

[Who]

## Jon Spruce: Postgraduate Coordinator at Liverpool School of Art & Design

[What]

**“Enhancing the learning journey,  
and my students readiness for  
creative industry practice”**

[Why]

Better for staff (*me really*)

## Better for students

## Better for the creative industries

## [How]

## Exploring the development of enterprise skills through experimental and ambiguous scenarios





## [Learning Theories]

Transformative Learning (Davis 2006)

Troublesome Knowledge & Threshold Concepts  
(Meyer & Land 2003)

Learning Edge (Berger 2008)

Tolerance of Uncertainty (Tovey 2006)

Perspective Transformation (Mezirow 1997)

**The liminal spaces of a  
creative process  
described as a  
“conceptual gateway”  
[a threshold]**

not just in knowledge but in perception  
and understanding









# Collaborative partners

Culture Liverpool – Liverpool International Music Festival

George Garret Archive Exhibition

Biospheric Project – Manchester

Catholic Blind Institute

Aloft - NorthWest

Camp & Furnace - Liverpool

Bay TV – Liverpool

FACT

Sound City Festival – Liverpool

STAX Creations - Birmingham

Re-Dock Community Cinema

National Wildflower Centre

Stage Door Theatre Company

LJMU – Student Wellbeing

URBED – Manchester

Constellations – Baltic, Liverpool

Churchill Way Flyover

REX retail

The Rotunda – Liverpool

TATE – Liverpool

Writing on the Wall Festival

LISSA – Nantes, France

The World Museum – Liverpool

Aintree Hospital – Liverpool

Wigan STEAM - Wigan

Working in various collaborative arrangements, as student teams or as individuals **engaging in outward facing projects alongside real people, with real needs in real time.**



**The City as a canvas for collaborative partnerships**



# [the learning edge & the transfer leap]

We may possess a host of transferable skills, but we don't always have the awareness of how to apply them in different contexts.

**"We live in contexts, we learn in contexts, we work in contexts and no two contexts are exactly the same."**

Our ability to contextualise skills is as important as the skills themselves (Kemp & Seagraves 1995).

## Design Skills

- 1 interpret needs
- 2 generate viable concepts
- 3 contextualise
- 4 collaborate effectively
- 5 critical analysis
- 6 reflection

## Transferable Skills

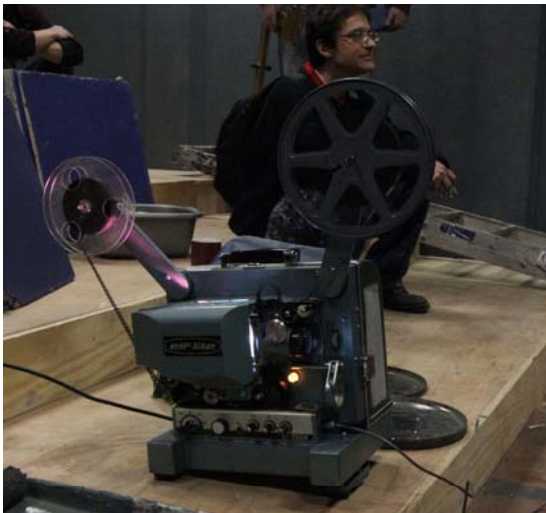
- 1 communication
- 2 team working
- 3 negotiation
- 4 critical analysis
- 5 self awareness
- 6 decision making

## Enterprise Skills

- 1 creative thinking
- 2 negotiated action
- 3 problem solving
- 4 decision making
- 5 initiative
- 6 effectiveness

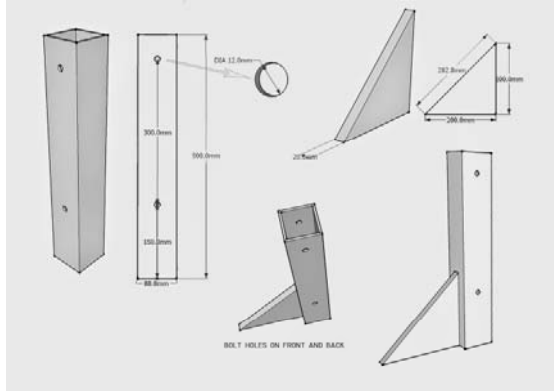
*Map comparisons and alignments of transferable, enterprise and subject skills*



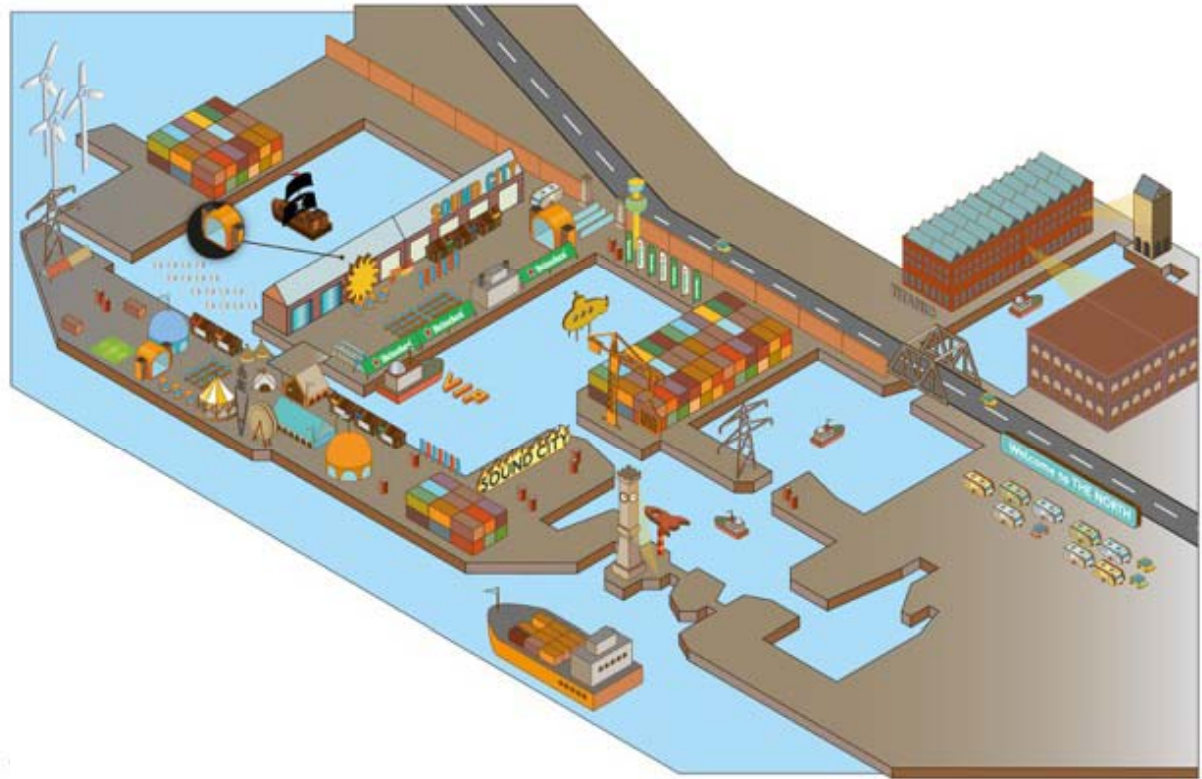




## Writing On The Wall, Liverpool, George Garrett Archive Project



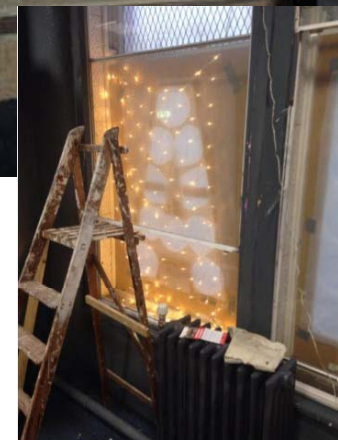
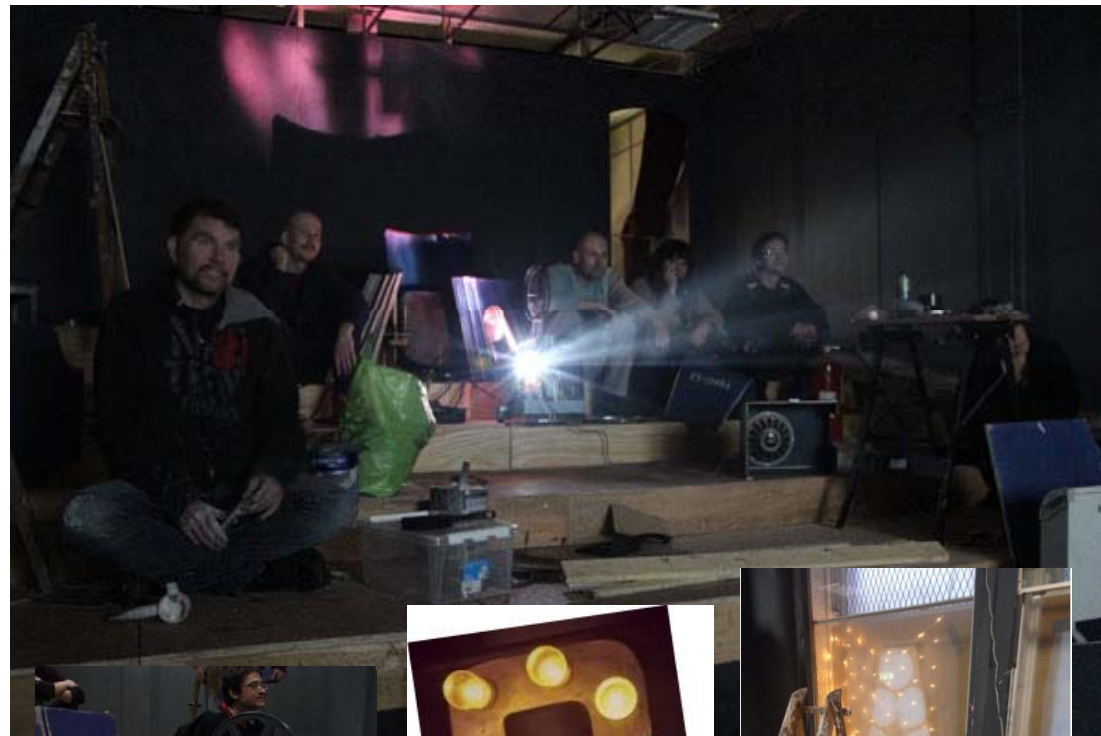




Liverpool Sound City Festival







Re-Dock, Small Cinema project



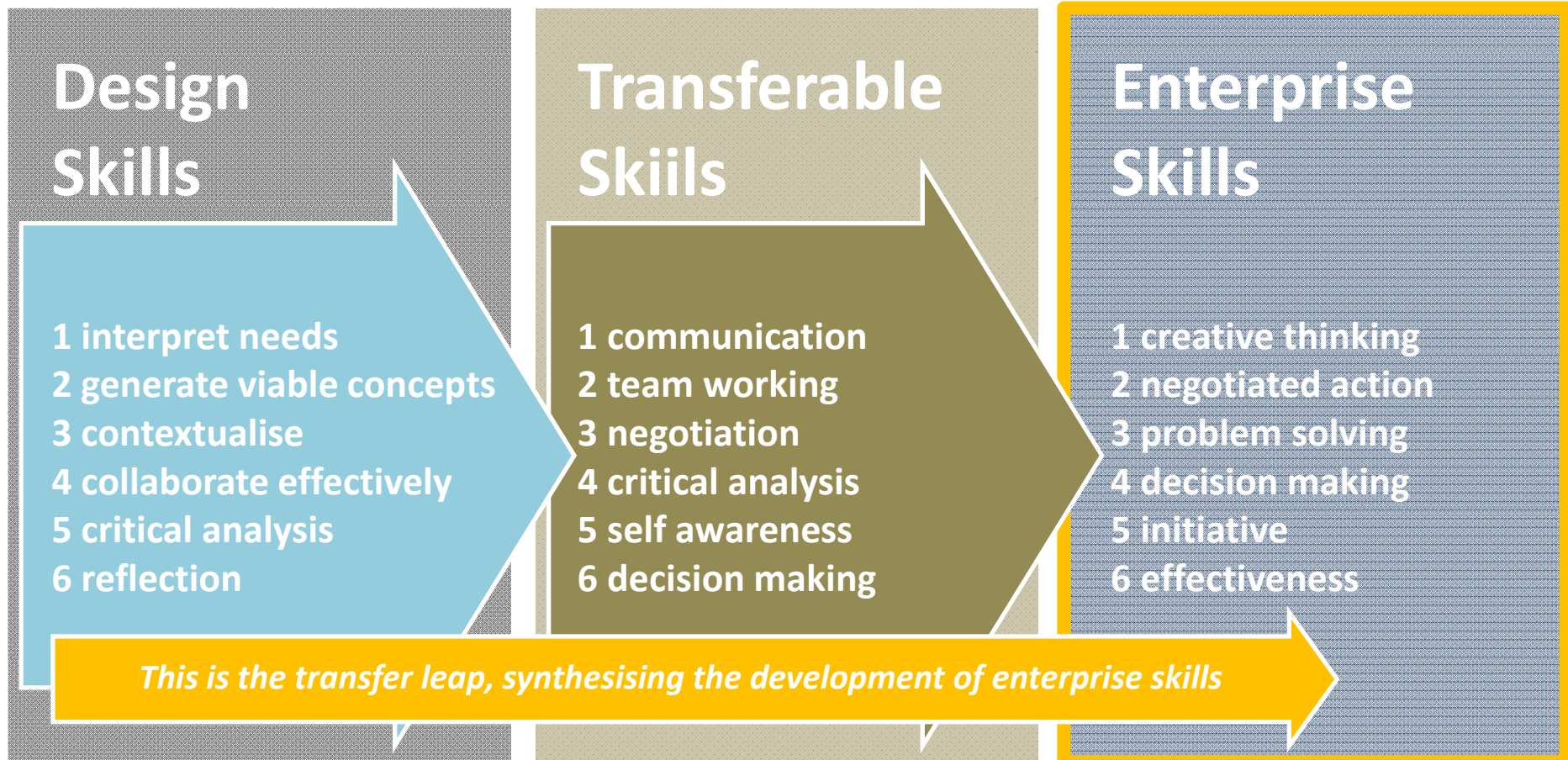


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## Breadth and Depth

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE IN EDUCATION

BUT WHY?

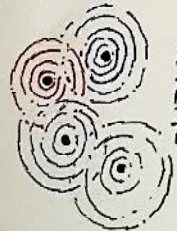
WIDE ACCEPTANCE THAT IT'S OF GREAT VALUE!

### People Skills

- GRADUATES BETTER PREPARED FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES → REQUIRES OF WORKING AND GETTING THINGS DONE } EXPERIENCING MULTIDISCIPLINARY PRACTICE... IS...
- WHETHER LOOKING FOR EMPLOYMENT WITHIN AN INDUSTRY SECTOR OR NOT! PEOPLE SKILLS + EMPATHY ARE IMPORTANT.

\* ALL MODELS OF "TRUE" COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE ARE BASED ON DEMOCRACY + SHARED VALUES OR VISION!

BUT WITHIN WHICH, PARTICIPANTS UNDERSTAND + RESPECT OTHERS ROLES.



A "POOLED" MODEL OF RESOURCES IS COMMON IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES + BEYOND.

+ THIS IS OFTEN "ORGANIC" IN NATURE, GROWING AND RESPONDING TO THE PROJECT NEEDS.

• INITIAL SEPARATIONS BECOME CONNECTING STRENGTHS.

### Social Activity

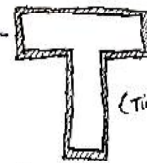
\* ATTEMPTS TO BREAK THE "SILO" MENTALITY IN MANY ART SCHOOLS

(THIS IS OFTEN "NOT" COMFORTABLE...)

ESTABLISHED ON OLD HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURES AND LOCKED DISCIPLINES!

"THE CLASSICS" (JOHN MEADA 2015)

BREADTH



BREADTH IN OTHERS

(TIM BROWN 2009)

BEING T-SHAPED!

AND DEPTH IN YOUR FIELD

(THIS IS OFTEN COMFORTABLE)

ROOTED BUT CONNECTED TOGETHER

COMMON PURPOSE OR PROJECT GOAL

(SCHIEFELER 2010)

(WAGNER 2009)

THIS IS A BALANCE THAT CAN CREATE TENSION IF UNMANAGED

YOU MAY NOT UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER!

DISCIPLINE LANGUAGE?

VIEWPOINT?

DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING + KNOWLEDGE

"CO-CREATION" APPROACHES + METHODS HELP BALANCE + MANAGE THIS TENSION.

→ MORE ENGAGEMENT (YOU KNOW MORE RELEVANT STUFF)

→ LESS RISK (CONFIDENCE IN SHARED UNDERSTANDING)

→ MORE CHANCE OF SUCCESS (LESS BLIND SPOTS)

THIS MAKES YOUR "PARTNERS" ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS NOT PASSIVE PARTICIPANTS... YOU ARE DELIVERING WITH NOT DELIVERING TO!

### Co-production



# A "SCAFOLDING" FOR COLLABORATION!

PROVIDING A SENSE OF STRUCTURE VIA METHODS AND APPROACHES TO HELP NAVIGATE THE EXPERIENCE.

Structured

AND MOVE TOWARDS SHARED VISIONS + AN AGREED ROAD MAP!!

"AGREEING THE PHASES OF THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS"

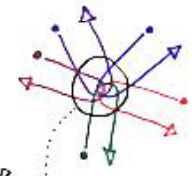
BECAUSE ITS A SCARY PROCESS... THAT CAN TAKE YOU OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE!



LOOK AT STAMFORD 'D' SCHOOL FOR IDEAS ON RADICAL COLLABORATION

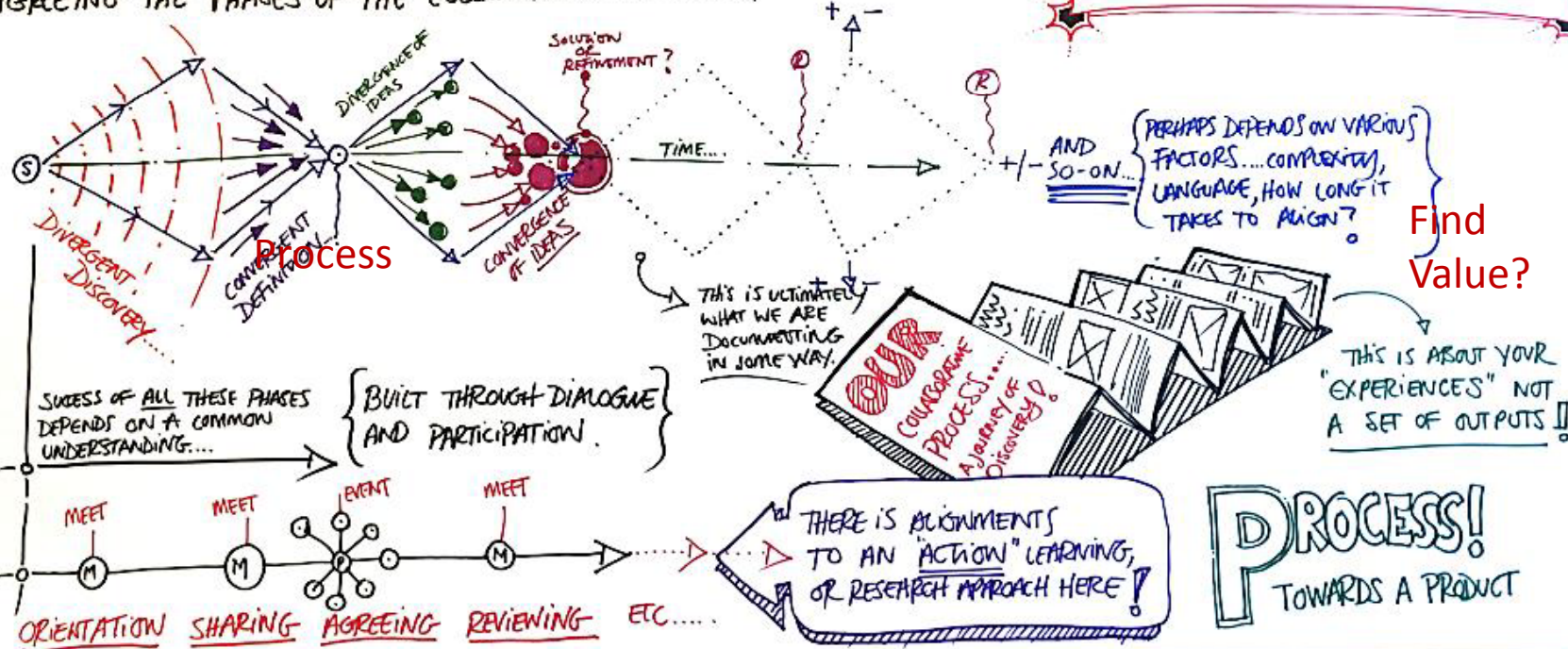
## The Players

A COLLECTION OF VIEWS, IDEAS, DISCIPLINES + STAKEHOLDERS... FIZZING!



YOU'RE HOLDING THIS TOGETHER "NETWORK"

WHAT ARE THE STICKY NEEDS? (VON HIPPEL 2001)  
"THINGS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO ARTICULATE OUT OF CONTEXT OR EXPERIENCE?"



Find Value?

THIS IS ABOUT YOUR "EXPERIENCES" NOT A SET OF OUTPUTS!!

PROCESS! TOWARDS A PRODUCT



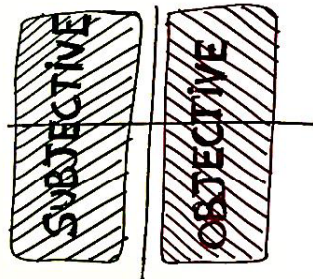
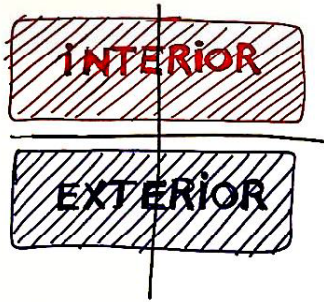
A "SCAFOLDING" FOR COLLABORATION!

PROVIDING A SENSE OF STRUCTURE

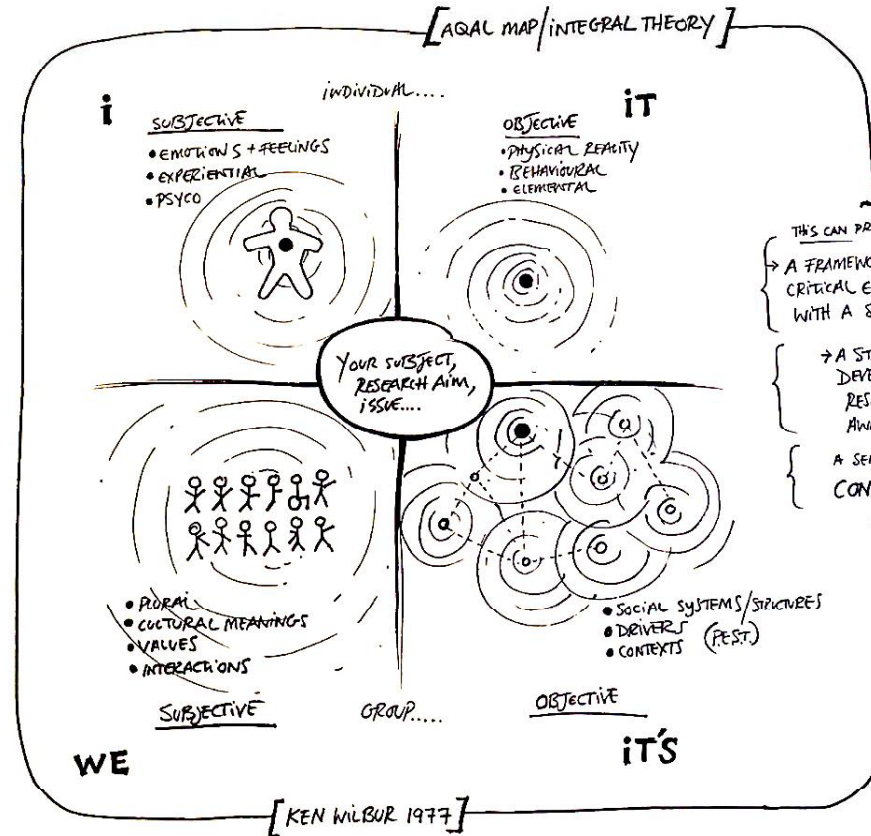
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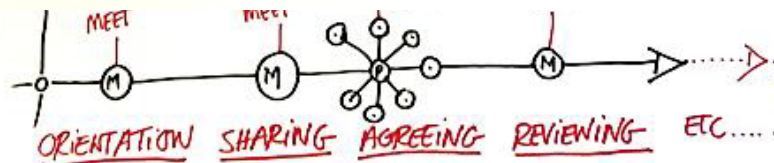
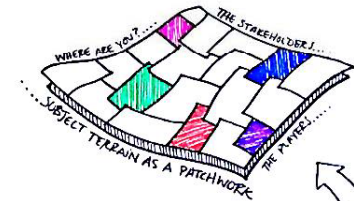


- READING THE MAP...  
"THESE THINGS ARE ALWAYS PRESENT"



- THIS CAN PROVIDE....
- A FRAMEWORK FOR CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH A SUBJECT,
  - A STRUCTURE TO DEVELOP YOUR RESEARCH + AWARENESS
  - A SENSE OF... CONTROL!

- ENABLING YOU TO CONTEXTUALISE YOUR RES/PHASE WITHIN A SUBJECT TERRAIN.
- DIRECTING YOUR LITERATURE REVIEW + METHODOLOGY
- CREATING ORDER FROM "CHAOS"
- PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH
- TO MANAGE THE RESEARCH PROCESS

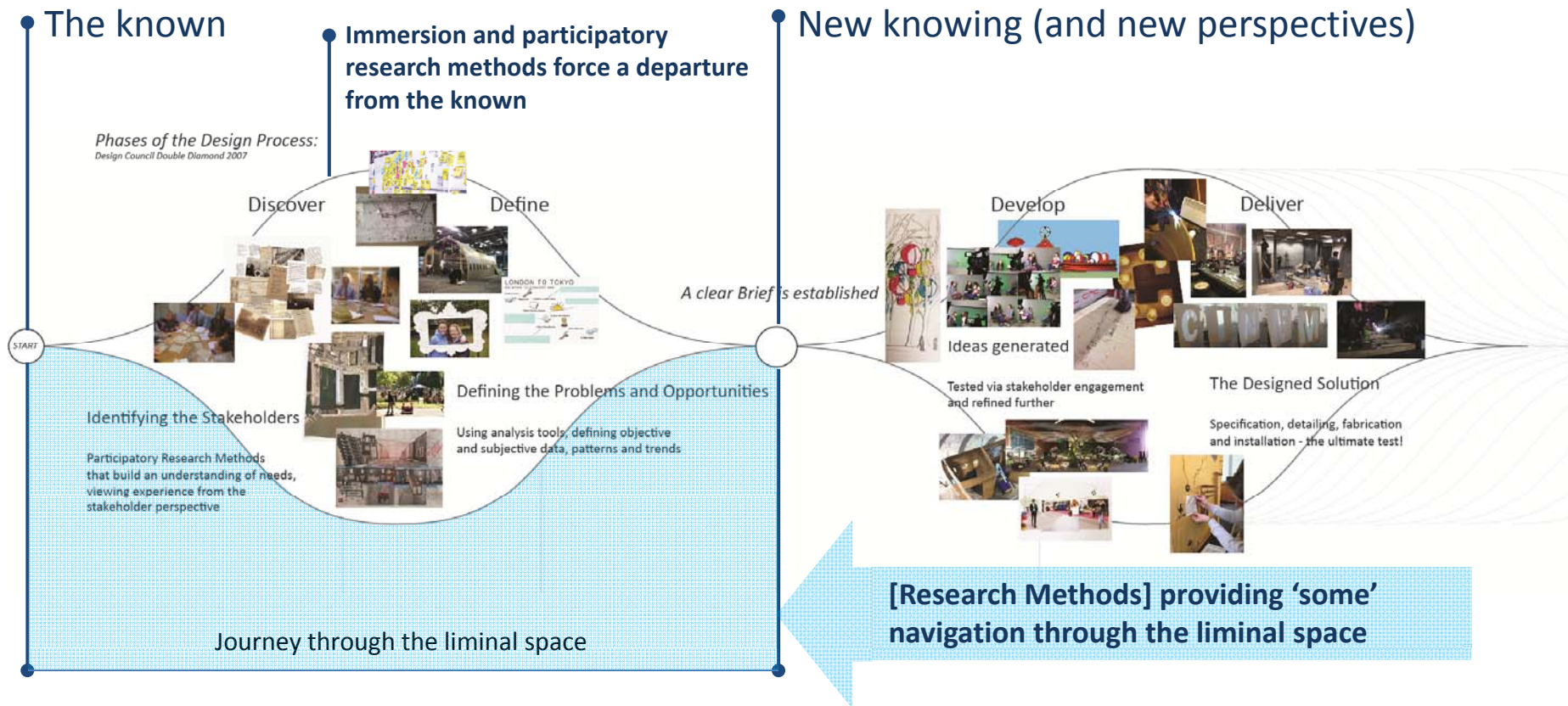


THERE IS ALIGNMENTS  
TO AN "ACTION" LEARNING,  
OR RESEARCH APPROACH HERE!

PROCESS!  
TOWARDS A PRODUCT



The Double Diamond design process model (Design Council 2007) is structured into phases of divergent and convergent thinking – discover into define, develop into deliver. The model is a simplistic (but useful) visualisation of a creative process, derived from Alex Osborn and Sid Parnes work on creative problem solving. This model – particularly in the (problem) phase of the creative process contains liminal spaces that students have to navigate in order to move through towards definition.



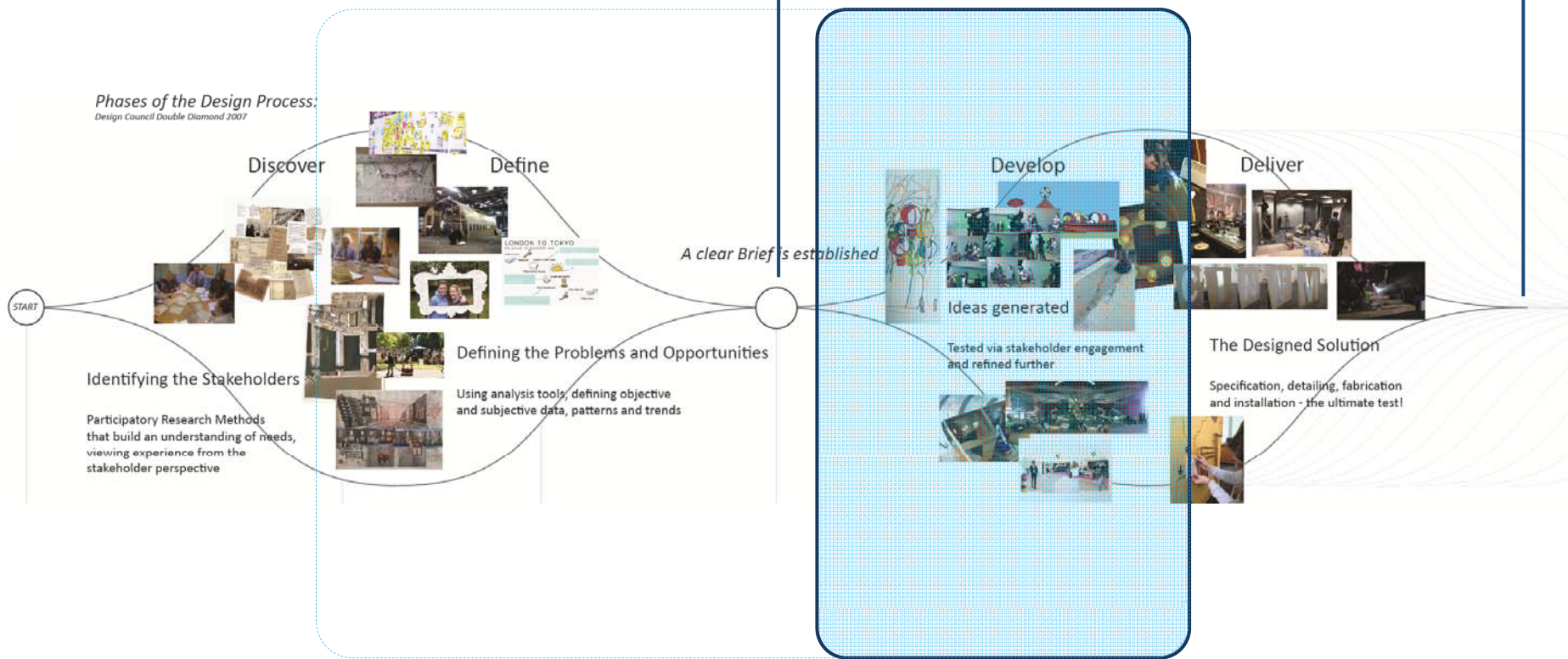
(1<sup>st</sup> diamond) problem space of discovering and defining provides threshold challenges that generates 'troublesome knowledge' for students including questioning assumptions of...

**Ownership** (my project) **Control** (I think this) **Agency** (can I do that)



A reframing of the issue/problem

A reframing of the subject

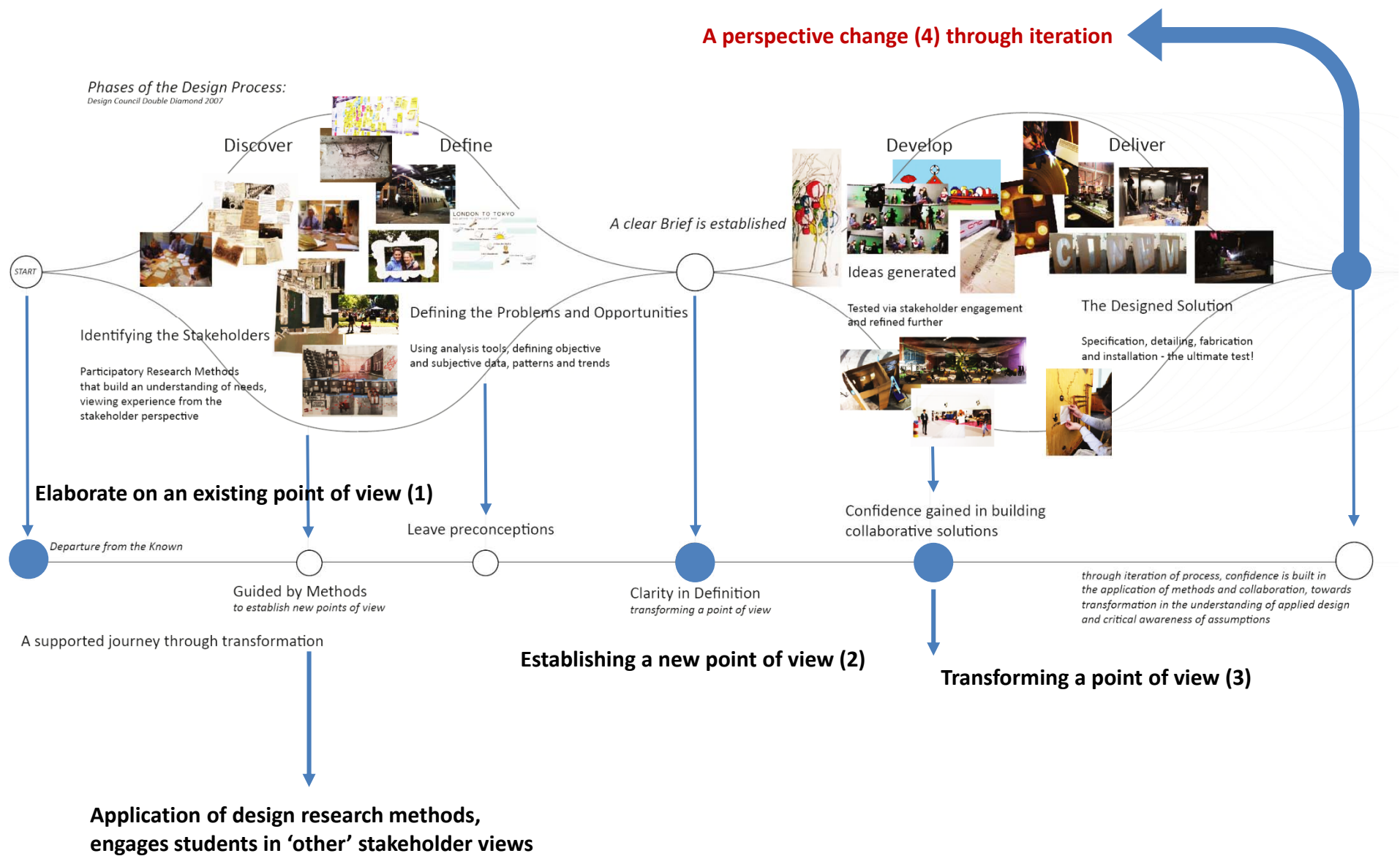


**(2<sup>nd</sup> diamond) solution space characterised by Tovey (2006) containing the threshold concept of 'tolerance of uncertainty' as students struggle to generate meaningful design ideas**

**Tolerance of ambiguity (Heath 1964)**

**'Uncertainty' is reduced – ideas are less seen as bolts of inspiration, instead recognised as products of a transformed understanding, resulting from their immersion and engagement in participatory methods during the previous phase.**





**1,2,3,4 from Mezirow's (1997) Stages of Perspective Transformation**



## [Student Feedback] are they transformed?

Transform habits of mind (4)  
Transformed point of view (3)  
Establishing a new point of view (2)  
Elaborate on an existing point of view (1)

Perspective Transformation  
Mezirow (1997)

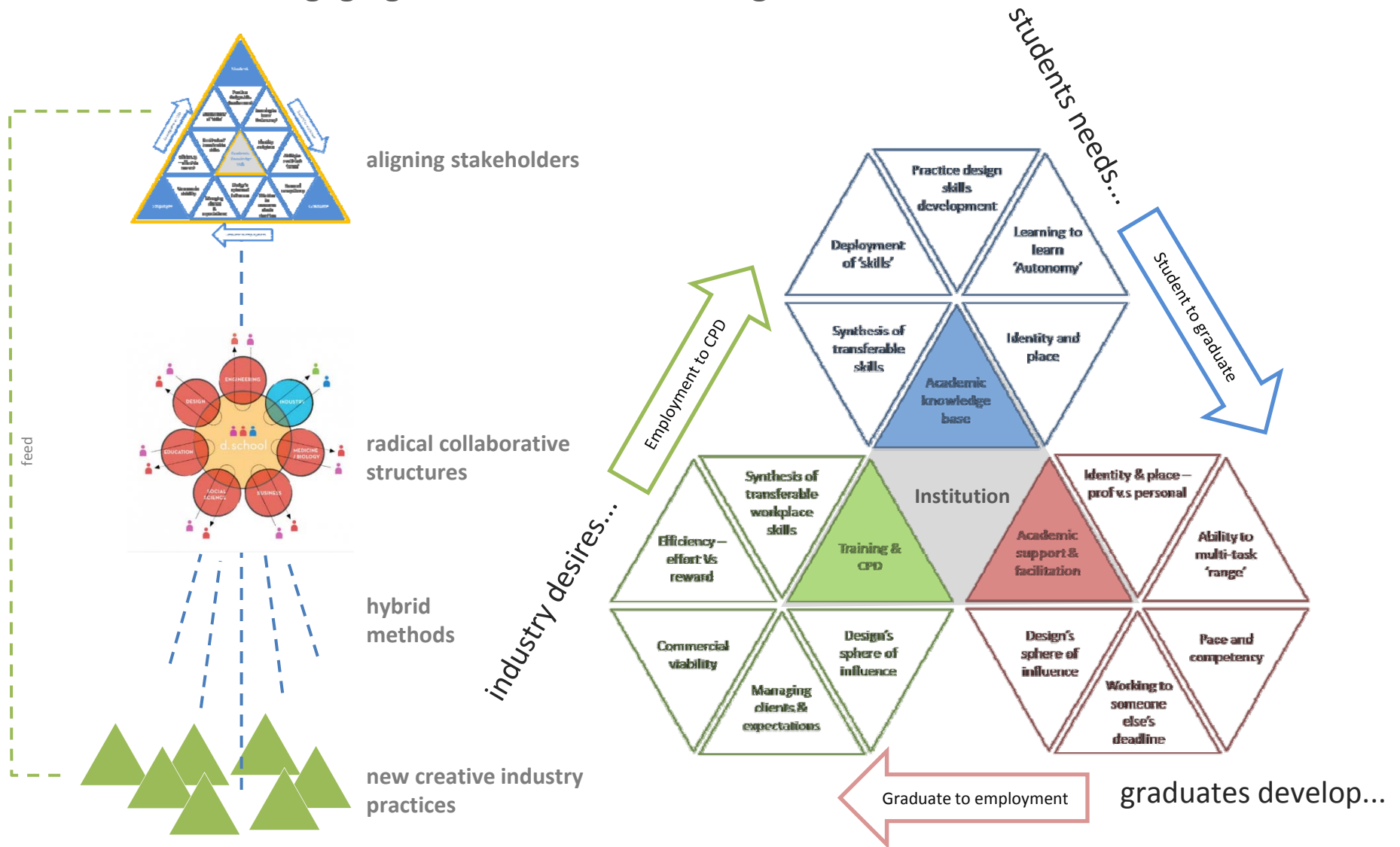
Responses suggest that user centred considerations continues to be integral and in some cases central to approaching design activities and informing evaluations. **This suggests that for some individual learners there has been a significant transformation in point of view and habits of mind (3 & 4 on Mezirow's Perspective Transformation scale)** that has impacted upon not only the application of methods, but has developed new understanding of the subject terrain and context.

**Process oriented answers** focused on dealing with different points of view within the design process to help define issues, problems or opportunities.

Use of user centred research methods provided the opportunity for assumptions to be critiqued, developed and potentially challenging the learners existing point of view, leading towards the first phase of transformation - **exhibiting the ability to elaborate on and add to existing points of view or established frames of reference.**



# A framework for curriculum development: engaging all stakeholders of design education





[Who]

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I'm also very happy to collaborate!

[Thank you for listening]

