Developing the master project manager.

The education of project managers is mainly focused on training in using prescriptive instruments such as PMBOK, PRINCE etc. (cf. Pant, 2007, Thomas et al., 2008, Ojiako et al. 2008, Thomas et al., 2008, Ramazani et al., 2014), while evidence is mounting that the increasing complexity of projects requires a different set of competences. In this situation, where scholars and practitioners are seeking for ways to manage complexity, we reflect on the possibility that a design-based approach project management might provide the basis for advanced project management education that prepares project managers to deal with complexity.

First we briefly review the literature on Design Thinking and particularly on Design Thinking in Management. Next we explore the literature on Project Management Education. Finally we introduce the Project Design Cycle as a means to prepare project management students to deal with complexity. In particular we give an example on how this cycle can help to define (the problem of) the project and to facilitate learning from managers’ day to day-experience.