product and service design.

03

Double Diamond Brings Structure 2004

The UK Design Council formalizes the Double Diamond—structuring design into four phases: Discover, Define, Develop, and Deliver.

05

d.school Revolutionizes Design Education 2005

d.school is founded at Stanford by David Kelley (IDEO), democratizing design thinking through education and creative confidence-building.

07

Global Integration Across Sectors 2014

Cross-cultural integration sees design thinking embedded in emerging economies, healthcare, education, and public service innovation.

09

Design Thinking meets AI 2023

The rise of generative AI sparks new intersections between algorithmic intelligence and human-centered design methodologies.

02

Buchanan's Re-evaluation 1992

Richard Buchanan introduces "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking", redefining the conceptual foundation for design thinking's evolution across disciplines.

04

The 5-Stage Model Emerges

The d.School introduces the "Empathize–Define–Ideate–Prototype–Test" framework, which becomes the standard method used for design thinking worldwide.

06

Design Thinking Goes Mainstream 2013

Design thinking gains traction in business schools, Fortune 500s, and governments—spurring global adoption as a strategic tool.

08

Pandemic Sparks a Design Shift 2020

The pandemic challenges traditional design processes, accelerating virtual collaboration, systems thinking, and inclusive co-design.

10

Design Thinking as Leadership DNA 2025

Design thinking is a core competency in leadership programs, enabling adaptive problem-solving in complex, volatile environments.