Design thinking offers a problem-solving approach widely adopted by the most innovative companies and organizations - but how do we truly measure its impact? Jeane Liedtka’s 2018 report, Exploring the Impact of Design Thinking in Action, examines 22 organizations using design thinking in their work, to assess the methodology’s true impact.

The report identifies the flow of the five key design thinking practices used and how they directly connect to innovation outcomes:

1. **Commitment to Deep Understanding of User Needs**
   - Development of empathy and observation for user needs
   - Reference problem to solve vs. generating problem
   - Alignment of team members
   - Emotional engagement
   - Enhanced ability to pivot

2. **Truly Heterogeneous Teams**
   - Distributed expertise and resources to higher order solutions
   - Sub-teams enabled to solve new problems
   - Simplicity
   - Open communications
   - Creating alignment across differences
   - Enhances willingness to innovate

3. **Dialogue-Based Conversations**
   - Increases psychological safety
   - Allows specific involvement of key stakeholders not in core team
   - Helps manage cognitive complexity
   - Incorporates coaching for increased quality and confidence
   - Supports team alignment and collective learning
   - Facilitates engagement and trust
   - Provides a social technology for better dialogue
   - Allows unique solutions to emerge during process

4. **Multiple Solutions Winnowed Through Small Bets**
   - Reduces risk and failures and investment
   - Reduces cognitive biases
   - Allows champions to emerge
   - Encourages learning culture and action orientation

5. **Creation of Structured and Facilitated Process**
   - Identifies new assumptions and options
   - Creates alignment and collective learning
   - Enables teams to work together
   - Reduces ambiguity and investment
   - Enables cognitive biases
   - Allows champions to emerge
   - Encourages learning culture and action orientation

**Improved Quality of Choices**

**Reduced Risk and Cost of Failure**

**Enhanced Likelihood of Successful Implementation**

**Increased Adaptability**

**Creation of Local Capability Sets**

**Enabling Mechanisms**

The five elements above do not directly affect innovation outcomes - each one operates through a variety of process mechanisms. These processes mechanisms which produce better innovation outcomes.

**Impact On Innovation**

The five design thinking elements and their corresponding enabling mechanisms work together to improve organizational innovation performance.