
Curriculum Design for Employability Development

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Employability Strategy

- Embed across all curricula
- Strengthen connections with alumni and employers
- Part of every student experience
- Meet diversity within student cohort
- Emerging, future thinking and institutional in approach.



Aberystwyth University
Employability Strategy
2024-2029

It would be great if.....

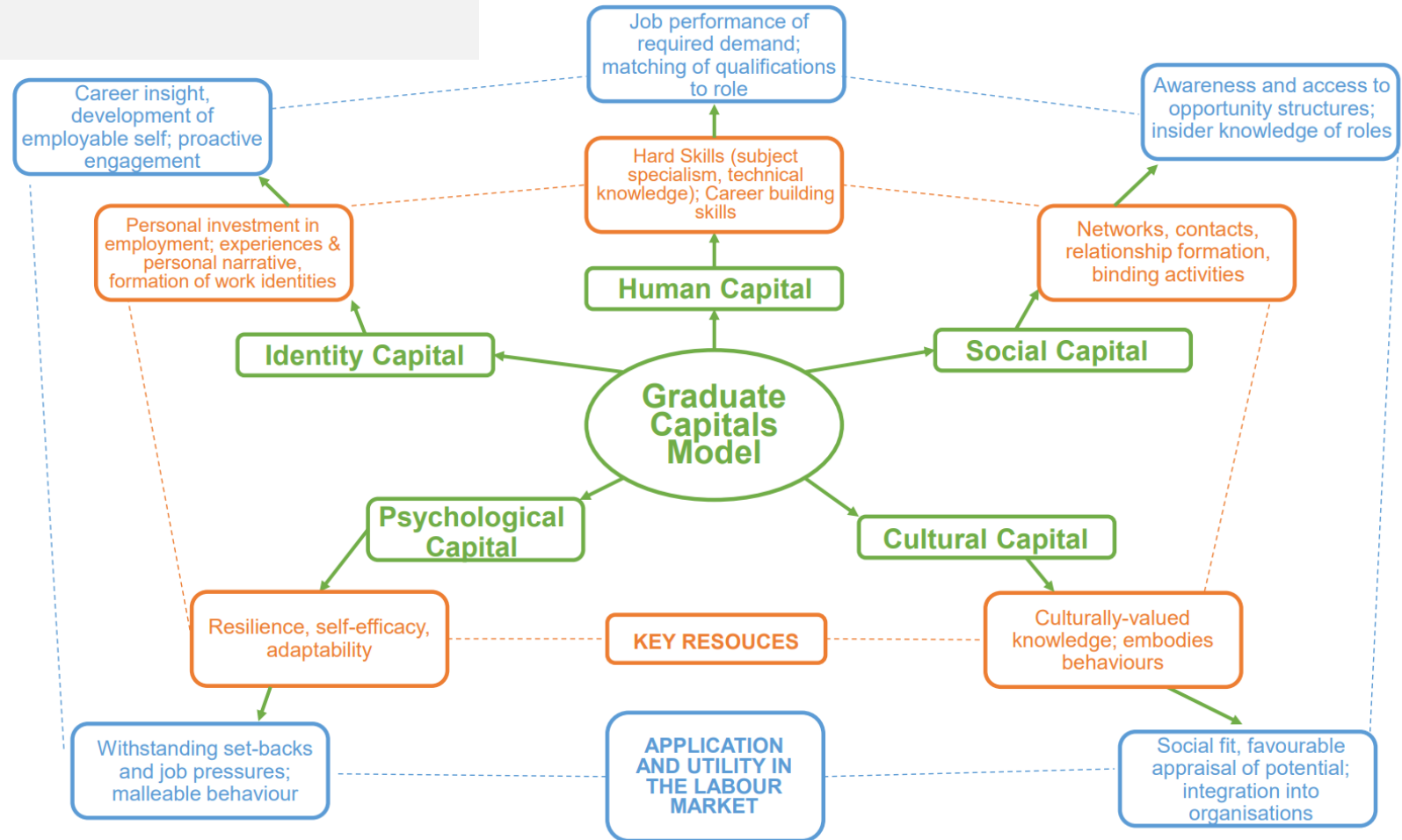
- Students enjoyed their degree, and benefitted from it in the longer term
- Students could tell employers just why studying their subject made them a great future employee
- In a highly uncertain economic landscape, students' experience of higher education maximised their chances of employment.

Why is this not always the case?

How can we make this more obvious?

Graduate Capitals model

Tomlinson, M. (2017)
 “Forms of graduate capital and their relationship to graduate employability”,
 Education + Training, Vol. 59 (4), pp. 338-352



Some reflections on DGES in respect to employability and careers

1: Diverse departmental profile

- Physical + social sciences; Environmental Science, Environmental Earth Science, Geography (physical, human), Sociology
- Mixed picture in Graduate Outcomes Survey
 - Human Geography graduates perform relatively poorly in comparison to UK averages in terms of unemployment and % in employment/further study.
 - Graduates in environmental sciences more positive in comparison to UK averages

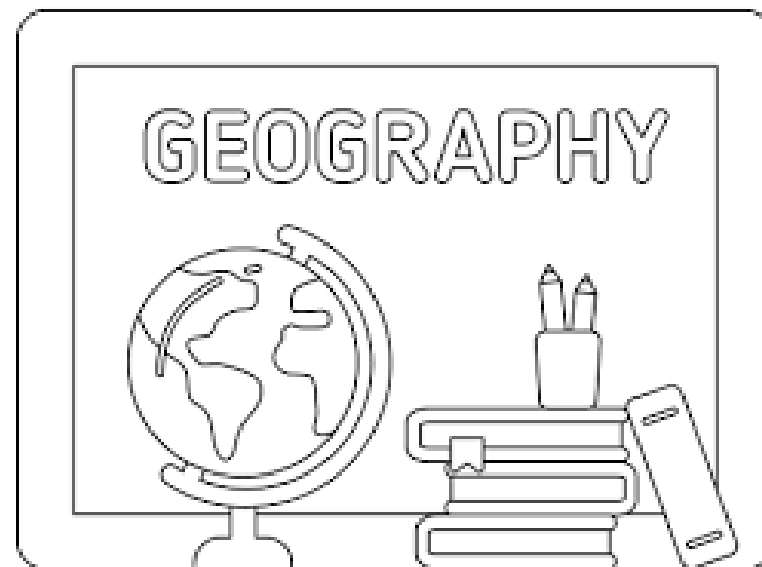
Some reflections on DGES in respect to employability and careers

2: The need to do things differently

- Lack of a coherent strategy over a period of years
- Engagement with employers tends to fall disproportionately in environmental sciences and physical geography (inc. RSK,
- Students unable to adequately articulate skills required and acquired
- Year in Industry – positive, but not achieving ‘trickle down/ overflow’.
Recruitment tool and tendency to aid the most ‘switched on’
- Occasionally unhelpful media scrutiny and popular narratives



Kerry Katona slams schools for teaching 'pointless subjects like geography when we have AI and Google' as she calls for kids to be taught 'real-life skills'



Some reflections on DGES in respect to employability and careers

3: Why Now?

- AU-wide prioritization of employability
- Major review of year 2 provision/ move to 20 credits in DGES, including thematic modules, fieldwork and dissertation preparation
- Awareness of digital skills gaps and opportunities/ staff expertise
- Royal Geographical Society (RGS)/ Community for Environmental Disciplines in Higher Education (CEDHE) Accreditation
- Close working relationship with Careers Service

Useful links:

- [Get the most out of networking – RGS-IBG](#)
- [How to Network – University of Portsmouth](#)
- [Networking - Oxford University Careers Service](#)

3 – Get your communication skills in shape for job applications

CVs, cover letters and interviews crucial aspects of almost every job application process and need good written and verbal communication skills.

In a CV or covering letter, it's important not just to state your skills – give evidence by saying what you achieved. "Capable at writing reports" for example, tells an employer much less than "Wrote a 5,000-word report for a local environmental NGO that was used to inform their land management project".

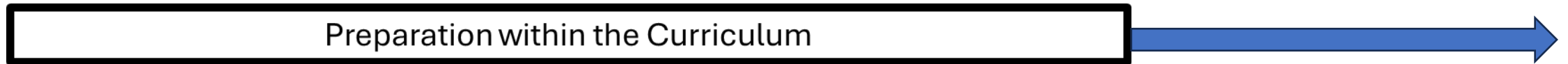
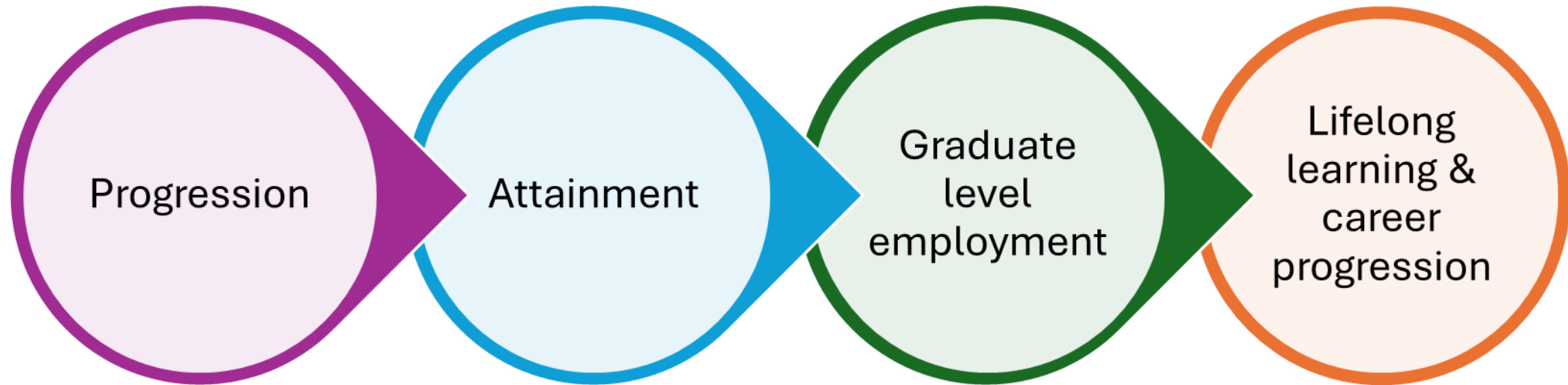


Geography is a very 'recruitable' degree - the skills you learn are highly desirable. It's about understanding how to communicate them in your application and interview.



Vanessa Pilley, DEFRA

Preparing all students for the future



Adapting Careers Service

Careers and Employability Preparation

Faculty aligned support for students through the provision of 121 appointments, drop-ins, and workshops

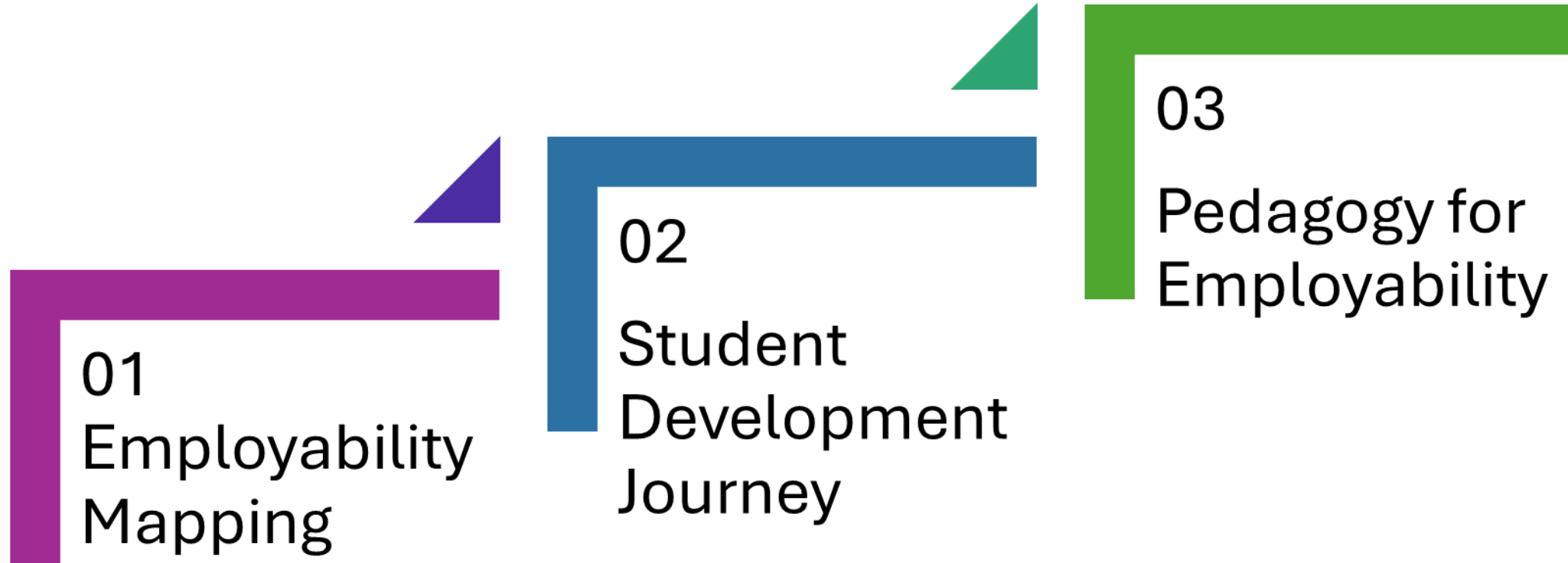
Employability Curriculum

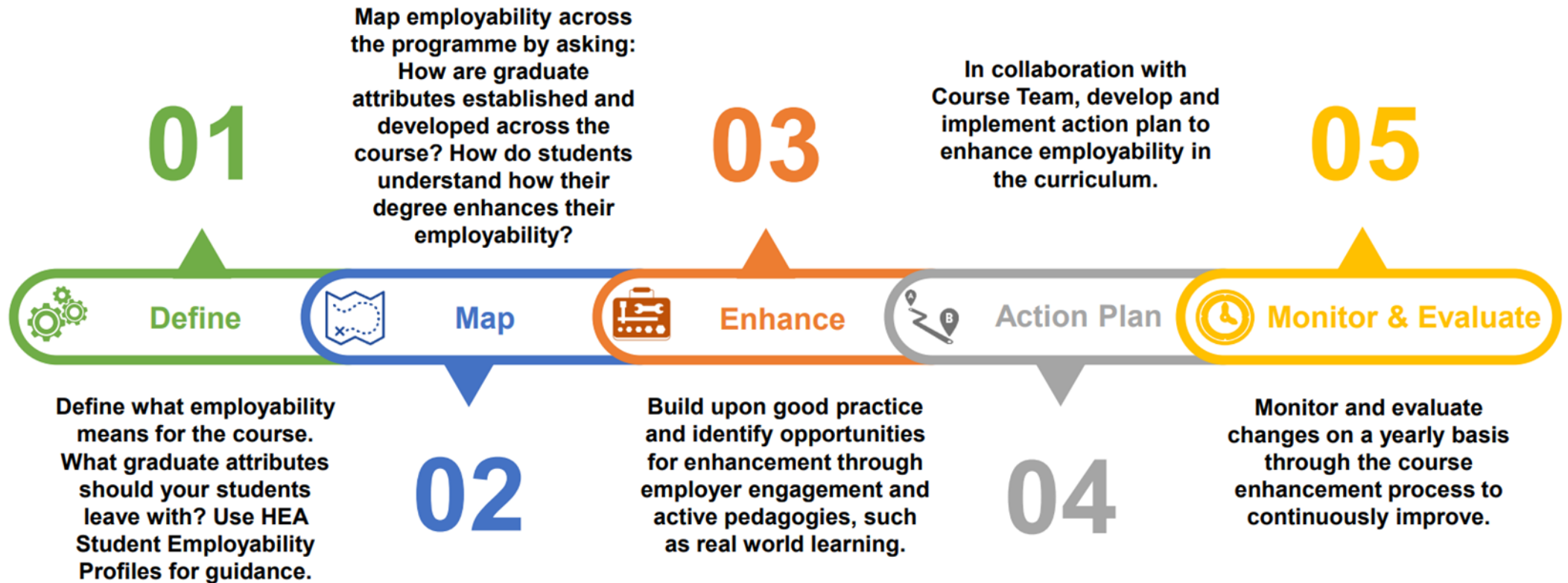
Supporting Course Teams to deliver faculty employability aims, embed employability/ enterprise through subject specific teaching and assessment, and enhance employability through employer engagement in the curriculum

Employer Engagement

Manage and grow employer and industry relationships to create placement and graduate opportunities, and identify opportunities for involvement in curriculum development and delivery

3 stage approach to working together





[Inclusive Employability Development through the Curriculum \(qaa.ac.uk\)](http://qaa.ac.uk)



01

Learning About

- Through standalone in-curricular workshops e.g. on presentation skills, teamworking, leadership etc.
- More passive form of learning
- Achieves surface-level knowledge

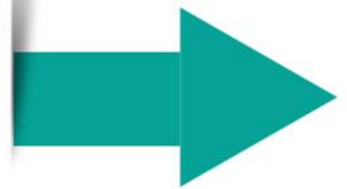


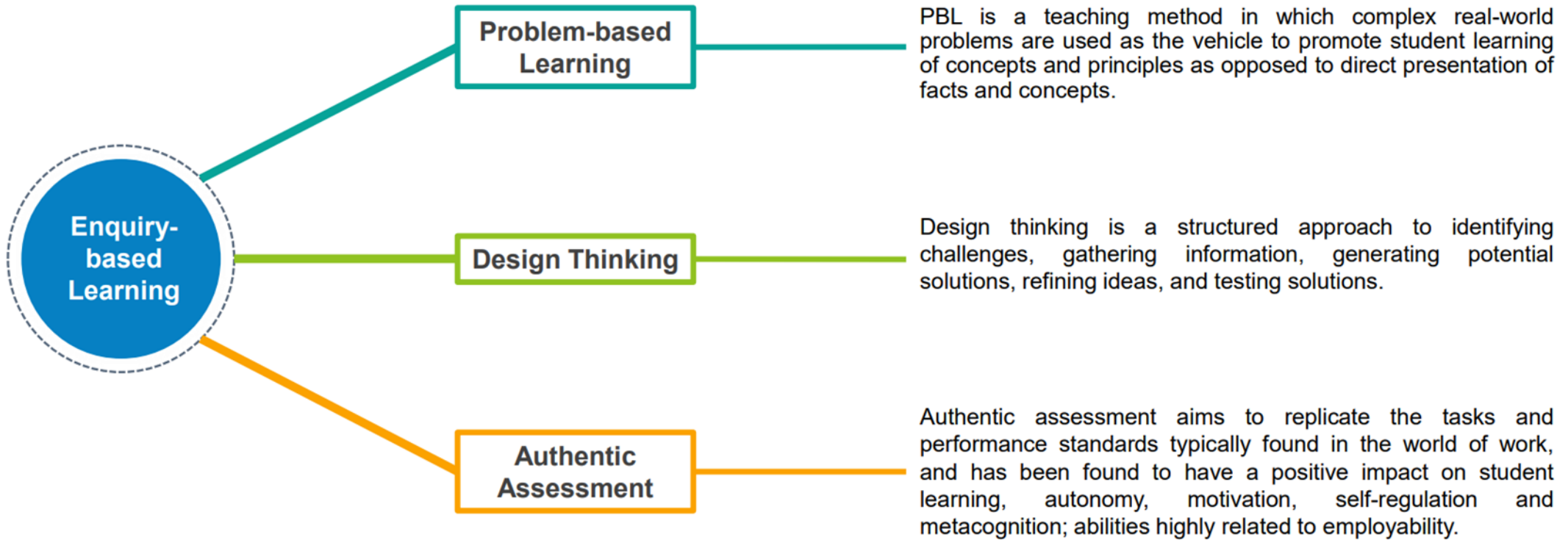
03

Learning Through

- Through real-world projects and work-based learning
- This is more active, enabling students to understand how their theoretical learning can be applied to affect real-world change
- Achieves deep learning

02



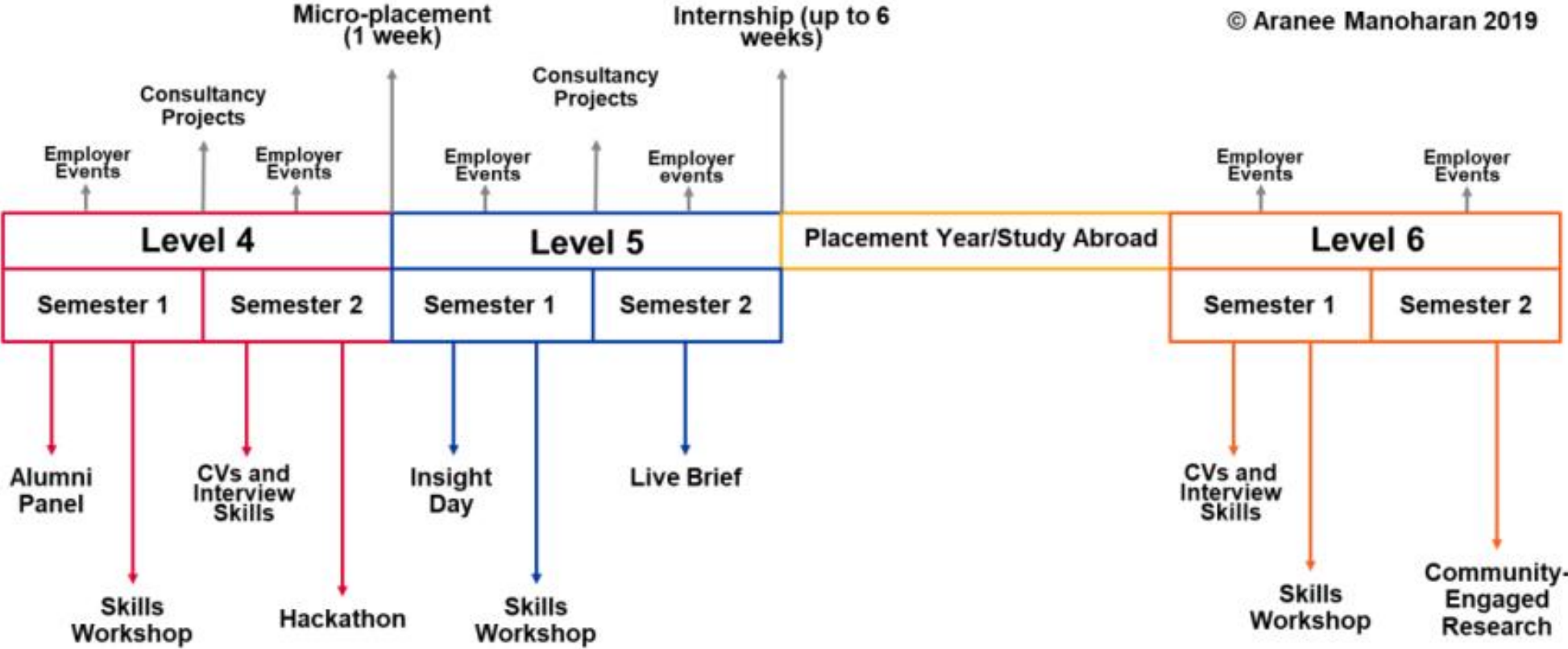


Examples- integrating these diverse methods create a comprehensive learning experience that not only imparts academic knowledge but also prepares students for the complexities of the modern job market.

- Experiential learning
- Problem-based learning
- Collaborative learning
- Reflective practice
- Enquiry based learning
- Project based learning
- Simulation and role play
- Service learning
- Mentoring and coaching
- Technology enhanced learning
- Flipped classroom
- Competency based learning
- Careers development-based activities

Extra-curricular

In-curricular



Our students.....

- Enjoy their degree, and benefit from it in the longer term
- Can tell employers just why studying their subject made them a great future employee
- In a highly uncertain economic landscape, our students' experiences of higher education maximise their chances of employment.

Because we work together across their learning journey to make that happen!

Some reflections on DGES in respect to employability and careers 4: Some issues to grapple with and opportunities



- Challenge of working with 'outside' actors and institutions
 - Timetabling
 - Managing feedback
- Developing assessment profiles
- FAAC lag
- Lack of synergies/ consistency across Faculties and Departments (e.g. placements inside and outside of UK)
- Short-term thinking and quantifying achievements
- Student profiles and support



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