

# *Negotiated Work-based Learning and Organisational Learning*

*The Relationship between Individual and  
Organisational Knowledge Management*

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# A journey between two research projects...

Shah, H., Eardley, A. and Wood-Harper, T. (2007) 'ALTAR: Achieving Learning Through Action Research' European Journal of Information Systems, Vol.16 No. 6, Pp. 761-770)

Eardley, A., Borup, R. And Basit, T.H. (2012) 'WBLQUAL – An Approach to Qualifications Through Negotiated Work-based Learning for the European Union'. Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency (Erasmus) Research Project No. 510022 LLP-1 UK-ERASMUS ECUE. Research into Lifelong Learning; Erasmus. Collaborative partners in the UK, Italy, Latvia, Poland and Denmark

[www.wblqual.com](http://www.wblqual.com)



# The journey...

Action Research (ALTAR)



Knowledge Management (KNOVAL)



Organisational Learning

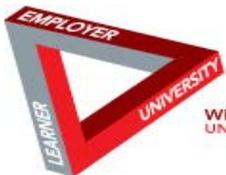


Work-based Learning (WBLQUAL)



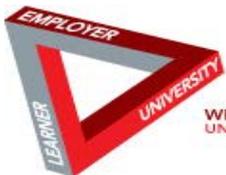
# The company...

- Britvic is a leading U.K. manufacturer and distributor of fast-moving consumer goods, making and distributing a wide range of branded products
- At the time of the AR project (2003-2007) Britvic had over 2700 employees and had a turnover in excess of 600 million GBP
- Before the AR project began, Britvic had commissioned a study into the use of KM technology and a decision had been made to acquire KM software
- The ALTAR (Achieving Learning Through Action Research) approach was derived and evaluated during the AR project which is discussed in Shah *et al.* (2007)



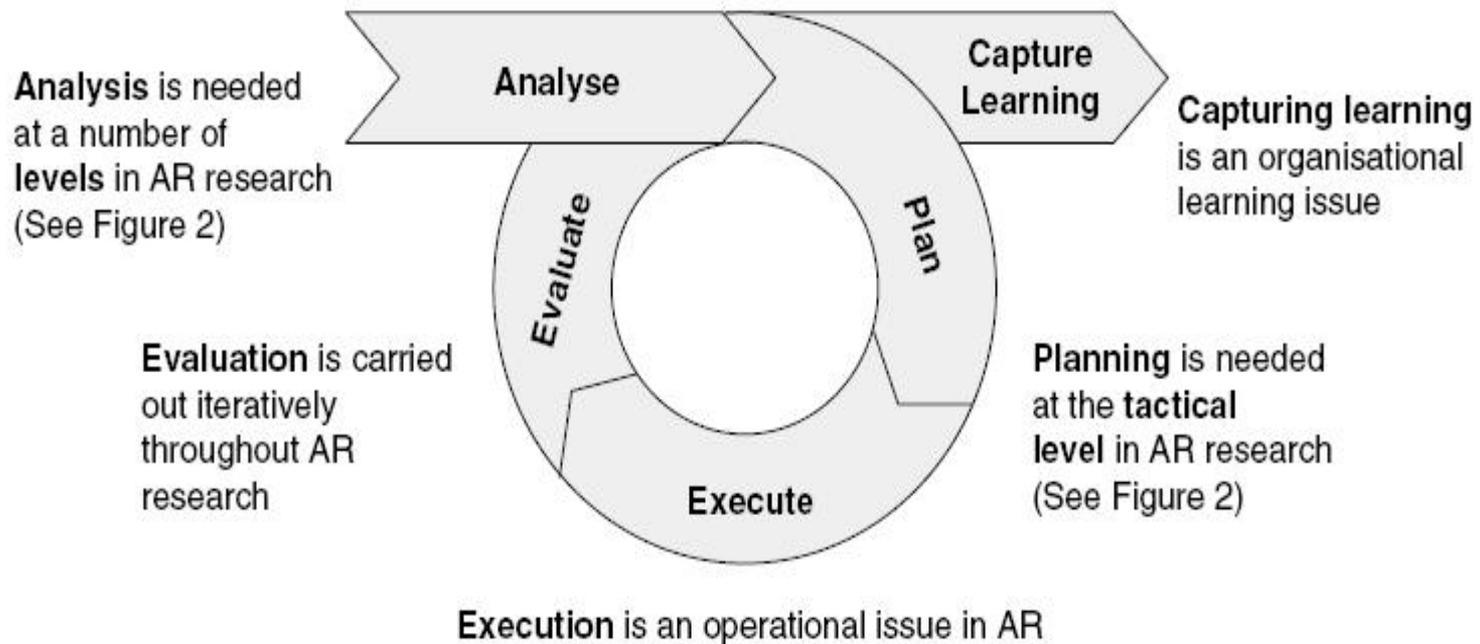
# Achieving Learning Through Action Research

- Research showed that KM technologies were ‘sold’ to organisations without a full understanding of KM needs
- The ALTAR project was formulated as a response to a ‘real world’ problem that could be addressed by a rigorous academic approach (AR)
- Key aspect of the AR project was this processing of academic theory and terminology into ideas and language that were appropriate to the business world
- The aim was to have an impact ‘in the real world’
- The AR project included a series of workshops and interviews involving a wide range of personnel at the organisation including a number of senior managers



# Action research cycle

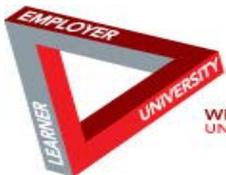
The AR Cycle is subject to iteration and application at a number of levels



**Figure 1 The action research cycle (Susman & Evered 1978)**

# Achieving Learning Through Action Research

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- Key aspect of the AR project was this processing of academic theory and terminology into ideas and language that was appropriate to the business world
- The aim was to have an impact ‘in the real world’
- The AR project included a series of structured workshops and interviews involving a wide range of personnel at three ‘levels’ of the organisation





# Strategic, tactical & operational learning

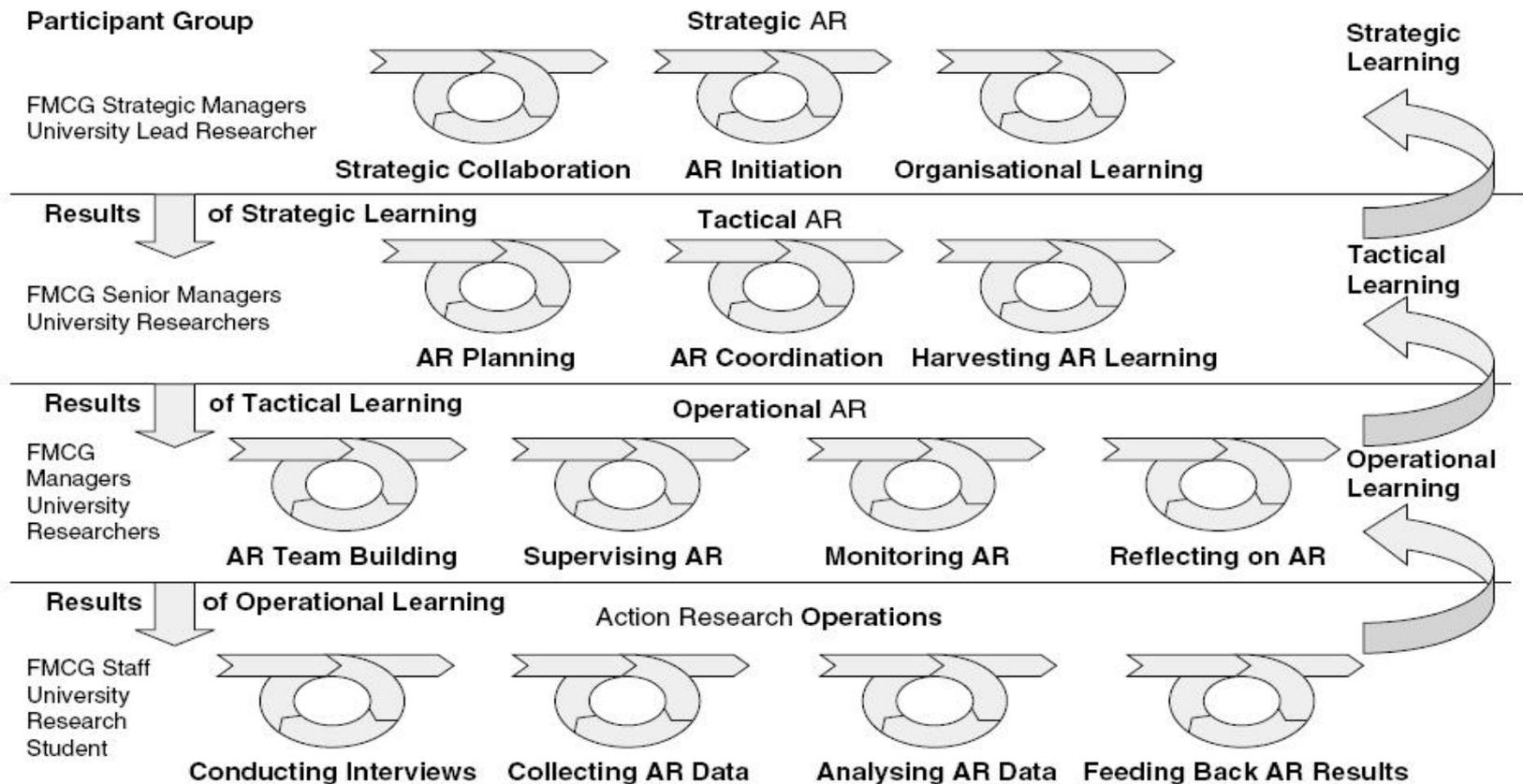
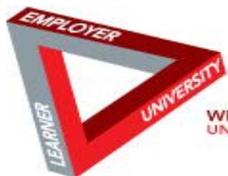


Figure 2 Levels of Learning from Action Research (Shah *et al* 2007a)



# KNOVAL

A model of the knowledge process that represents one form of the knowledge value chain (see Figure 3) from Sharp *et al* (2003) and consists of the following :

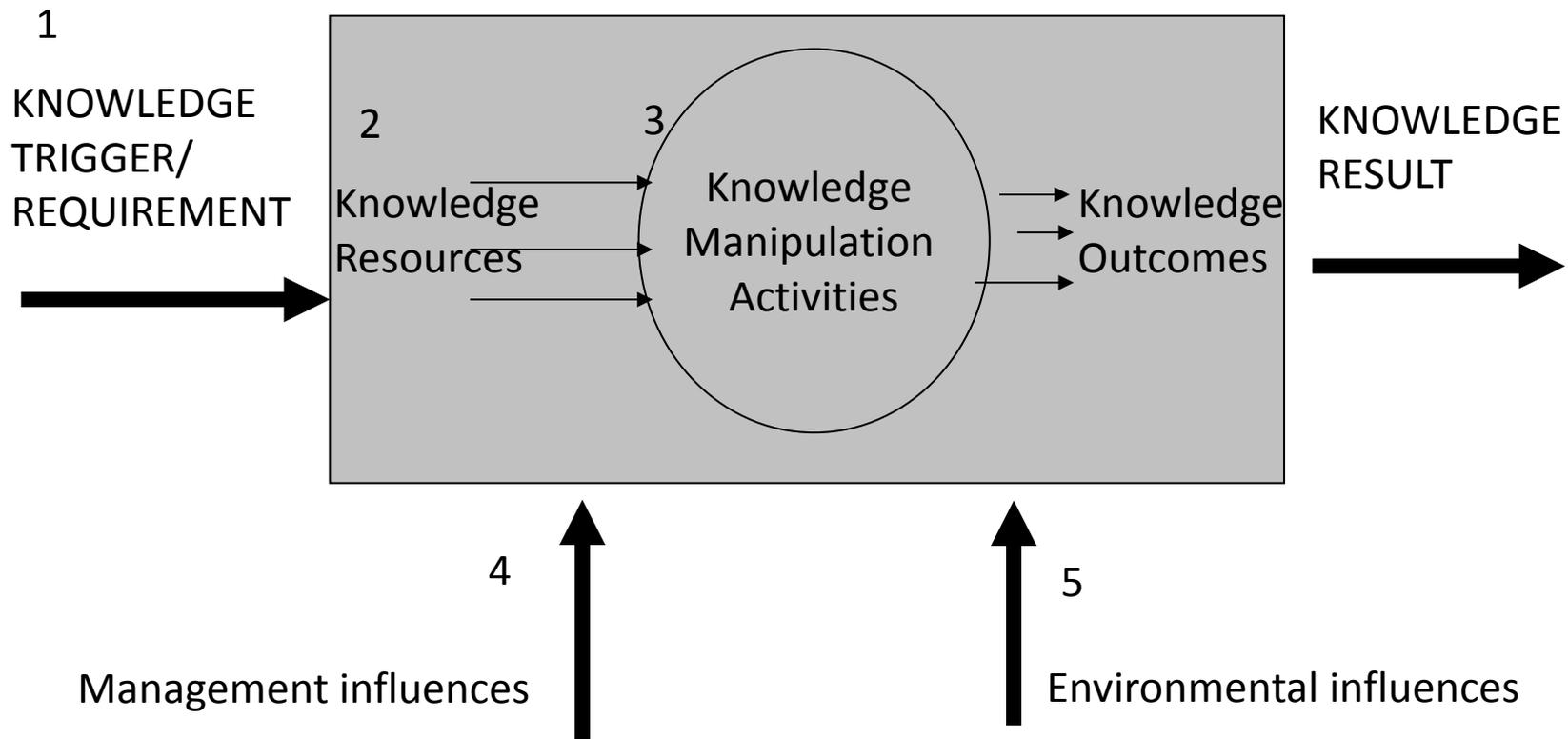
- A knowledge requirement
- Knowledge assets
- A number of 'knowledge actions'
- The knowledge process
- Environmental factors
- 'Knowledge outcomes'
- 'Knowledge potential'

KnoVal assisted the organisation to focus on essential aspects of KM and the joint definition of knowledge proved useful at the different organisational levels.

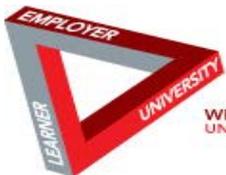




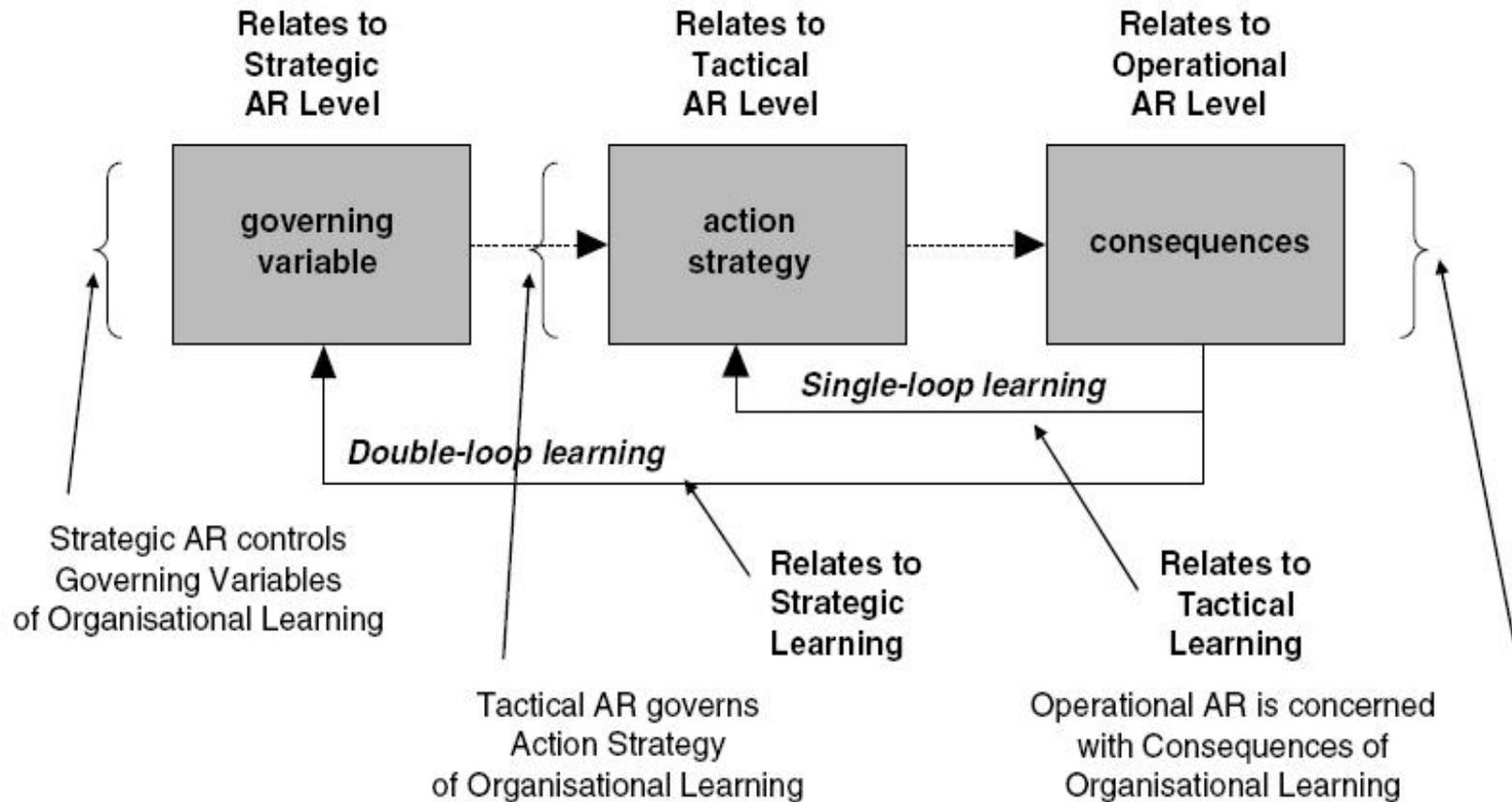
# KNOVAL – a knowledge value chain



**Figure 3 The knowledge value chain (Shah *et al* 2007b)**



# Research, knowledge and learning



**Figure 4 Levels of AR, knowledge and OL (Shah *et al* 2007b)**

# AR, KM, OL and change

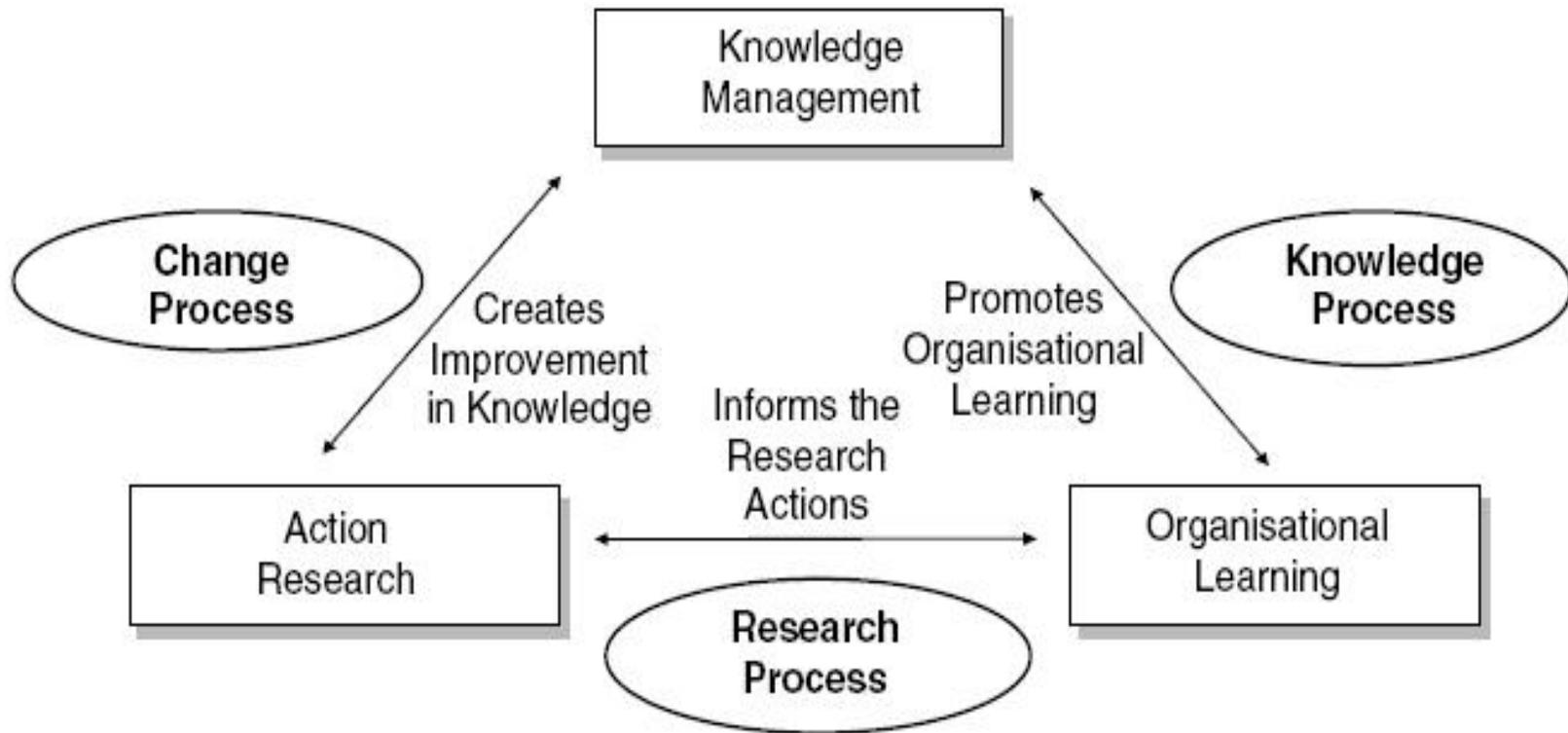


Figure 5 Links between AR, KM, OL and change (Shah *et al* 2007b)



# And so to work-based learning...

- The bespoke Britvic IT Academy was created to 'up-skill' ICT staff who were 'qualified by experience'
- Staffordshire University & Britvic began a programme of negotiated WBL awards
- Britvic linked its staff development requirements to an academic framework recognising employees' previous qualifications, learning and experience, allowing them to study for an award at an appropriate level
- WBL intended to reduce the time for staff to become fully competent and reduce the need to employ consultants

[http://www.staffs.ac.uk/for\\_business/learning/casestudies/britvic/](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/for_business/learning/casestudies/britvic/)

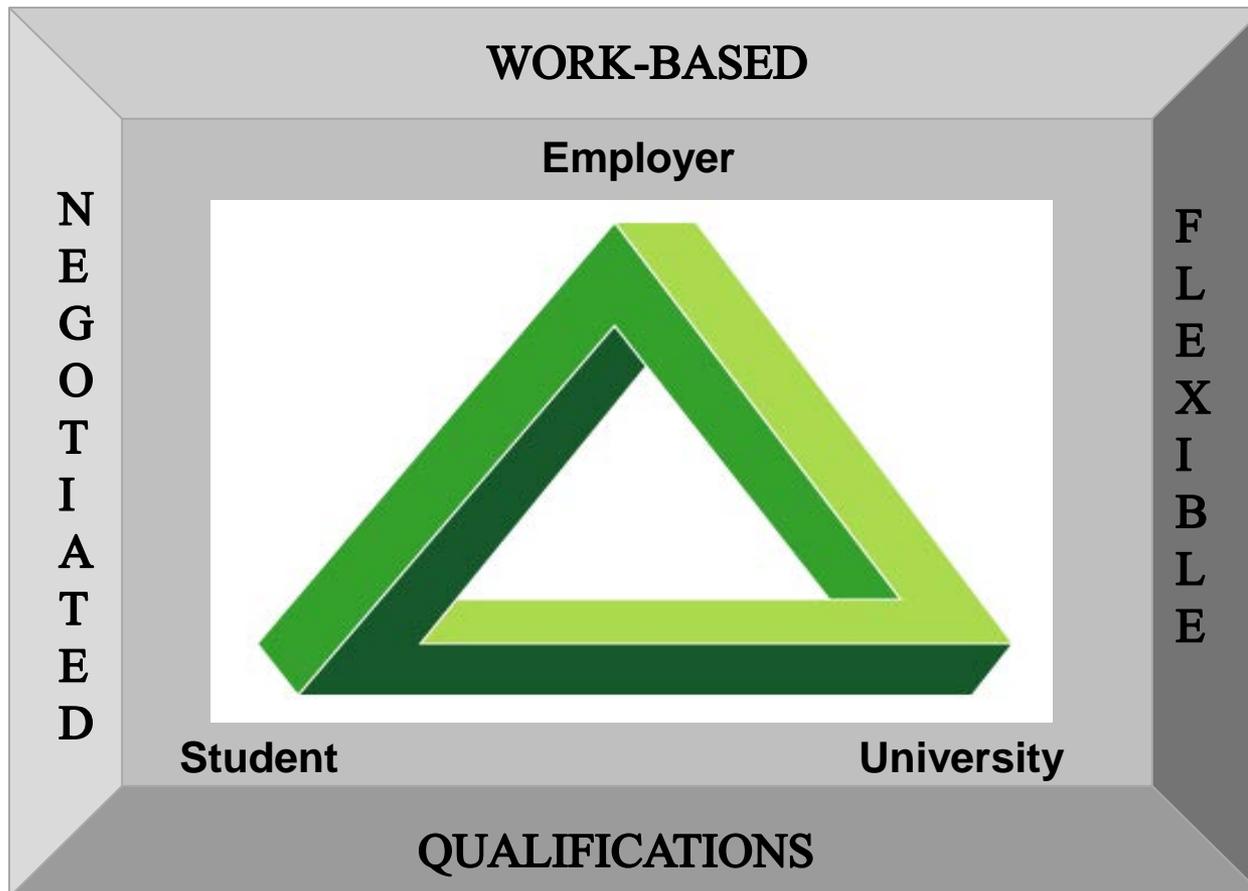


# A working definition of 'WBL'

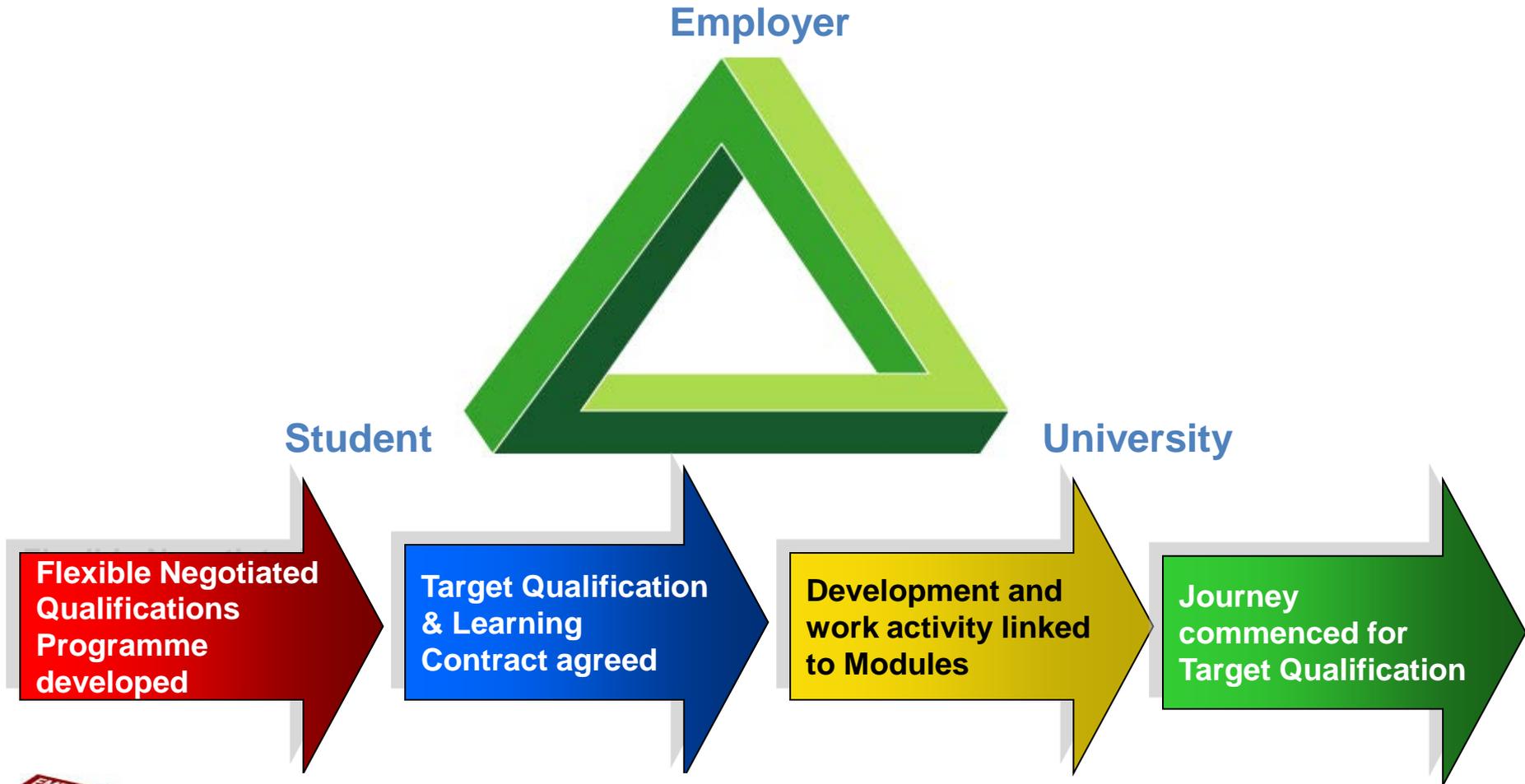
- Formally agreed/accredited programmes of study
- Based on a tripartite relationship between employer, learner and HEI
- Employer-driven qualifications served by HEI
- Focus on up-skilling workforce as a part of achieving personal and organisational objectives
- Employers wish to promote the education of their employees to close 'skill gaps'
- Learners take responsibility for negotiating learning



# Resulting in... a WBL negotiated framework:

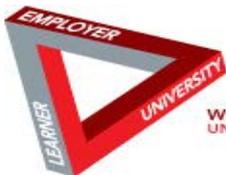


# WBL Partnership - Employer & University



# Changing mindsets: Old model v New model

Old View	Curriculum Design	New view
Academic in charge	<b>Who:</b>	Employer and Academic
Topic of choice	<b>What:</b>	Employer driven
Campus - Lecture Theatre	<b>Where:</b>	Place of work
1 hr - once a week?	<b>When:</b>	Flexible
'Talk and Chalk'	<b>How:</b>	Blended /Distance / F2F
Examination/coursework	<b>Assessment:</b>	Work based
Exam Passed	<b>Outcome:</b>	Value Added – to individual and to employer



# Changing learning mindsets

- What are the challenges facing us?
- What are we trying to achieve?
- How do we currently develop our people?
- Will the academic programme map to this?
- Why education not training?
- Who should take part ?
- What is the cost : benefit ?
- Will this really work?
- How will we measure effectiveness?



**Employer**



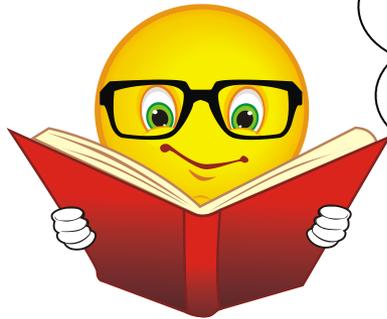
# Changing learning mindsets

## Academic



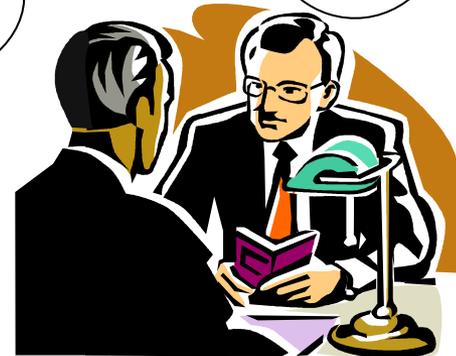
- Academic integrity?
- Subject rigour?
- QA procedures?
- Am I no longer the subject expert?
- What is my role?

## Student



- Can this further my career?
- What will I learn?
- Can I use my current knowledge?
- How do I apply learning to work?
- How am I being assessed?

## Line Manager



- What is the benefit for me & my department?
- What will be expected of me and my staff?

# Significant learning from WBL experience

## EMPLOYER

Drives people/HR development

Senior Management support is crucial

Increased rigour in development planning

Learning for mentors and 'study buddies' as well as student

Level of ambition has been raised

Significant time/cost commitment required

## STUDENT

Real value from development and being more effective in role

Achieving academic education without attending University

Recognition of previous experience and skills

Intellectual challenge

Balancing home life, work and study

## UNIVERSITY

Buy-in from University Management

Increase in engagement with employers

Widening participation through new types of students

Sustainable model for extending programme

Challenging students

Capable staff resource required to deliver collaborative working

# Did WBL work for Britvic?

*"We've seen some really practical and positive changes in our people. Gaining qualifications increases their effectiveness in the workplace, builds confidence and has led to promotion into new roles".*

**Rob Pritchard – Britvic Group IT Director**

[http://www.staffs.ac.uk/for\\_business/learning/casestudies/britvic/](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/for_business/learning/casestudies/britvic/)

**The Britvic experience led to a European research project:**

*'WBLQUAL – An Approach to Qualifications Through Negotiated Work-based Learning for the European Union'. (2010-2012)*

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# References

Shah, H., **Eardley, W.A.** and Wood-Harper, A.T. (2007) ALTAR: Achieving Learning Through Action Research. *European Journal of Information Systems*, Vol. 16, No. 6. Pp. 761 -770.

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