I thought the problem was...

Field of application	#Problem Analysis. #Strategic planning
Resume / Brief description	This tool is designed to help innovation teams to refine the problem definition. This is important as very often the creative energy goes to try to solve problems that are, really, symptoms of a more deep situation. The game uses two powerful elements: - The sentence: "I thought the problem was... but maybe the real problem is..." - The "Knowledge shower" concept The combination of these elements, creates an enlightening experience that helps teams to understand much better the problem or situation they are trying to solve. Category: - Problem reframing - Brainwarming - Ideation - Idea optimization
Target group	- Entrepreneurs - I&D teams - Innovation teams - Students - Community
Group size	4 to 30 people
Objectives	To find the "real problem" behind the problem we are trying to solve.
Requirements	Material: - I thought the problem was... format Time: 60 to 240 minutes
Implementation - Overview	The process has to main parts: - In the first part, the participants write down its definition of the problem - In the second part the participants are exposed to a "Knowledge shower" in order to give them more elements to understand the situation better. The two parts are repeated as long as "Knowledge showers" are prepared At the end, the last versions of the problem are shared to build the final one.

Implementation - Guidelines	This tool requires a good deal of preparation as each "Knowledge shower" can require investigation, data collection, experts searching, documents preparation, etc. The main objective of the preparation phase is to ensure that the participants will receive high quality varied knowledge. For organizing each "Knowledge shower" you must take into account: - Have a variety of knowledge. For example one shower can talk about the financial part of the problem and the other can present the user point of view. - Set the presentation of the knowledge in a "compact" version. This will give you the possibility to deliver not just one. - Think in variety when deciding the format for each "Knowledge shower". Maybe one can be a segment of a movie, other can be bringing a real customer to the session, other can be a presentation of numbers and facts, other can be an interactive experience with the product, etc. - Be sure that the knowledge presented has the potential to challenge the beliefs of the team. Be provocative. Once the session starts, give several formats "I thought the problem was..." to each participant. Then instruct them to use the first section to write down their personal definition of the problem. This will be the starter point for them. Once everyone has written down their own definition of the problem, the first "Knowledge shower" comes. A "Knowledge shower" is an experience that gives participants the possibility to learn new things about the problem. A "Knowledge shower" can be: - A presentation from an expert - A presentation of relevant data - The possibility to talk with an actual client or user - A presentation of similar cases from other organizations While the participants receive its knowledge shower, must think if this information adds something new that changes its own interpretation of the problem. Once the "Knowledge shower" ends, each participant MUST write down a new interpretation of the problem in its format. This new interpretation is put in the "...but maybe the real problem is:" A good number of "Knowledge showers" can be between 3 and 6. Once all the "Knowledge showers" are finished, the participants are divided into teams and invited to share its interpretations of the problem. If possible, a common statement must be written down by the team. Finally, all teams present their conclusions and their versions of the problem. This exercise helps the innovation teams to avoid fast judgement and waste energy and resources solving the wrong problem.
Example of application:	Some examples of application of this game: - To solve day to day problems. In this case, the player can use the formato to capture new insights about the problem to solve as she searchs new information over the internet. - To start a planning session. In this case, the participants can analize the actual situation, and write down the main problem that the organization is facing. Then, using ""Knowledge showers"", each participant can change its view and understanding of the problem and write it down on the format - As an exercise to improve analytical capacities on students. The teacher can expose a typical situation (garbage management, education, gap between rich and poor countries, etc.), let the students write down their own interpretation of the problem and then, let some students present new knowledge and invite the group to find new interpretations to the problem.
Templates, Graphics for download	Format I thought that the problem was
Additional format/references	https://hbr.org/2012/09/are-you-solving-the-right-problem https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/237668

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