

APAIE 2024



PERTH, AUSTRALIA 4-8 MARCH 2024

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Collaborating for sustainable impact: partnerships across the Asia Pacific

APAIE Perth 4 - 8 March 2024

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Workshop 5: Mon 4th March, 12:30 – 15:30

**Tear-down, reconstruct: new practice architectures for
sustainable student support**

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Collaborating for sustainable impact: partnerships across the Asia Pacific

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Tear-down, reconstruct: new practice architectures for sustainable student support

APAIE pre-conference workshop
March 2024

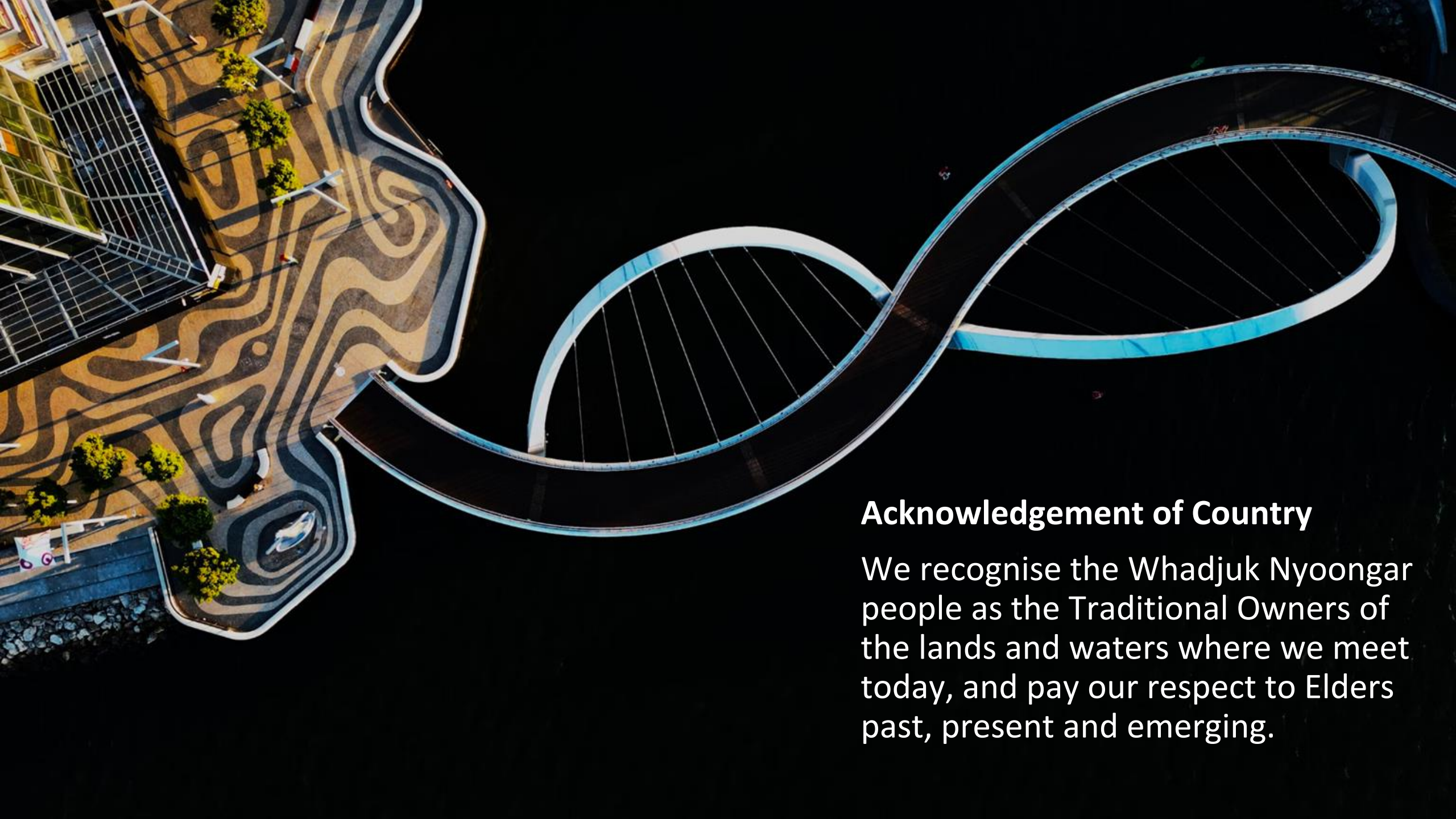
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Research Consultant, Intesa Insights & Consulting

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Academic Director, Sydney Institute of Business &
Technology - Navitas





Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise the Whadjuk Nyoongar people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters where we meet today, and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Workshop outline



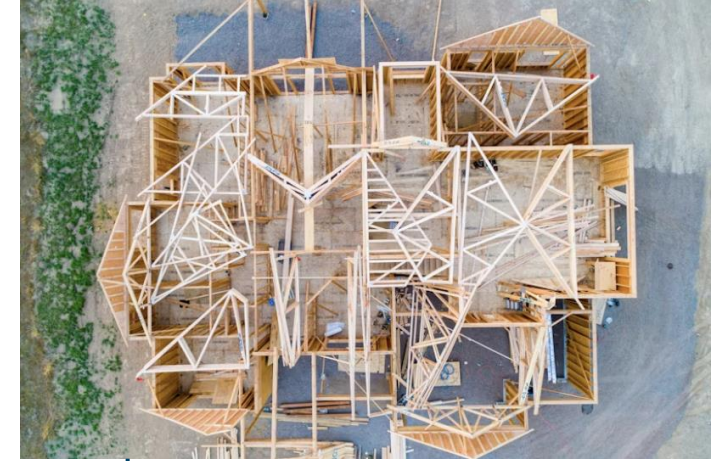
1 Tear-down

What's happening with student support?



2 Practice

Get hands-on with 'Interview To The Double'



3 Re-construct

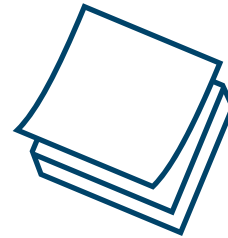
Build your own plans and practices

A quick meet and mingle

- Where are you from?
- What's your role?

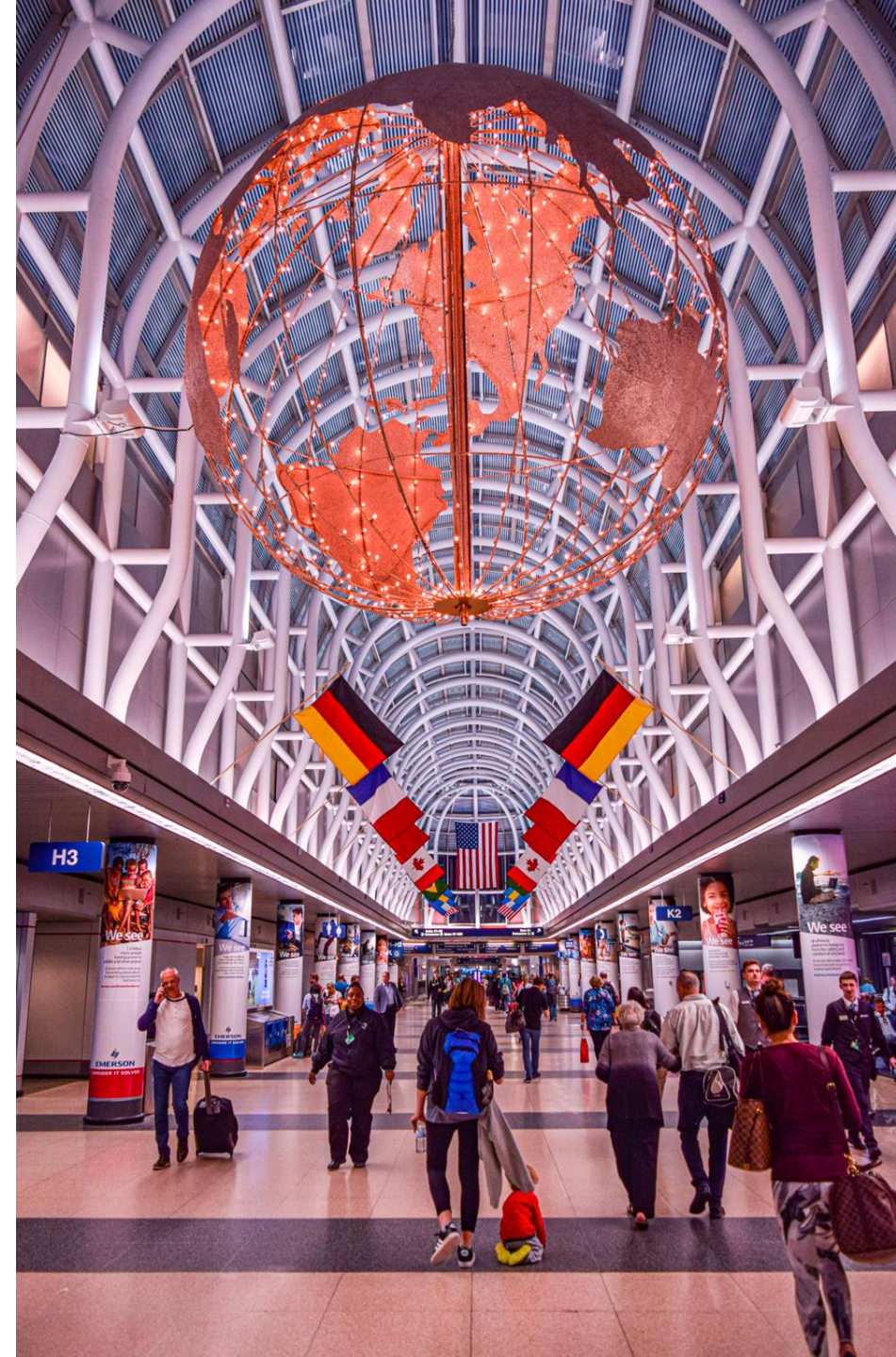
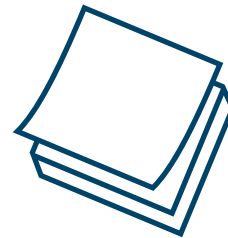
Note 1:

1 word to describe student support in your institution



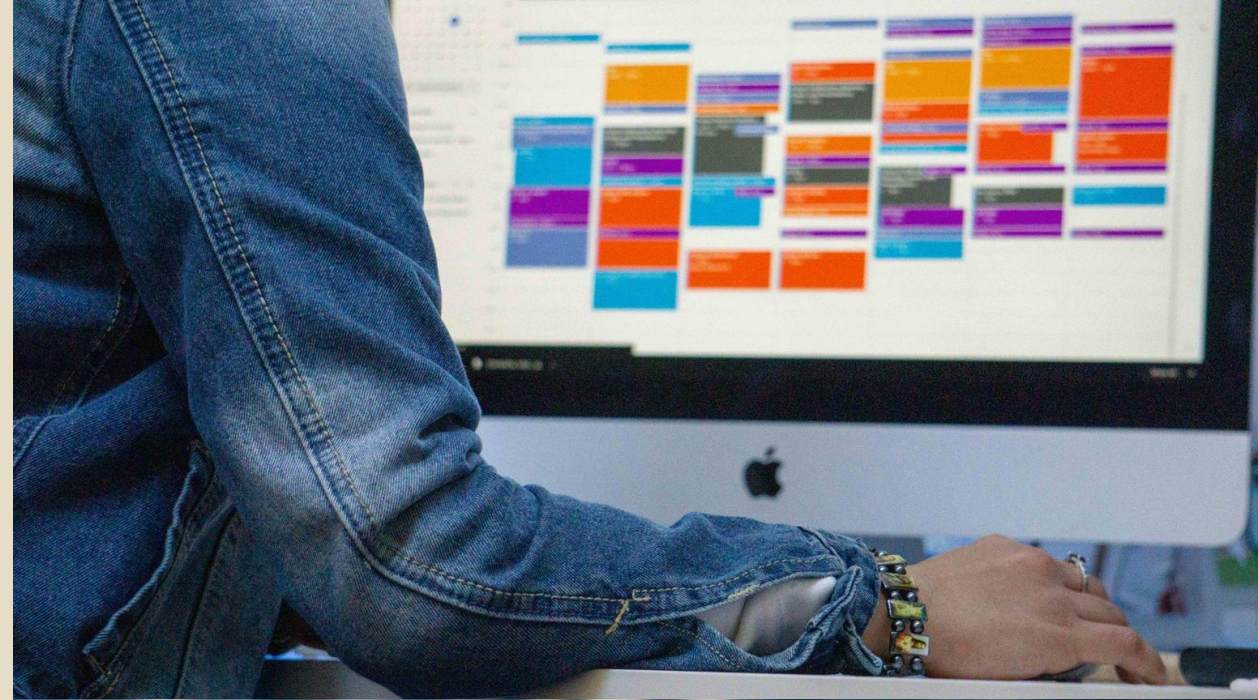
Note 2:

At the moment, international students really need...



Part 1: Tear-down

What did the research tell
us about international
student support?



Research background

Methodology

- 20 x individual depth interviews, 30-60 mins
- Campus & team meeting observations

Sample

- Australia, Vietnam, New Zealand, Malaysia, Canada
- Universities & Higher Education providers, public & private
- Range: long history working with international vs. small/ growing international student provision
- Wide variety of roles - 3 main groups:
 - Senior leaders (Director/ Head; multiple portfolios; multiple teams)
 - Middle leaders (Manager; student experience focus; direct reports)
 - Operations/ delivery (student services, advisor, counsellor)

Theory of practice architectures (TPA): in brief

TPA - a version of practice theory

→ Unit of analysis = practices (not individuals/ people)

Practice consists of 3 interdependent arrangements:



Sayings language; what/ how things are talked (or not talked) about;

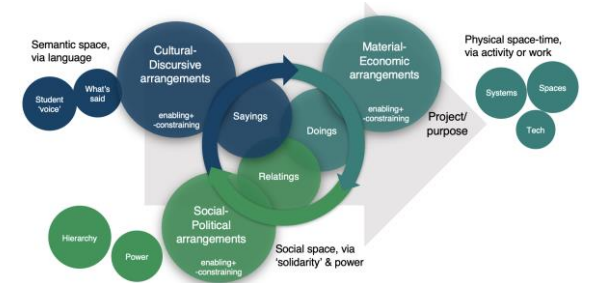


Doings material, temporal, physical & technology

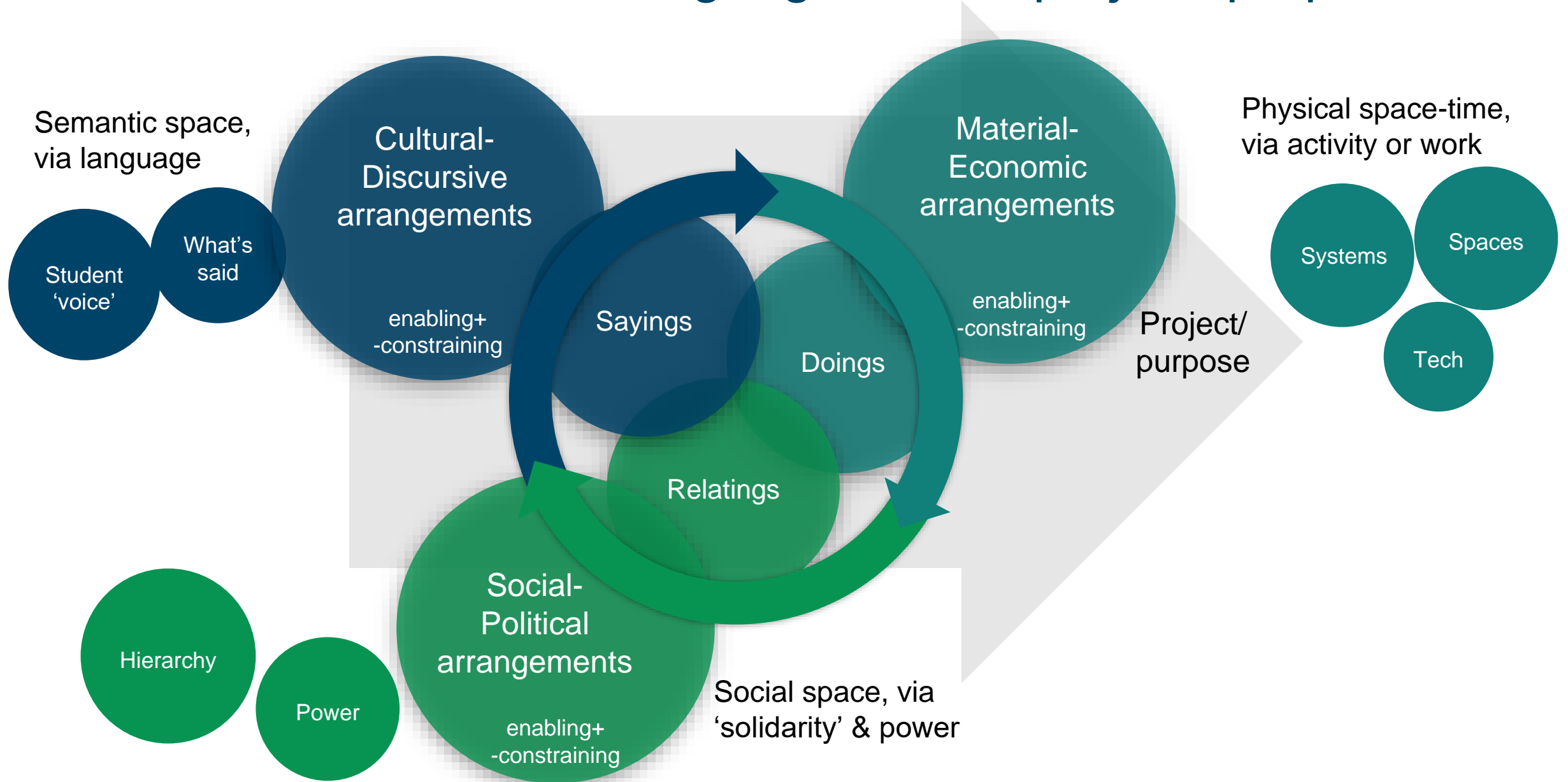


Relatings power, hierarchies, professional relationships

→ The 3 arrangements are interdependent on context and situation, happen in combination and only together shape our practices.



Practice architectures 'hang together' → project/ purpose



Interview To The Double

“Tell me how to be you for the day”

- A ‘projective’ interviewing technique
- Surfaces everyday practices
 - Work and education settings
 - Insights come from the ordinary and ‘mundane’
- Not about the individual, but about the environment in which practices take place
 - How work/ learning happens in context
 - Describing authentic practices, not sharing ‘best practice’



Analysing the data - identifying practices

Summary Transcript

1 Speaker 1 33:17

I don't take it home or no. Okay. All right. I because I know what's in that notebook. Anyway, in my mind, I have that book in mind anyway, so I'm not going to get surprises in the morning. Now, don't take those home. I asked my staff not to do that as well. We're not emergency service. We need to have a break because the work we do can be emotional, exhausting, ongoing challenge challenging in many ways, but really fulfilling and really meaningful. But even so, we needed the time after work. You put your out of office, reply on even if you do look in your emails I don't want to see anybody respond on teams. And I don't want to see any emails going out to students, because we also want to educate and model for students. This is business time. And people have lives outside of that we have a process for emergency. And no, we're not an emergency service, but we will definitely respond to you between the hours of eight to five appropriately and take care of you in that way. But please understand that we're, you know, like our kids, you know, like, Oh my God, that's my teacher when they see them out of school in public. And they're like yeah

0:00:00



1x

1:03:22

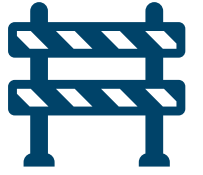


Synthesising the data - key practices



- **Managing risk**
- **Supporting students**
- **Administration**
- **Bridging & building relationships**
- **Influencing**
- **Managing teams**
- **Projects & planning**

Findings: What makes student support unsustainable?



Reactive focus & fire-fighting



Daily detail, no bigger picture



Always 'on' - lack of boundaries



Disconnected, working solo



International students not well understood across community

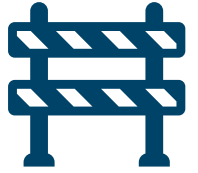


Lack of advocacy and institutional support



Clumsy systems and processes

What makes student support unsustainable?



I'd be driving with my phone on my leg and if I'd see a Teams notification on a red light, I would respond. I felt like I just had to be present for everybody all the time.



We don't have an international strategy, so [international students] are not very visible in that sense...



The job can be as big as you want it to be... but there's not enough time. And there's only one of me, so I have to work with realistic management of my time



We're using maybe three or four or even five different systems...



Findings: What makes student support sustainable?



Long-term planning and strategy



Prioritising wellbeing



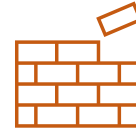
Setting and maintaining boundaries



Activating network and champions



Ongoing education and advocacy,
across institution and beyond



Building on foundations - not
reinventing the wheel



Making systems and technology
work for you and your team

Findings: What makes student support sustainable?



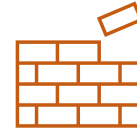
We need to have a break because the work we do can be emotional, exhausting, challenging in many ways, but really fulfilling and really meaningful.



You know the quieter times when you can provide support and training to staff so that they're equipped to handle [crises]. It's understanding the ebbs and flows of our college



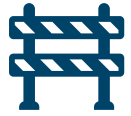
It's very important to come to these meetings advocating for students - not everyone has the same agenda



Why reinvent the wheel when there's already great best practices out there, especially when you're working with international students?



What's familiar or surprising to you here? What's your experience?



Reactive focus & fire-fighting



Daily detail, no bigger picture



Always 'on' - lack of boundaries



Disconnected, working solo



International students not well understood across community



Lack of advocacy and institutional support



Clumsy systems and processes



Long-term planning and strategy



Prioritising wellbeing



Setting and maintaining boundaries



Activating network and champions



Ongoing education and advocacy, across institution and beyond



Building on foundations - not reinventing the wheel



Making systems and technology work for you and your team

Four key areas of practice: diving deeper



Managing risk

Reacting
Triage
Prioritising
Troubleshooting



Managing people

Managing workload
Checking in
Being present
Helping out



Bridging & building relationships

Bridging silos
Advocacy
Networking
Internal/ external relationships



Planning & coordinating

Managing time
Coordinating tasks
Managing systems & resources

Matching practices to themes



Managing risk



Managing people



Bridging & building
relationships



Planning &
coordinating



Sayings

Mental wellbeing of the staff is quite important in a role like this.

Especially in high stress times, you think "Oh, I didn't eat, I haven't drunk any water today." We remind and check in on each other.



Doings

It's important that we catch up. Even though we're in the same room, people are really, really busy.

We put out of office replies on every day so we have clear directions for students and for staff [who and how to contact out of hours]



Relatings

They're such a strong team, it means that I don't have to come into the breach so often. We complement each other very well, and there's a lot of trust.

What's making things run smoothly? A really capable, competent, culturally competent team

Practice: Managing risk

Reacting; triage; prioritising; troubleshooting;



Sayings

It's a very reactive role. I get a lot of 'WTF' moments in my job that need action.

I have this internal triage system of "is this something I can deal with later or would this take a two second reply?"



Doings

We have a clear policy [...] we are expected to be autonomous in our working hours and to know when to turn off and when not to

I have a notebook. I can cross out and tick things off and note what I need to prioritise from the inbox for the next hour, the next two hours, the next three hours...



Relatings

There's a real need for internationalisation throughout the university. We have faculties making decisions that impact on student visas, but they don't think about that

I'm always fascinated at how different departments are more risk averse than others and which are more student-centric than others...

Practice: Managing people

Managing workload; checking in; being present; helping out



Sayings

Mental wellbeing of the staff is quite important in a role like this.

Especially in high stress times, you think “Oh, I didn't eat, I haven't drunk any water today.” We remind and check in on each other.



Doings

It's important that we catch up. Even though we're in the same room, people are really, really busy.

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Relatings

They're such a strong team, it means that I don't have to come into the breach so often. We complement each other very well, and there's a lot of trust.

What's making things run smoothly? A really capable, competent, culturally competent team

Practice: Bridging & building relationships

Bridging silos; advocacy; networking; internal/ external relationships



Sayings

I use the term champions quite a bit with my team. Find your champions. [...] those titans of industry, or people you have worked with on different things.

keeping my finger on the pulse with some of the bigger things that might be affecting scholars from certain countries...



Doings

It's important to have face-to-face engagement and campus engagement to see the relationships that have been built.

On a semesterly basis we survey our students and we ask them, What do you have? What do you need? What do you want?



Relatings

soft diplomacy is a huge part; the informal morning hellos and meeting people in the lift. Soft diplomacy being the primary way to get things done.

It's very important to come to meetings advocating for students - not everyone has the same agenda

Practice: Planning & coordinating

Managing time; coordinating tasks; managing systems & resources



Sayings

Email is definitely your compass for working. You have a very rigid calendar.

Not letting the 'urgent' get in the way of the important



Doings

We create a lot of templates so we don't have to reinvent the wheel every time

This is where it all becomes a bit manual...
[working between systems]

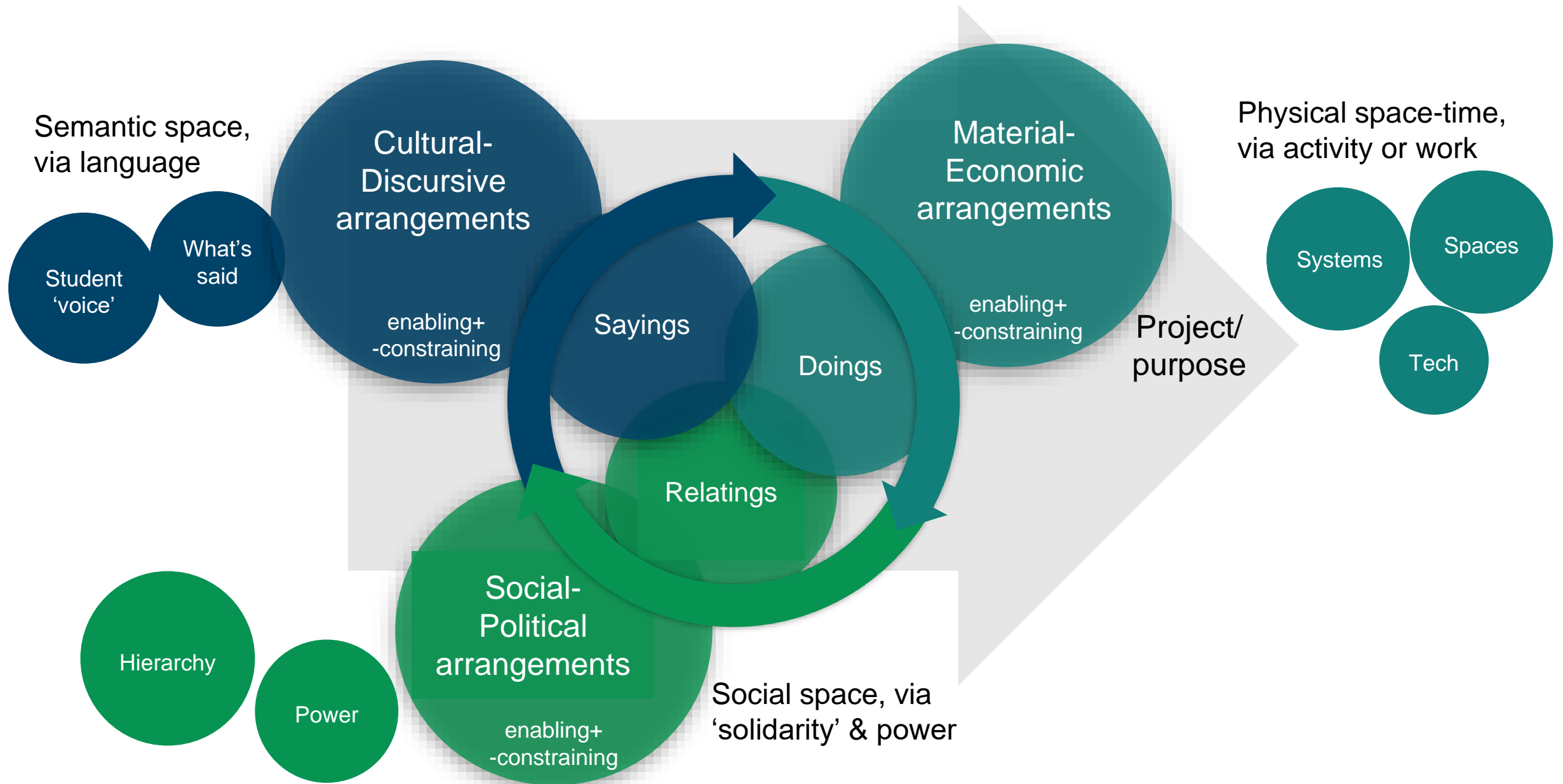


Relatings

What gets measured gets done, and I found that to be incredibly true, certainly in university settings.

The wins that we've had in student experience have been where we've gone in with a proposal and said really clearly, here's what we'd measure success to be and then actually follow up with it

Connecting practices to the 'project'/ purpose



Which 'arrangements' enable and constrain practices?



Cultural-Discursive

Promoting student voice

Internationalisation (campus, curriculum)



Material-Economic

Technology & systems

Policy & process



Social-Political

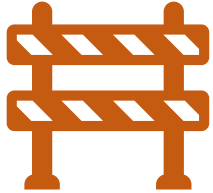
Perceptions of international students

Functional gaps & siloes

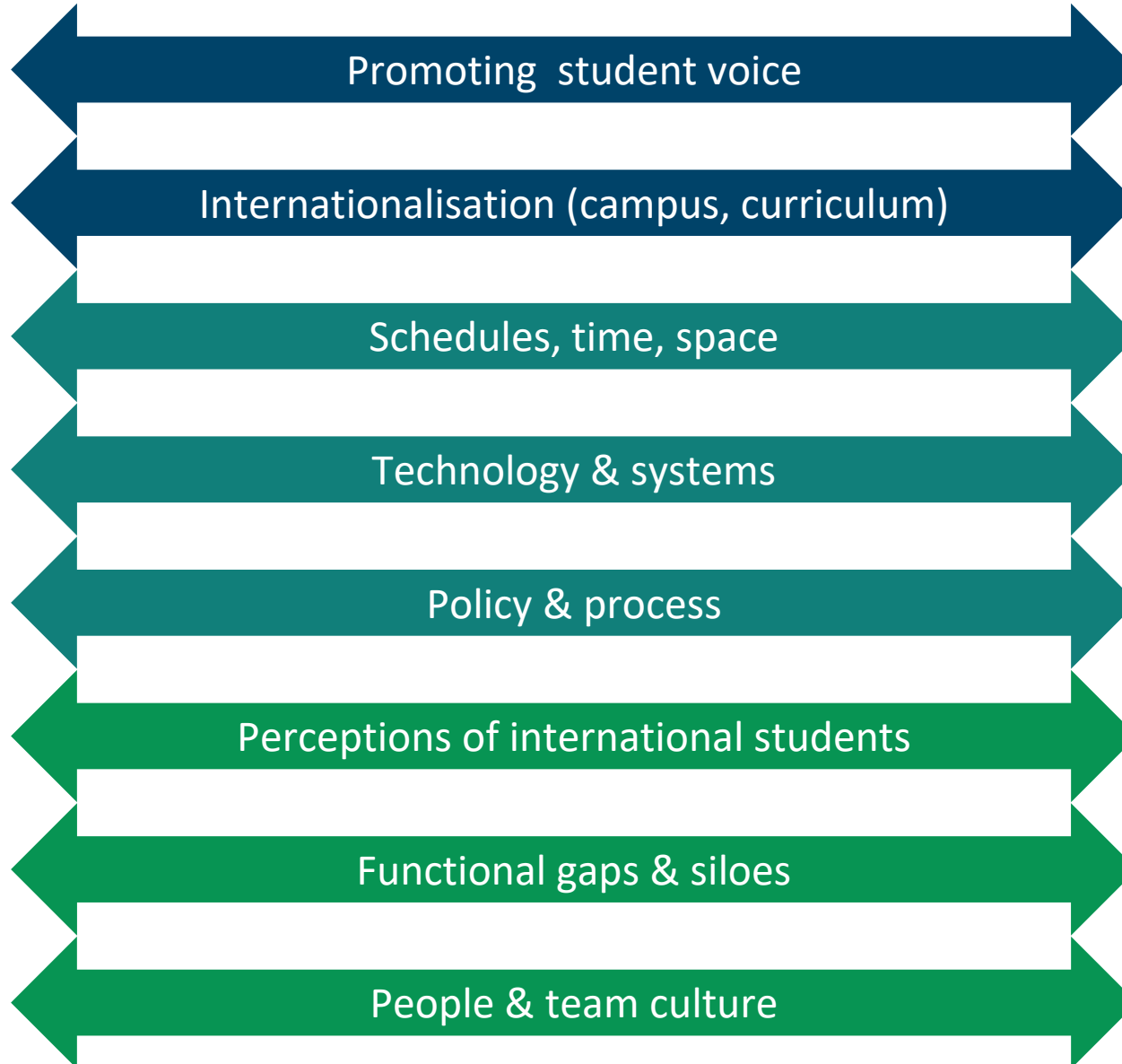
People & team culture

What constrains and enables student support practices?

- Cultural/ language barriers



- Turnover of staff - loss of knowledge

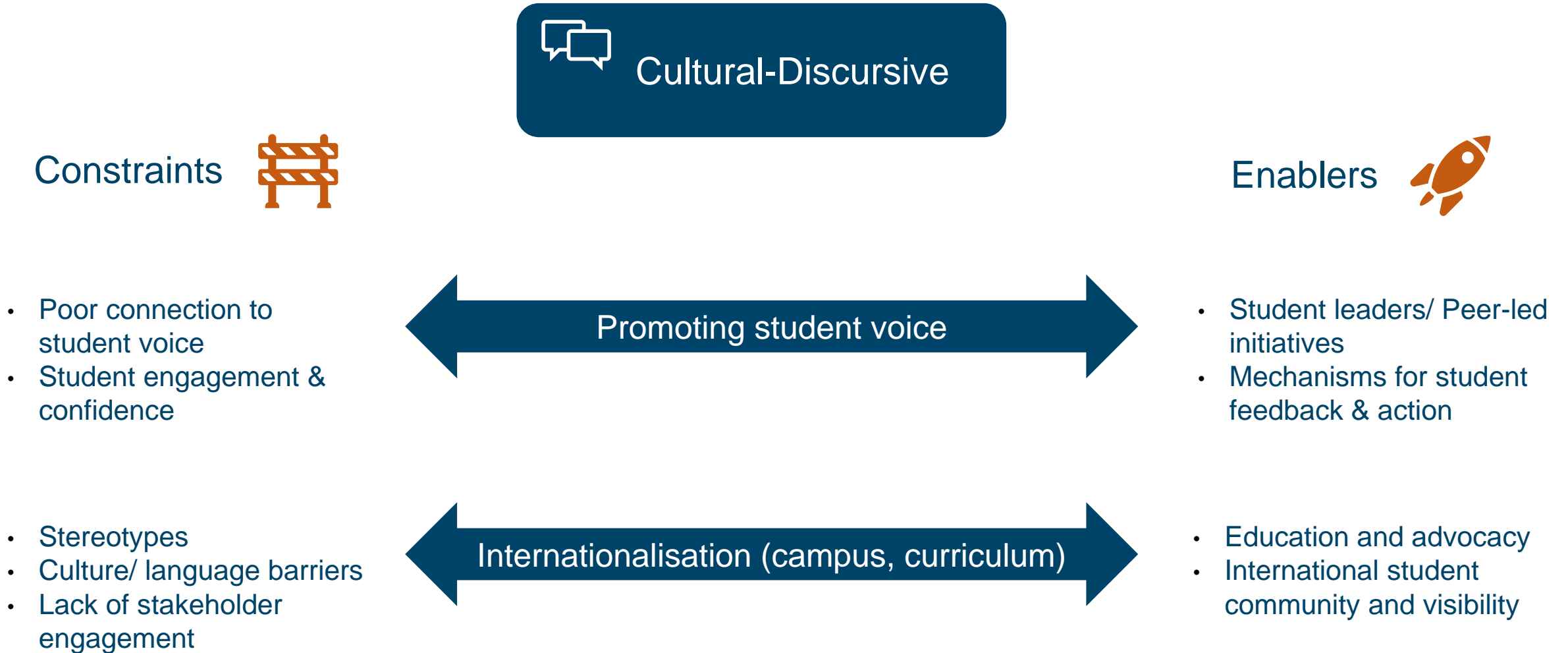


- Mechanisms for student feedback & action

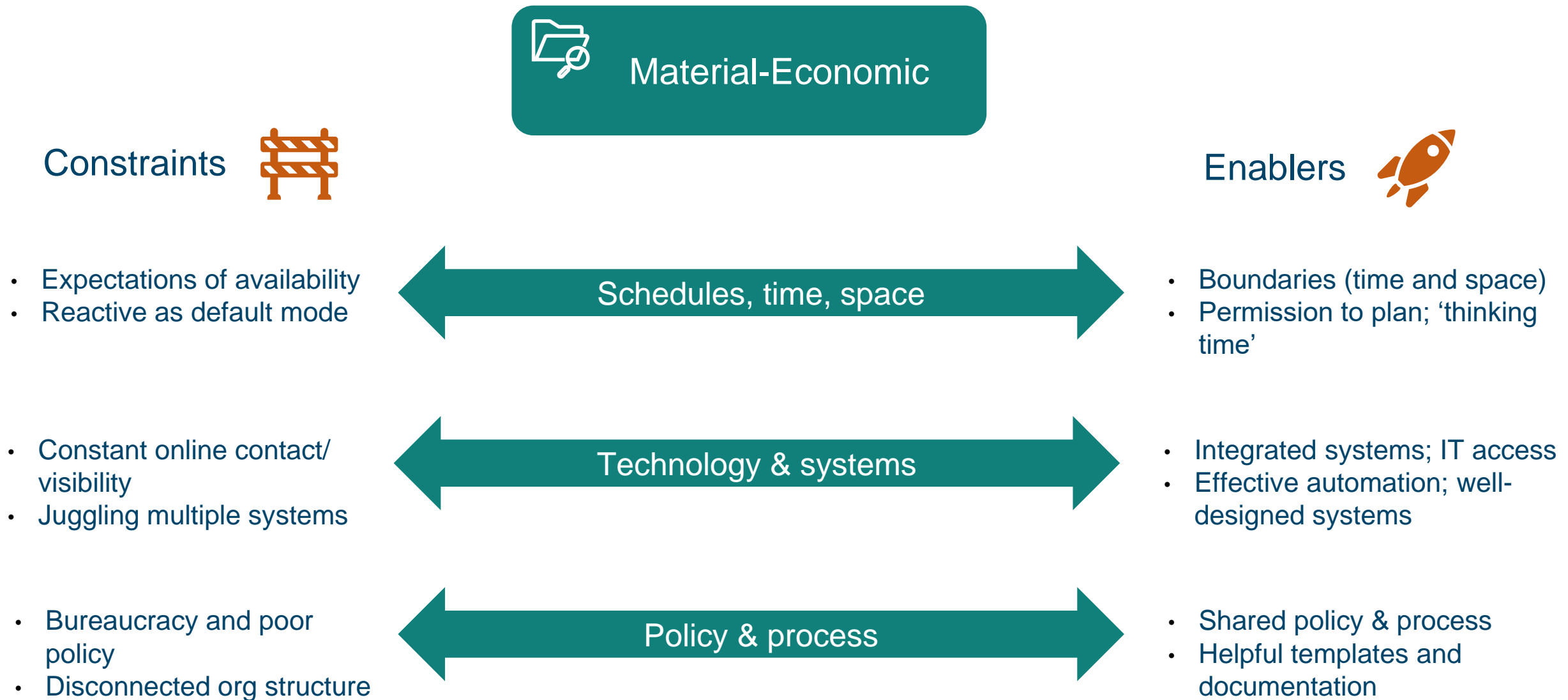


- Visibility, promotion of international students

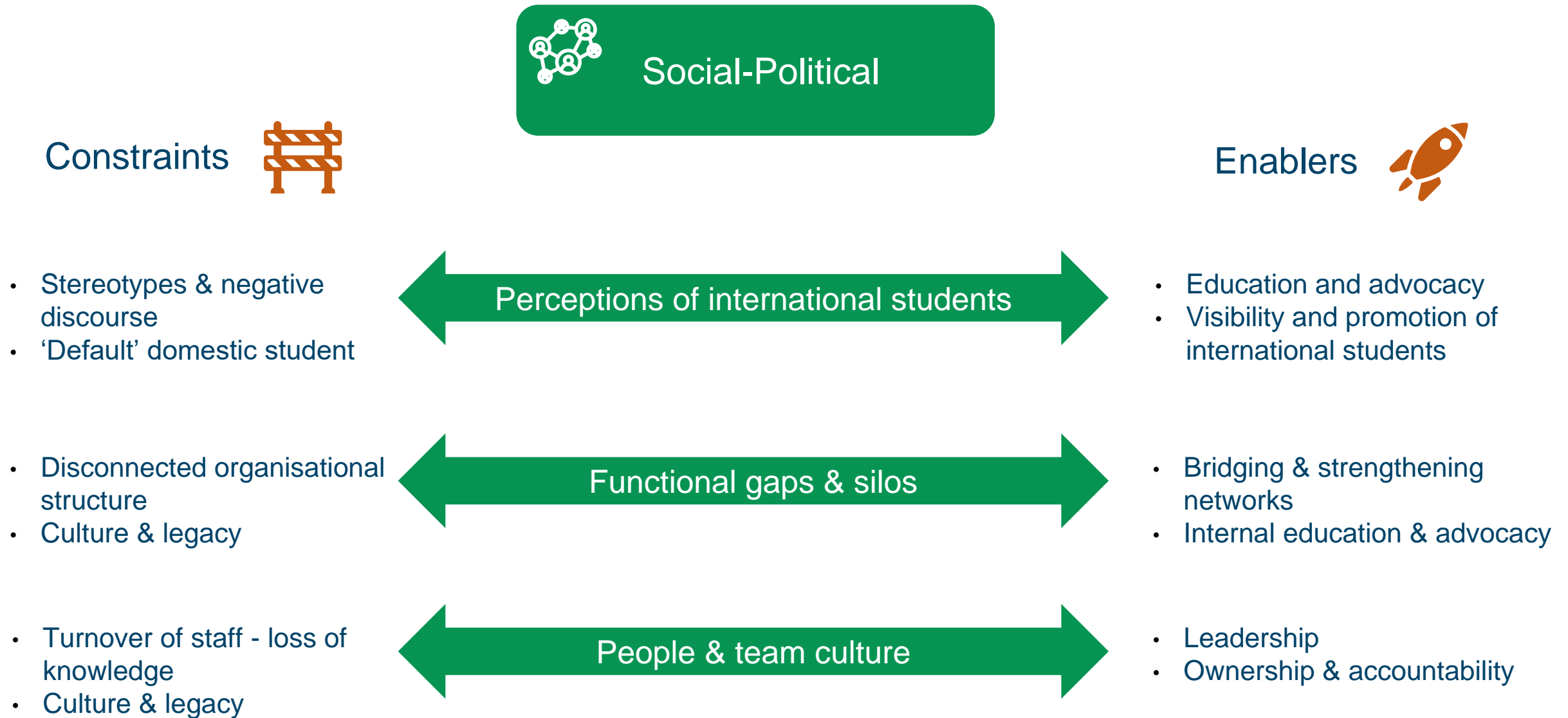
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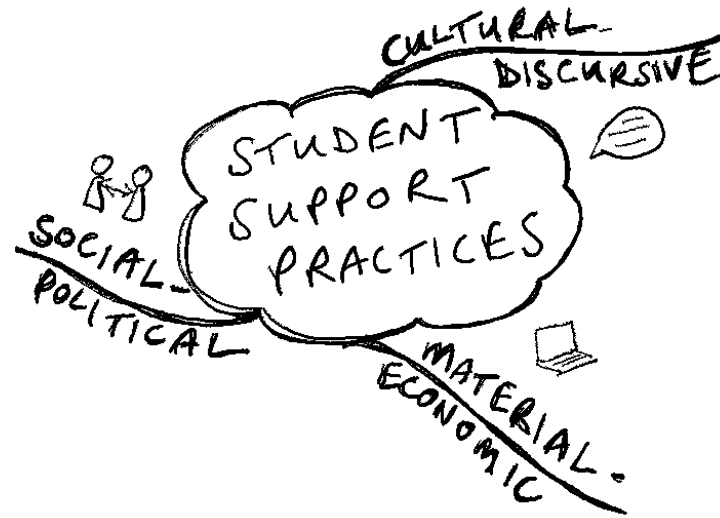
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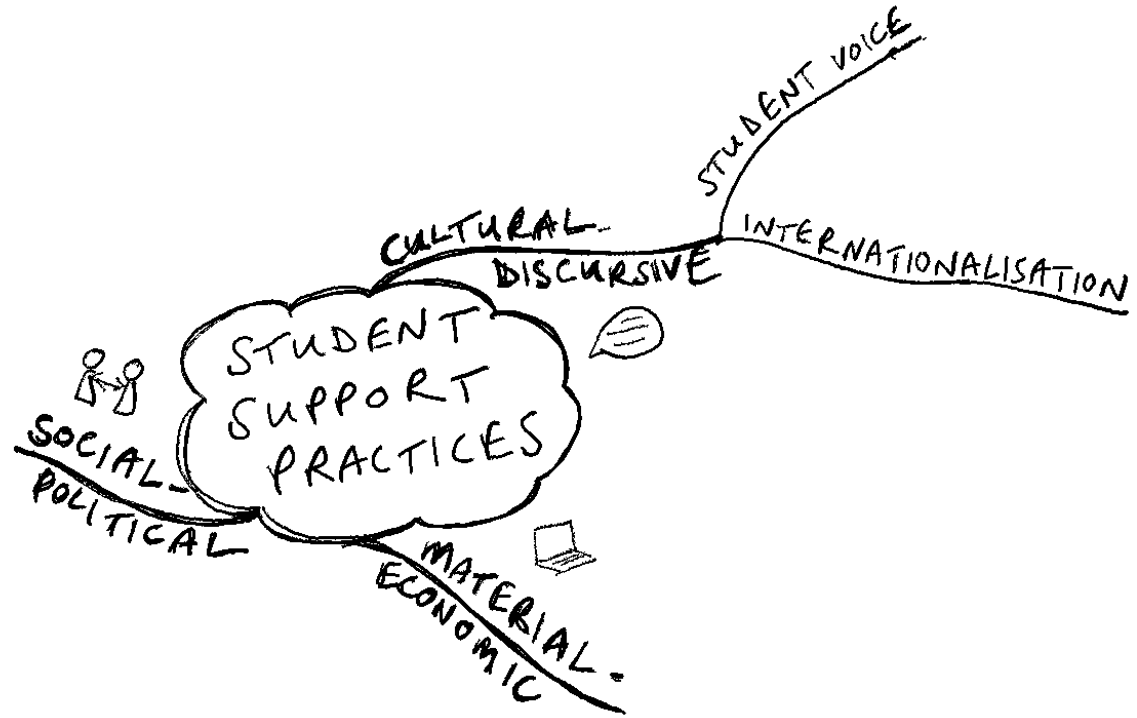


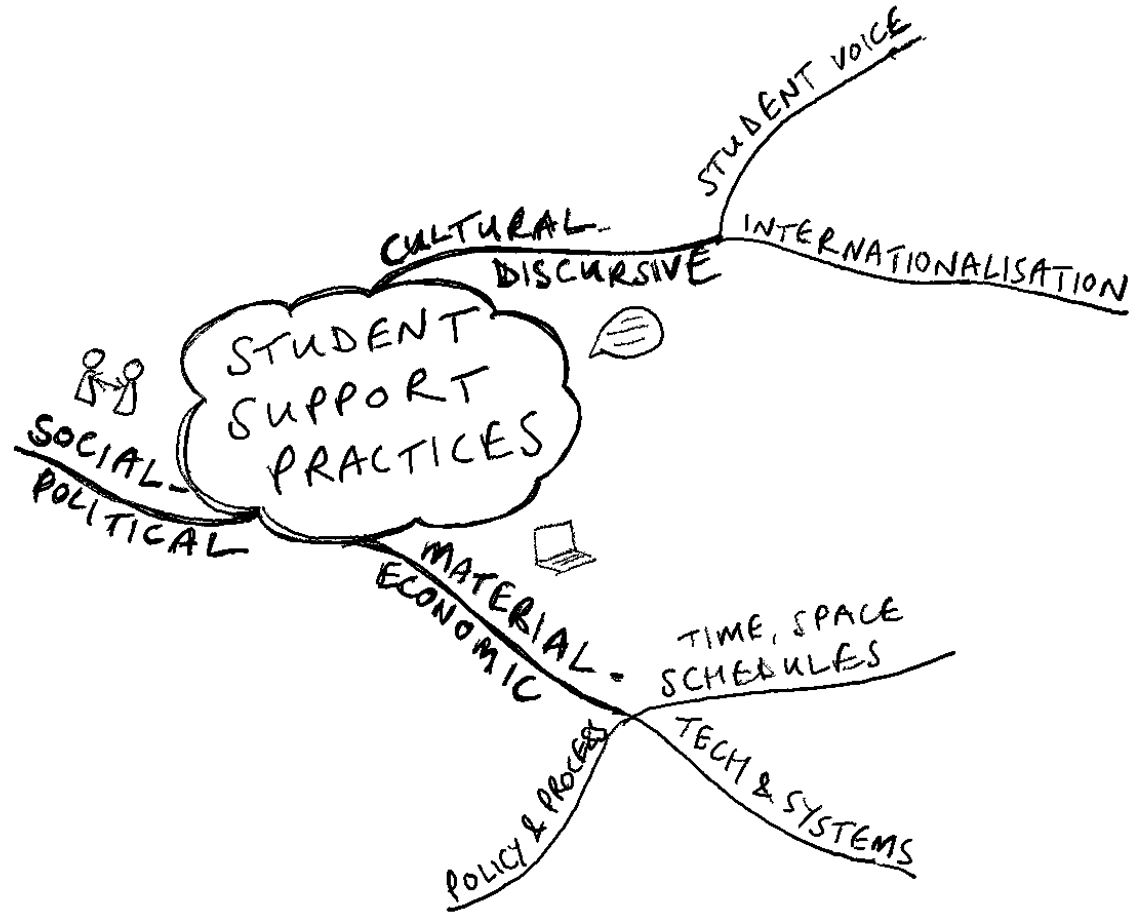
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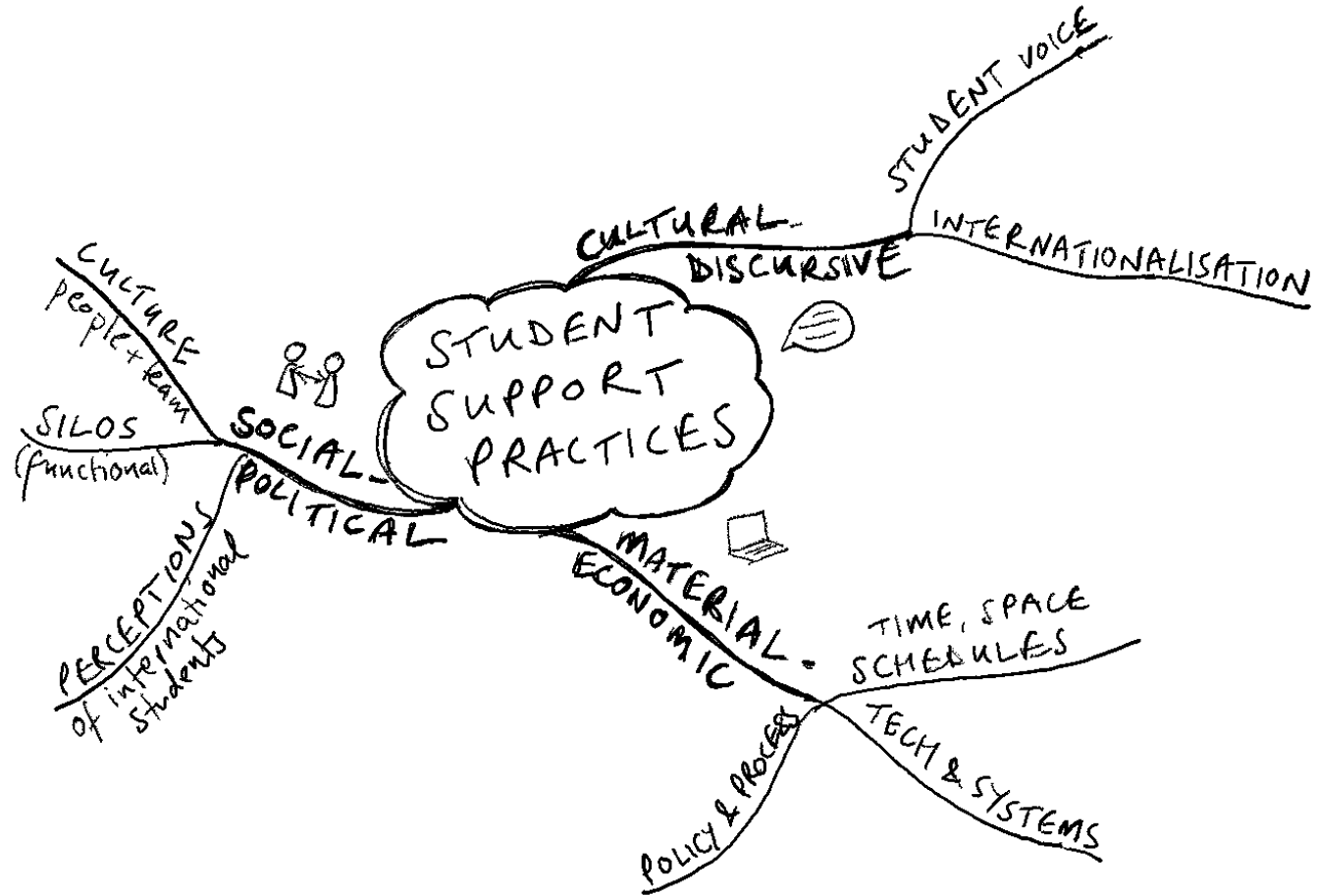


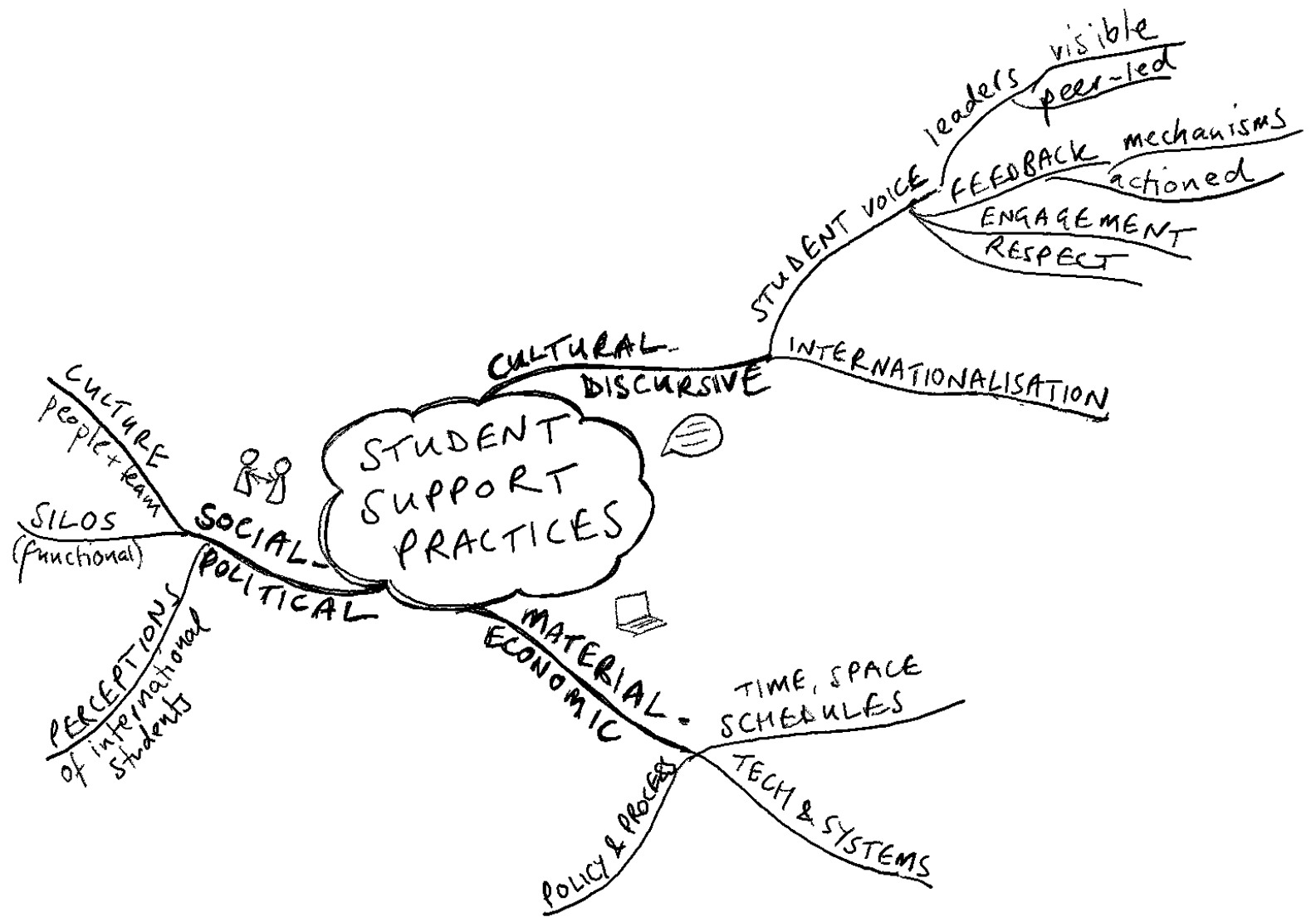
Seeing a connected picture (or 'ecologies of practices')

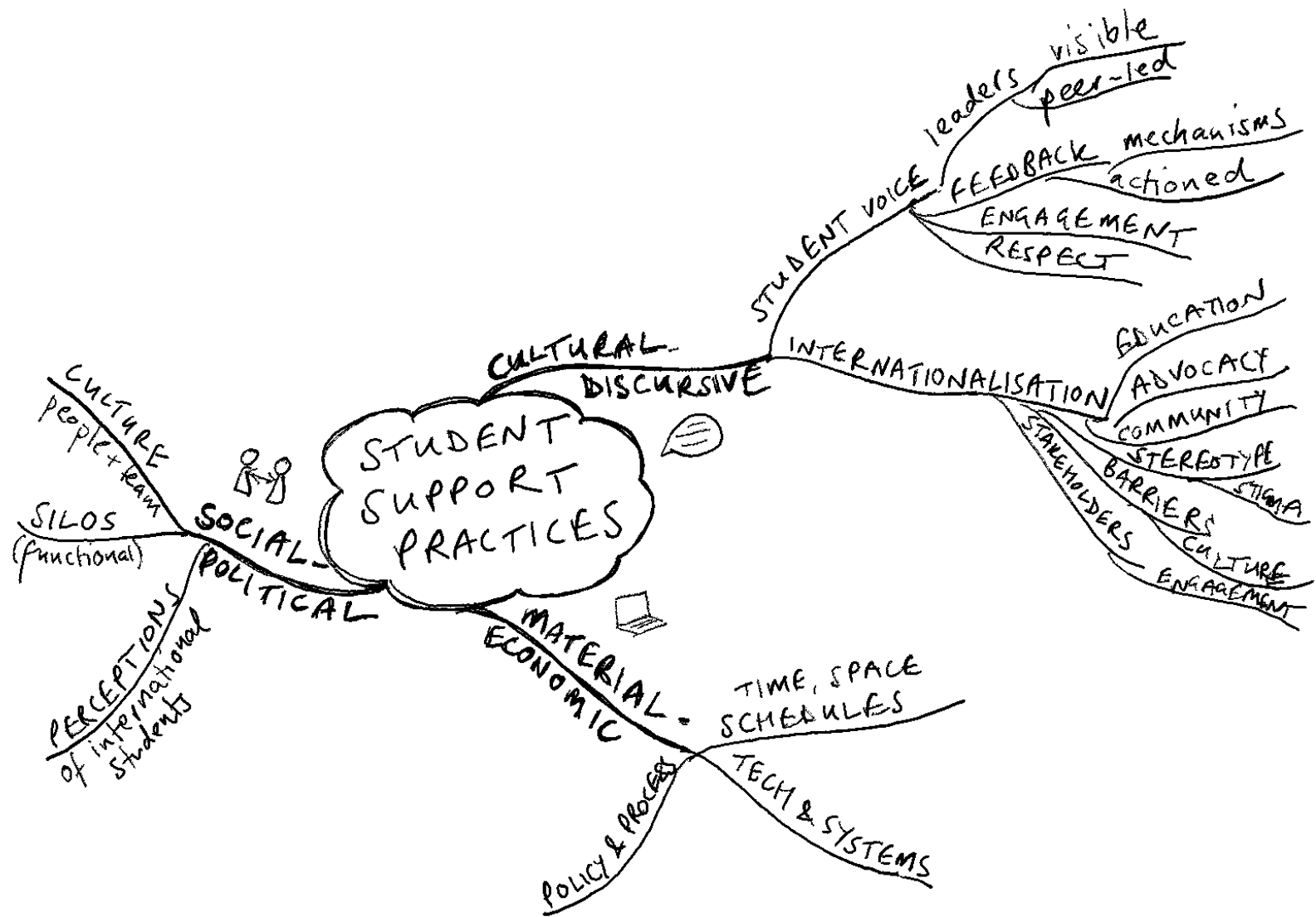


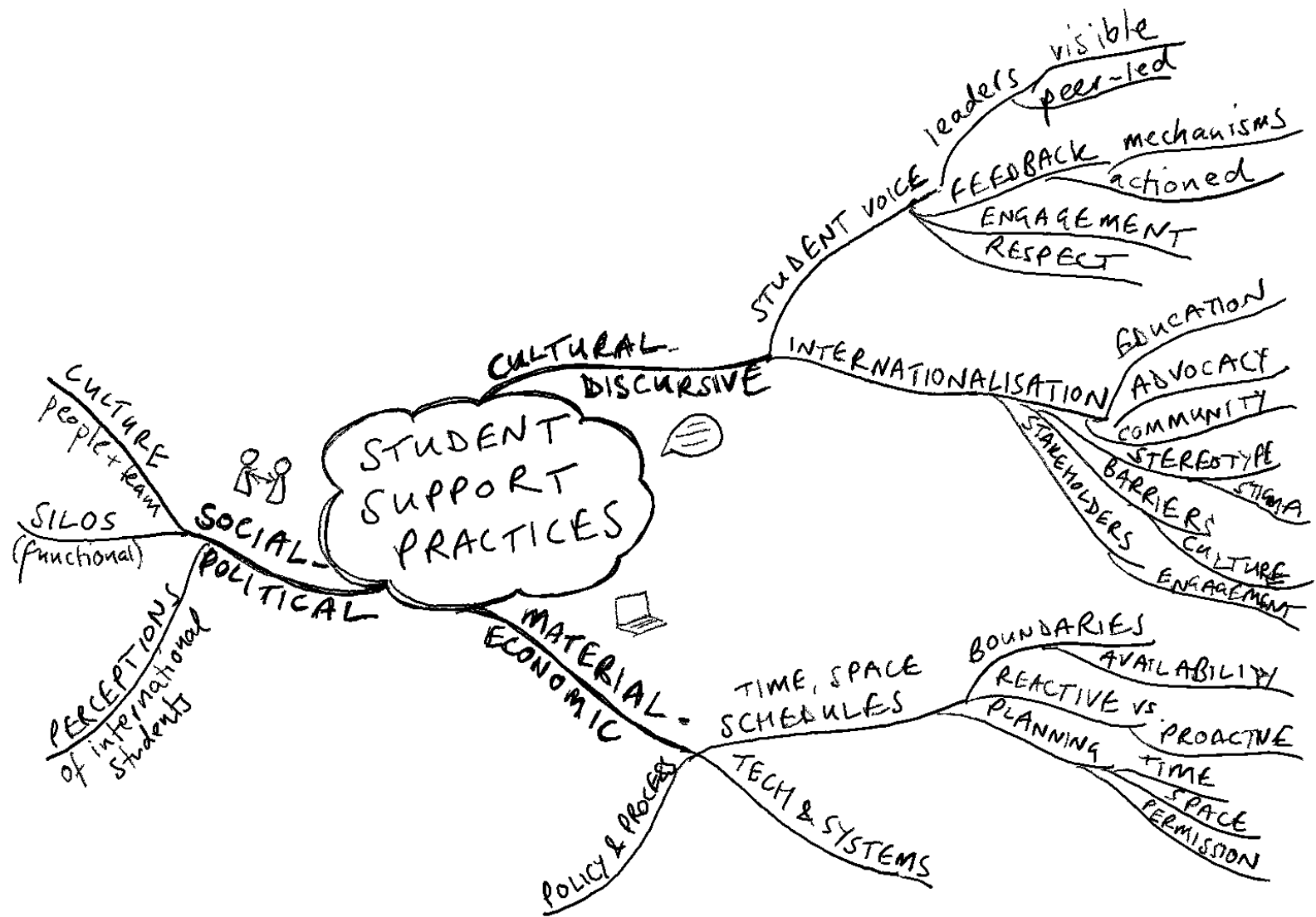


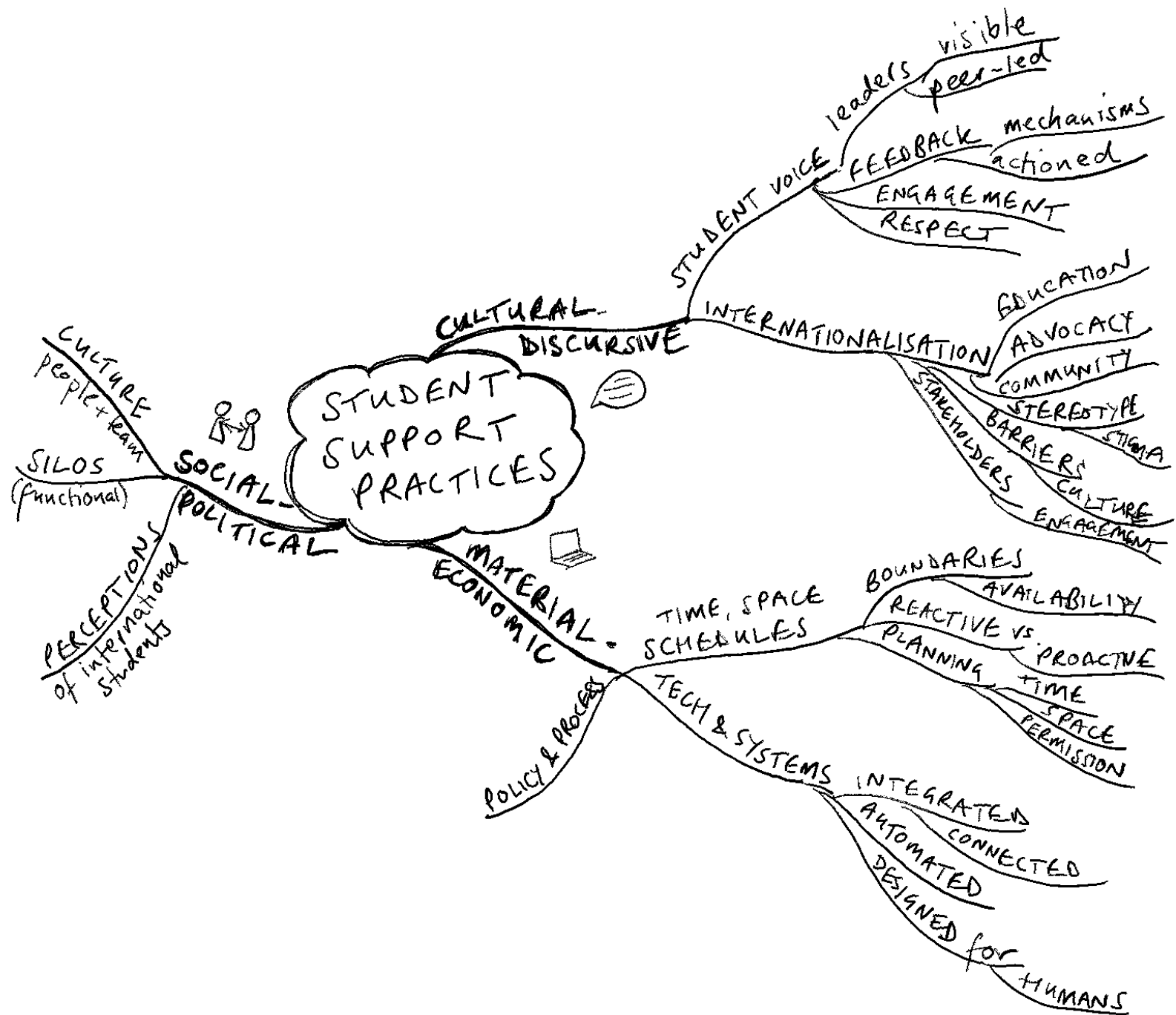


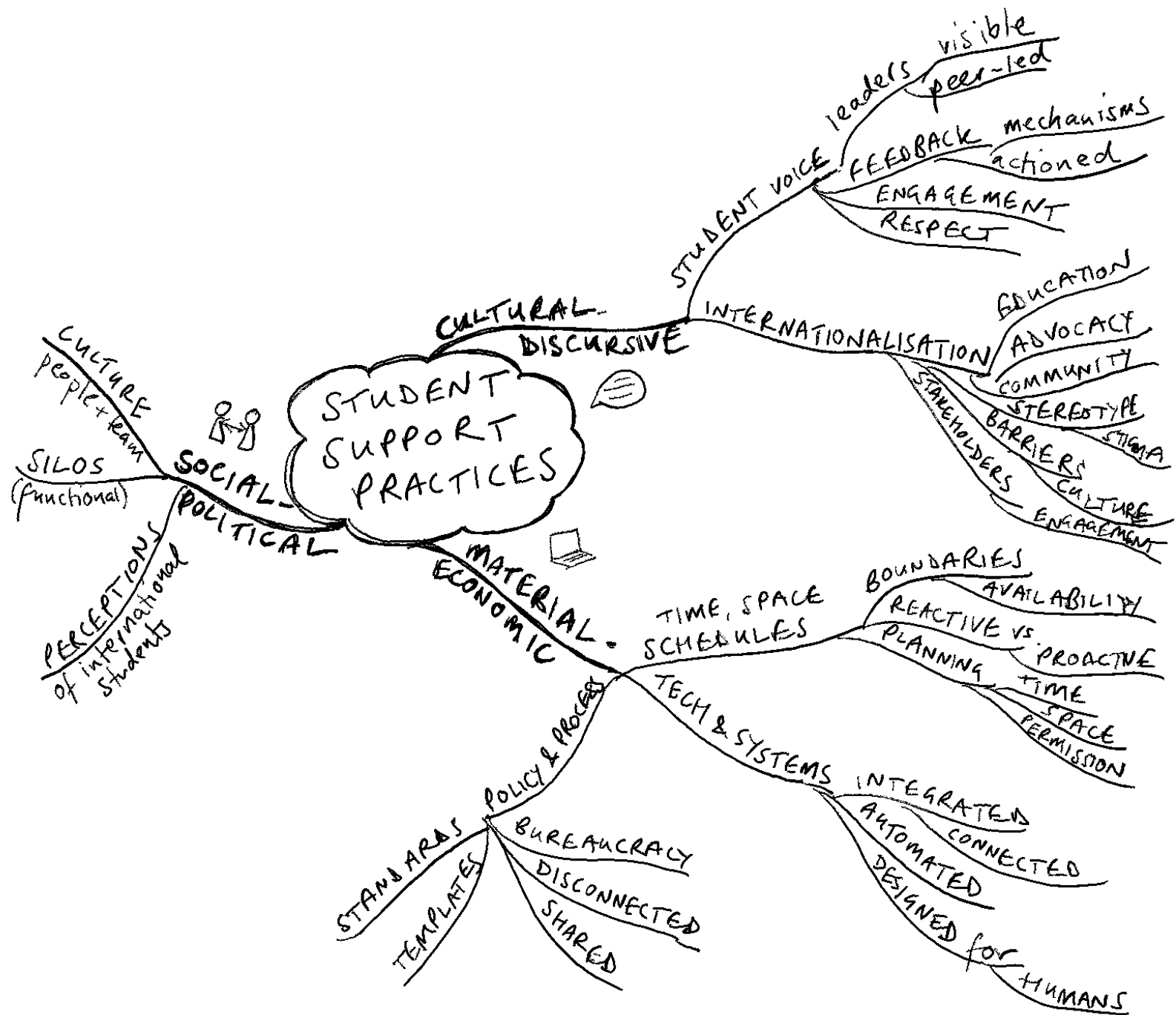


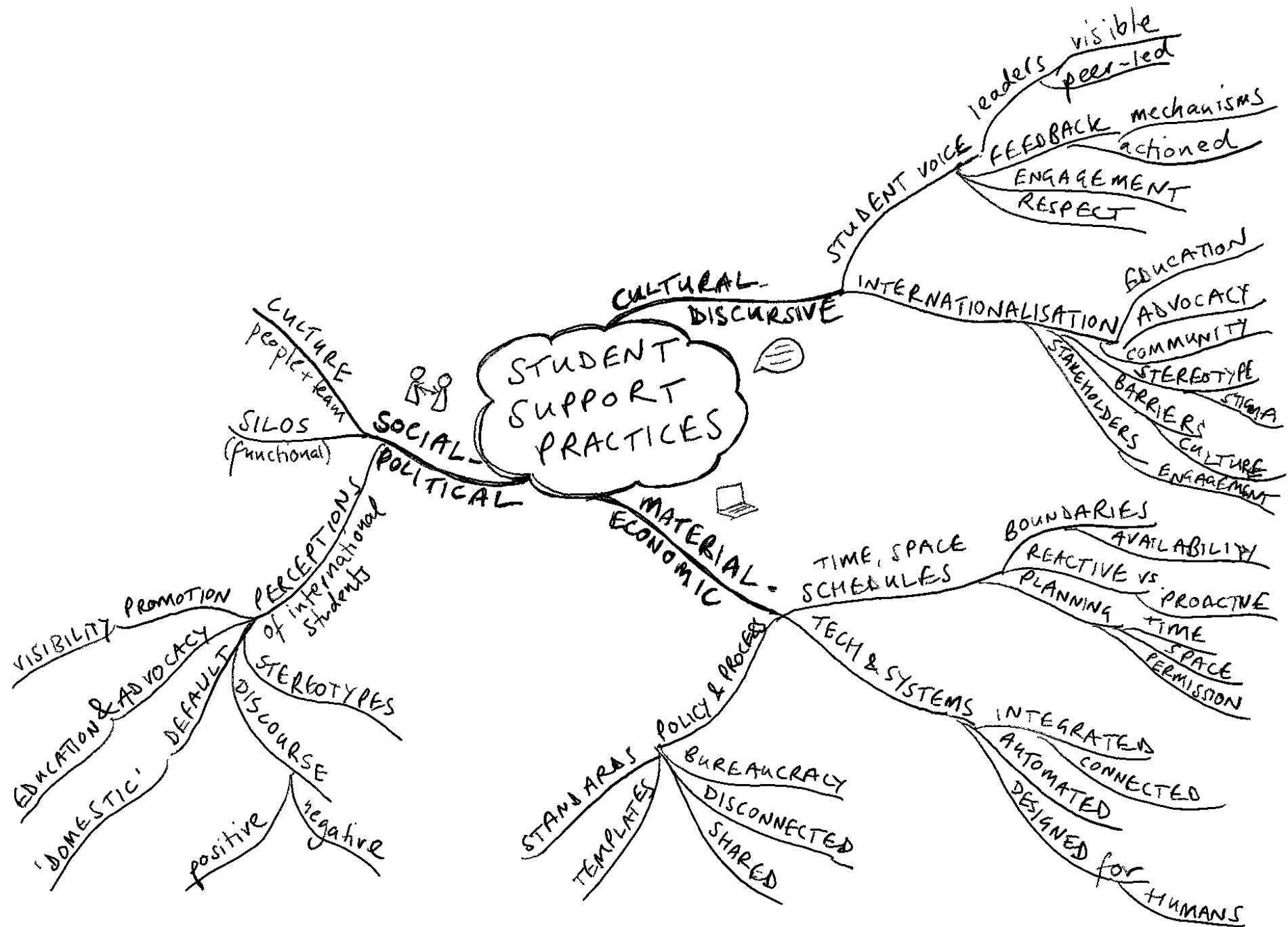


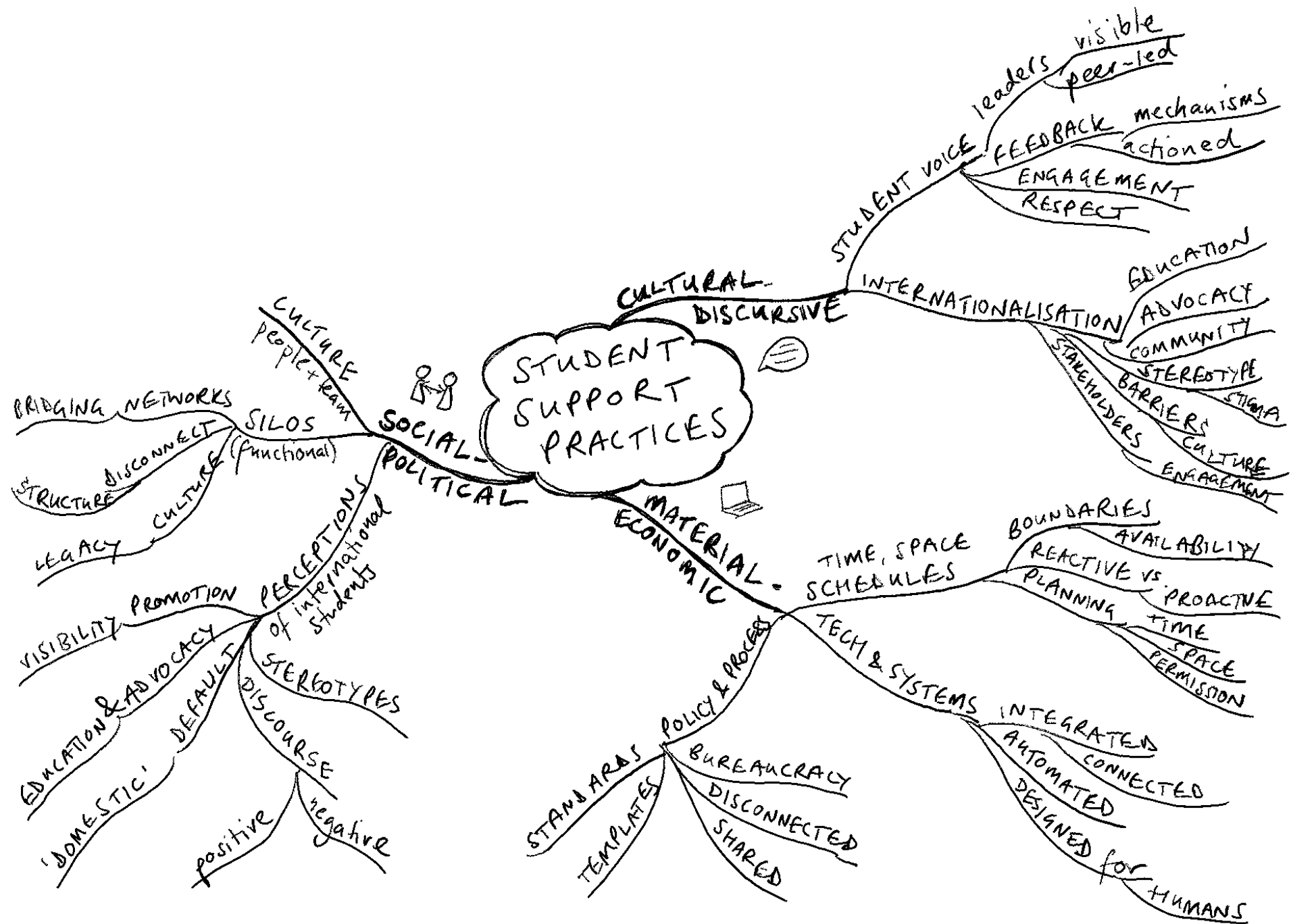


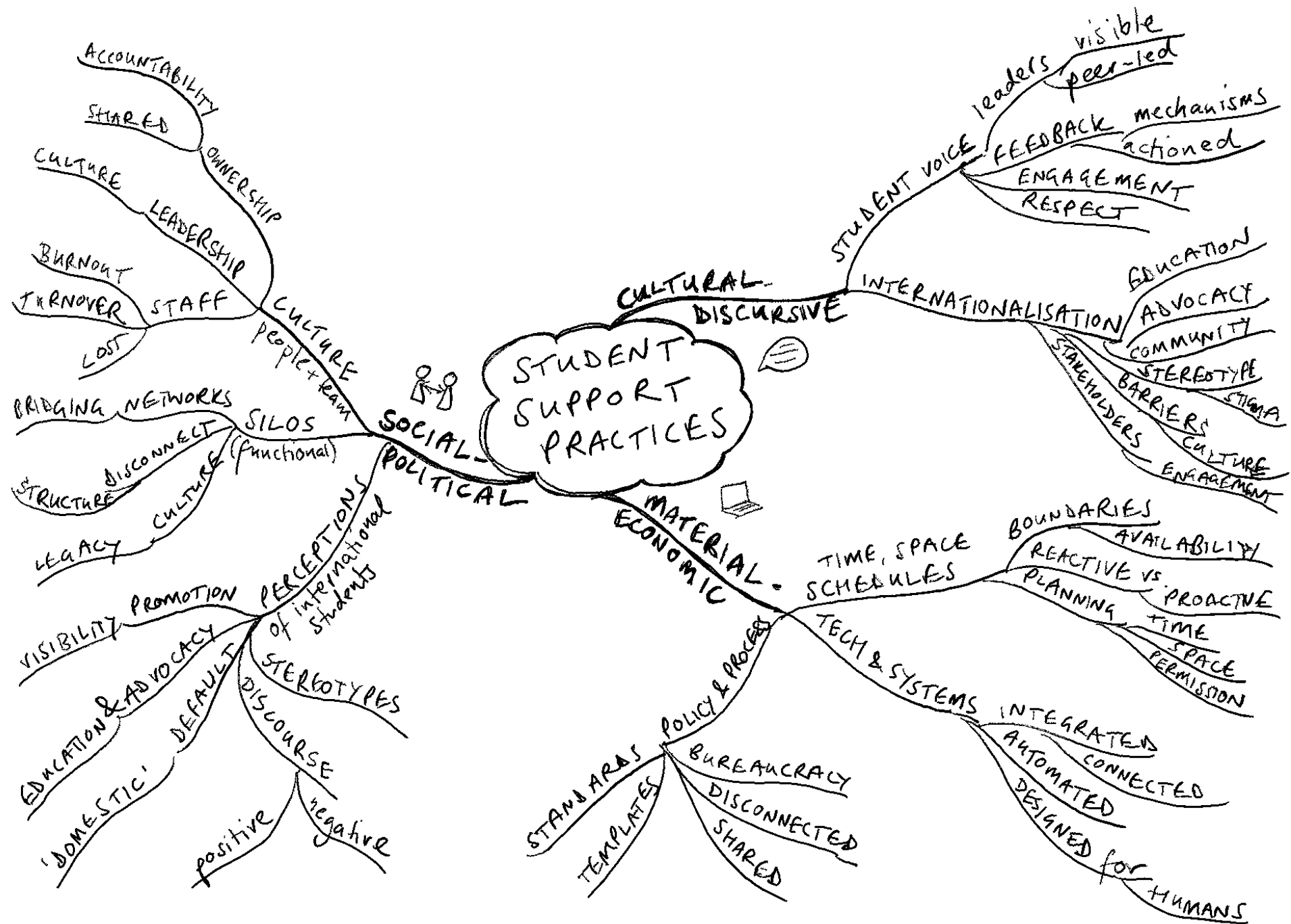


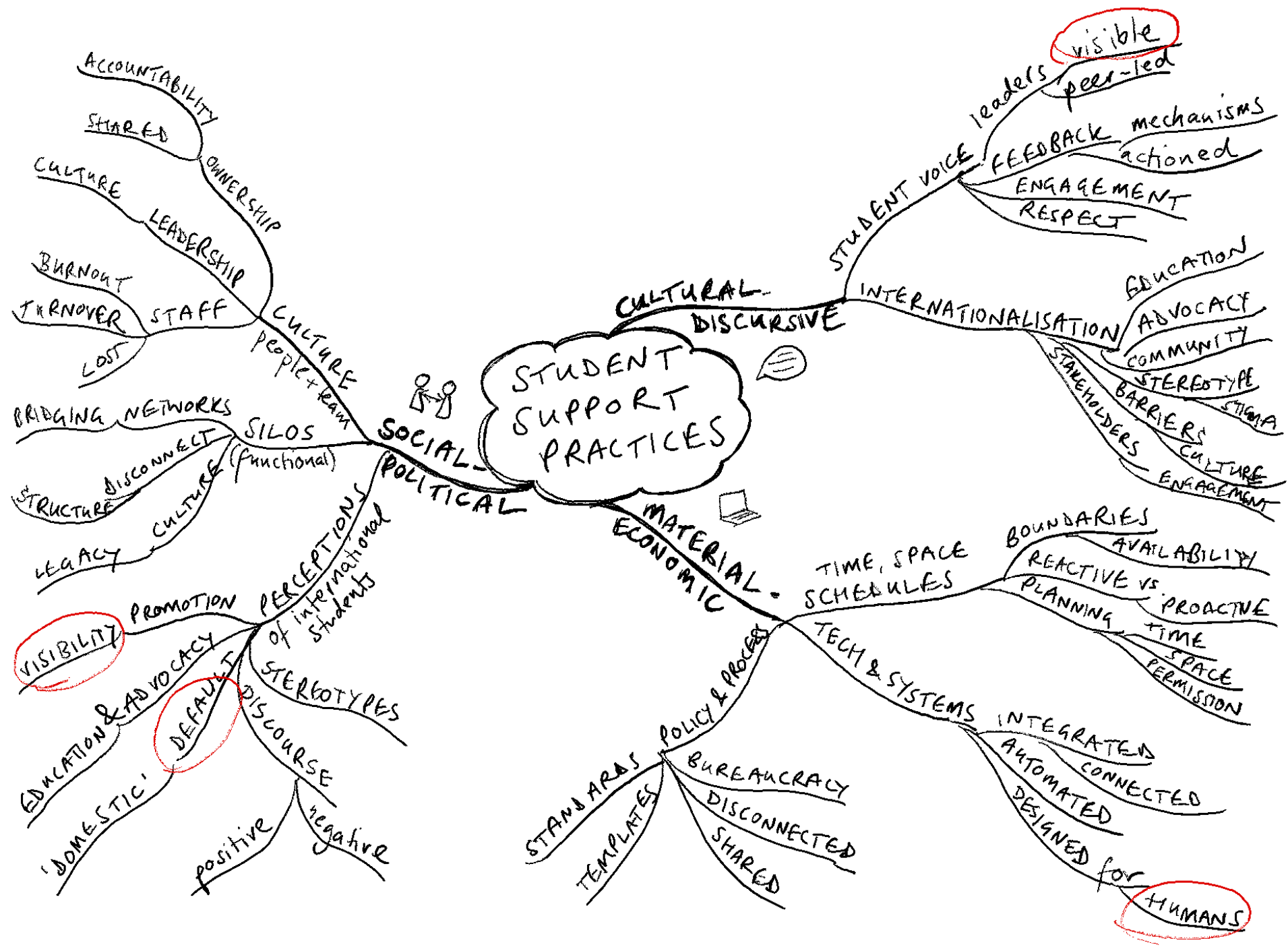


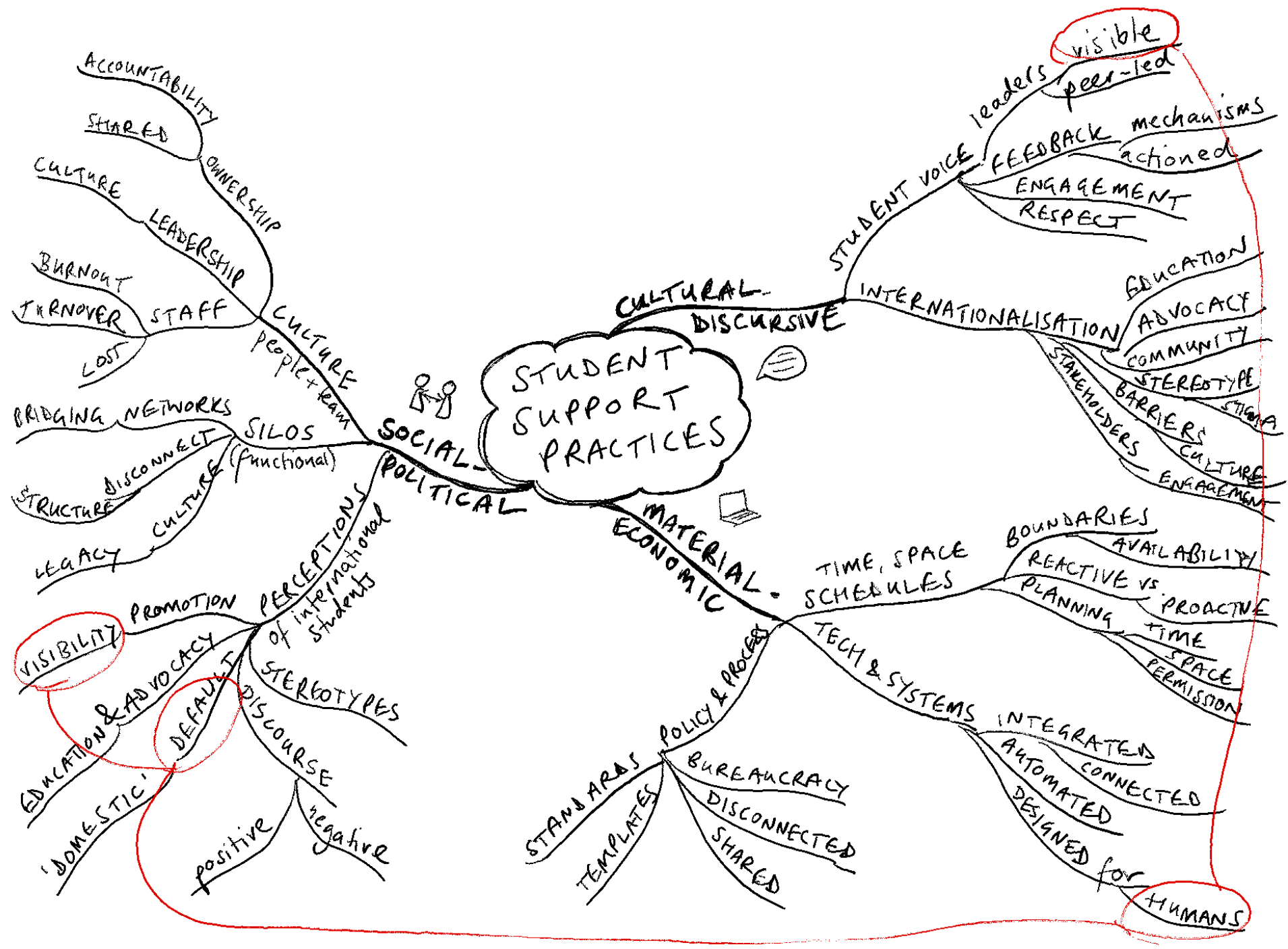


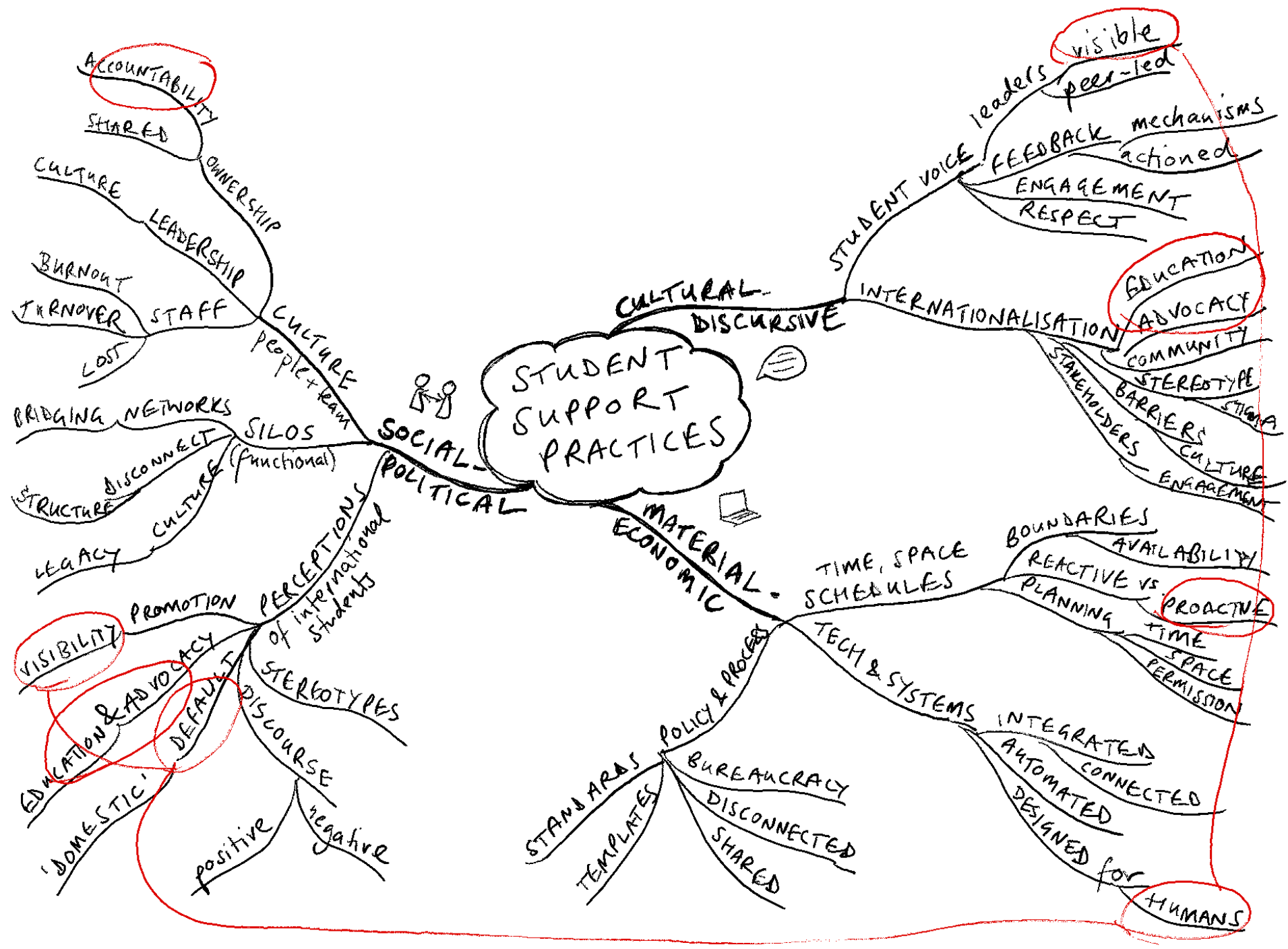


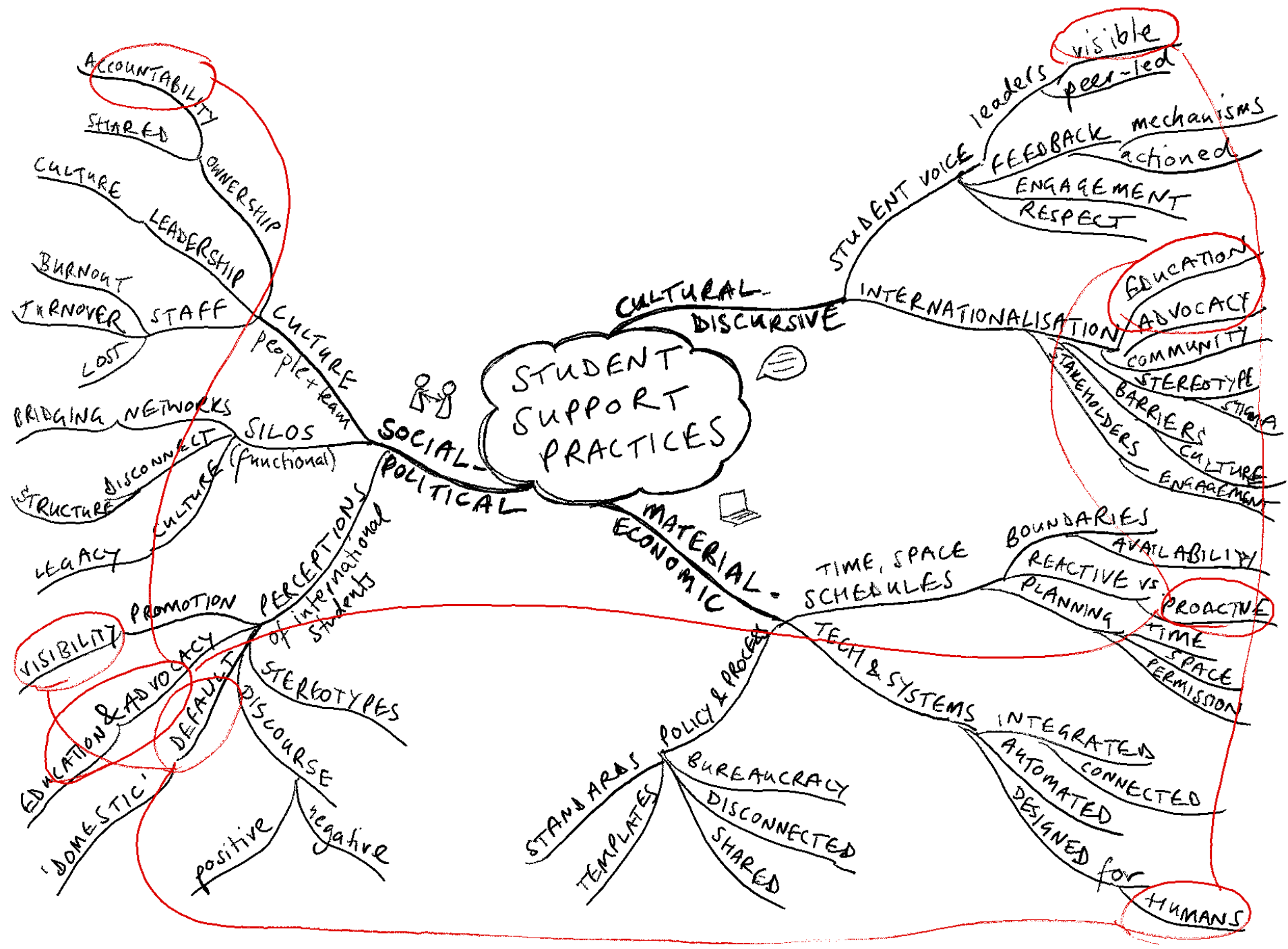


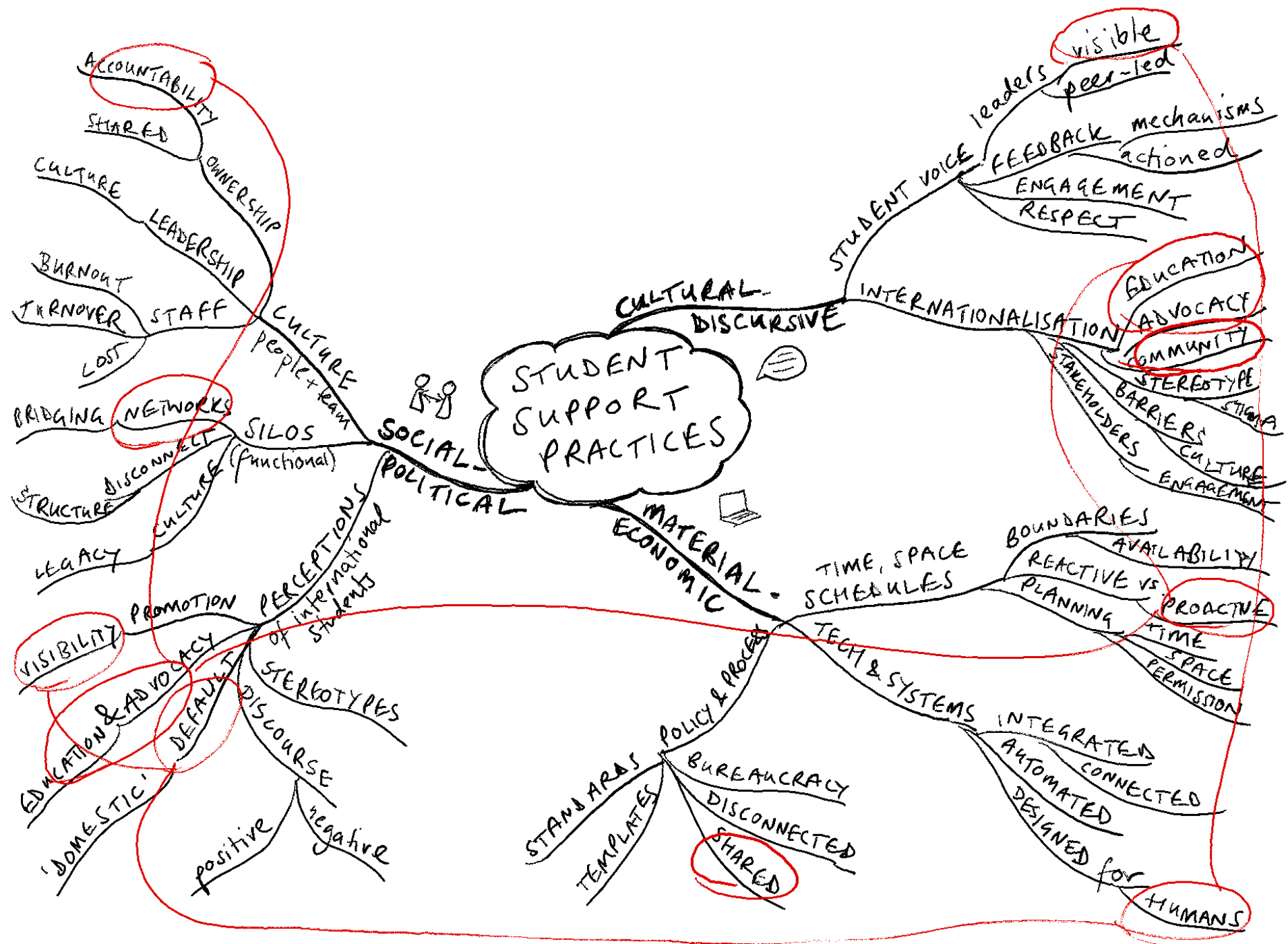


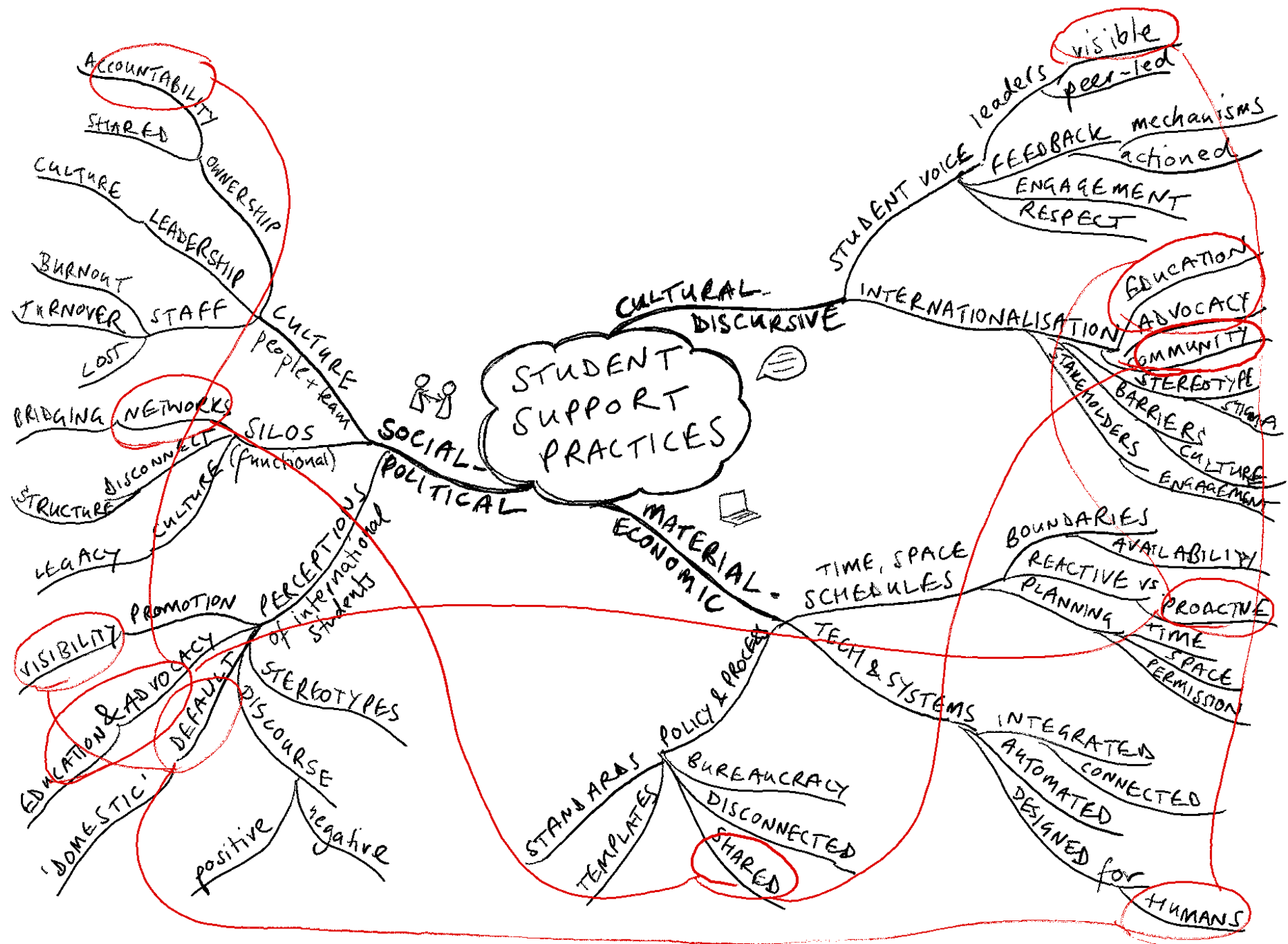












How can we...

... create new architectures for sustainable student support?



- Prioritise wellbeing - yourself, your staff, your students



- Make the systems work for humans, not vice versa!



- Build on blueprints - don't re-invent the wheel



- Strengthen networks & engage champions

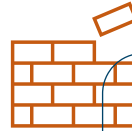


- Support international student visibility and reputation - educate and advocate

Some final words from our student support professionals...



You don't have to be there for everybody all the time because then they are not learning to be autonomous. Try giving them distance a little.



Why reinvent the wheel when there's already great best practices out there, especially when you're working with international students?



Post-COVID people are very, very tired and there is a bit of a churn in the sector at the moment. So you probably do need to put in a bit of work in 2024 just to find your champions again.

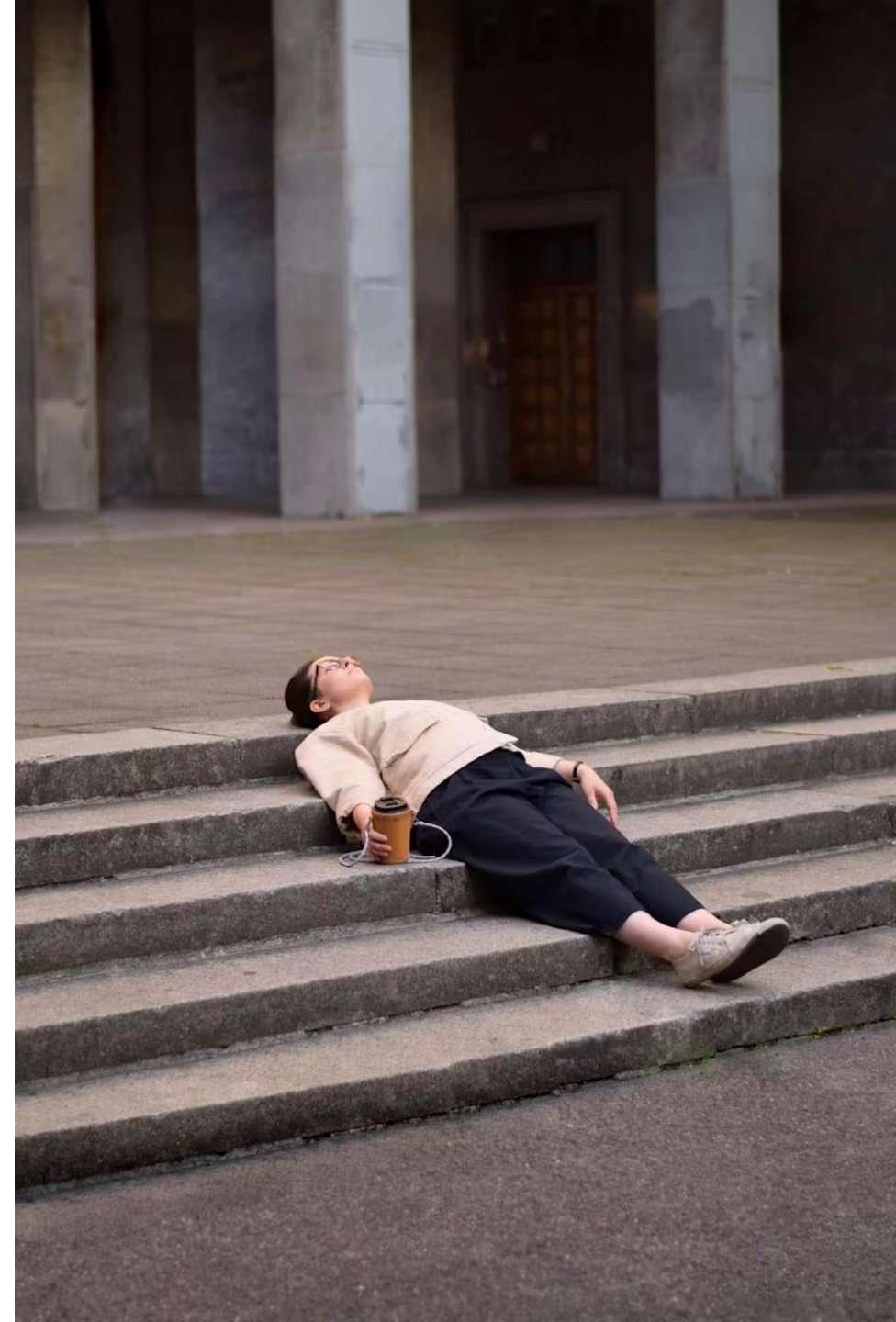


[Technology] is front and centre because there's only so many humans in the office in terms of staff capacity. So having platforms that are an extension of our staff to support students is important. It's also extremely important to have some of these things automated for ease of access and everyone is still in the loop.



The long-term goal would be to not have specific international student support but to have all the services capable of supporting international students.

We need to have a break because the work we do can be emotional, exhausting, and challenging in many ways, but really fulfilling and really meaningful.



Part 2: Practice

Get hands-on with
Interview To The Double



Interview To The Double

“Tell me how to be you for the day”



In pairs → 10 minutes total (take turns to interview)

Interviewer (5 mins)

- Invite interviewee to ‘instruct’ you on how to be them for 1 day
- Don’t interrupt
- Ask for clarification only if necessary

Interviewee (5 mins)

- Give as much detail as you can
- Think about a specific day
- Be instructive: “If you want you be me for the day, you’ll need to... then you should...”

Interview To The Double

What was easy or difficult?

How could you apply this technique to an aspect of your work?



Analysing the transcripts

APAIE Workshop 5 - Tear-down, reconstruct: new practice architectures for sustainable student support

Pre-workshop task (optional, but recommended!)

Below are brief excerpts from interviews with 4 people from our research sample. In each interview, we asked them to share detailed descriptions of their everyday work in a technique called 'Interview To The Double'.

You will explore these transcript excerpts again during the workshop, but if you'd like to get a sense for the topics we're exploring, have a look! As you read, consider what sounds familiar to you, habits and routines you recognise, but also what might be unknown or new to you. What can we learn from other people's daily practices?

Names have been changed and details anonymised to ensure our research participants cannot be identified.

Questions? Email lucy@lucyblakemore.com

Marie (New Zealand)

I always keep [my phone] on silent. So it's always on me to be checking but I am often looking at the screen. Then I guess you have this internal triage system of 'okay, that's something I can deal with later' or 'this would take a two second reply'. I can do it on the spot, you know, yes or no. Anything more complicated needs to be an email or a conversation on the phone.

I'm always fascinated at the university, how different departments think and which departments are more risk averse than others, and which are more student-centric than others. I've learned that the Academic Records Office is very risk averse. I learned that the hard way by sending a couple of emails to brief them about the fact that this event had been approved and we were really looking forward to it and could they provide the names of all of the students who were completing at the end of the semester, and getting quite a harsh email back about whether it was responsible that we were doing this and you know, had we thought about all of the consequences of what it would look like if the students didn't actually graduate? So, what I thought was going to be a relatively easy email became several meetings. Once I got my head around that I realised it needed to be taken higher. So I talked to my boss in my fortnightly meeting about the need to get sign off from his equivalent and that office.

I think what gets measured gets done, and I found that to be incredibly true, certainly in university settings. The wins that we've had in student experience have been where we've gone in with a bit of a proposal and said really clearly "here's what we'd measure success to be" and then actually follow up with it. So, a big part of your thinking always when implementing a new thing is what does it actually do? What is it contributing? What does success look like?

I'm often thinking about replying [to emails] after hours and thinking, do I really need to do this? But I'm my own worst enemy because if I see things sitting there for too long, I do start to feel really anxious and for me there's almost nothing worse than getting the email prompt saying, "hi

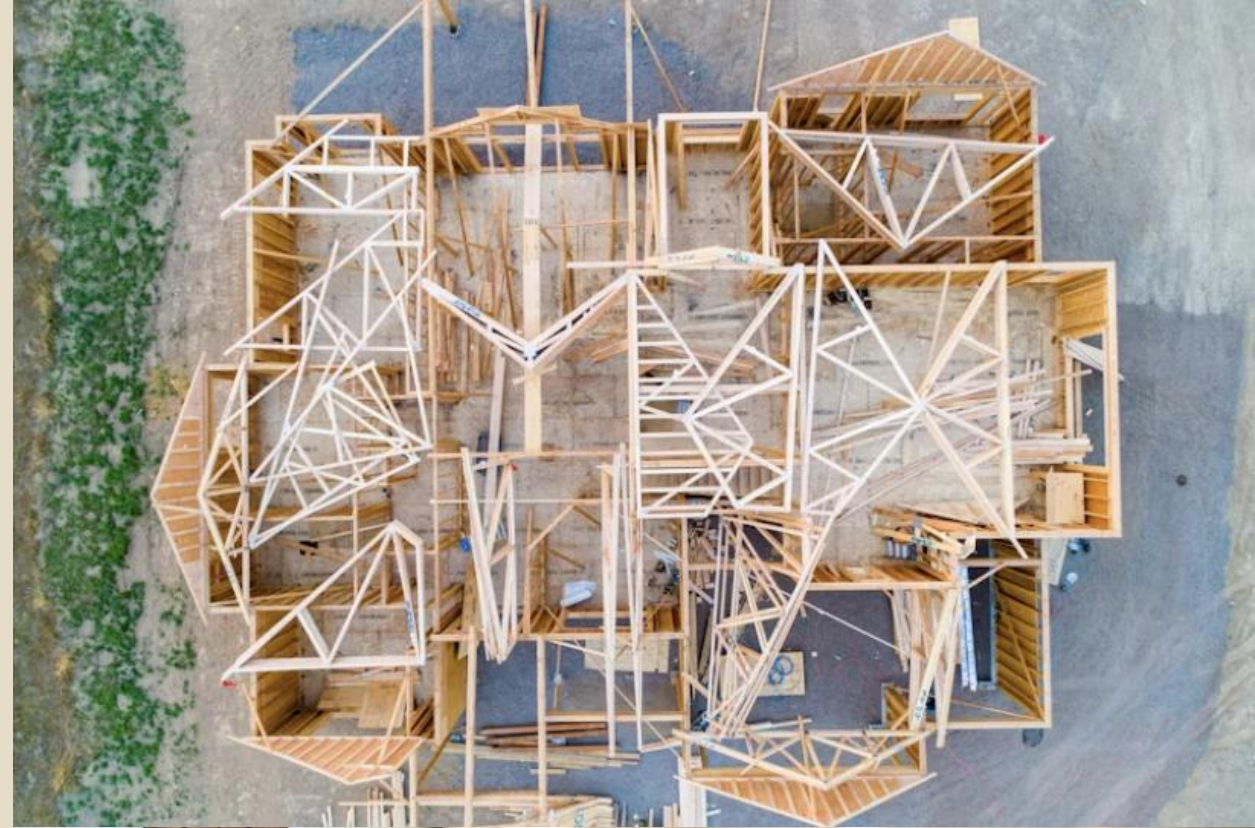
Read as much or as little as you like (5 mins), then:

1. What's interesting to you?
Highlight, underline, make notes...
2. What 'sayings', 'doings', and 'relatings' do you see?
3. Share back:

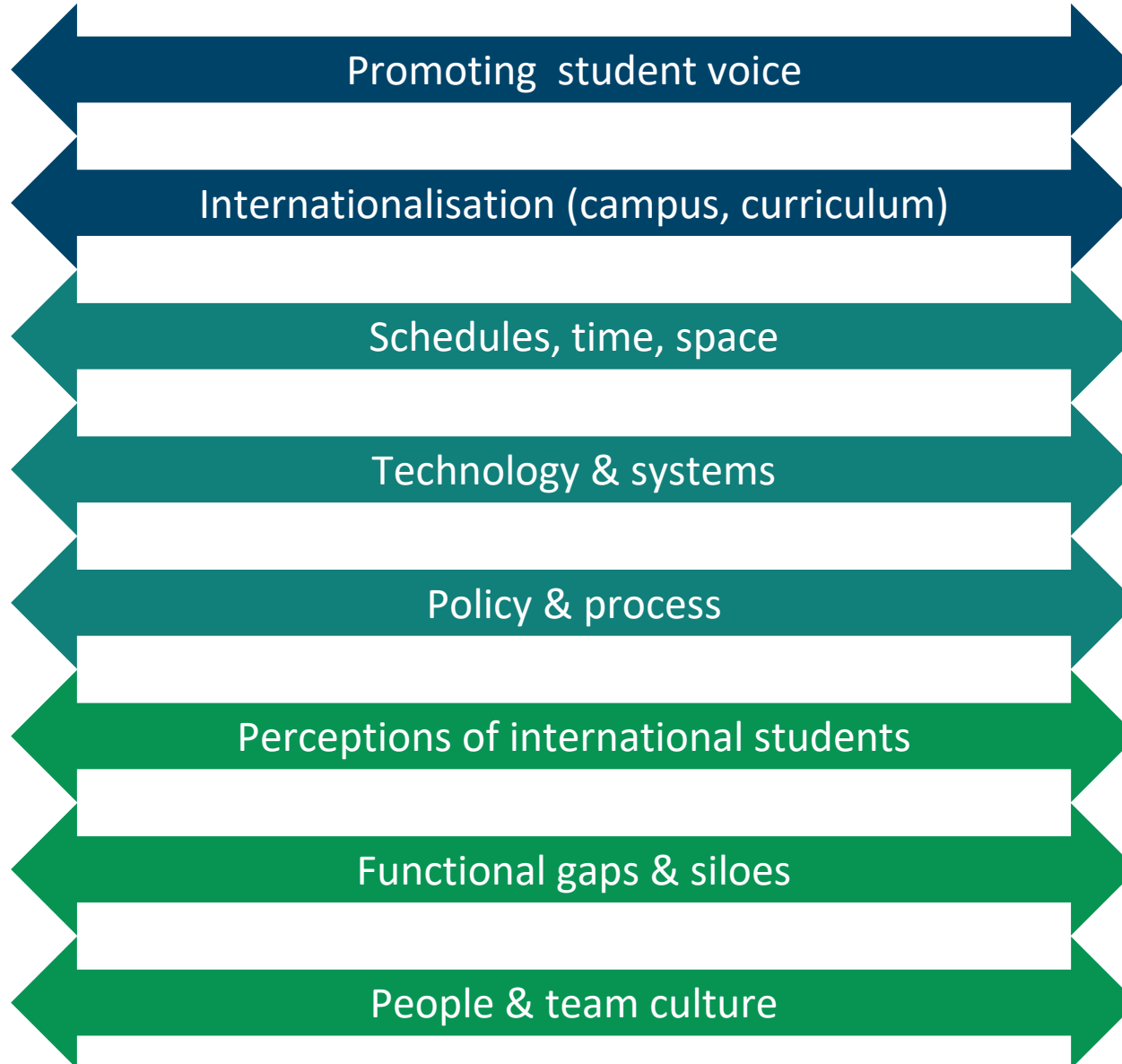
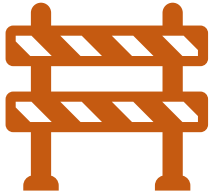
2 x '**sayings**' - language; what is talked about
2 x '**doings**' - material, time, physical & tech
2 x '**relatings**' - power, hierarchies, relationships

Part 3: Re-construct

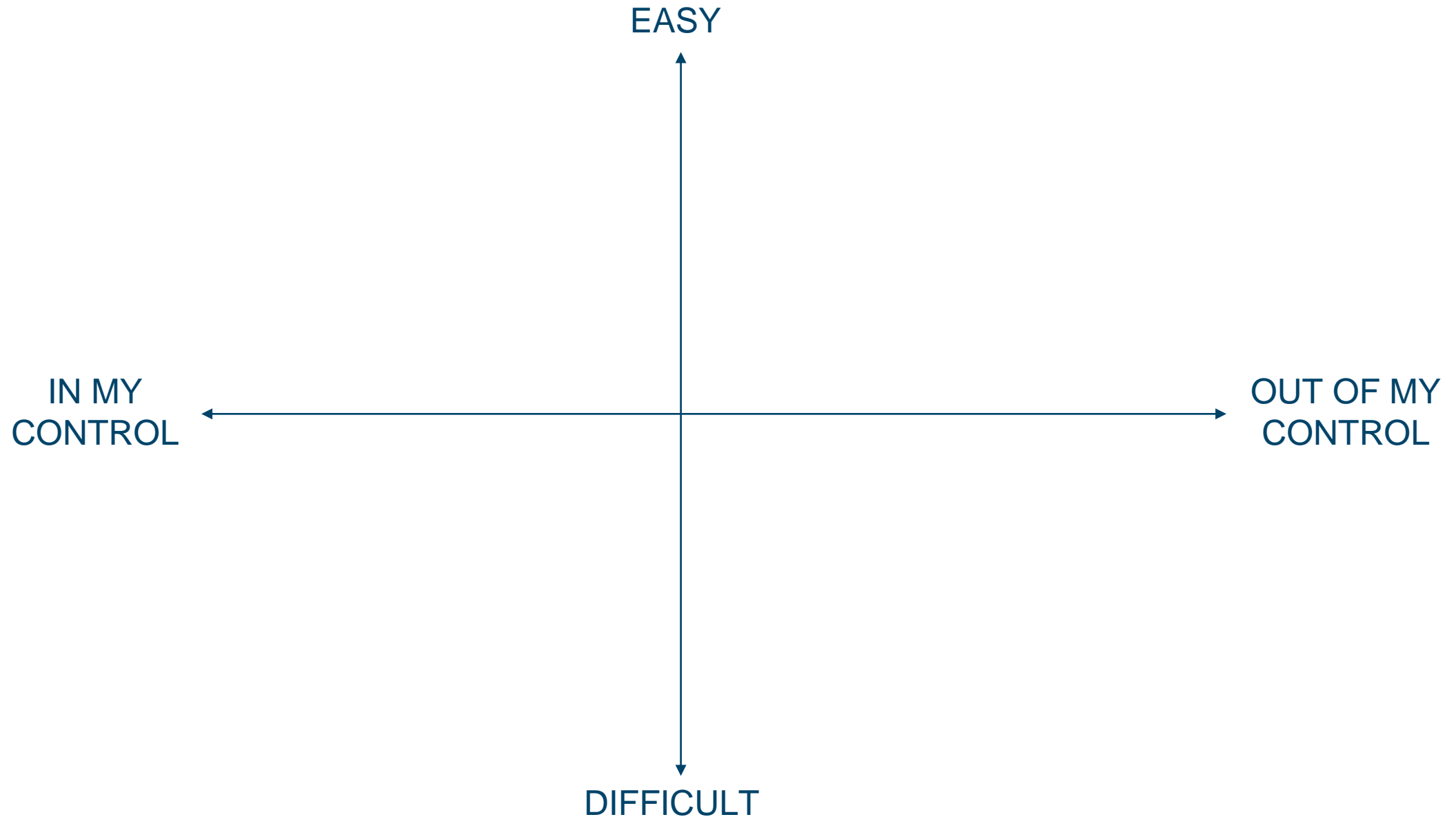
Build your own plans and practices



What enables and constrains student support practices in your institution?

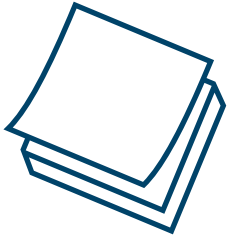


Where to start? Prioritising student support plans and practices

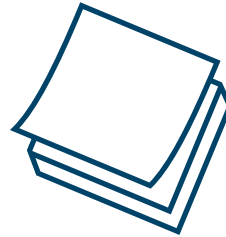


What do you want to stop, start, and continue from here?

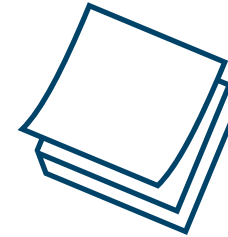
STOP



START



CONTINUE



Tear-down, reconstruct: new practice architectures for sustainable student support

APAIE pre-conference workshop
March 2024

Lucy Blakemore

Research Consultant, Intesa Insights & Consulting

Peta Bollen

Academic Director, Sydney Institute of Business &
Technology - Navitas



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Collaborating for sustainable impact: partnerships across the Asia Pacific

APAIE Perth 4 - 8 March 2024