Strategy Principles and Practice

John Pritchard, Durham University

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# **Overview**

- Surveying – scope, approaches and principles

- Navigating - engaging in the strategy process
  – Durham University
 – The Open University

- Reflecting – your thoughts

Thinking **Big**

Thinking Long

Multiple Futures

Today's Knowns & Uncertainties

What if?
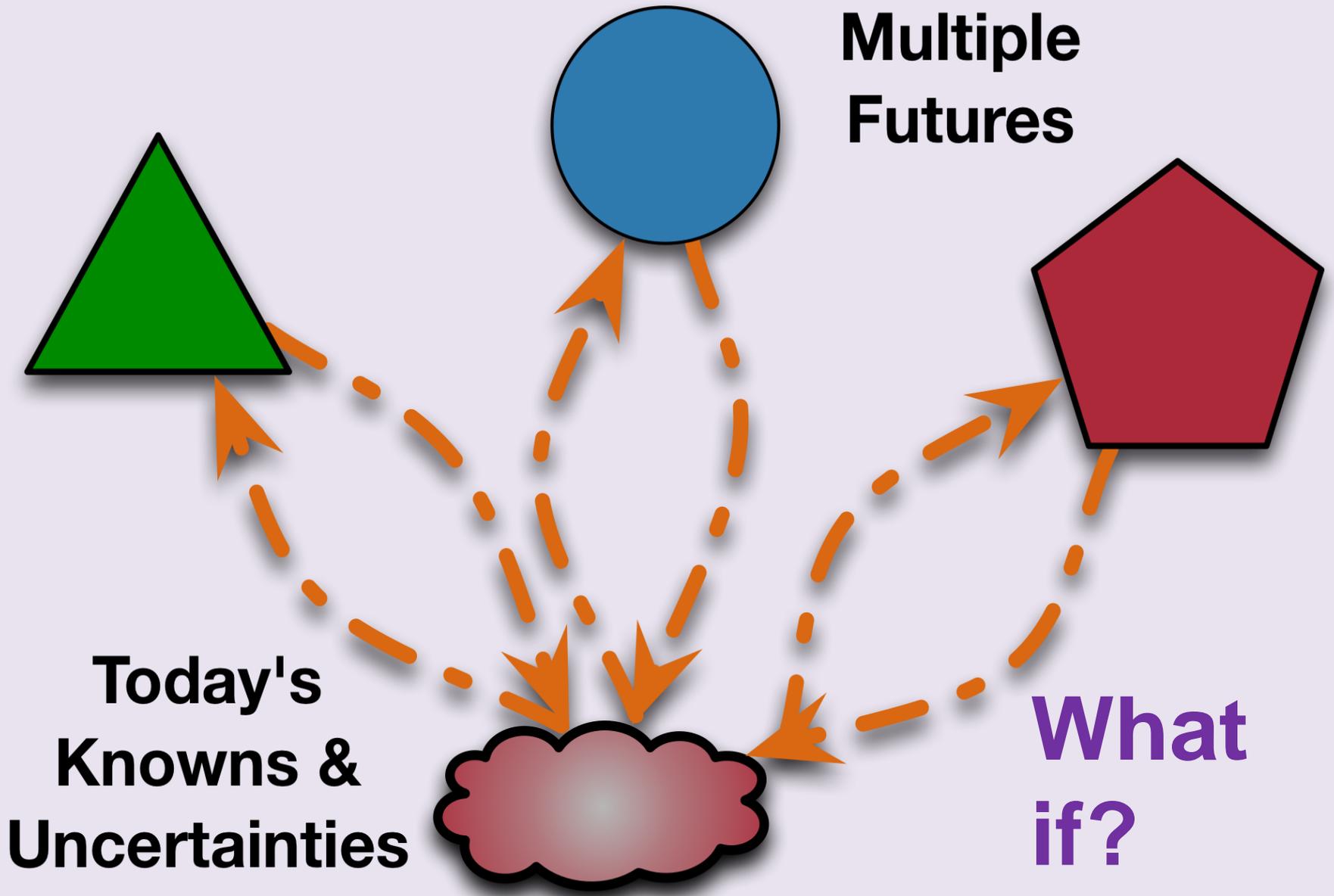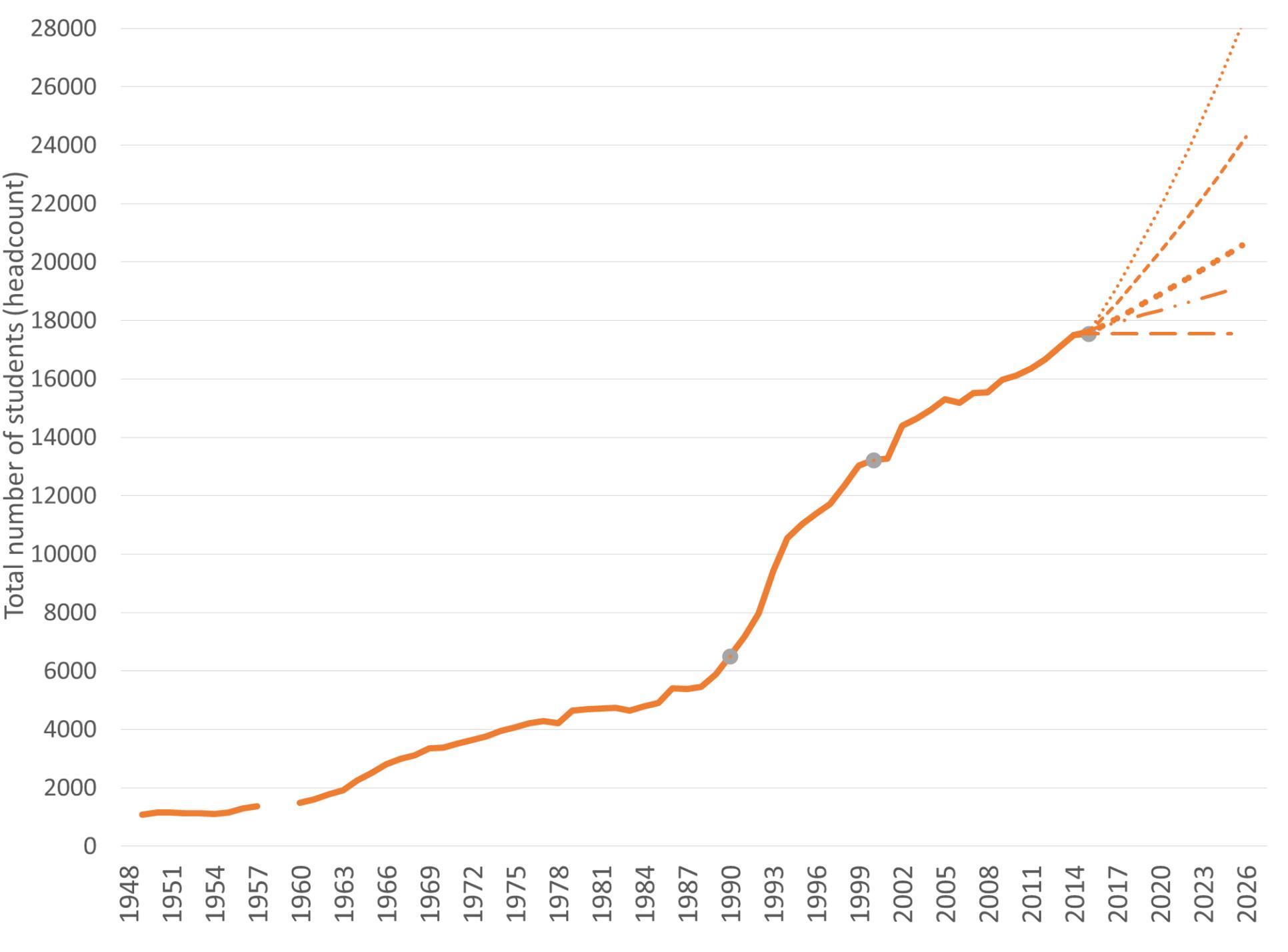
Thinking

D E E P
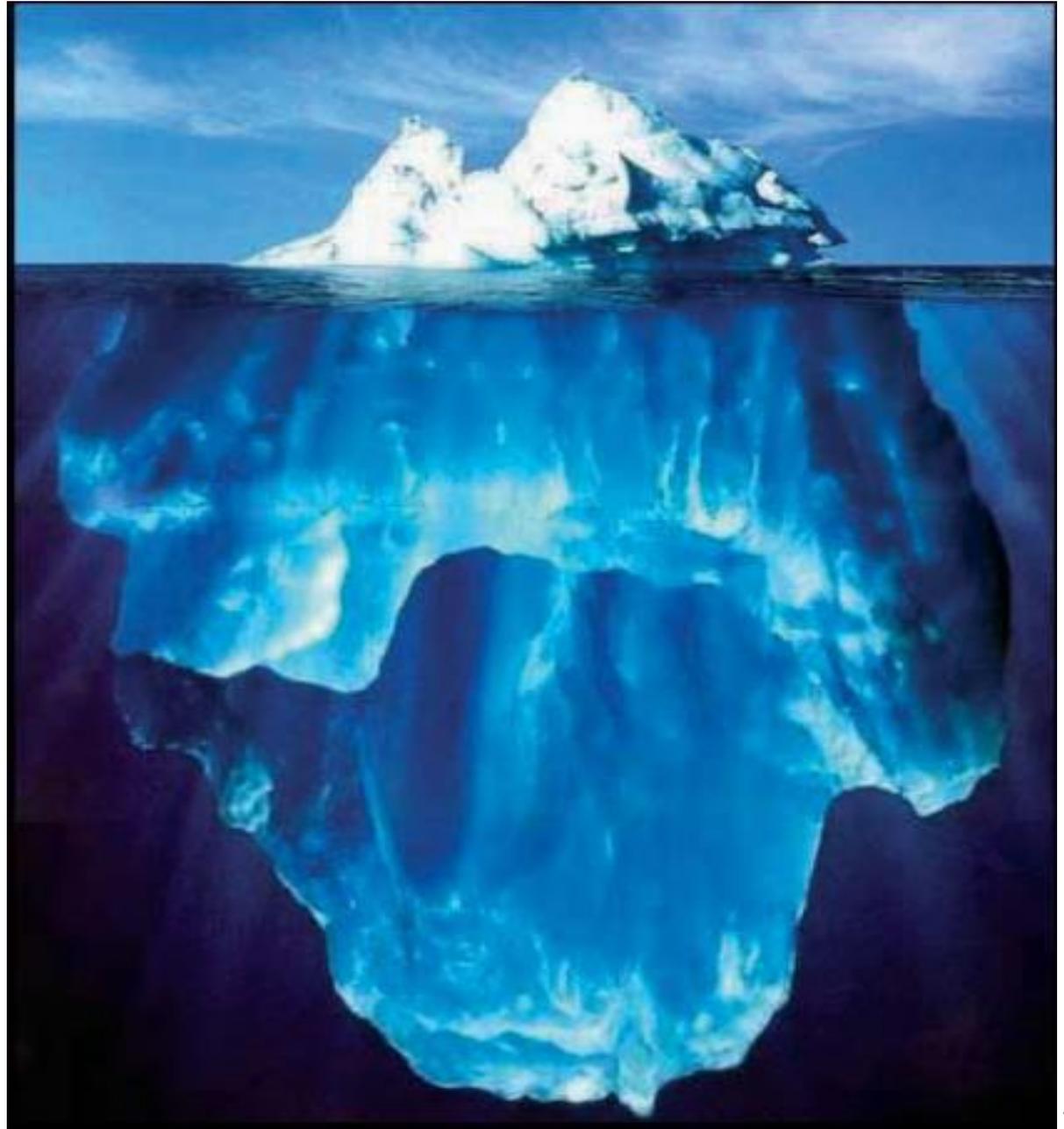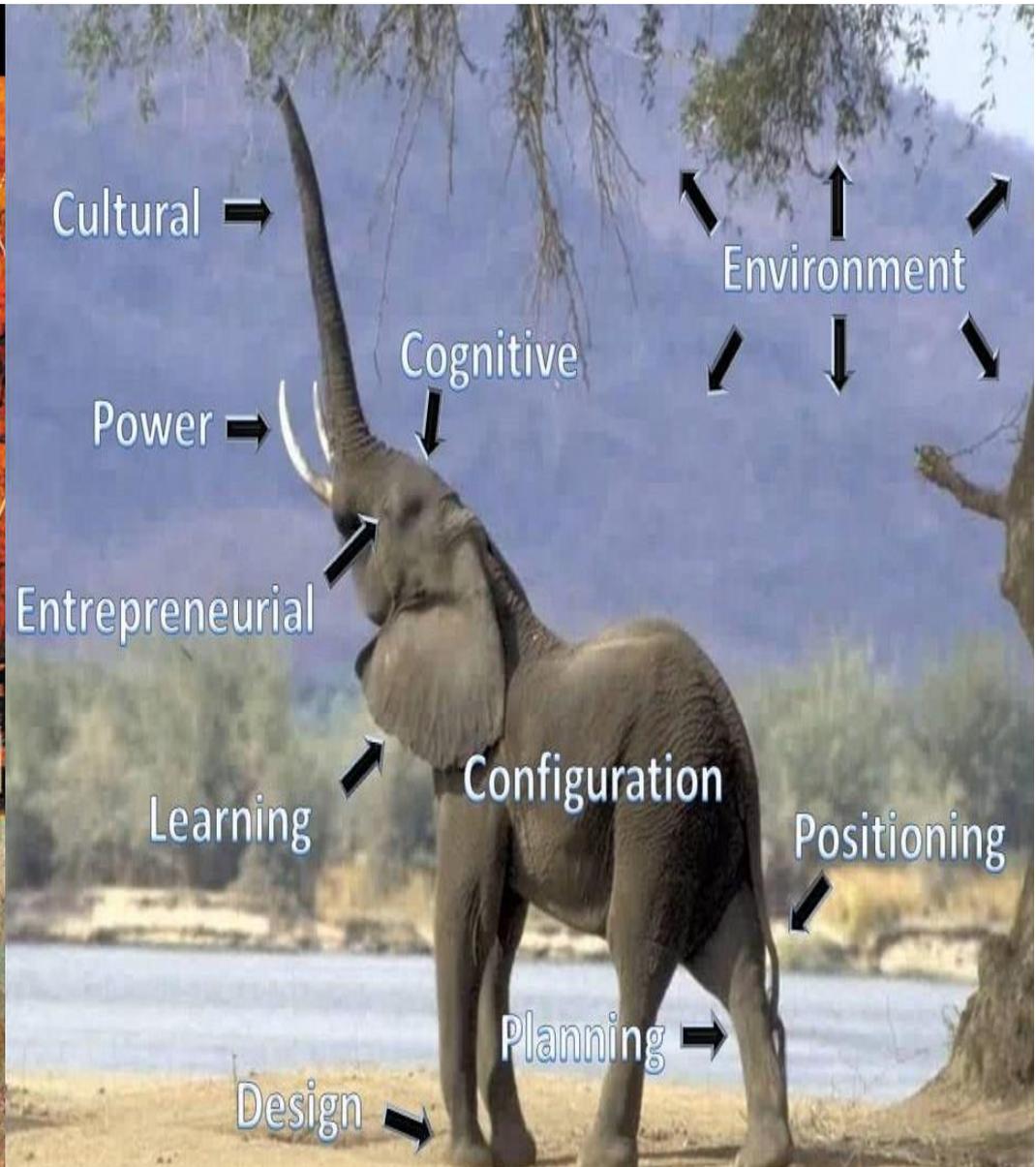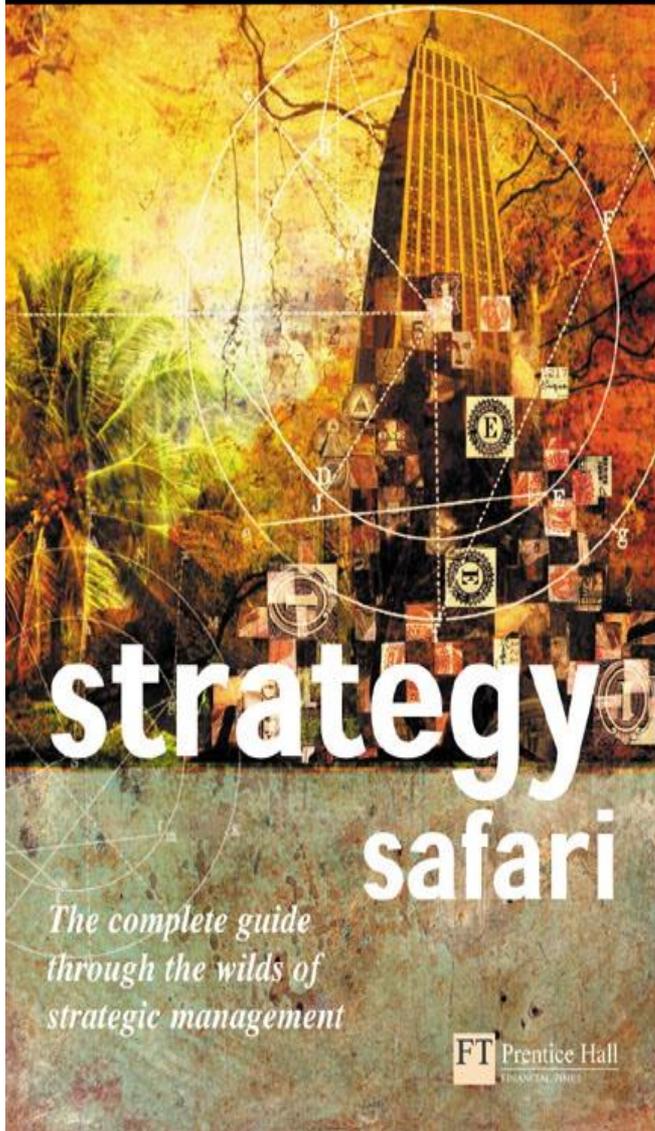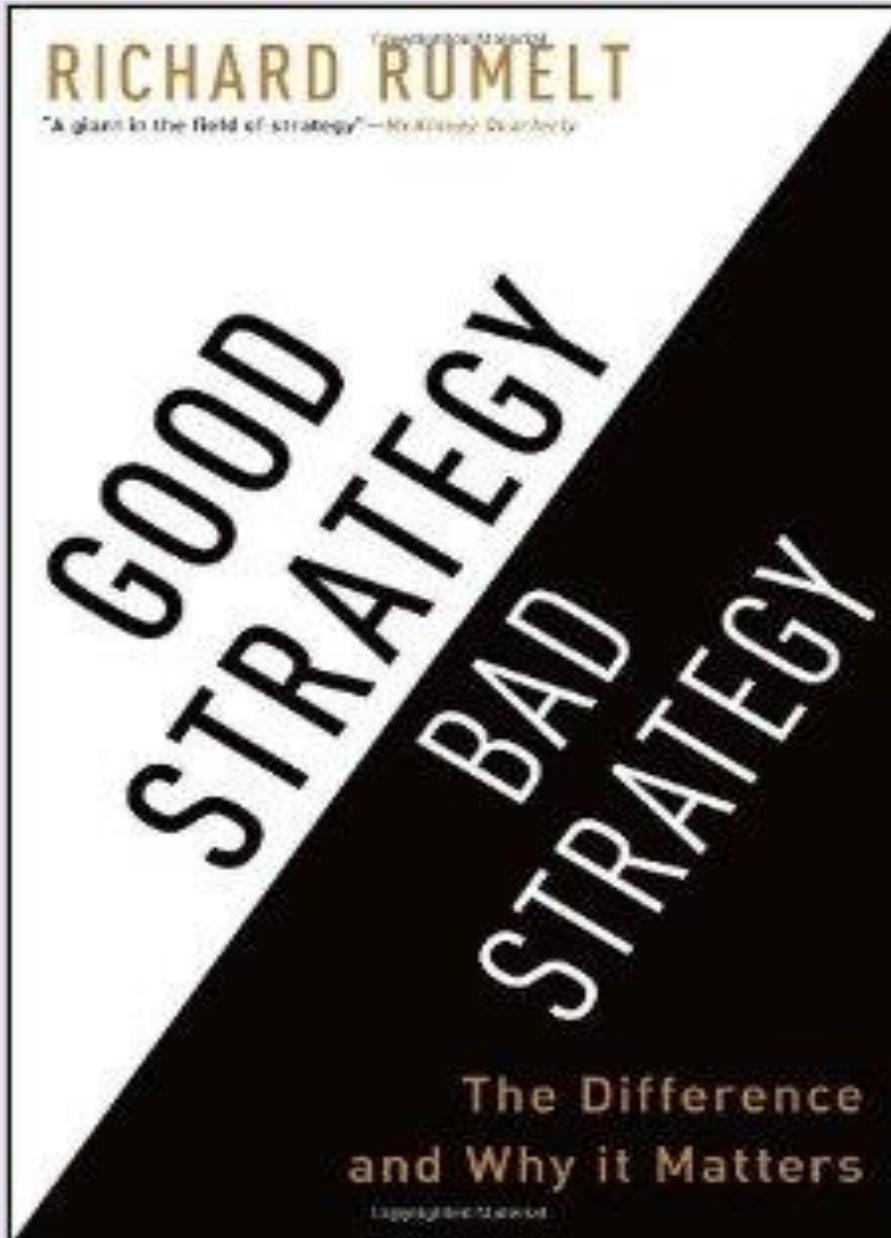
Diagnosis of Critical Challenge

Guiding Policy

Action Plan
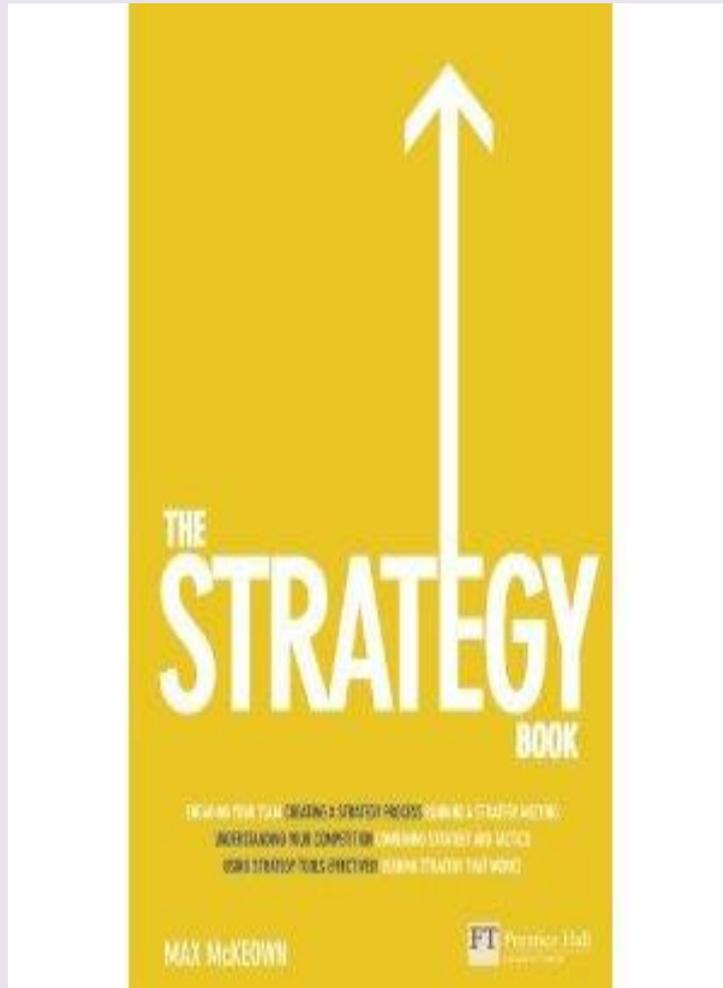
The Strategy Book
Max McKeown

A practical toolkit for those who would manage strategic change

Strategy Principles

- Develop close working relationships with senior leaders
- **Engage and communicate**
- Define workstreams
- Establish active governance and management
- Develop a strong evidence base
- Determine priorities
- Align strategies
- Develop strategy iteratively
- Think about implementation at the development stage
- Make strategy relevant to everyday roles

THE DAIR MODEL

Durham Analysis and Intelligence Review

Establish strategic imperative

Evidence gathering

Analysis & production

Engage & Influence

Re-evaluation

Planning & direction
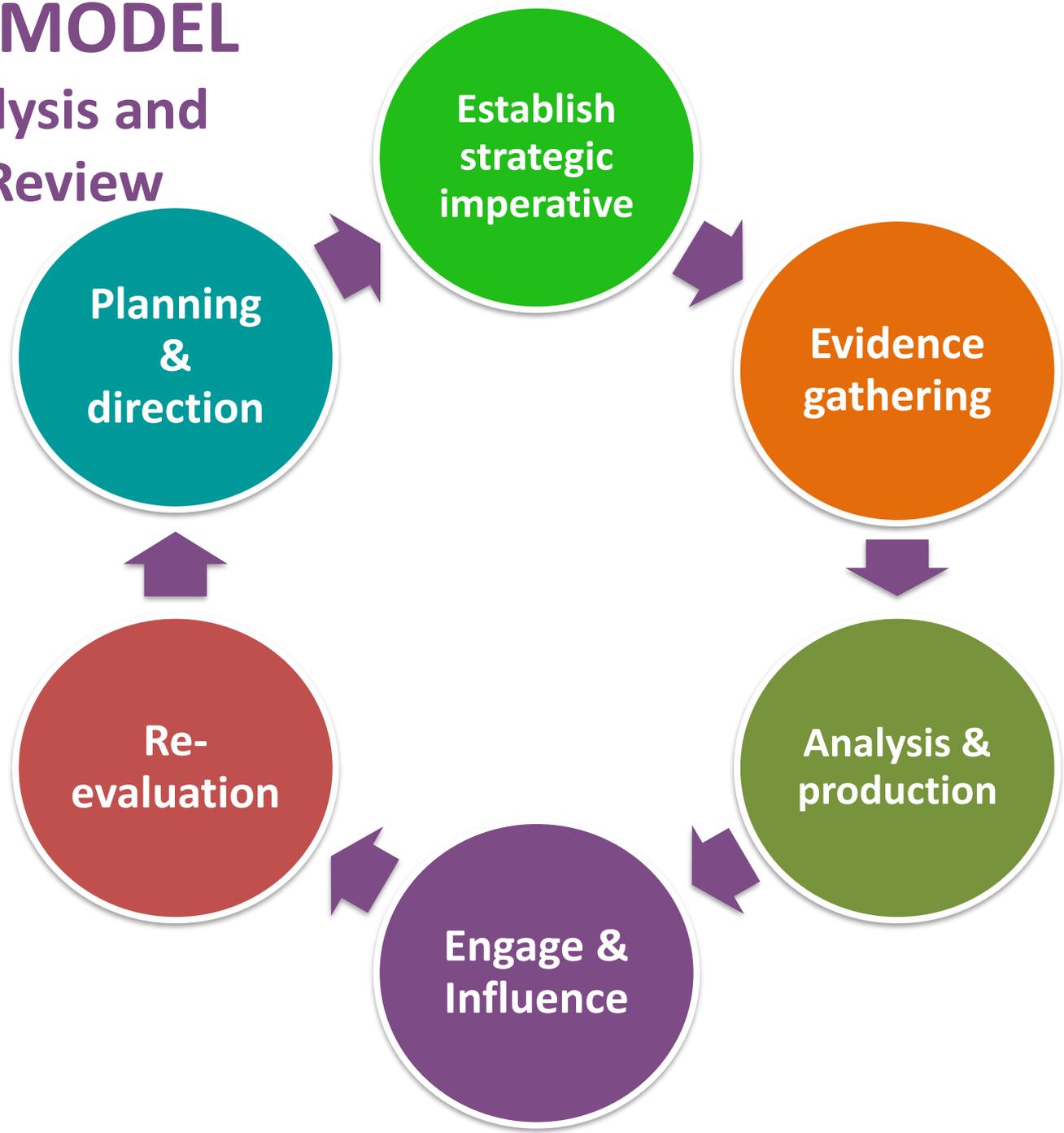
The **sweet spot** of **institutional impact**

Strategic Context

Evidence, analysis, insight

Engagement

Micro-politics identity and influence

HEAD
(intellectual buy-in)

HANDS
(behavioural effort)

HEART
(emotional buy-in)
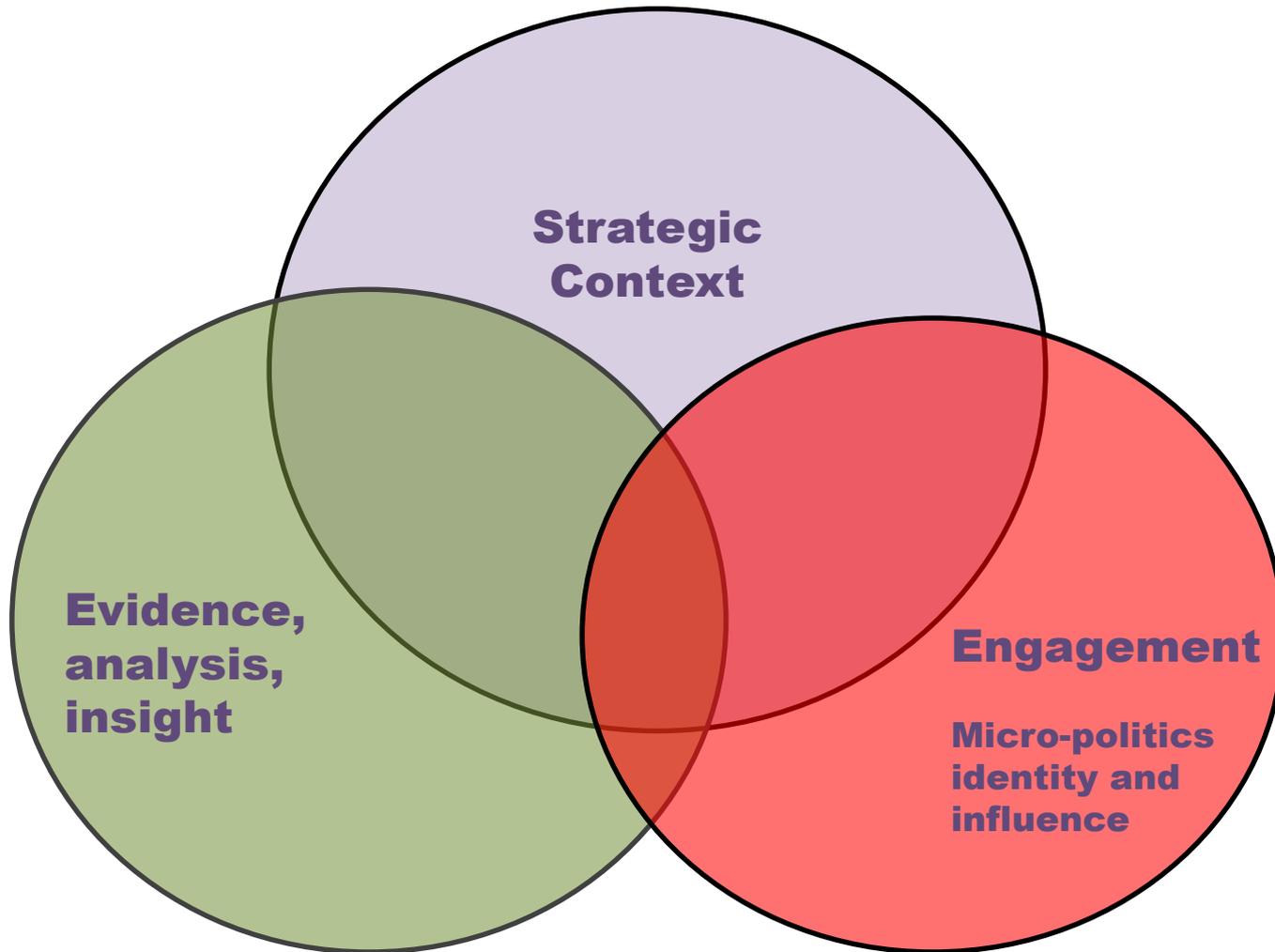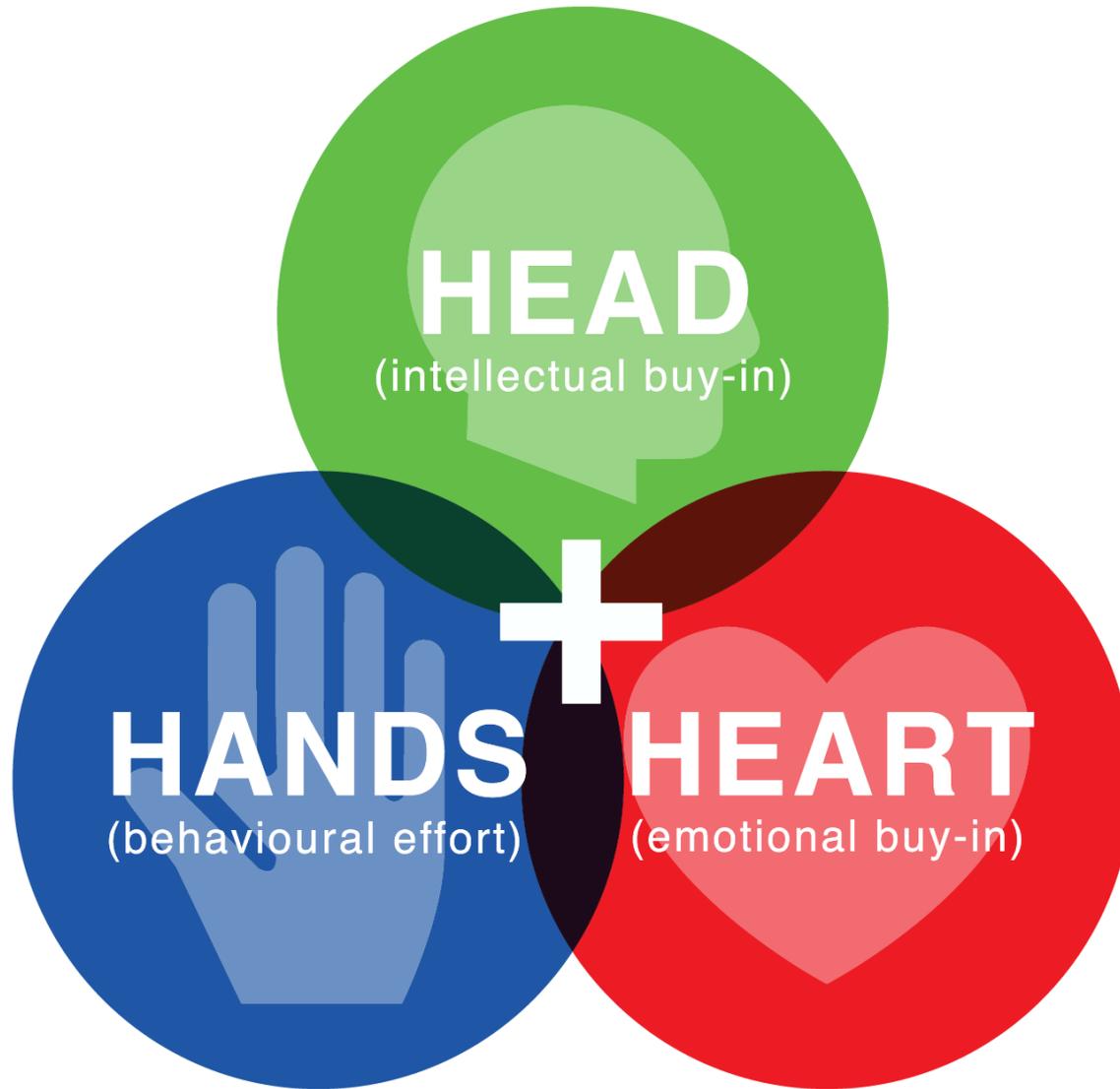
Durham University Strategic Context

- A new Vice-Chancellor and a changing senior team

- Sharing insight and opportunity

- Client focus: aligning and adapting insight

- A compelling and clear evidence base

- A programme of active, phased engagement

Durham University: Strategy and Sustainability

Critical mass
in subject areas $\longrightarrow$ World leading

Durham
University

Small scale

Broad
subject
base
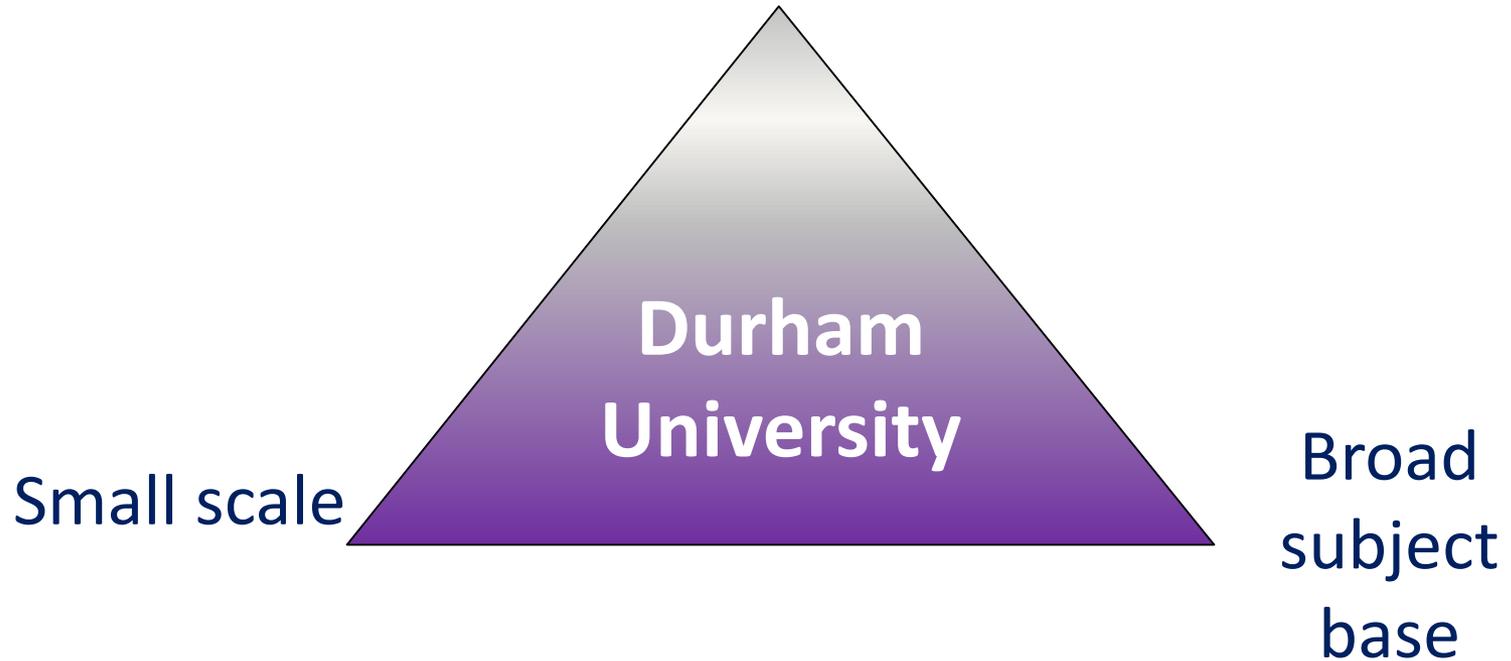
Campus development
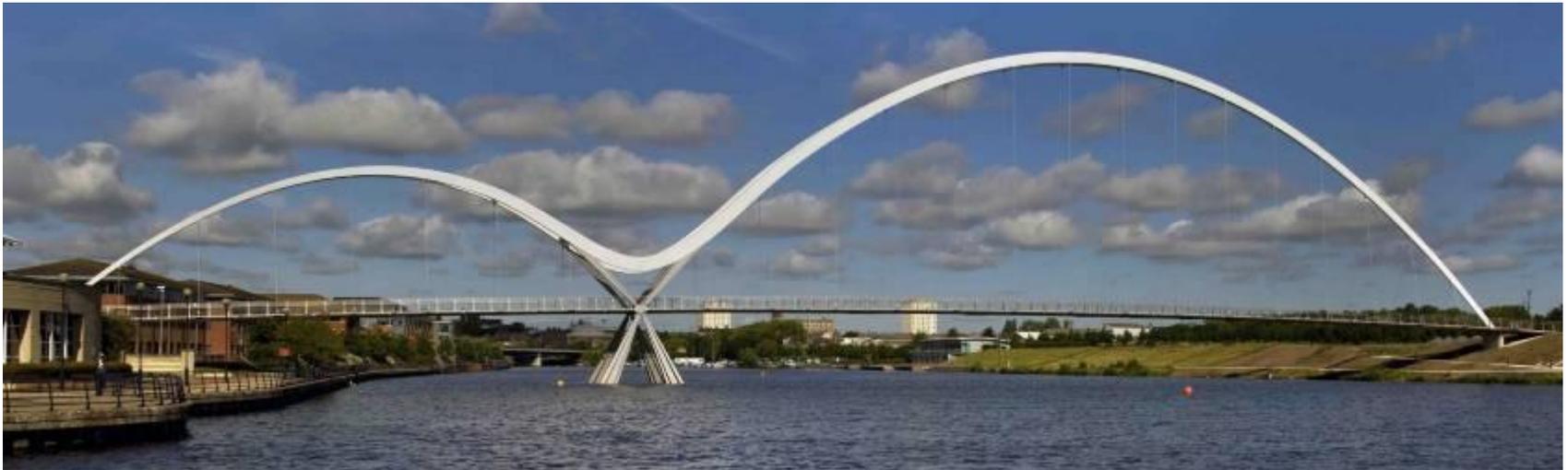
Julie Hodges

Managing and Leading People through Organizational Change:

The theory and practice of sustaining change through people

Strategy Stakeholder Analysis

Individual or Team	Strategy role: leader, influencer, participant	Extent of strategy impact	Degree of support	Level of influence	Issues

Entering the Zoud
The Zone of Uncomfortable Dialogue

- Accept the uncomfortable
- Review the situation
- Identify wants and needs
- Be objective
- Be flexible
- Recognise triggers
- Actively support others
- Be honest
- Assume responsibility

Strategic decisions

- SMPH

- Academic Departments

- Durham International Study Centre

Influencing strategic change

Sensing needs, amplifying understanding, building awareness, creating credibility, legitimizing viewpoints, generating partial solutions, broadening support, identifying zones of indifference and opposition, changing perceived risks, enabling flexibility, putting forward trial concepts, creating pockets of commitment, eliminating undesired options, crystallizing focus and consensus, managing coalitions, formalizing agreed commitments

Engaging multiple stakeholders in strategy development: Open University case study

Anna Barber
Head of Strategic Planning
The Open University

Strategy development process

Understanding our stakeholders

| Governance	Staff	Students	External
Senate	10.3k staff overall	138k students (headcount)	Funding bodies in the four nations of the UK
Strategic Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC)	4.7k academic and non-academic staff based in 13 locations across the UK	67k FTEs	Commercial partners
Council	5.6k Associate Lectures distributed all across the UK	Located across the four nations of the UK, elsewhere in the EU and outside the EU	Employers

Strategy Stakeholder Analysis

Individual or Team	Strategy role: leader, influencer, participant	Extent of strategy impact	Degree of support	Level of influence	Issues	How to engage

Iterative process of engagement and development

VC shares initial "think piece" with the whole University

Executive use this feedback plus external and internal analysis to scope initial vision and objectives

Emerging strategy is formulated and shared with whole University

Vision statement and objectives are refined and shared back

The strategy is refined into its final version with a "you said, we did" mapping showing how the feedback was used

Jun - July 2015

Sep - Oct 2015

Nov 2015 - Jan 2016

Feb - Mar 2016

Apr –May 2016

Refined though feedback from Council and other governance groups plus staff and student reps via online forums

Feedback from Council Strategic Planning and Resources Committee plus a workshop with~50 senior staff

- Senate and Council discussions,
- Staff briefing event led by VC, discussions in each Unit, feedback route and updates via intranet site,
- Discussions with Student Exec plus online Student Consultative Forum

- Senate, SPRC and Council workshop
- 6 large cross-University workshops with staff and students
- Event with external stakeholders

Formal approval followed by launch event and ongoing communications

Engaging mixed groups

Cross-University workshops

Objective: To bring together people from different parts and levels of the organisation - on an equal footing – and provide a creative environment for staff to share and develop new perspectives on the strategic objectives and generate new ideas and approaches

Details: 6 workshops with approximately 100 staff and students at each


Output: captured and shared back via intranet for transparency and to generate further discussion
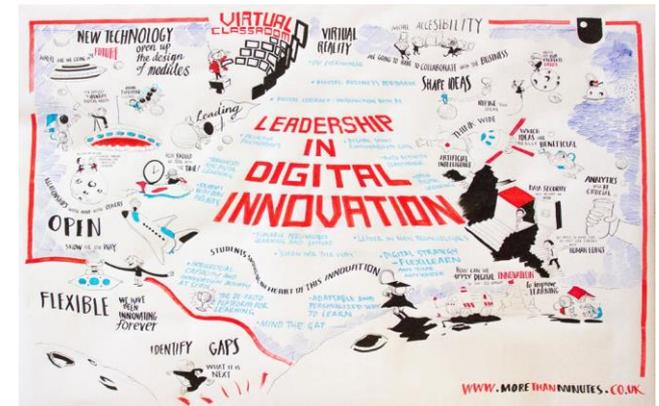
Outcomes: A survey of attendees showed they felt that their engagement in the workshop had been worthwhile, felt they had made a helpful contribution, were aware of what the strategy is trying to achieve and clear on how they can play a role in its delivery

Levels of engagement

Awareness

Telling people, without elaboration, about a decision or topic. A one-way process, which is unlikely to motivate people to engage except where the rationale for involvement is self-evident

Understanding

Communicating information one-way with context or rationale. Explanations and evidence on which people can form their opinions are provided

Favourability

A two-way process, in which ideas are discussed as part of the decision-making process. Input and feedback are invited.

Involvement

A sophisticated two-way process, where challenges are shared and everyone works collaboratively to come up with solutions

Ownership

Open, collaborative working, where everyone feels equally able to take the initiative, challenging current practice and suggesting potential improvements

Adapted from Bill Quirke "Making Connections"

Key lessons learned

- Develop close working relationships with senior leaders

    - Requires close communication with the VC

    - Plan in plenty of discussion time with the Executive

- Develop strategy iteratively

    - Very resource intensive, requires good planning

    - Creates a more robust strategy and greater buy-in

- Engage and communicate

    - Collaborative effort: particularly with Communications team and Learning and Organisational Development team

    - Prepare for negative and positive feedback – all valuable

    - Needs to be authentic

- Think about implementation at the development stage

    - This is where the greatest challenge lies…

Influencing strategic change

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