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Let's Make It Real! Approaching Engaged Learning from Authentic Contexts Across Disciplines

Let's Make It Real!

Approaching engaged learning from authentic contexts across disciplines - emerging case studies from Southern Cross University.

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Southern Cross University

‘Engaged Learning Incubator Project’.

Overview – Engaged Learning Incubator

▶ Curriculum co design across three schools - developed new models of engaged learning and teaching (MELT) across disciplines and pedagogical approaches.

▶ All units (subjects) underpinned by experiential learning and learning that is situated in authentic community and/or industry contexts = students and industry as partners.

▶ Identifying the explicit skills required for the integration of community and student engagement - The HUG MELT and Collaboration MELT.

▶ Explore evolution of the Collaboration MELT to engage students and community partners as co-learners in the collaborative process.

Engaging students, industry and the community through authentic contexts.

Bowen (2005) suggests that "educators think of engagement in four related but different ways":

▶ 1. *Student engagement with **the learning process** - similar to **active learning***;

▶ 2. *Student engagement with **the object of study** - similar to **experiential learning***;

▶ 3. *Student engagement with **contexts** of the subject of study – similar to **multidisciplinary learning**;*

▶ 4. *Student engagement with the human condition*.

Engaging with our communities is at the heart of what we do at Southern Cross University.

Community engagement to be a collaborative process that connects the University with communities of all scales in a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge, expertise and experience in the context of partnership, trust, respect and reciprocity.

Through engagement with our communities we create inspiring student learning experiences, innovative and relevant research, and ultimately, stronger and more vibrant communities and regions.

Our founding Act describes a principal function of the University as *"the provision of courses of study or instruction across a range of fields, and the carrying out of research, to meet the needs of the community"*. Our vision and mission are firmly anchored in the ways that we enrich communities through the excellence of our graduates and the quality of our teaching and research.

We work to create distinctive opportunities for engaged learning and research as a hallmark of the Southern Cross University experience.
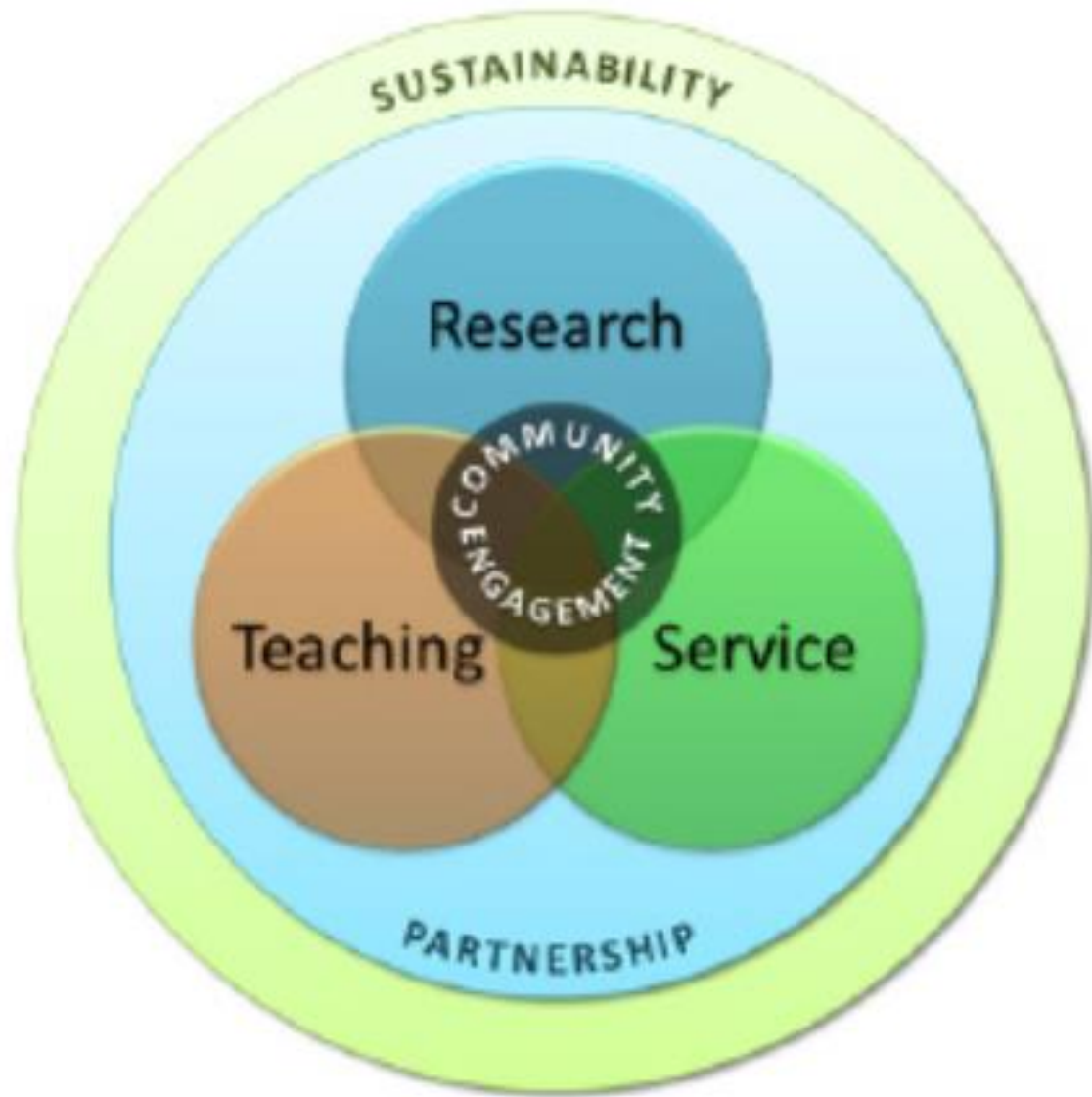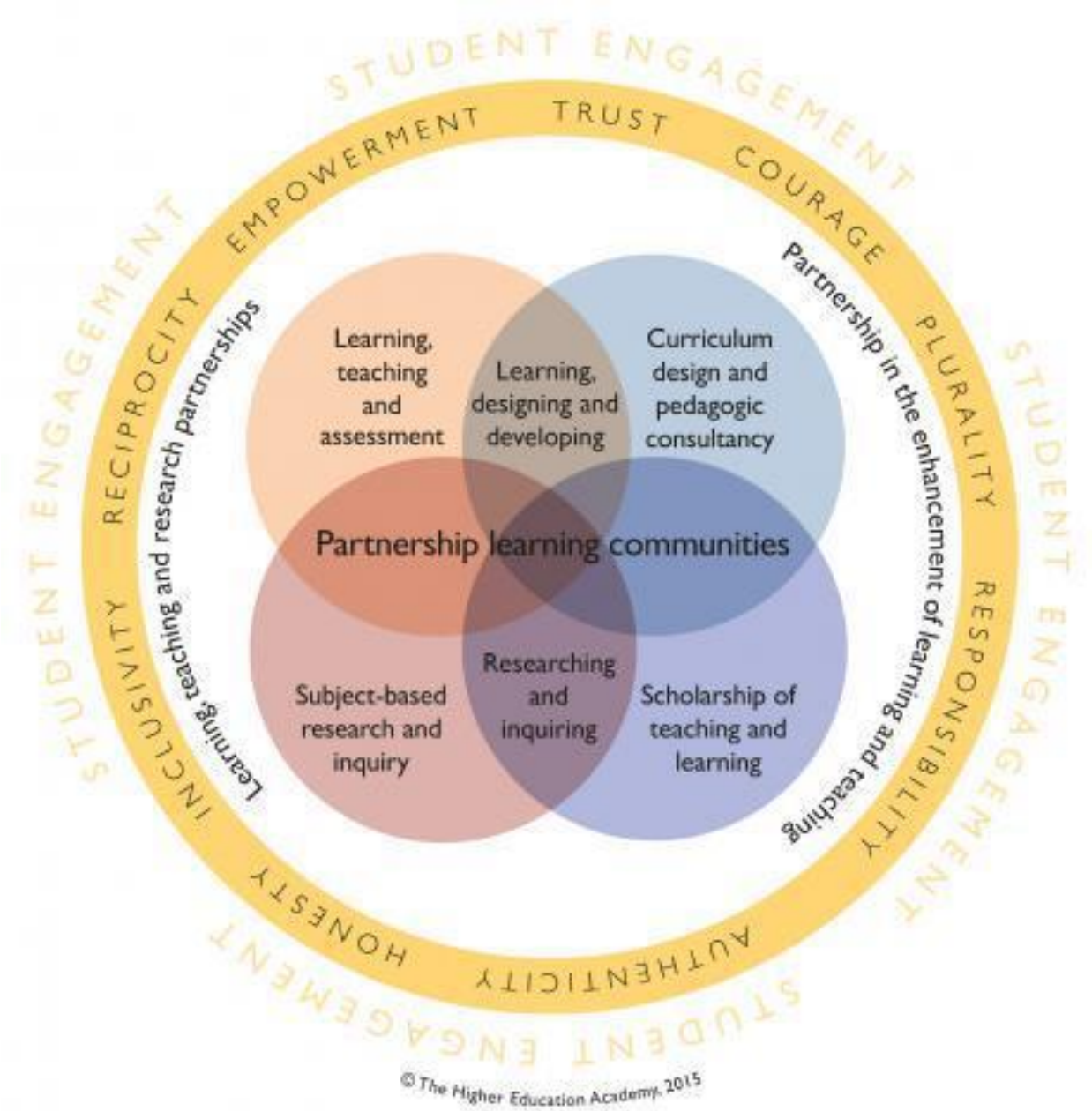
Design for Engaged Learning:
a continuum of real-world possibilities

Hypothetical learning activity
e.g. hypothetical assignment brief, role play or scenario

Single real world learning activity
e.g. invited lectures, a field trip or a real world assignment brief

Multiple real world learning activities
e.g. combination of field trips, invited lectures or a real world assignment brief

Whole unit process
e.g. real world undergraduate research project or placement/internship

Design for Engaged Learning:
a continuum of student engagement

Lecturer driven collaboration
eg: UA chooses activities,
projects, is responsible for
initial collaboration & external
partner relationship
management

Student driven collaboration
eg: student initiates real world
undergraduate research project
or placement/internship and is
responsible for the
collaboration from the outset

The Engaged Learning Incubator

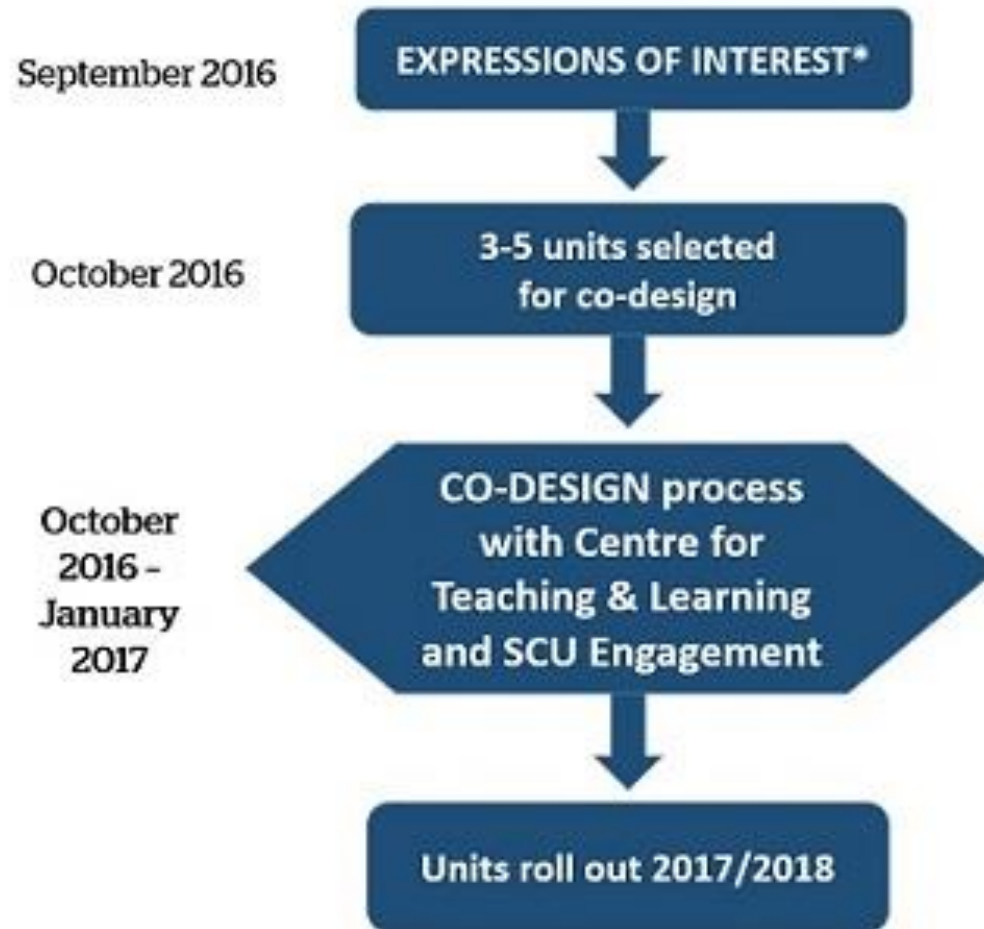Providing direct support to academic staff pursuing curriculum renewal and review of assessment in cases of **authentic, engaged learning** in a two staged process:

1. Let's Make It Real *workshops*;
2. Units selected for incubator through EOI for *co-design*.

This project was initiated as a collaboration between by two whole of University work units – The Centre for Teaching and Learning and SCU

Engaged Learning Incubator

September 2016 → **EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST***

October 2016 → **3-5 units selected for co-design**

October 2016 – January 2017 → **CO-DESIGN process with Centre for Teaching & Learning and SCU Engagement**

→ **Units roll out 2017/2018**

EOI Process: Unit Assessors need support from their Head of School as there will be some workload implications depending on if it is rewriting and adapt the nominated unit of work, or activities within.

Selection criteria include: *Suitability* - is the unit well suited to experiential learning methodologies to achieve learning outcomes? *Complementarity* - will this unit compliment other engaged learning within the course? *Sustainability*: is this unit offered regularly as a key part of the course? *Spread* - looking for model units across disciplines and across all years.

Units (subjects) involved with the Southern Cross University Engaged Learning Incubator

Discipline	Unit	Context	MELT
Arts & Social Science	**Community Engagement Project**	*Student-driven community-based project*	☑
Arts & Social Science	**Introduction to Social Welfare**	*Student-initiated short volunteering/service learning*	☑
Business & Tourism	**Sustainable Tourism**	*Student-chosen case-study*	☑
Environmental Science & Engineering	**Introduction to GIS**	*Industry research problem - selected by lecturer. Curriculum design influenced by student & industry advisors.*	X

Introduction to Social Work

- Introduction to Social Welfare is a core Unit in the Bachelor of Social Welfare. It is compulsory for Bachelor of Social Welfare students and is usually undertaken by 1st year students (many of whom are mid-year entry students undertaking it as one of their first Units of study for the course).

- This Unit takes a student centered approach in introducing students to key concepts, theories, ideas and perspectives in the field of Australian social welfare, and explores the main sources of critical knowledge, skills and attributes that are essential to social welfare practice in relation to various client populations.
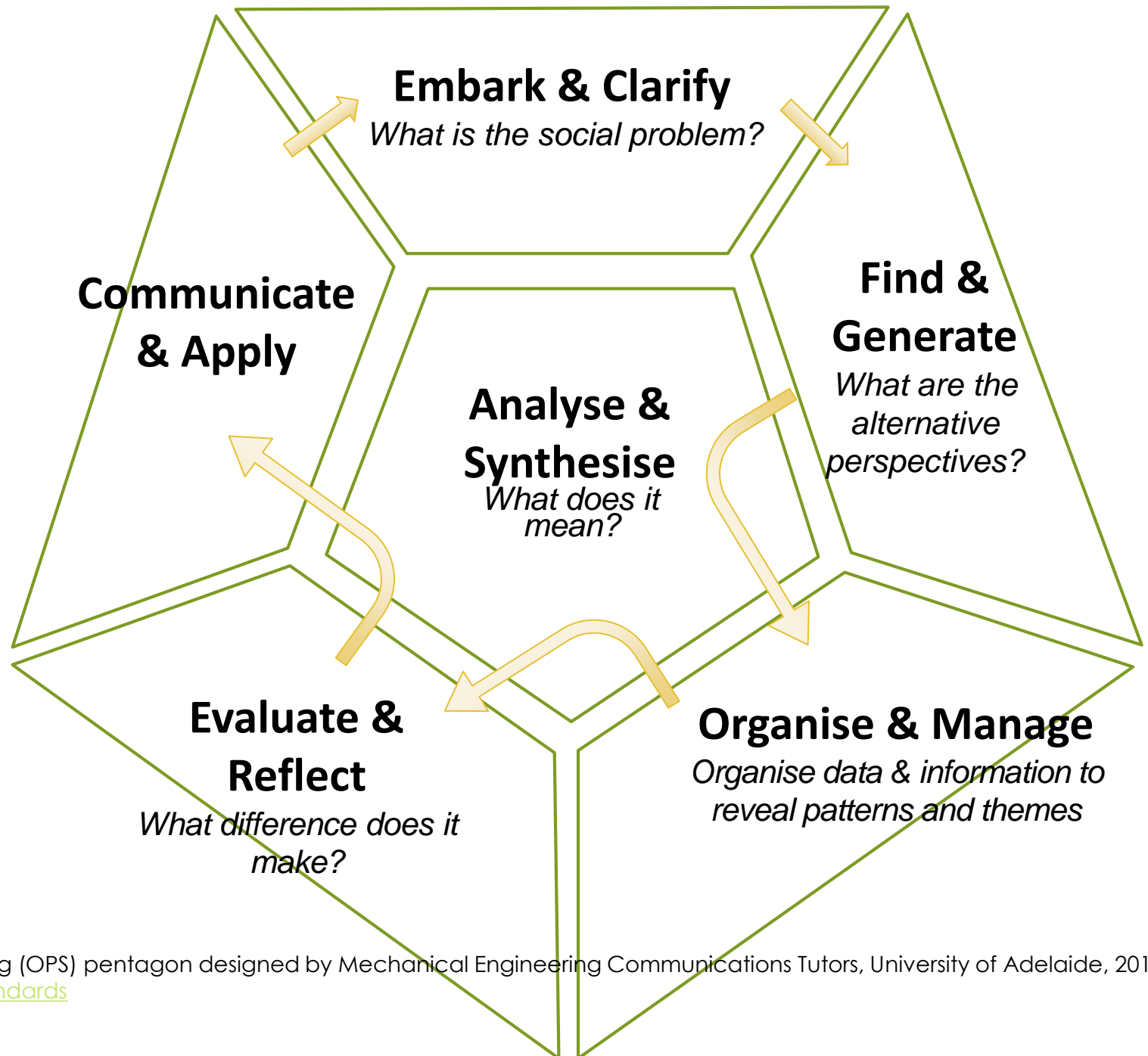
Community Engagement Project

- Provides students with support to undertake real-world collaborative active learning opportunities located in community organisations or settings.

- Meets community needs through the application of disciplinary knowledge and practice.

- Develops skills that contribute to students' ability to act as ethical and socially responsible citizens through ongoing critical self-reflection, collaboration, active listening and dialogue.

- Both students and partners engaged in the learning activities and outcomes.

Critical Analysis - the "HUG" MELT

'When in doubt, analyse & synthesise'

Based on the problem solving pentagon (1). Mapped to Social Welfare Core Competencies (novice) (2)

Embark & Clarify
What is the social problem?

Communicate & Apply

Find & Generate
What are the alternative perspectives?

Analyse & Synthesise
What does it mean?

Evaluate & Reflect
What difference does it make?

Organise & Manage
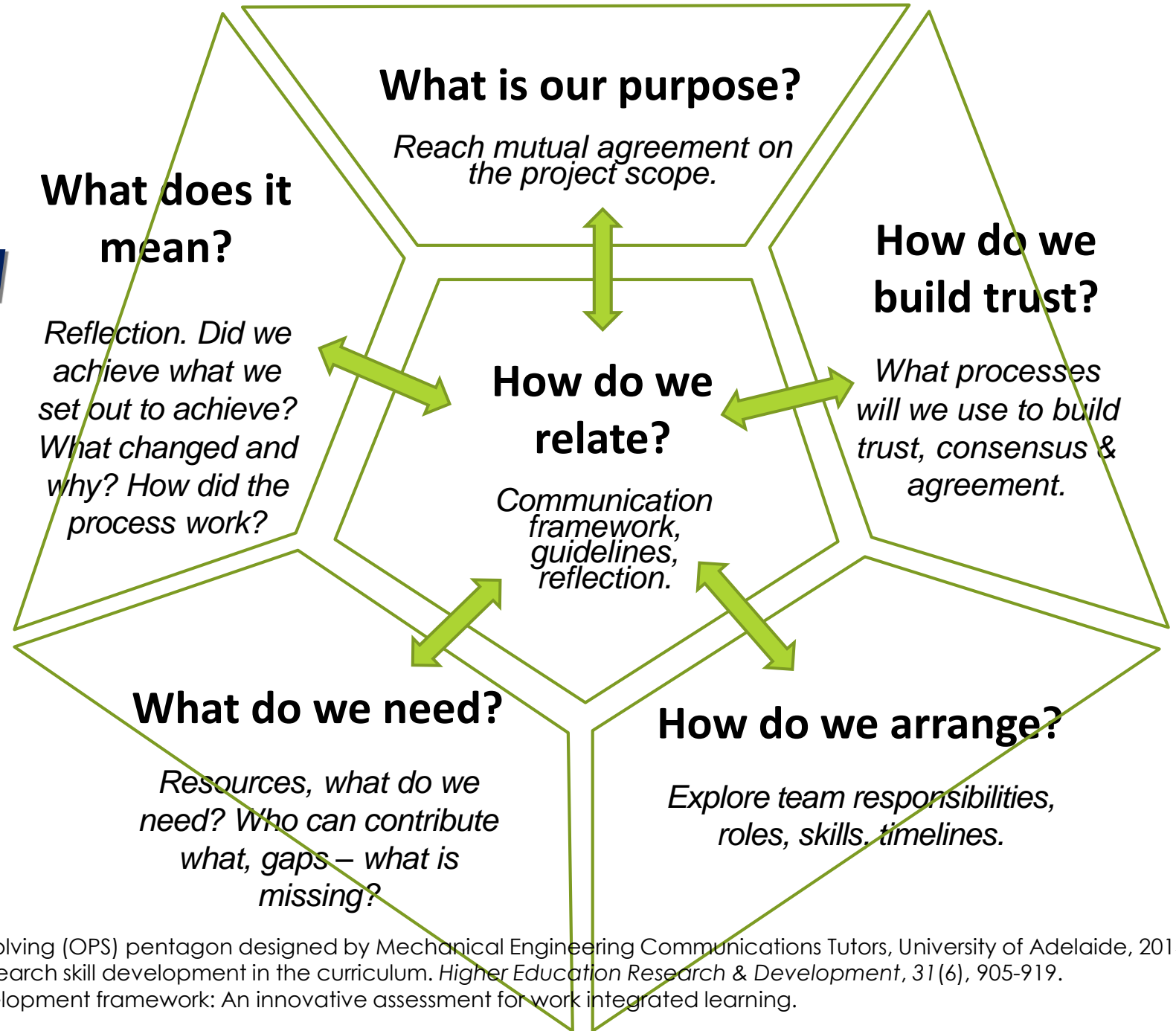*Organise data & information to reveal patterns and themes*

1. Ritchhart, R. & Perkins, D. 2008 Optimising Problem Solving (OPS) pentagon designed by Mechanical Engineering Communications Tutors, University of Adelaide, 2014.
2. Australian Social Work Education and Accreditation Standards

THE COLLABORATION MELT

'When in doubt communicate'

Based on the optimising problem solving pentagon (1). Inspiration drawn from the Research Skills Development (2) and Work Skill Development (3) frameworks.

What is our purpose?

Reach mutual agreement on the project scope.

What does it mean?

Reflection. Did we achieve what we set out to achieve? What changed and why? How did the process work?

How do we build trust?

What processes will we use to build trust, consensus & agreement.

How do we relate?

Communication framework, guidelines, reflection.

What do we need?

Resources, what do we need? Who can contribute what, gaps – what is missing?

How do we arrange?

Explore team responsibilities, roles, skills, timelines.

1. Ritchhart, R. & Perkins, D. 2008 Optimising Problem Solving (OPS) pentagon designed by Mechanical Engineering Communications Tutors, University of Adelaide, 2014.
2. Willison, J. W. (2012). When academics integrate research skill development in the curriculum. *Higher Education Research & Development, 31*(6), 905-919.
3. Bandaranaike, S., & Willison, J. (2010). Work skill development framework: An innovative assessment for work integrated learning.

COLLABORATION PRINCIPLES

What is our purpose?

Establish mutual agreement on project scope and deliver on process and outputs as agreed.

Who do we trust?

Build trust, consensus and agreement to be able to work together.

How do we relate?

Establish a communication strategy, with guidelines, as well as incorporate self-awareness and reflection.

How do we arrange?

Explore roles, responsibilities and timeframes.

What do we need?

Identify who can contribute what? What is missing? Do we need to redefine scope and purpose?

What does it mean?

Reflect on our experience to understand what the process of collaboration means for ourselves. Give feedback to help build mutual understanding with others.

Emotional Intelligence

IF YOU WERE WAITING FOR **THIS** A SIGN IS IT

Communication

Action learning (Bob Dick 2017) approach where students and partners forming the action learning sets, lecturers as the facilitators.

Dick, B. 2017. Action Learning – Using project teams to build leadership and resilience. An Interchange Publication, Chapel Hill, Queensland.

Portfolio Part A - Reflections ⊙

If a Blog or Journal can be graded, a grade assigned to an individual me

Journal Instructions ⌃

This part of the portfolio assessment item requires you to engage in a structured series of reflections throughout the session in the form of a blog or journal. Respond to the prompts each week to guide your reflections. These will be linked to learning outcomes related to teamwork, which is central to the successful attainment of this unit. **This journal is a private space for your individual reflection.**

You will be required to complete reflections over weeks 3–7 and at weeks 10-12 (8 weeks x 200 words per reflection = 1,600 words total).

DUE: WEEK 6 and WEEK 13.

Document your project process and contributions via "artifacts" or examples of you work in written, visual form or through links to digital media.
Show how this work links to your projects goals as set out in the Collaboration Agreement (Assignment 1). Add artifacts each week to build up your portfolio.
This is a "public" journal enabling you to document and showcase process as well as outputs.

DUE: ***WEEK 6*** and ***WEEK 13***

Showcasing Your Process - Principle 1

Showcasing Your Process - Principle 2

Showcasing Your Process - Principle 3

Showcasing Your Process - Principle 1

Establishing purpose and mutual agreement on scope.

Thursday, November 30, 2017

Week 4 - Reflection ⊙ New
Posted by ▮▮▮▮▮ at Thursday, November 30, 2017 9:41:49 AM

I have discovered through emotional intelligence (EI) testing my level of ability to connect with others. At the start of the collaboration I found it overwhelming creating a project with a stranger. However, I was reminded of my ability to connect with others when I received a high EI score, which gave me confidence. Despite my EI result being high, I did identify within myself the need to listen more deeply to others. At times I can get caught up in my thoughts and not be present in the moment, and for this reason I enjoyed the 'Elder invites all Australians to embrace tradition of deep listening' reading. As a Westernised Indigenous person I found comfort in being reminded to deeply listen to the land by elder Miriam Rose (Kohn 2016). Moreover, this reading allowed me to awaken my senses and really listen to what my partner was saying and to pay attention to what the underlying tones of the conversation were. I was to design the project around the aim of finding affordable housing solutions for the homeless, which my partner had asked for. My project design was approved by my partner, which reiterated my ability to listen to what my partner needed to meet the intended aims.

Thursday, December 7, 2017

Week 5 - Reflection ⊙
Posted by 🖼 Kayla Philp at Thursday, December 7, 2017 10:49:11 AM

I have brought to my community project my passion for helping others, as well as my learnt knowledge and research skills that I accumulated over time through doing my Bachelor of Social Science Degree. My community partner (John) also has studied a Social Science Degree, which has been a positive contribution to our collaboration, as we have been able to connect on similar interests and have built rapport easily. John and I have been able to work out a project that utilises my research skills and also allows me to have some hands-on experience working with homeless people directly. We have used a strengths-based approach in our project by finding out each other's abilities, what we can offer, and how much time we both have to achieve a common goal. Stohs (2014) suggests that by using a strengths-based approach to project planning, and by asking each participant what they can bring to the project, people are more likely to reach the intended goal. Therefore, because John and I built rapport in the beginning by asking questions regarding each other's skillsets and what we could bring to the project, we have been able to build trust and meet our intended goals.

Stohs, L 2014, *Strengths-Based Project Learning*, online video, viewed 5 December 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAMuGRljOhM&index=31&list=PLHjhHpgwhouMvdkXm_QvnAHm3NFo2dPvA

Where to next?

Discipline	Unit	2018	MELT
Arts & Social Science	**Community Engagement Project**	*Session 2 – second iteration*	☑
Arts & Social Science	**Introduction to Social Welfare**	*Session 1 – first iteration*	☑
Business & Tourism	**Sustainable Tourism**	*Session 2 – first iteration*	☑
Environmental Science & Engineering	**Introduction to GIS**	*Session 2 – second iteration*	X

Challenges… and opportunities!

- *Bottom up approach – need to document the pilots/capture UA and student feedback*
- *Single unit application – no whole of course view*
- *Ongoing organisational change*
- *Communicate up!*
  - *embedding RSD at under grad level/capstones/masters*
  - *Opportunity to embed WSD as part of our "employability framework"*
- *Work across at least 3-4 central work units*
- *Where to next?*
  - *Embed existing MELTS, test through further iterations.*
  - *Opportunity for future MELT workshops*