How can teaching and learning in college based higher education evolve to meet future employers' needs?

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Chichester College Group

CCG HE offer: BA, BSc, FD, HNC, HND & PGCE

› **Art, Design & Media** (Creative Media, Film & Television, Fashion Design, Fine Art, Photography, Graphic Design & Illustration, Textile Design)

› **Music** (Music Business & Management, Performance and Production)

› **Theatre Arts** (Acting, Costume Design, Dance, Prop Making, Makeup & Hair, Musical Theatre, Stage Management)

› **Engineering** (General, Electrical, Motorsport)

› **Animal Management**

› **Business**

› **Computing**

› **Construction Management**

› **Sport, Exercise & Health Sciences**

› **PGCE/ Cert Ed**

› **Childhood Studies**

Partners & Awarding Bodies

Validating Partner	**Validating & Franchise Partner**	**Validating Partner**	**Franchise Partner**	**Awarding Body**
• Art & Design and Creative Industries (BAs) • Taught at Northbrook (West Durrington Campus) • **53%** of students study on UAL programmes (306 students)	• Validating Partner for Motorsport (FD & BSc) – taught at Northbrook (Shoreham Campus) • Franchise Partner for PGCE – taught at Brighton Met College. • **18.5%** of students study on University of Brighton programmes (107 students*) *11 franchise/ 96 validated	• Courses in Business, Childhood Studies, Dance and Sport (BA Top-Ups & FDs) • Taught at Chichester, Crawley & Worthing colleges. • **8%** of students study on University of Chichester programmes (46 students)	• Courses in Creative Media, Business and Education (BSc, FD and PGCE) • Taught at Chichester • **3.5%** of students study on University of Portsmouth programmes (20 students)	• HNC/D qualifications in various subjects (Animal, Business, Computing, Construction, Engineering & Media) • Taught at Brinsbury, Chichester, Crawley & Northbrook • **17%** of students study on Pearson programmes (97 students)

Project title : How can teaching and learning in college based higher education evolve to meet future employers' needs?

Aim : To explore how teaching and learning in college-based higher education (CBHE) can evolve to better meet the needs of future employers, by engaging **multiple stakeholders in a collaborative research** process that informs curriculum design and strategic planning.

Objectives:

- To implement a participatory action research model that empowers students and staff to co-lead the research process through campus-based research pods.

-To collect perspectives from CCG staff and students, alongside other HE providers and employers, on the skills and attributes needed by future employers.

- To investigate how current curriculum and teaching practices align with employer expectations and identify areas for enhancement.
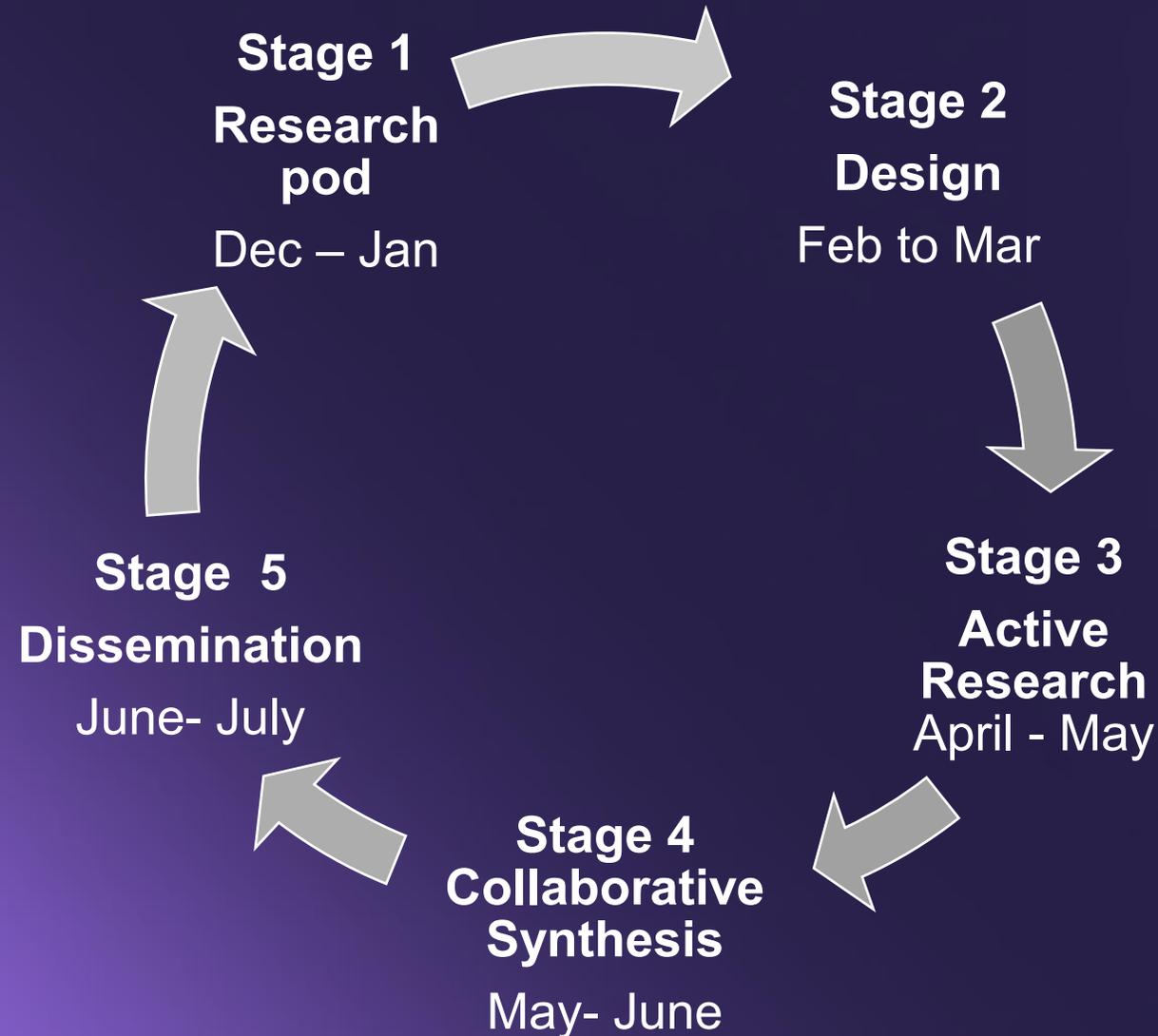
Project sponsors

- Chichester College Group- Research and Scholarly Fund

- Mixed economy group - Small Scale Research Bursary

The why?

- The HESA Graduate Outcomes Survey and Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data show **that graduates consistently outperform non-graduates in employment, earnings, and access to high-skilled jobs**.

- Luzajic & Elkomy (2025) suggests **employers still report gaps in soft skills and workplace readiness**

- (LSIP,2023,P22) states they need to action "**a deeper dive into our key sectors to get a clearer picture of the challenges they face, and the skills needs and gaps within them**"

Timeline

Stage 1
Research pod
Dec – Jan

Stage 2
Design
Feb to Mar

Stage 3
Active Research
April - May

Stage 4
Collaborative Synthesis
May- June

Stage 5
Dissemination
June- July

Student Voices in Higher Education

explorance

Stage 1.
The Research Pods

Recruitment of Research pod

- Each HE campus will have a **staff and Student Research Pod**

- Research Pods will be asked to complete e-course: Education Research That Matters: Ways of Researching at the beginning of the process.
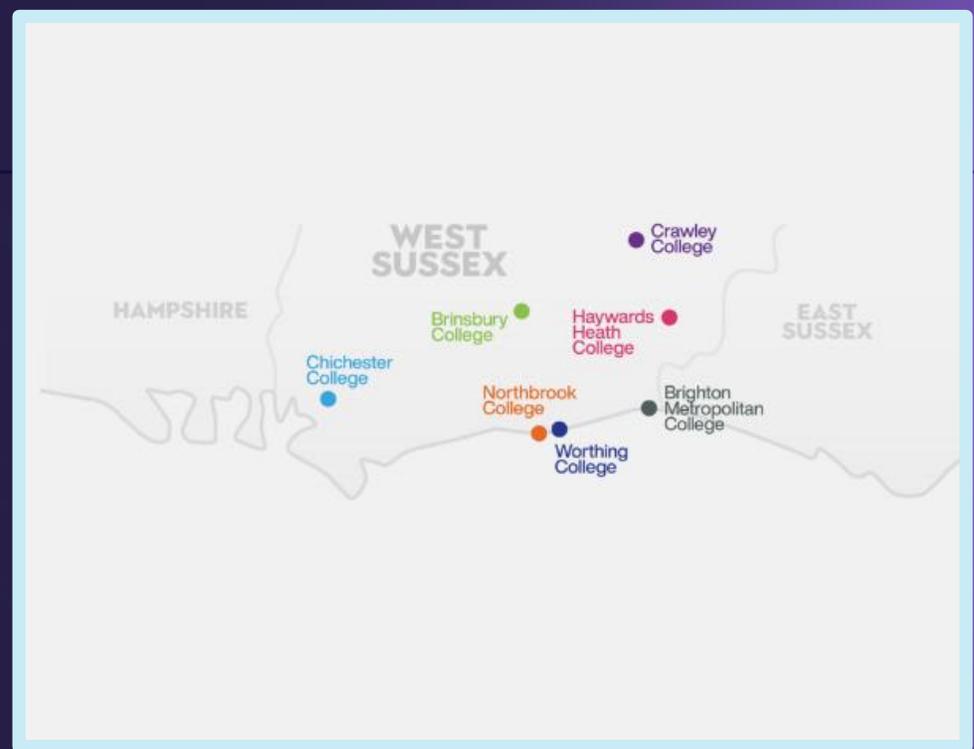
The project will follow a Participatory Action Research (PAR) model (guided by the university of Reading PAR tool kit) , where students and staff co-design and co-lead the research process.

(University of Reading. 2023)
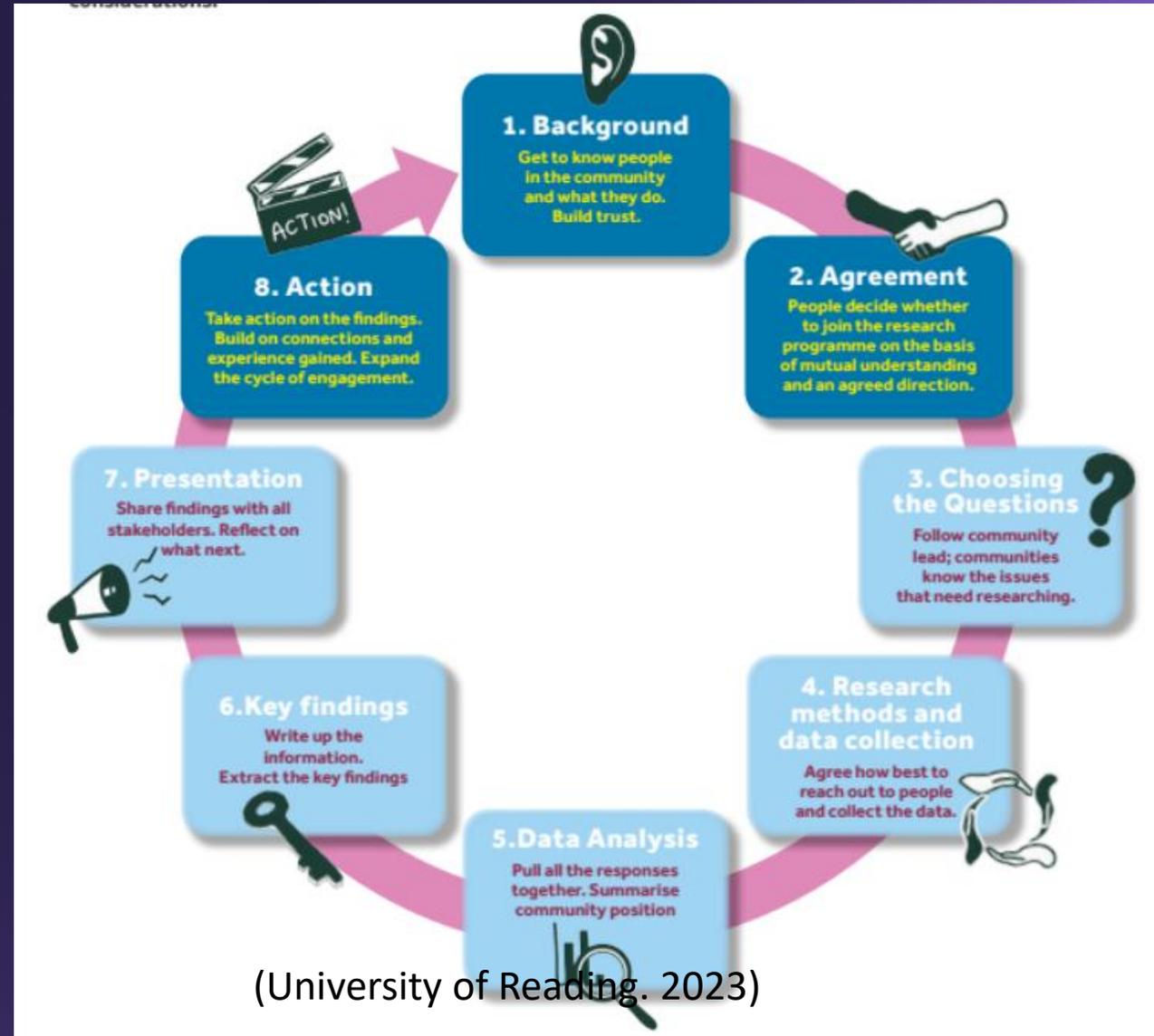
Stage 3. Active research stage

Once the research questions, methods and data collection/ analysis are finalised, the project will be subdivided by campus into research pods.

Each research pod will be responsible for:

- Conducting focus groups and surveys,

- Collecting and managing data ,

- Analysing their own campus-specific findings

Stage 4 . Collaborative Synthesis

After campus-level analysis, all teams will rejoin the main research group to:
- Share findings ,
- Compare themes across campuses
- Lead researcher ; co-create a larger, combined data set .

Final product is a Co-authored conclusion and recommendations.

Stage 5 . Dissemination

- CCG HE Development Day
- CCG Research Journal
- MEG's Summer Showcase event
- MEG Research Group meeting
- AHE CBHE Research festival
- HEM/ HEB papers

Path finding focus group

HOLs and TLM from across were asked :

"In your curriculum area, what new skills or knowledge do you think future graduates will need to succeed in the workplace?"
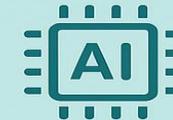

Summary of Key Themes

- **Recruitment & Retention**
- **Education Pathways** — Higher Level HE / HE
- **Workplace-Linked Learning**
- **Technology & AI** — Essential Skills: Data Literacy, Audience Psychology, Writing proficiency
- **Collaboration**
- **Future-Ready Competencies**

CCG HOLs and TLM key themes suggests:

- Organisations will need strong strategies for recruiting and retaining staff, supported by flexible education pathways that include both Higher Level Apprenticeships and traditional HE routes.

- Learning should be increasingly workplace-linked, with real projects and live briefs from industry. Graduates will require a blend of essential skills—including data literacy, audience understanding, strong writing, and adaptability—alongside confidents in ethical use of technology and AI.

- Success will depend on collaboration across internal teams and external partners, and on developing future-ready competencies such as flexibility, multi-skilling, agile working, and continuous learning to meet evolving employer demands.

Based on the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper (2025). Future graduates will need skills that are:

- Digital (AI literacy, data handling, confidence with technology)
- Technical (sector-specific competencies aligned to growth industries)
- Flexible and adaptive
- Green and sustainability-focused
- Collaborative and communicative
- Quality- and standards-awareness
- Lifelong learning mindset
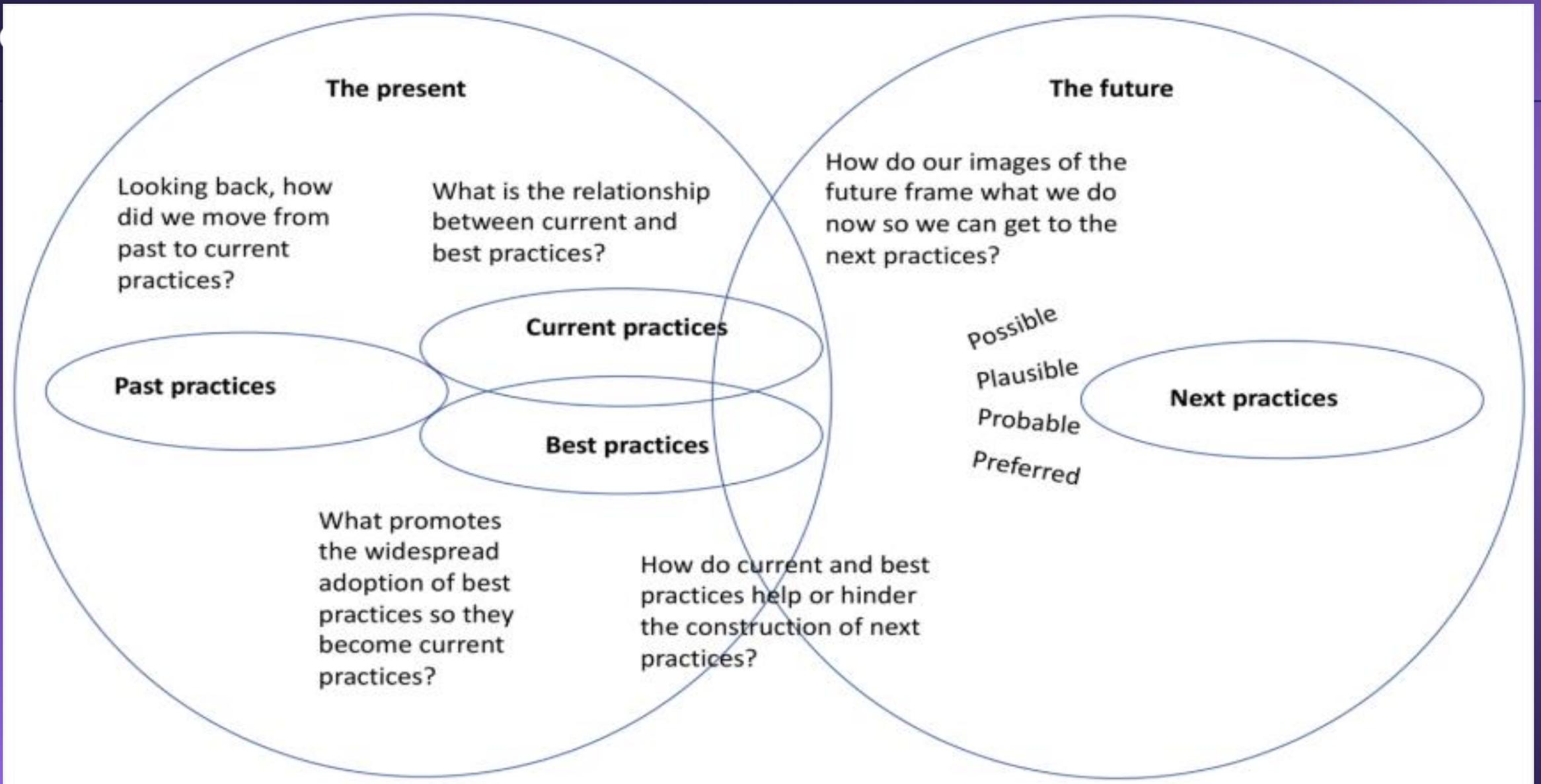
- Figure 1. (Guur,2022) A conceptual foresight model to guide thinking from the present to the future.

Definitions

- **Possible-** Something that can happen.

- **Plausible**- Something that is reasonable and believable based on what we currently know.

- **Probable** - Something that is likely to happen

- **Preferred**- Something that is desired or considered the ideal outcome

Why the 4 Ps Matter ?

- Possible Futures → Encouraging Creativity and Openness

- Plausible Futures → Grounding Vision in Evidence

- Probable Futures → Planning for What Is Most Likely

- Preferred Futures → Defining Vision and Purpose

Gurr, David & Jarni, Nada & Taylor, Adam. (2025).

We like to hear what you think?

- What new skills or knowledge do you think future graduates will need to succeed in the workplace?"

Possible What might happen?	• Focus on **divergent** thinking. What futures can you imagine? • What is the best and the worst case?
Plausible What could happen?	• Focus on **convergent** thinking. What is feasible from the scenarios you've already identified?
Probable What is likely to happen?	• Focus on **analytic** and **systems** thinking. What events would need to happen to make this future a reality? What assumptions are we making?
Preferable What do you want to happen?	• Focus on the preferred **future state.** What do you want to happen and what choices can you make now?

Any Questions?

References

- Luzajic & Elkomy (2025) Graduate outcomes: What the latest data reveals about employment, pay and job quality source on 10/10/25 Graduate outcomes: What the latest data reveals about employment, pay and job quality

- TO WHAT DEGREE? Understanding what UK businesses look for in graduates (2024) University-Alliance-CBIE-Report_graduate-employability_To-What-Degree.pdf

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