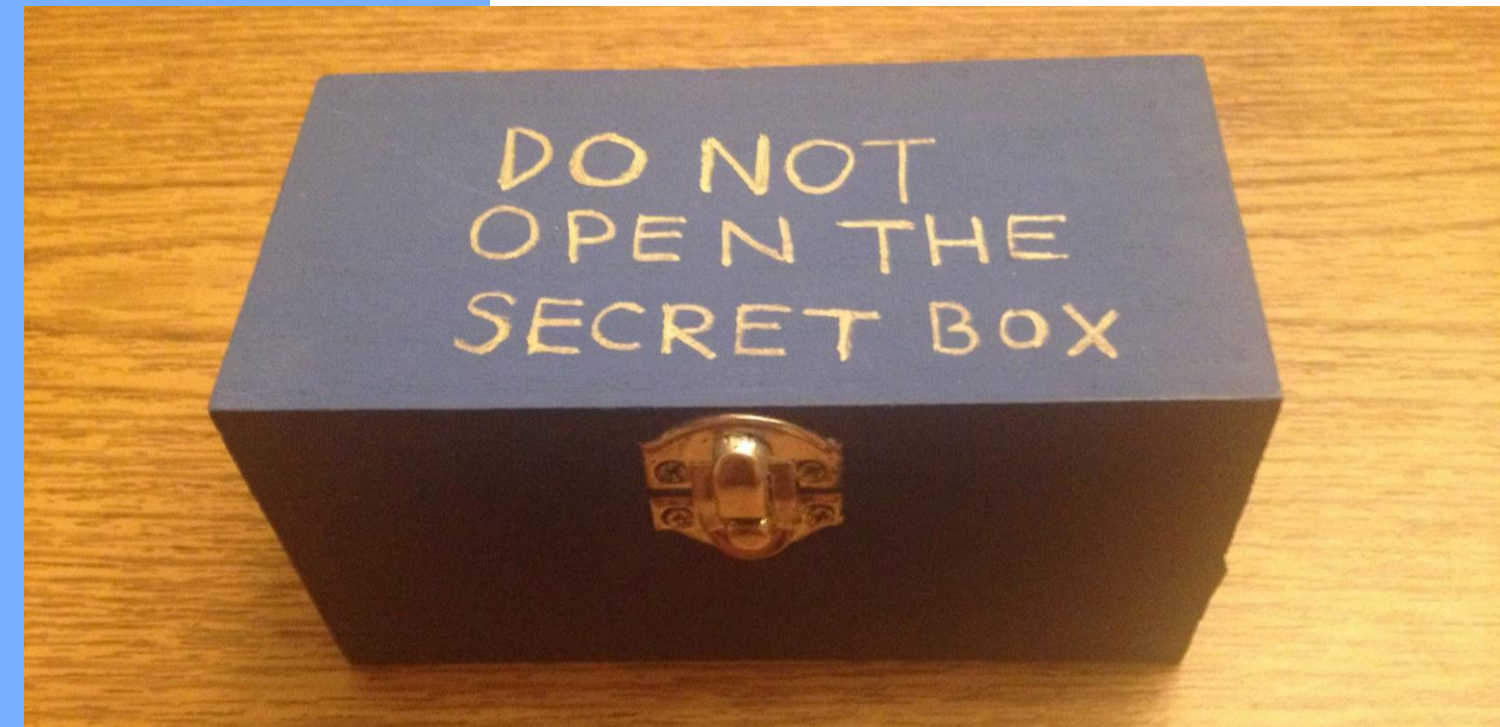


Secrets of political thinking

Students' Unions 2021
Jim Dickinson, Wonkhe SUs

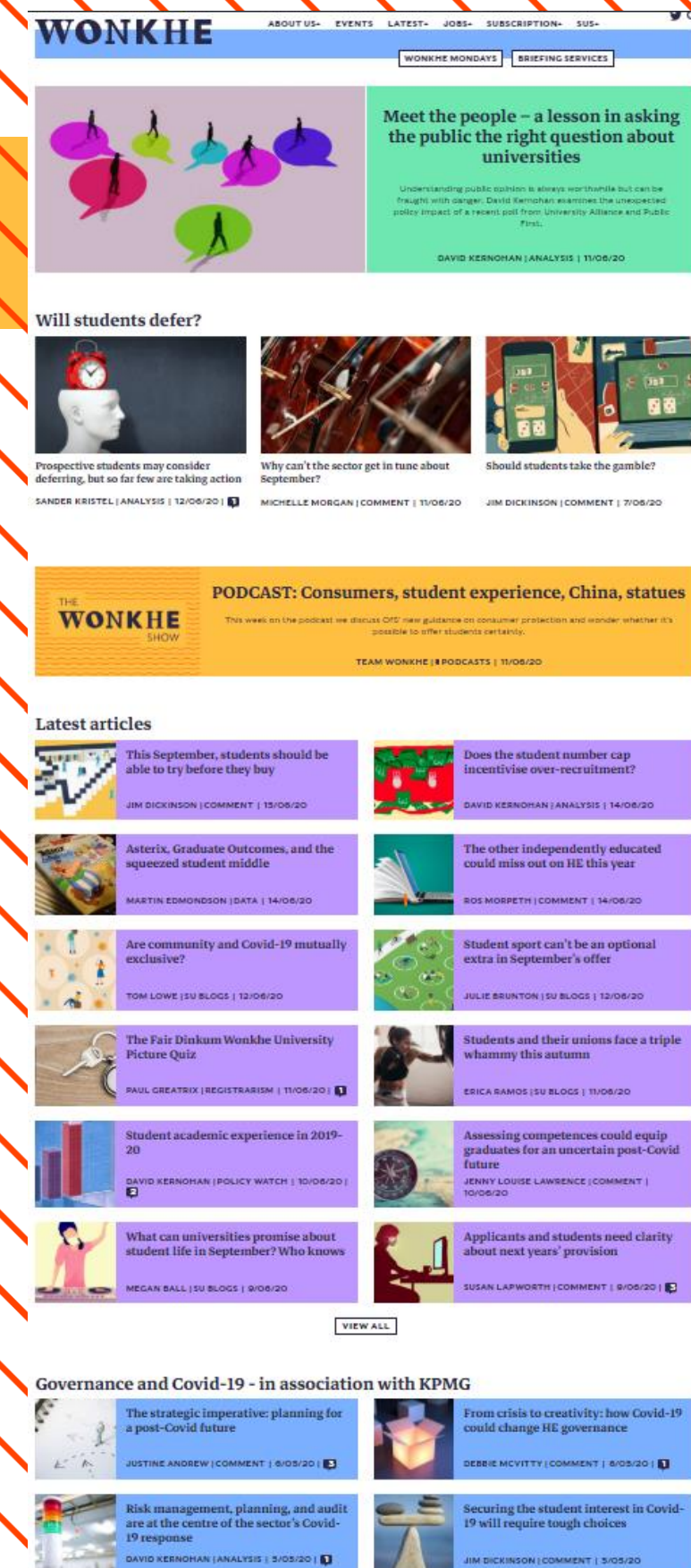


WONKHE

About Wonkhe

- Wonkhe is the home of higher education policy, bringing the sector together through expert analysis.
- A community of diverse voices, we provide platforms to drive the policy conversation forward and bring about real change.
- We like to do things differently, offer the unexpected and challenge the status quo. And all because we love HE and want to make it better for everyone.
- Our articles lead the higher education debate with analysis and commentary, driven by hundreds of different voices.
- Our events bring the sector together to explore higher education themes and drive professional development in HE.
- Our podcast platform publishes The Wonkhe Show – our weekly roundup of everything going on in HE.

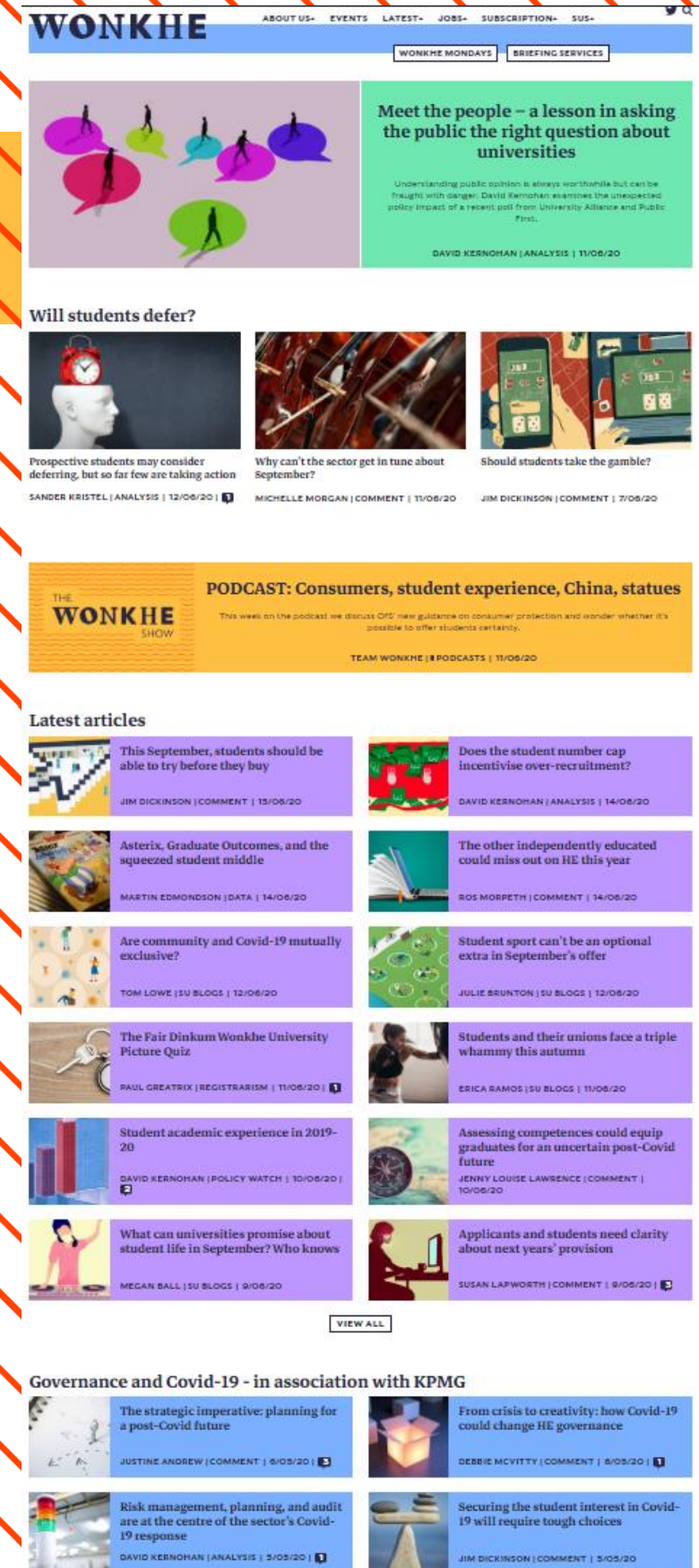
WONKHE



About Wonkhe

- Our flagship email briefing, Wonkhe Mondays keeps the sector up to date with a weekly look at the latest developments in UK HE policy.
- And the Wonkhe Daily is depended on to keep the HE sector, government and agencies ahead of the HE policy and news curve.
- We work with a range of organisations in around higher education that share our goals and support our work.
- Wonkhe depends on contributions from across higher education – if you would like to write for us, please read our guide to writing for Wonkhe, and get in touch to pitch an article.

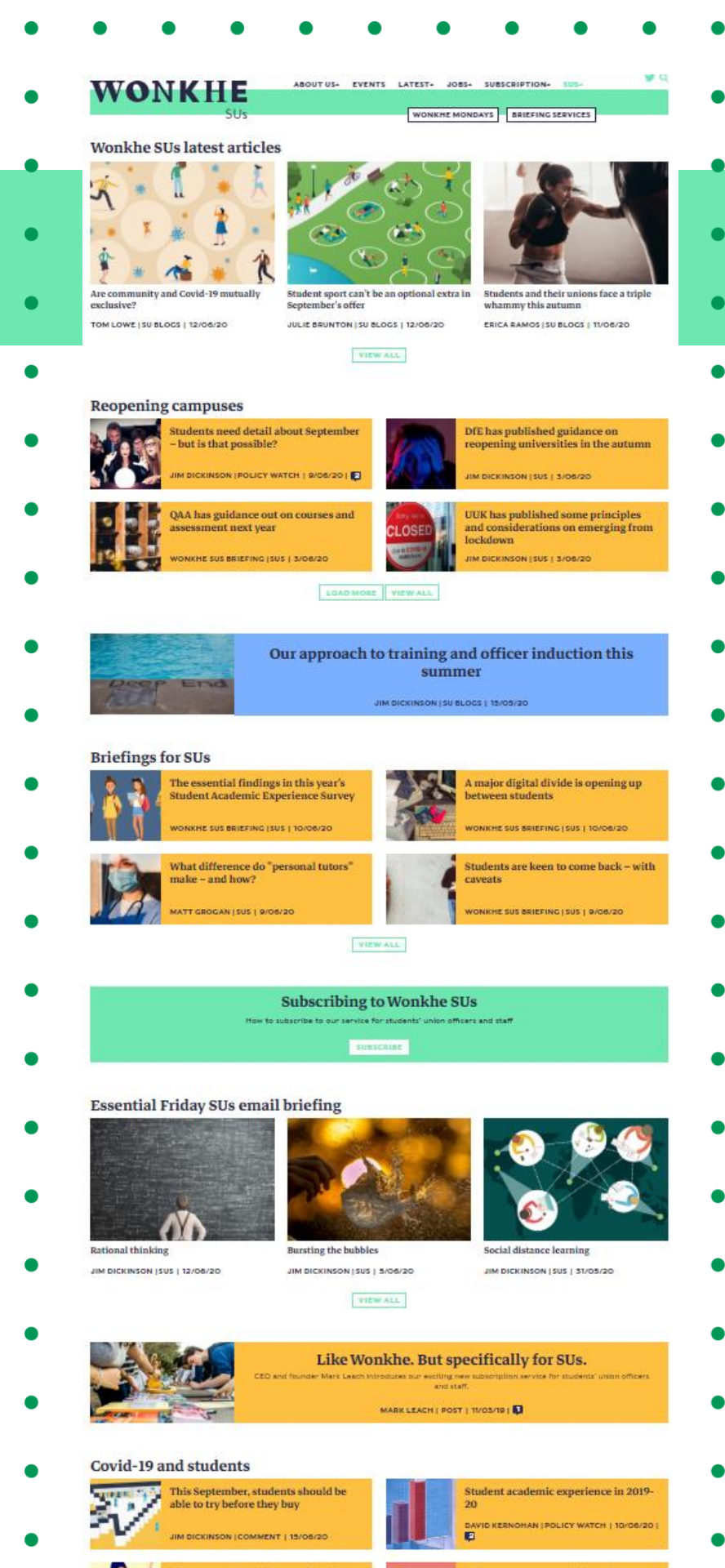
WONKHE



Like Wonkhe, but for SUs

- Wonkhe SUs is a subscription service for students' unions that is designed to save officers and staff time, and improve the effectiveness of student representation, campaigning and policy work.
- We do this through a mixture of expert briefings, emails, alerts, webinars, training and special projects.
- Representing students effectively is tough when policy is complex, confusing and constantly changing. We know that officers and staff that understand the environment are more effective, and get more done. We help with that.
- We think the challenges on students and students unions are increasing, and require rapid, creative thinking. We provide and facilitate that too.

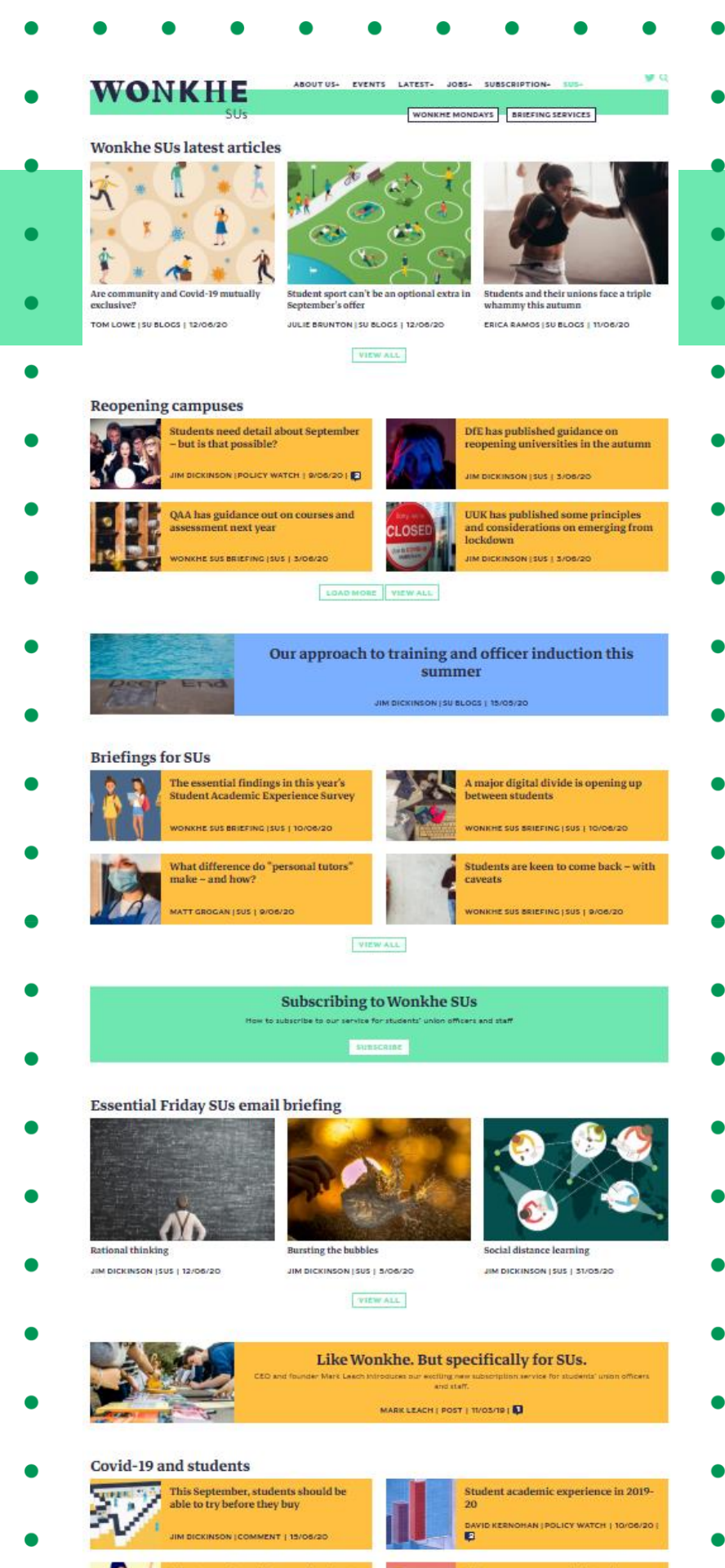
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Like Wonkhe, but for SUs

- At Wonkhe we love students' unions. Many of us began our careers in students' unions. We think the UK students' union system is unrivalled around the world and makes UK higher education better. So we naturally want to deliver work in this area.
- We see work with students' unions as an investment in our mission to improve higher education policymaking, provide a platform unheard and diverse voices, and an opportunity to support the sector's wider talent pipeline.
- We're not a representative body – we'll never seek to speak on behalf of students or students' unions. That's your job, along with your National Union.
- We're also not a campaigning body – there won't be a national demonstration or a lobby of parliament.
- We're not democratic and we're non-partisan. That doesn't mean you won't hear professional opinions from the team and doesn't mean we won't involve SUs and students in our work – but we won't take a policy position or have an elected committee.

WONKHE



Like Wonkhe, but for SUs

- As well as strict higher education policy, we have an interest in and expertise in wider areas that apply to HE – like equality and diversity, governance and charity law, and freedom of speech.
- We know you are busy – so we'll do the reading so you don't have to, distilling the essentials and helping you lead and deliver for your students in the process.
- When you are as familiar with the issues as your university's senior team, you're more effective.
- We're up to date – in the sector we're relied upon for our quality and timely analysis so we like to stay nimble and be responsive. We keep our operation lean, our partnerships wide and don't get bogged down by bureaucracy or layers of complexity.

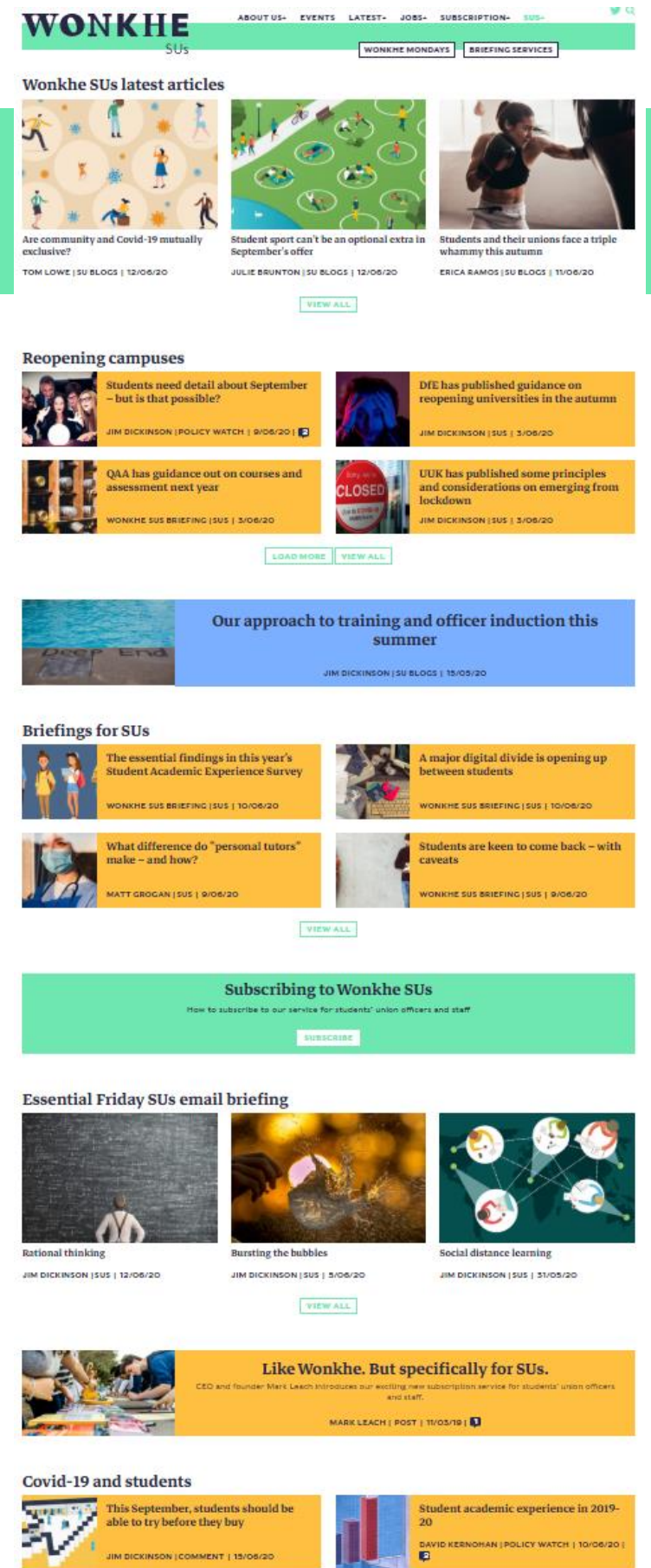
WONKHE

The screenshot displays the Wonkhe website interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes links for 'ABOUT US', 'EVENTS', 'LATEST', 'JOBS', 'SUBSCRIPTION', and 'SUS'. Below the navigation bar, the 'Wonkhe SUs latest articles' section features three article cards: 'Are community and Covid-19 mutually exclusive?' by Tom Lowe, 'Student sport can't be an optional extra in September's offer' by Julie Brunton, and 'Students and their unions face a triple whammy this autumn' by Erica Ramos. A 'VIEW ALL' button is positioned below these cards. The 'Reopening campuses' section follows, containing four article cards: 'Students need detail about September – but is that possible?' by Jim Dickinson, 'DfE has published guidance on reopening universities in the autumn' by Jim Dickinson, 'QAA has guidance out on courses and assessment next year' by Wonkhe Sus Briefing, and 'UUK has published some principles and considerations on emerging from lockdown' by Jim Dickinson. Another 'VIEW ALL' button is located below this section. A large blue banner titled 'Our approach to training and officer induction this summer' by Jim Dickinson is featured next. The 'Briefings for SUs' section contains four article cards: 'The essential findings in this year's Student Academic Experience Survey' by Wonkhe Sus Briefing, 'A major digital divide is opening up between students' by Wonkhe Sus Briefing, 'What difference do "personal tutors" make – and how?' by Matt Grogan, and 'Students are keen to come back – with caveats' by Wonkhe Sus Briefing. A 'VIEW ALL' button is placed below these cards. A green banner titled 'Subscribing to Wonkhe SUs' with a 'SUBSCRIBE' button is shown next. The 'Essential Friday SUs email briefing' section features three article cards: 'Rational thinking' by Jim Dickinson, 'Bursting the bubbles' by Jim Dickinson, and 'Social distance learning' by Jim Dickinson. A 'VIEW ALL' button is located below these cards. A yellow banner titled 'Like Wonkhe. But specifically for SUs.' by Mark Leach is featured next. The 'Covid-19 and students' section at the bottom contains two article cards: 'This September, students should be able to try before they buy' by Jim Dickinson and 'Student academic experience in 2019-20' by David Kernohan.

How it works

- Minimum twice weekly policy briefings and beginner's guides on key issues in higher education
- Access to our briefings archive with over 250 guides to key issues and research findings on students and SUs
- A entitlement to a day's training for your officers on effective policy analysis and creation
- A bespoke weekly email for SUs featuring the latest developments, news coverage, analysis and opportunities for SUs as well as news from around the network
- Access to our WhatsApp alerts and group
- Access to the Wonkhe Daily: our flagship briefing intelligence service for universities
- Weekly interactive webinars from the team on issues in HE you will be discussing with your institution
- Team Wonkhe on retainer, offering advice and support with your representation and policy issues and regular catch ups
- Discounted rates to Wonkhe events, including the flagship Wonkfest
- Access to the Wonkhe Briefing – our termly policy digest

WONKHE



Plus things like...

Study tour to Baltics and Finland – itinerary and details

SU BLOGS | 7/10/19



Do students' unions make a difference?

Do students' unions make a difference? Jim Dickinson has the lowdown on new research into student involvement and student outcomes

ANALYSIS | 24/10/19



WONKHE

WONKHE
SUs

ABOUT US+EVENTS+LATEST+JOBS+SUBSCRIPTION+SUS+

WONKHE MONDAYS+ BRIEFING SERVICES

Wonkhe SUs latest articles

Are community and Covid-19 mutually exclusive?
TOM LOWE | SU BLOGS | 12/06/20

Student sport can't be an optional extra in September's offer
JULIE BRUNTON | SU BLOGS | 12/06/20

Students and their unions face a triple whammy this autumn
ERICA RAMOS | SU BLOGS | 11/06/20

VIEW ALL

Reopening campuses

Students need detail about September – but is that possible?
JIM DICKINSON | POLICY WATCH | 9/06/20

DfE has published guidance on reopening universities in the autumn
JIM DICKINSON | SUS | 3/06/20

QAA has guidance out on courses and assessment next year
WONKHE SUS BRIEFING | SUS | 3/06/20

UUK has published some principles and considerations on emerging from lockdown
JIM DICKINSON | SUS | 3/06/20

LOAD MOREVIEW ALL

Our approach to training and officer induction this summer

JIM DICKINSON | SU BLOGS | 15/05/20

Briefings for SUs

The essential findings in this year's Student Academic Experience Survey
WONKHE SUS BRIEFING | SUS | 10/06/20

A major digital divide is opening up between students
WONKHE SUS BRIEFING | SUS | 10/06/20

What difference do "personal tutors" make – and how?
MATT GOGAN | SUS | 9/06/20

Students are keen to come back – with caveats
WONKHE SUS BRIEFING | SUS | 9/06/20

VIEW ALL

Subscribing to Wonkhe SUs

How to subscribe to our service for students' union officers and staff

SUBSCRIBE

Essential Friday SUs email briefing

Rational thinking
JIM DICKINSON | SUS | 12/06/20

Bursting the bubbles
JIM DICKINSON | SUS | 5/06/20

Social distance learning
JIM DICKINSON | SUS | 31/05/20

VIEW ALL

Like Wonkhe. But specifically for SUs.

CEO and founder Mark Leach introduces our exciting new subscription service for students' union officers and staff.

MARK LEACH | POST | 11/05/19

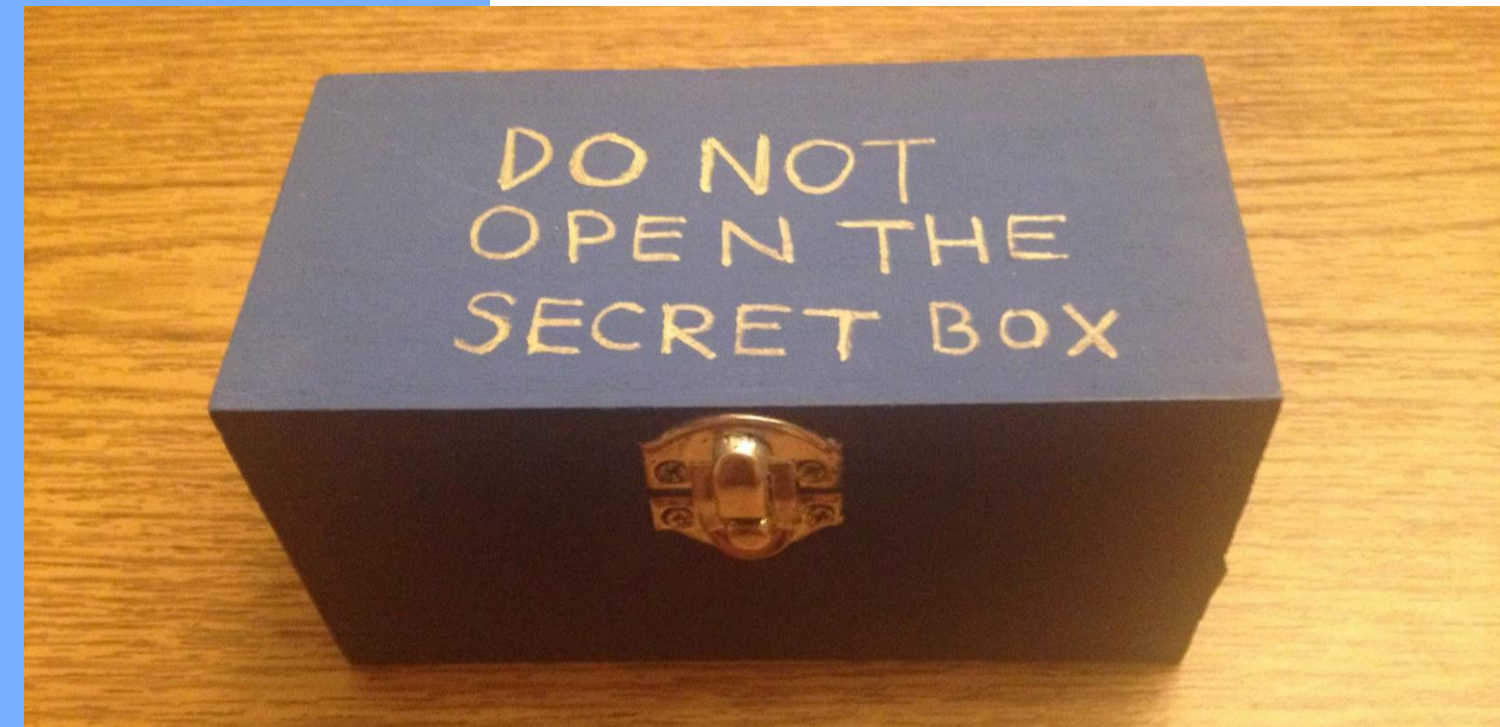
Covid-19 and students

This September, students should be able to try before they buy
JIM DICKINSON | COMMENT | 15/06/20

Student academic experience in 2019-20
DAVID KERNOHAN | POLICY WATCH | 10/06/20

Secrets of political thinking

Students' Unions 2021
Jim Dickinson, Wonkhe SUs



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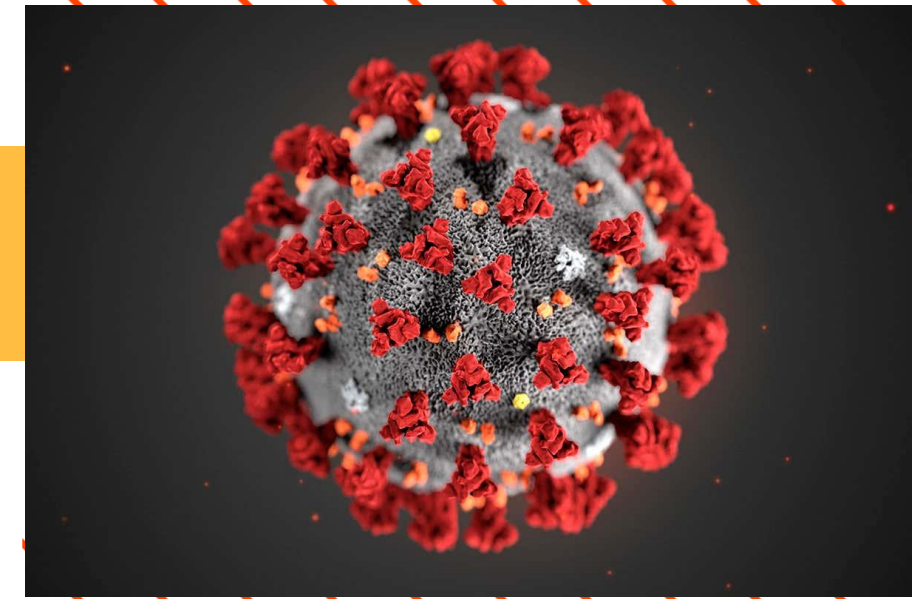
Representing students

- Representing students/winning for students/achieving change/promoting, defending & rights of students
- All involve **strengths** and **weaknesses** approach (manifesto, lobbying/campaigning/outcome – “hunting”)
- All **can** involve **opportunities** and **threats** approach (events, reviews, initiatives, bandwagons – “fishing”)
- **Forecasting** v **Planning**

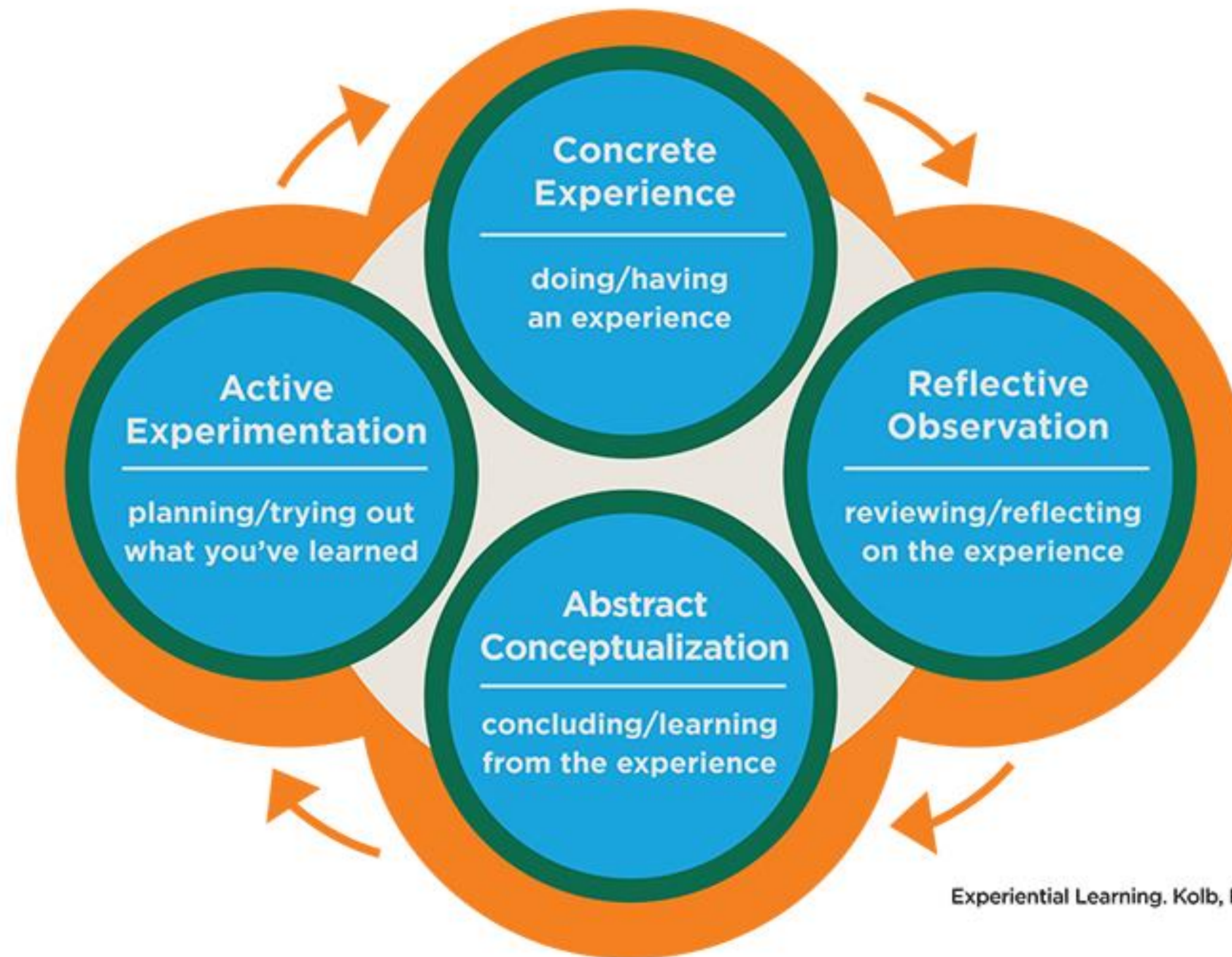


What did we learn?

1. HE can move quickly when it takes control – executive power and Partnership renegotiation?
2. Government likes to get out of the way
3. Learning is social, social is learning
4. It's their lives that matter
5. Students are actually really into education
6. Students are not well protected
7. Look at the state of accommodation
8. Regulated students – conduct matters
9. Students and communities needs work
10. Democracy and student interests – how can they work more intelligently and rapidly?

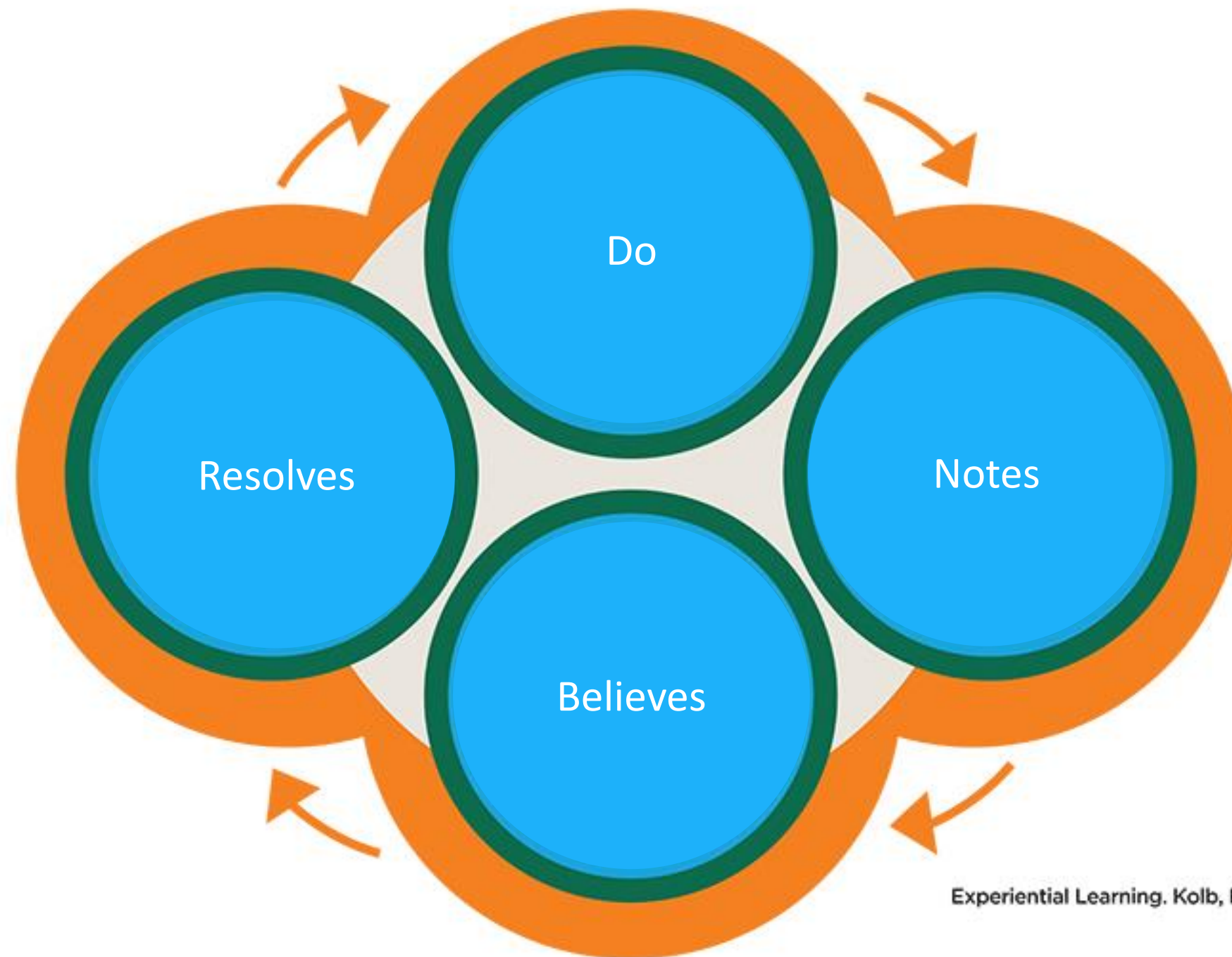


Representation as learning



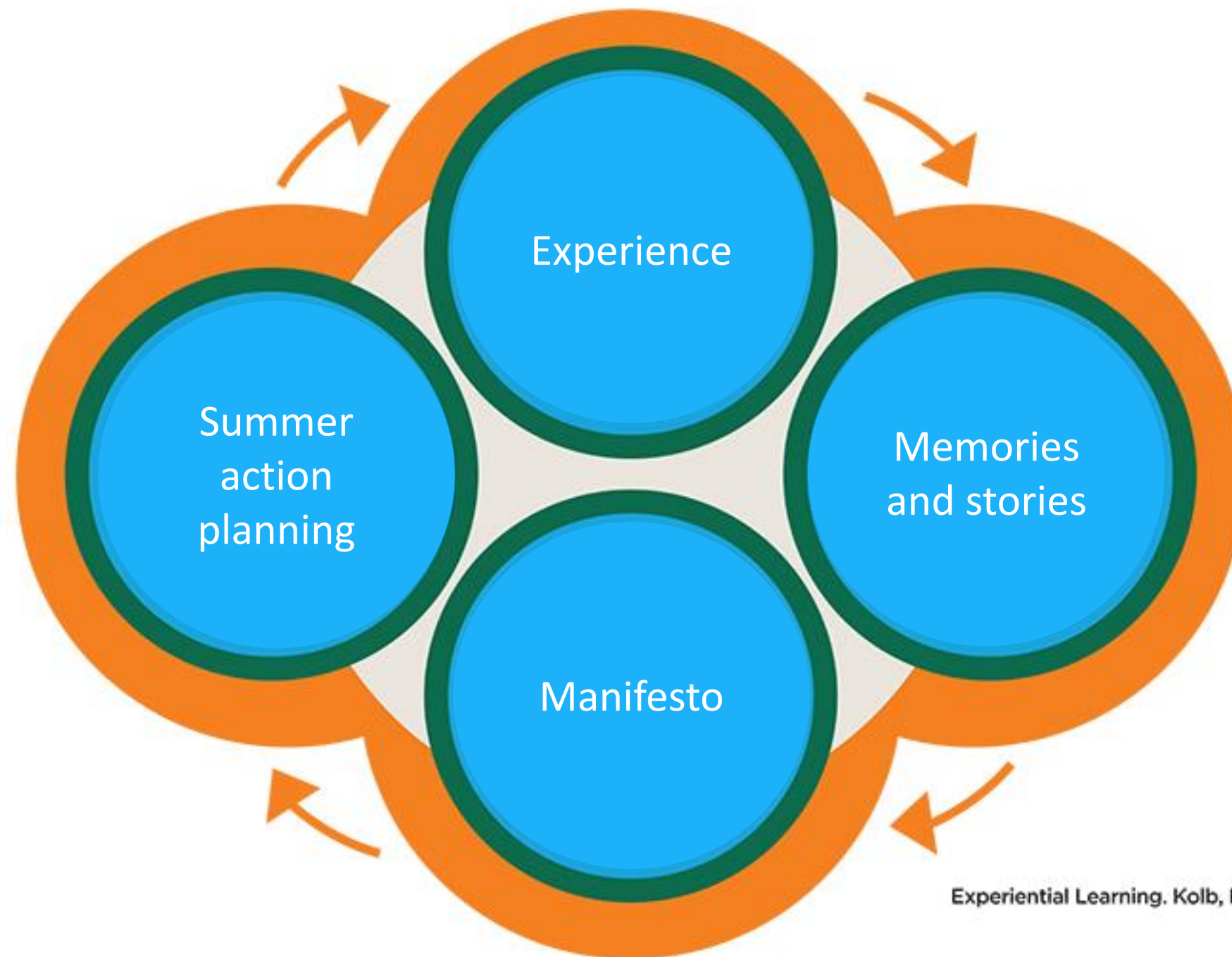
Experiential Learning. Kolb, D., 1984

Representation as learning



Experiential Learning. Kolb, D., 1984

Representation as learning



Experiential Learning. Kolb, D., 1984

Decisions

- How to respond to a problem
- How to respond to a proposal
- How to respond to an assertion about students
- What to select for focussed work
- What to communicate about and how to communicate about it
- Who to talk to about something



Now, I'd like to start with an example of somebody who had a question-and-answer session after one of my lectures reported a story, and that was a story

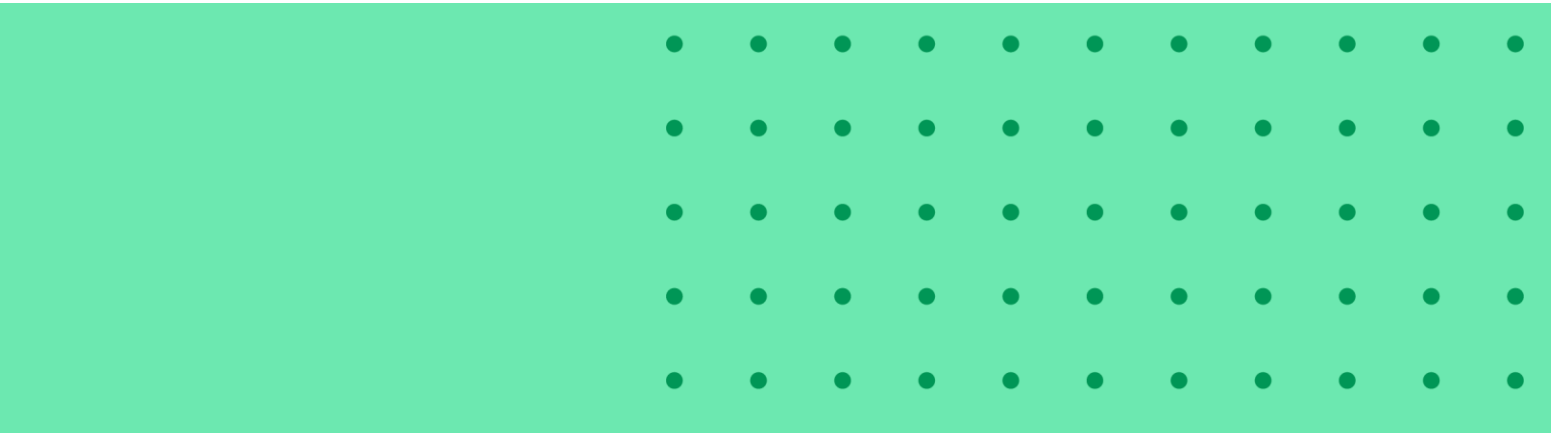
He said he'd been listening to a symphony, and it was absolutely glorious music and at the very end of the recording, there was a dreadful screeching sound.

And then he added, really quite emotionally, it ruined the whole experience. But it hadn't. What it had ruined were the memories of the experience.

He had had the experience. He had had 20 minutes of glorious music. They counted for nothing because he was left with a memory; the memory was ruined, and the memory was all that he had gotten to keep.

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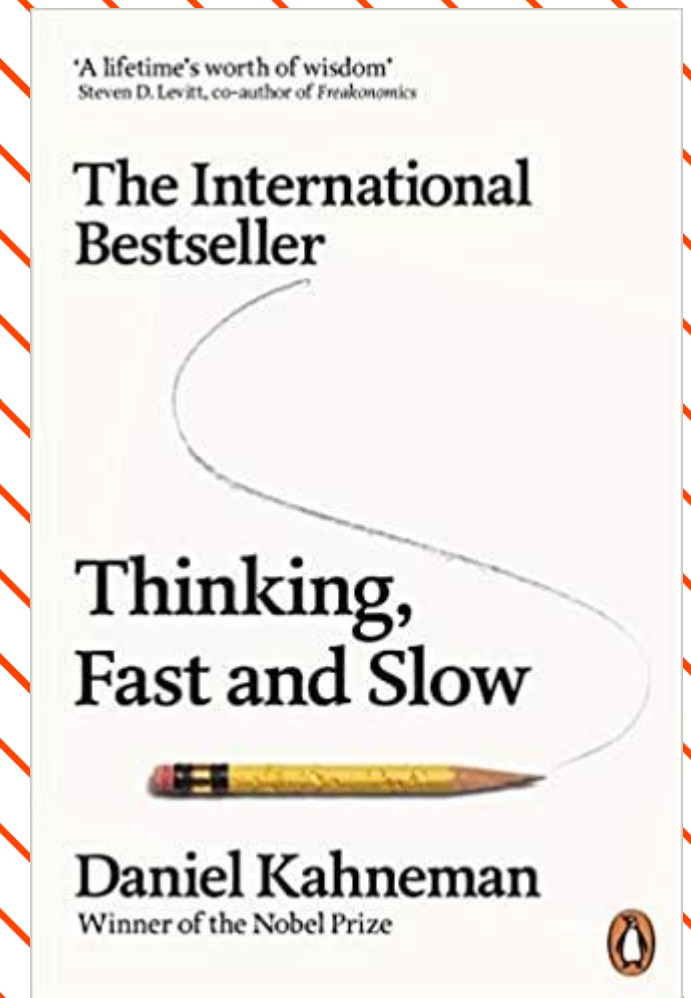
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System 1 thinking



How does this woman feel?

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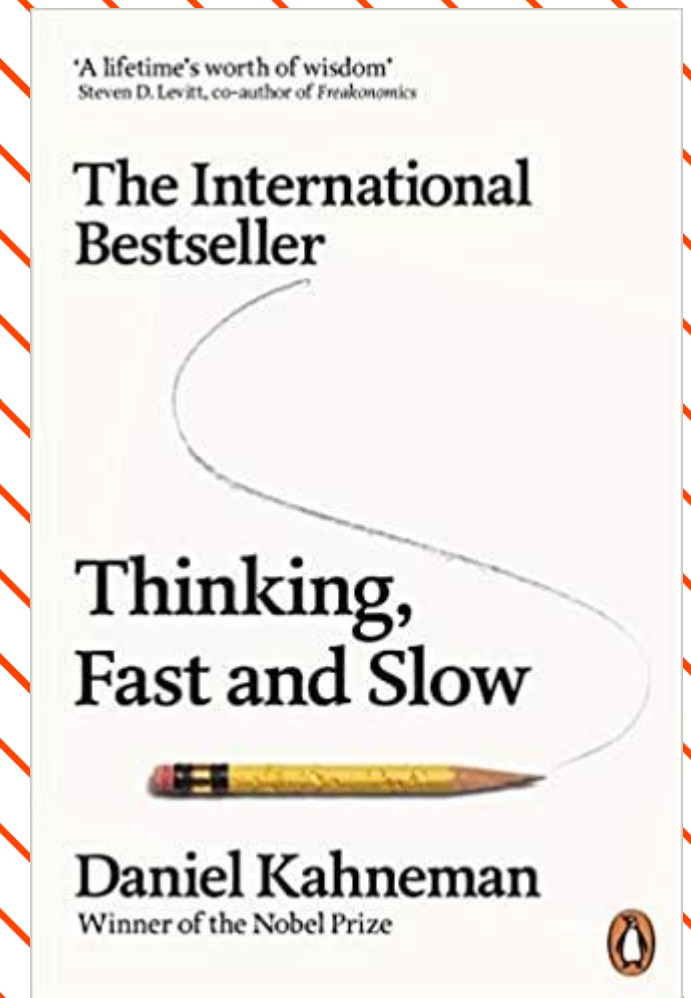


System 2 thinking

17 x 24 =

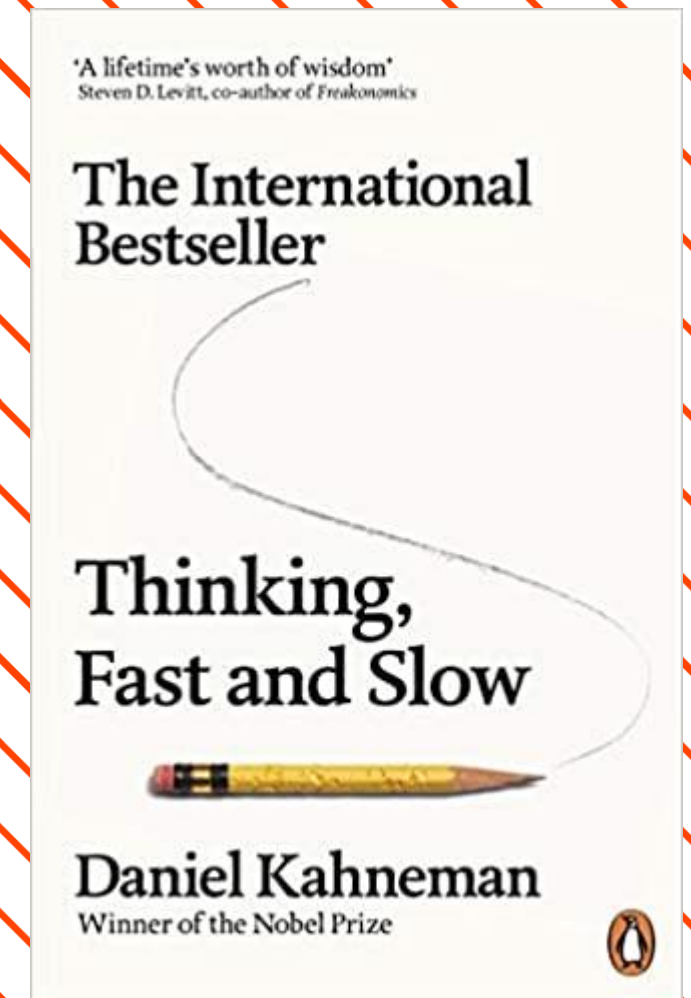
- Deliberate
- Effortful
- Orderly

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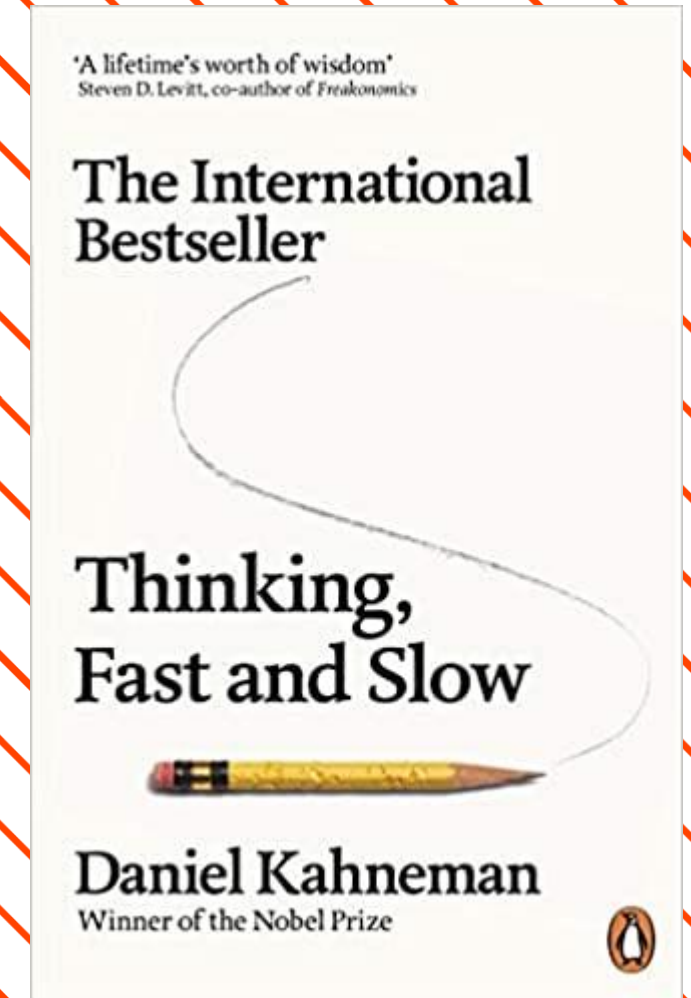
System 1 – fast thinking

- Detect one object is more distant than another
- Orient the source of a sudden sound
- Complete the phrase “bread and ...”
- Make a “disgust face” when shown a horrible picture
- Detect hostility in a voice
- Answer to $2 + 2 = ?$



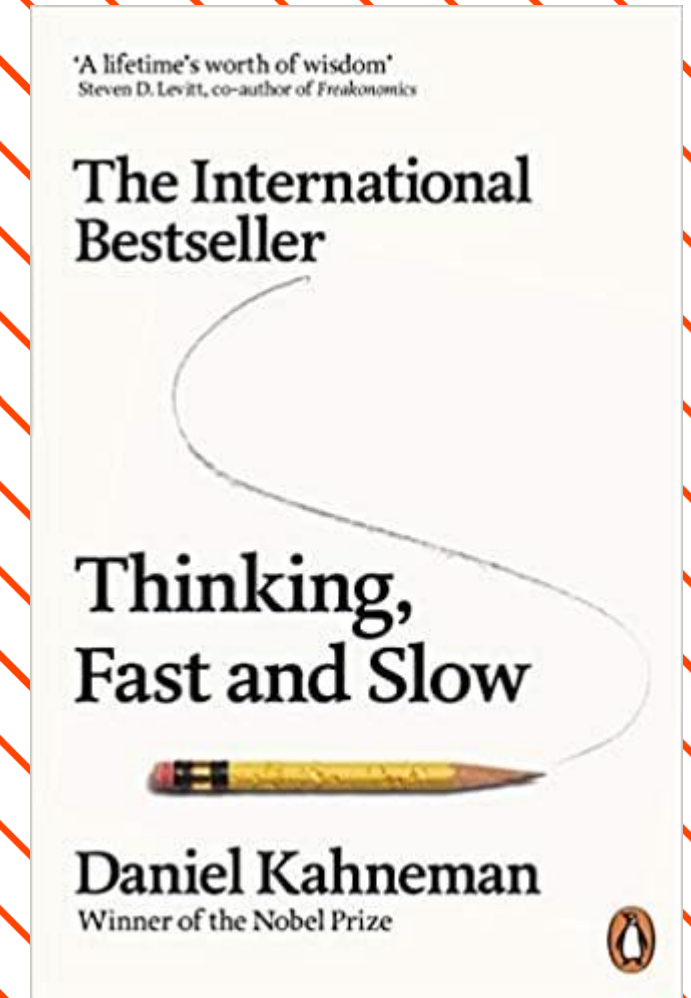
System 1 – fast thinking

- Read words on large billboards
- Drive a car on an empty road
- Find a strong move in chess (if you are a chess master)
- Understand simple sentences
- Recognise that a “meek and tidy soul with a passion for detail” resembles an occupational stereotype.



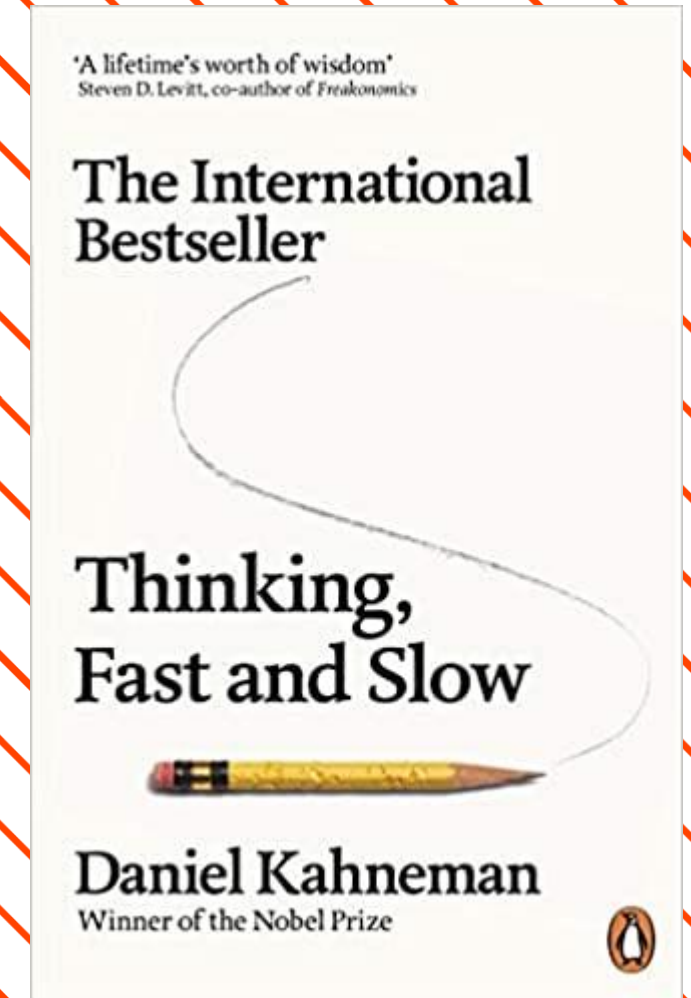
System 2 – slow thinking

- Brace for the starter gun in a race
- Focus attention on the clowns in a circus
- Look for a woman with white hair
- Search memory to identify a surprising sound
- Maintain a faster walking speed than is natural for you
- Monitor the appropriateness of your behaviour in a social situation



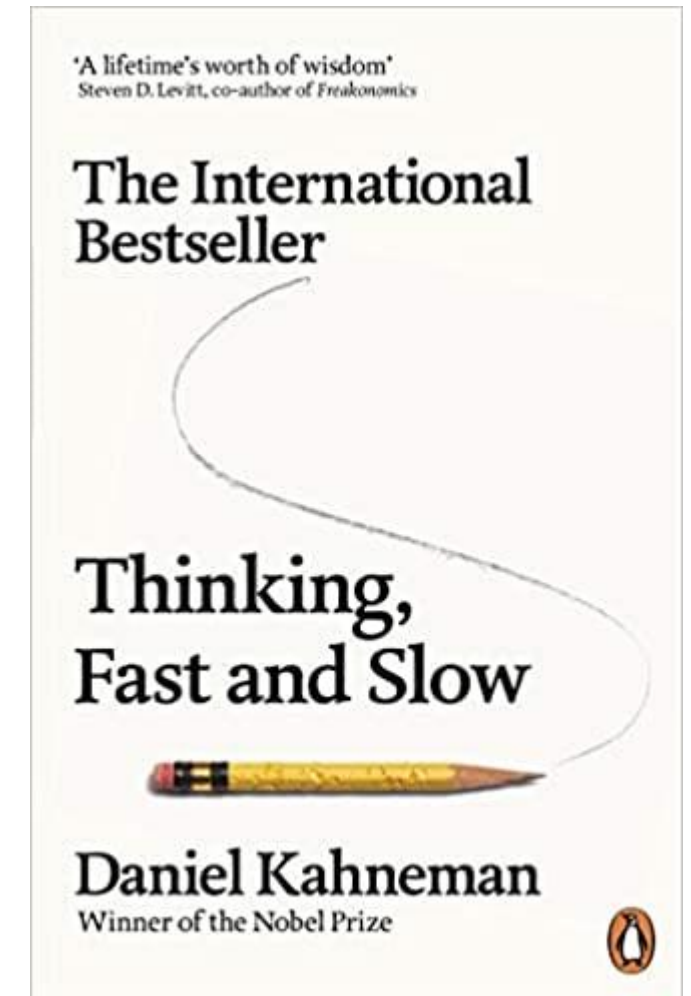
System 2 – slow thinking

- Count the occurrences of the letter *a* in a page of text
- Tell someone your phone number
- Park in a narrow space (for most people)
- Compare two washing machines for overall value
- Fill out a tax form
- Check the validity of a complex logical argument

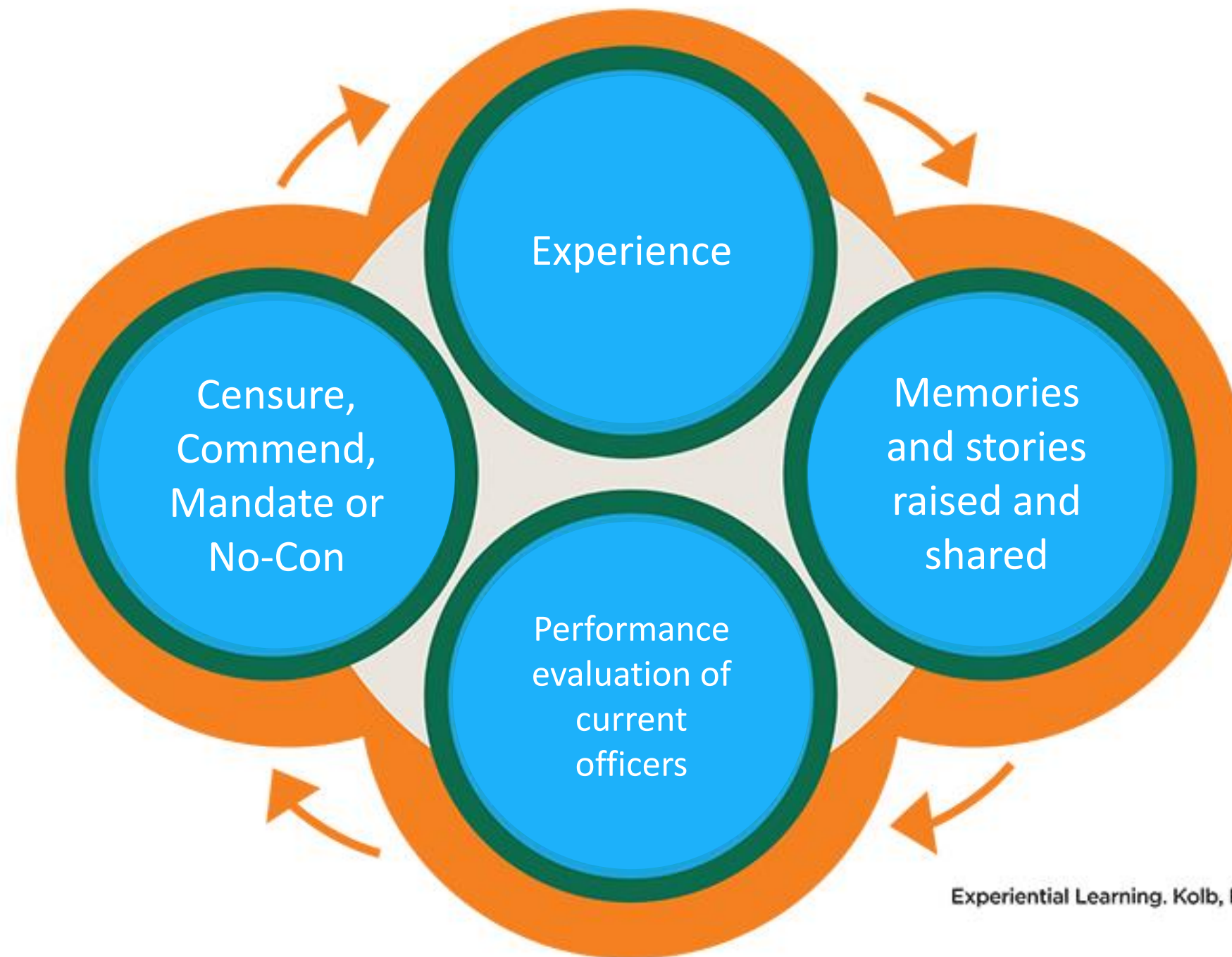


Maybe

- Summer for SUs/officers as “unreal world” but also “how things work”
- July, August and September is slow thinking – analytical, deliberate, evidence based
- October, November, December is fast thinking – subconscious, instinctive
- So to improve thinking and decision making in the “real world” do we reprogram subconscious, or take more time(s) out?



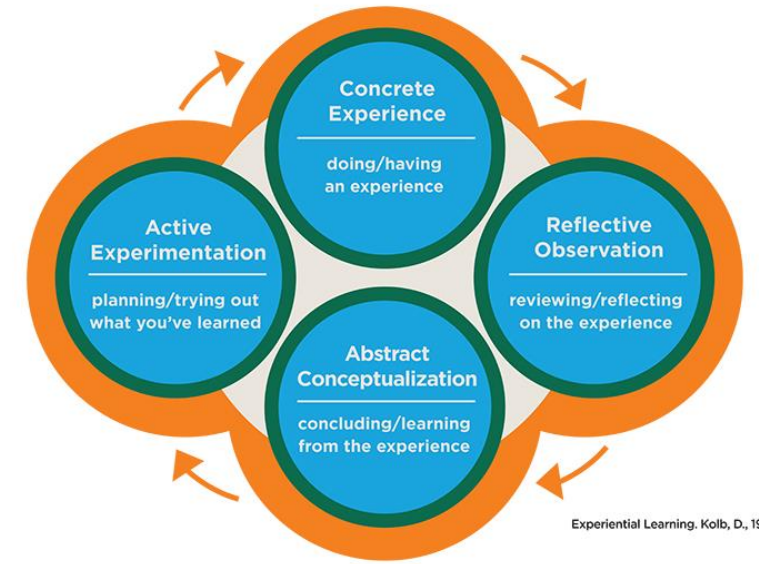
Representation as learning



Experiential Learning. Kolb, D., 1984

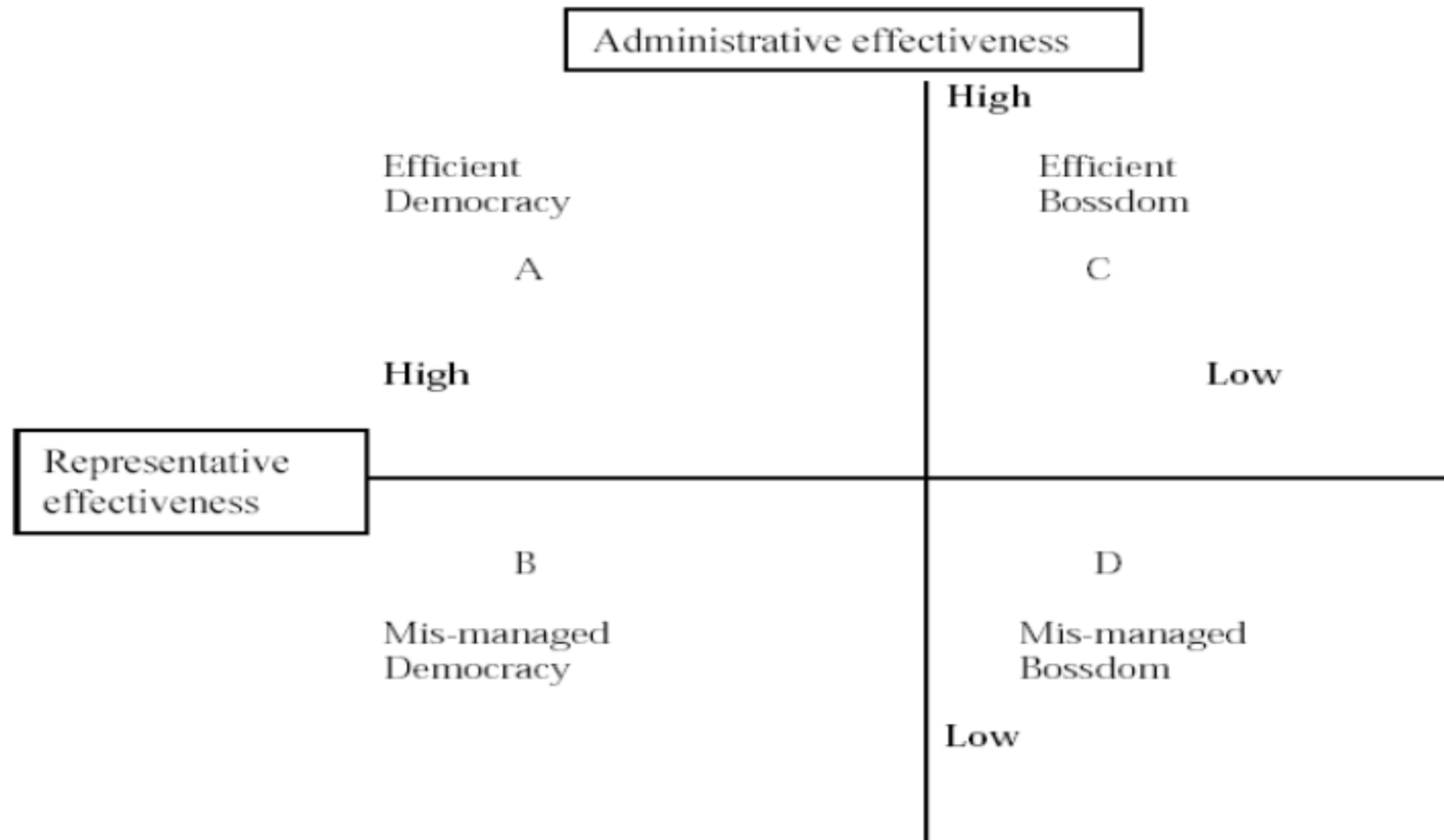
A question

- Imagine the FT officer team at your SU are all standing for re-election next year.
- The election could be called at any moment between Sep and April, and current officers can't campaign.
- They can only win if the whole team wins.
- What would change about your union? About how it works? What gets decided? How it communicates? How it runs?

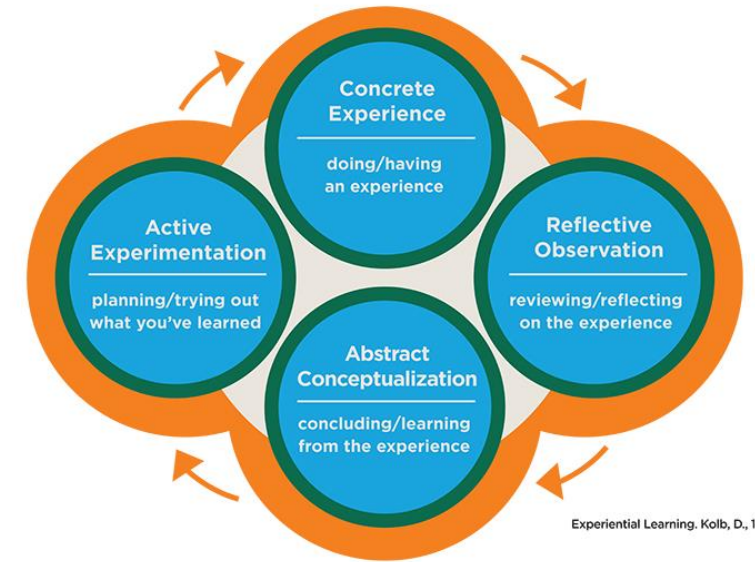


A question

Figure 1 Model of administrative and representative effectiveness



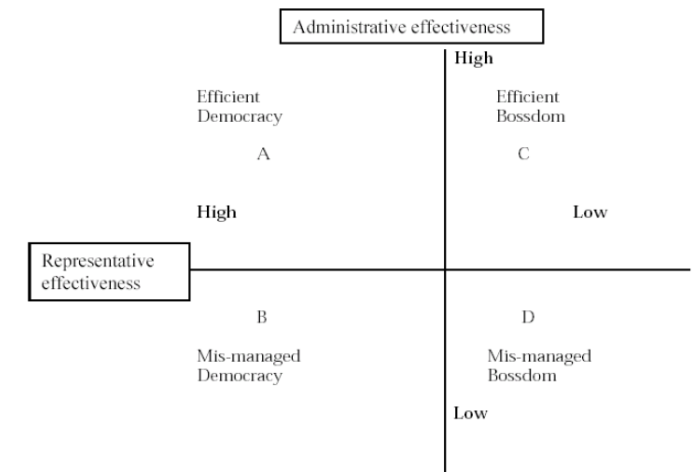
Source: Adapted from Child et al. 1973: 80.



Representative:

a flexibility of operations to suit the needs of different membership groups located within different situations, a duplication of functions in order to build checks and balances into union control, a multiplicity of communications in order to allow maximum interchange...of opinion, and a holding back of decision-making until every viewpoint has been expressed

Figure 1 Model of administrative and representative effectiveness



Source: Adapted from Child et al. 1973: 80.

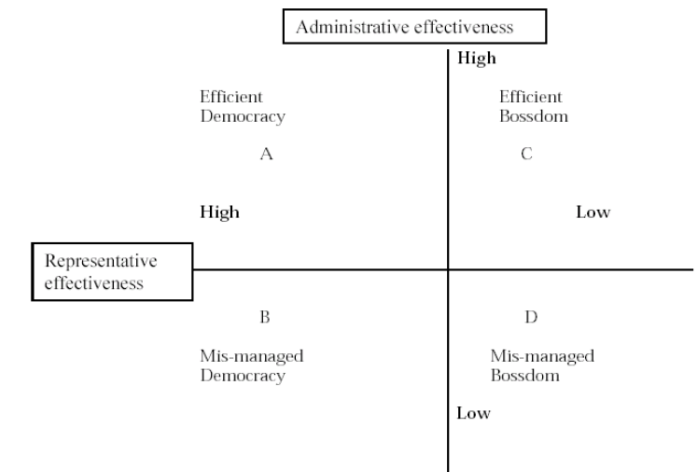
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Administrative:

is the design of an organisation in such a way that specified tasks or outcomes are attained with certainty or economy.

these conditions appear in many instances to require a routinisation of operations, specialisation of functions, directness of communication, and speed in decision-making

Figure 1 Model of administrative and representative effectiveness

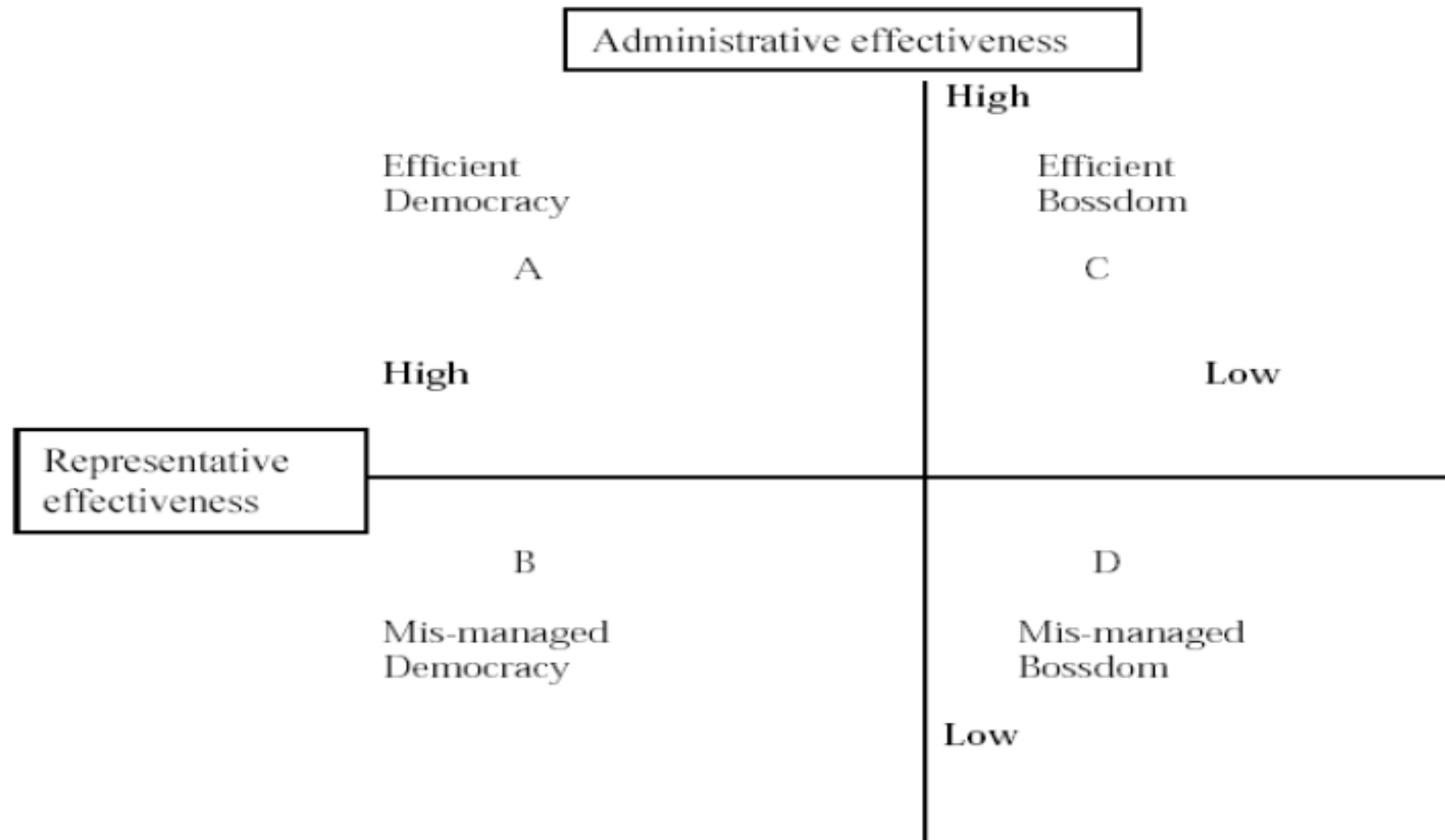


Source: Adapted from Child et al. 1973: 80.

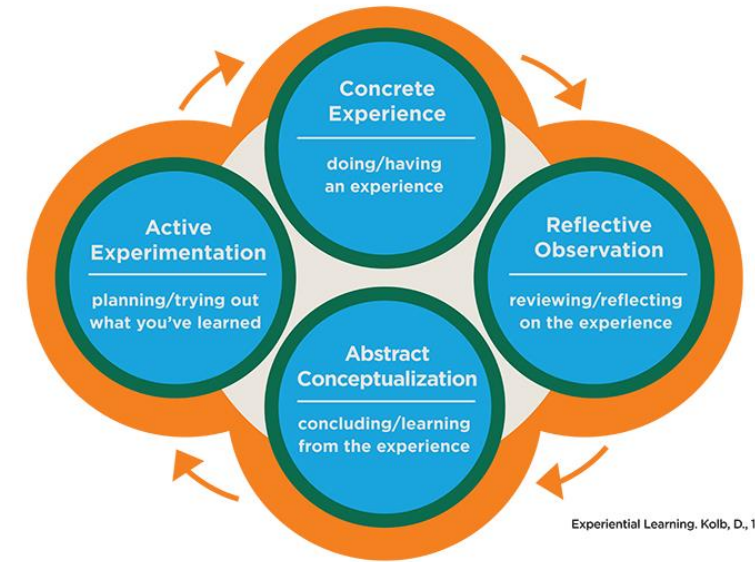
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A question

Figure 1 Model of administrative and representative effectiveness



Source: Adapted from Child et al. 1973: 80.



Policy analysis



- Types of leadership on offer
- Types of solutions to problems

1. Repetition



2. Reflection

- Can I argue that the thing I'm about to do or decide or say addresses something people recognise in the student experience?



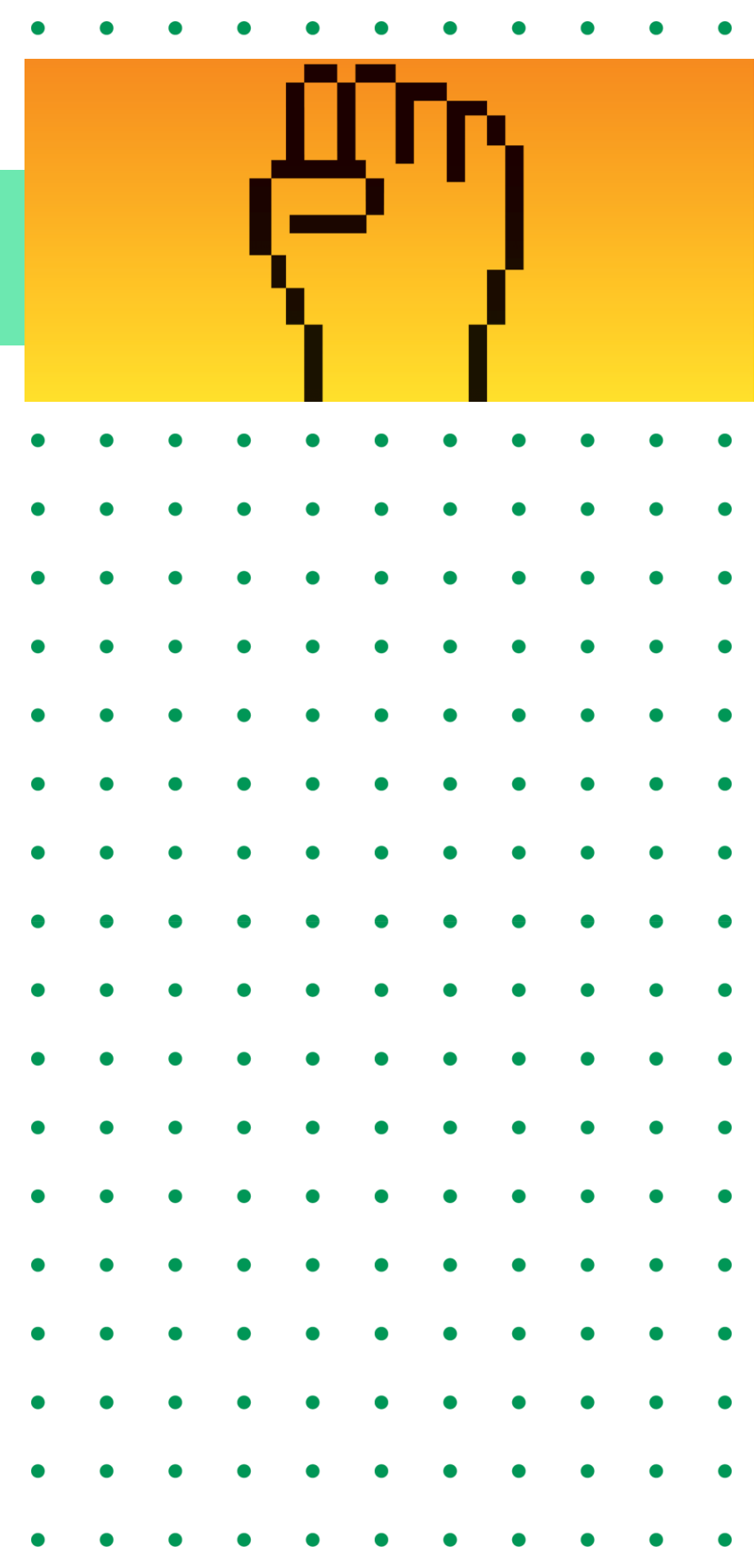
3. Empathy buckets

- Demonstrating that in making a decision – even a difficult one - you've listened, noticed and understood.
- Doing so extensively and vividly through narrative



4. Giving students things to do

- Community empowerment – here's a thing you can use to do amazing things
- Here's a thing I have done for you to rescue you
- Sometimes these are the same things – for example, securing additional student financial support
- (Do you want students to think you looked after them or made them feel powerful)



5. Connect

- Connecting for benefit is about influencing others in the student space and being a partner in them getting it right



6. Effort not just attainment

- Good politicians talk about what they believe and the way in which they've been arguing for it, not just their achievements.

CAMPAIGNS, COMMUNITY, DEFENCE, ECONOMY, PARLIAMENT

City MP speaks up for Portsmouth rail users in Parliament



York Outer MP speaks up for residents on fly tipping

[Like](#) [Share](#) [Tweet](#)

Wednesday, 18 April, 2018



7. Loads of little things



8. Political franchising



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Minimum Investment
£800,000

Funding Support
N/A

Franchise Fees
N/A

Business Type
Fast Food

Total Investment
POA

Expected Revenue After 2 Years
N/A

Enquire

Send a free enquiry
further info

Your Name*



9. Wrong?

- Be actually sorry (not just for the impact), as a human, very quickly, in as plain language as possible

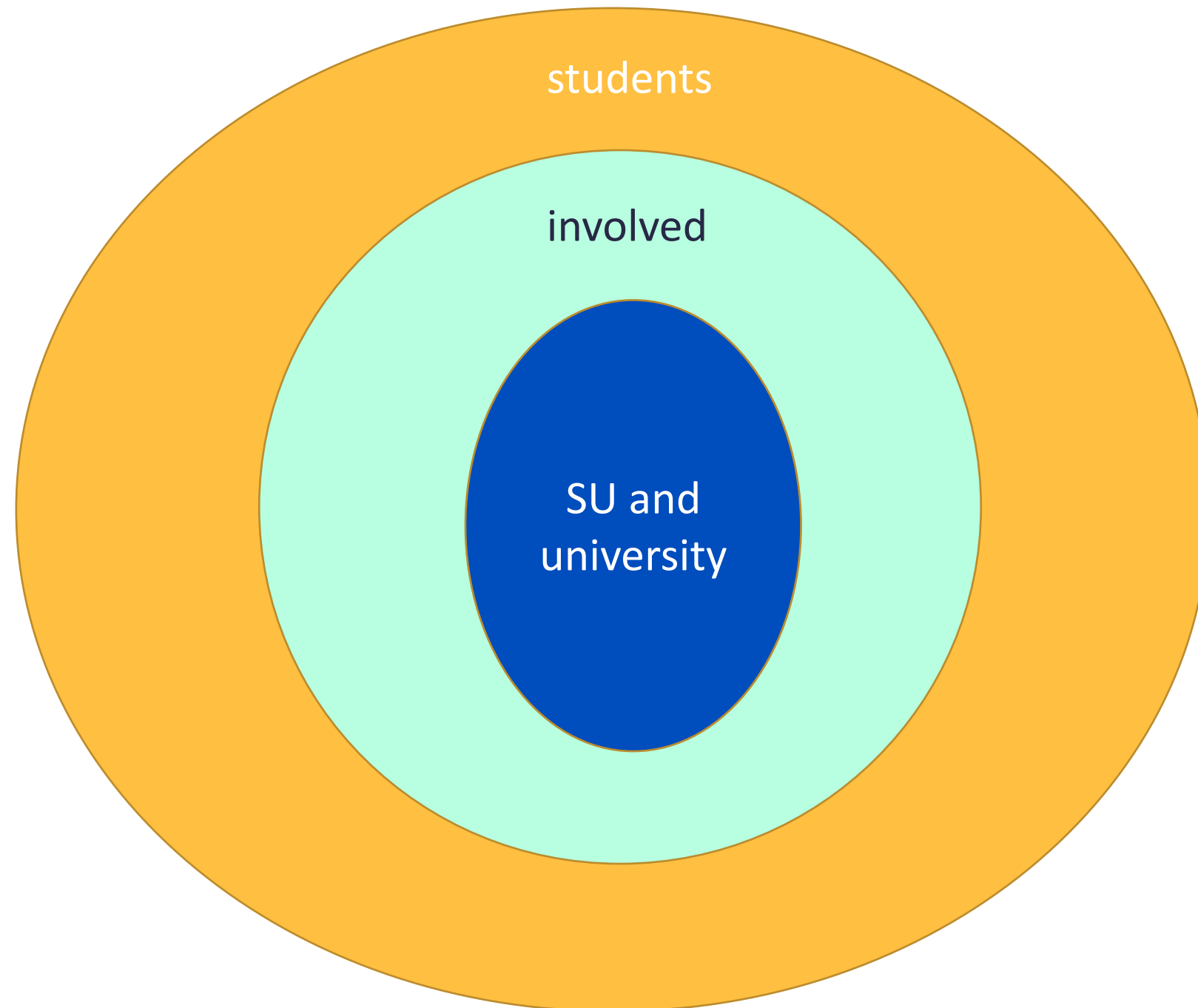


10. Condemnation?

- (Most) people don't like relentless conflict but
- (Most) people do like being “stood up for”



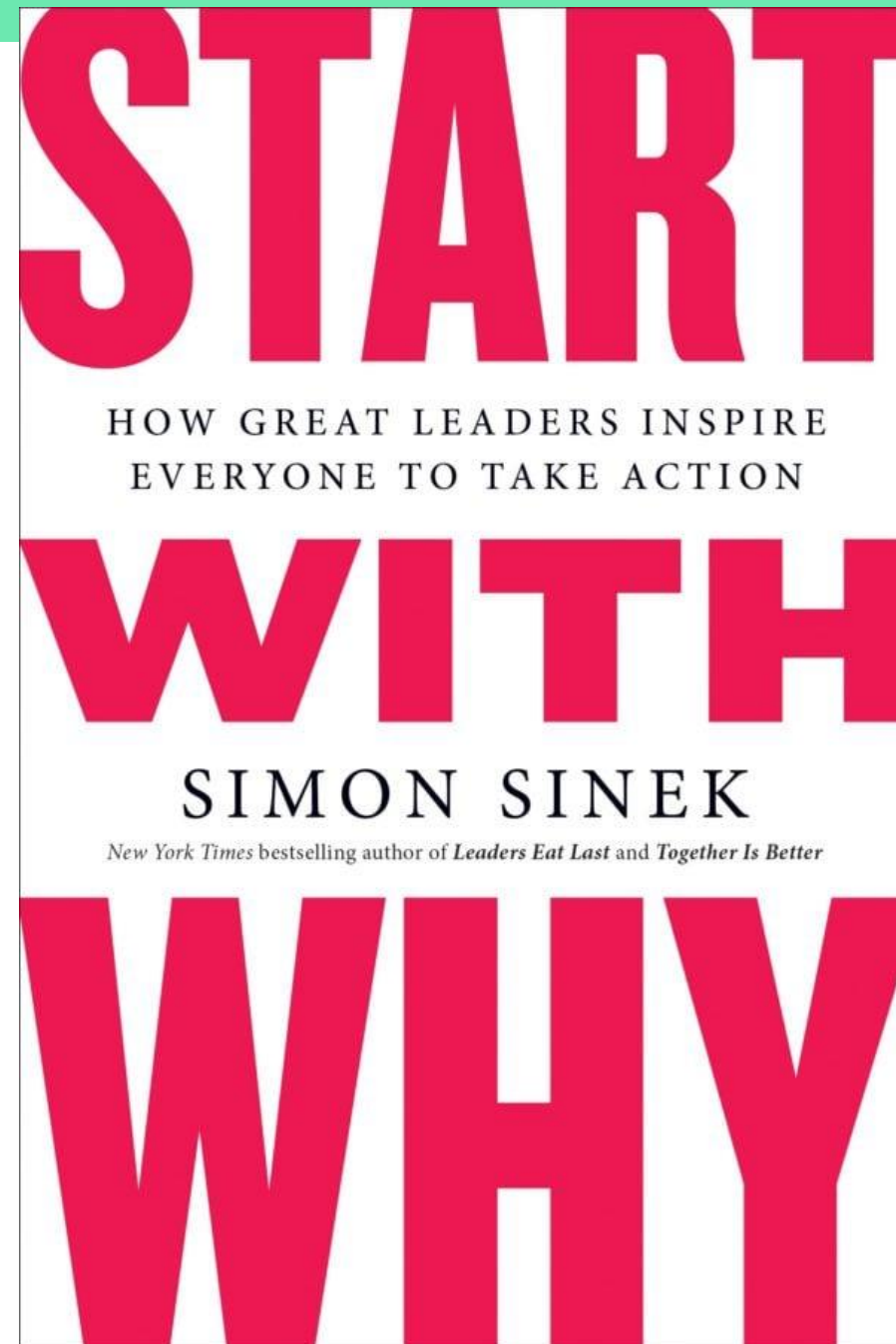
11. Talk in the circle you're in



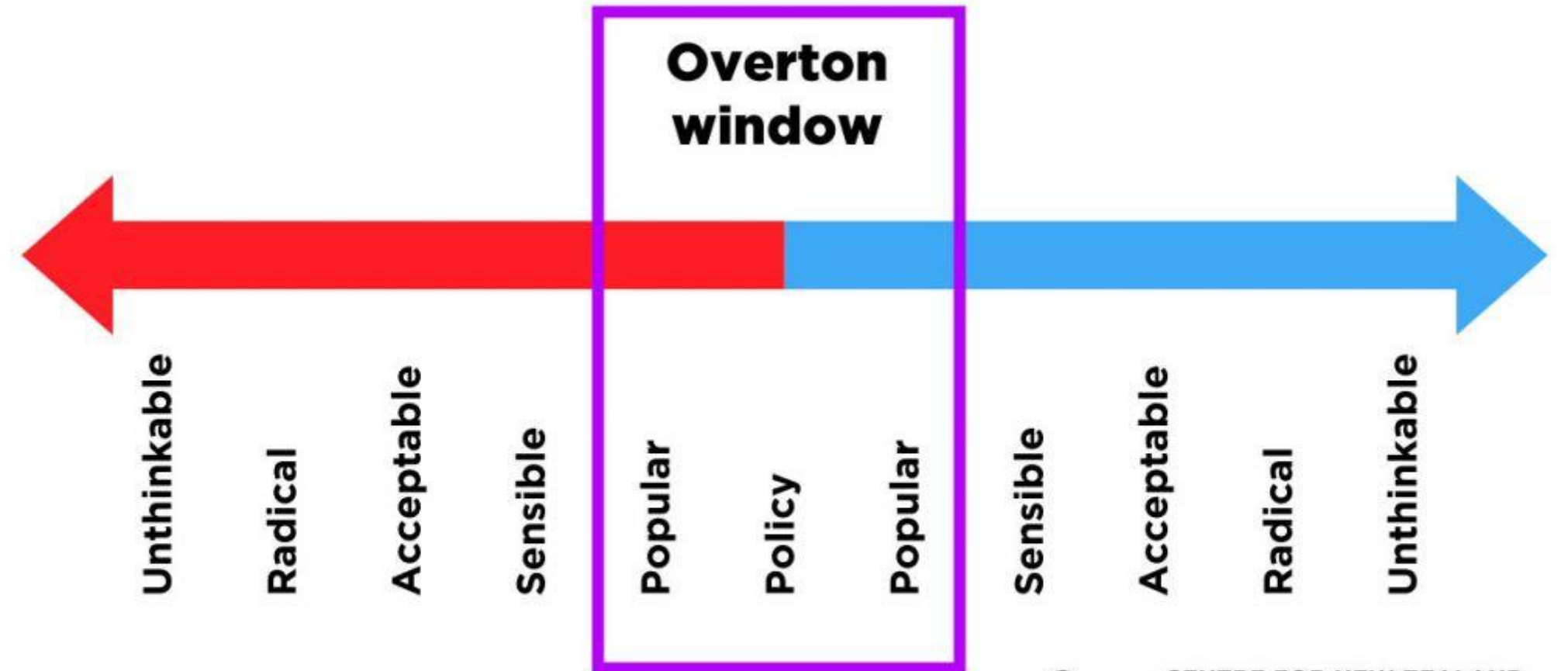
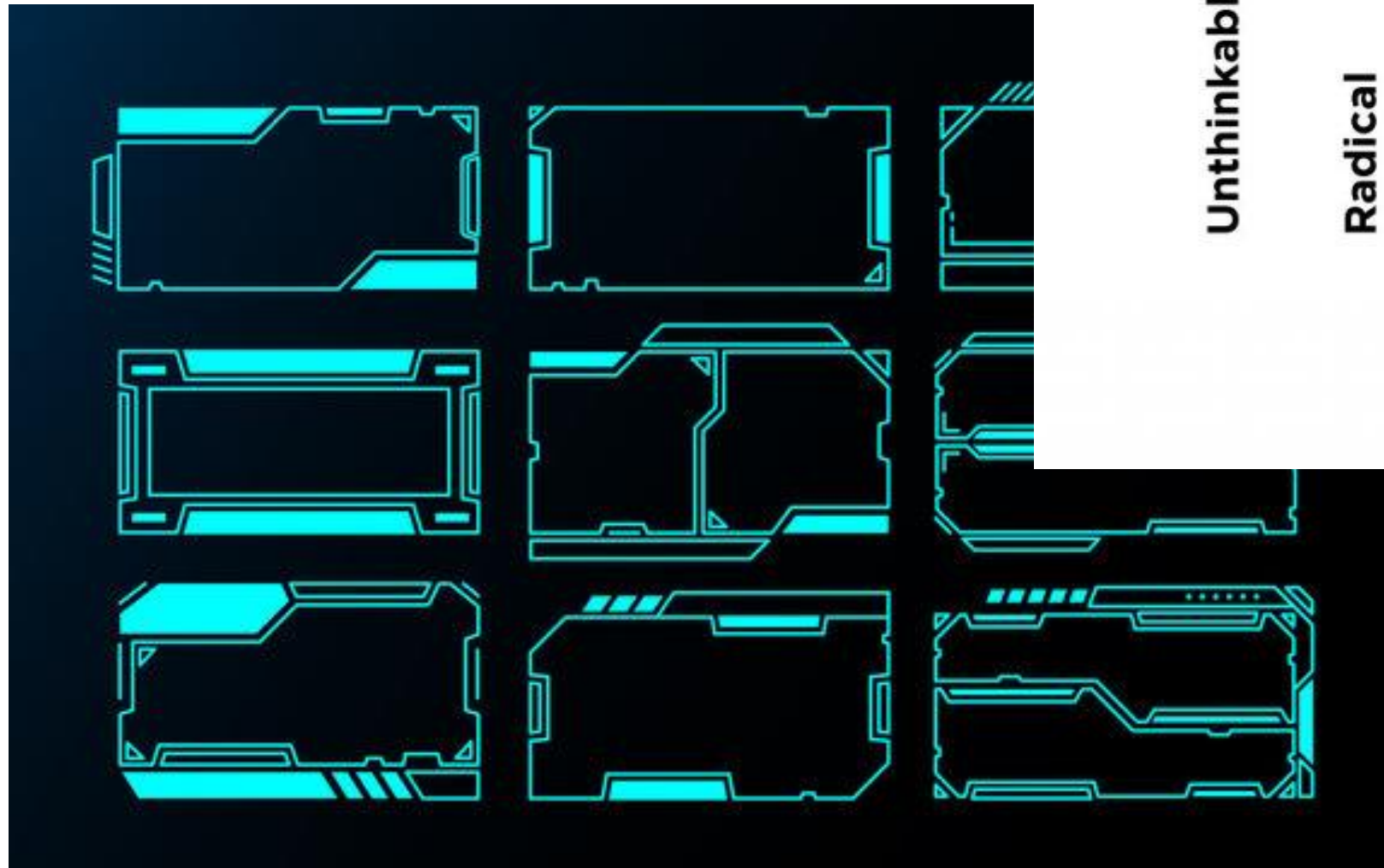
12. Don't crash moving buses



13. Restart with why



14. Frame others' decisions ahead of time



15. Involvement

- Mass involvement in evidence gathering
- Managed involvement in deliberation



16. “Side aligning”

- In proposals, comms, tweets, contributions being suddenly careful about who is included in “us”, “our” or “we” and who is included in “them”, “their” or “theirs”



Loop the loop



 **Praestare**
Perform at your best

As I've said many times, Vote Leave could only win because the Establishment's OODA loops are broken - as the Brexit negotiations painfully demonstrate daily - and they are systematically bad at decisions, and this created just enough space for us to win.

Dominic Cummings

Loop the loop

As I've said many times, Vote Leave could only win because the Establishment's OODA loops are broken - as the Brexit negotiations painfully demonstrate daily - and they are systematically bad at decisions, and this created just enough space for us to win.

Dominic Cummings



Secrets of political thinking

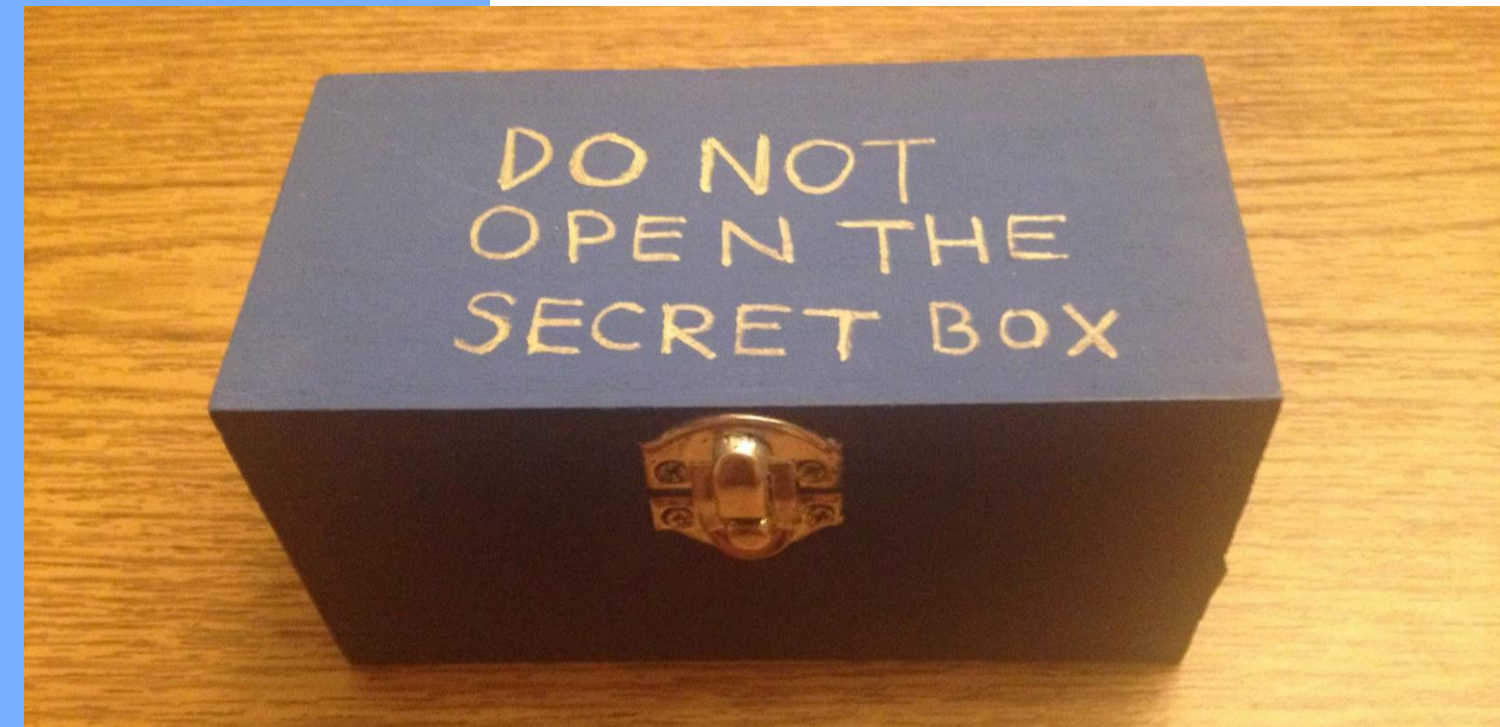
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