Made to Measure Mentoring

Meeting the challenge of embedding Level 8 thinking in a multi-national organisation

NATO International Professional Development Programme (IPDP)

Leaders in the field of professional development

Background and Context

- NATO is a multinational, multicultural, multiservice organisation with 30 member nations and additional partner nations
- Its workforce consists primarily of military and civilian staff posted from the member nations and thus it does not have its own workforce
- Any training is geared towards the interoperability of NATO rather than its constituent members
- NATO Allied Command Transformation [NATO ACT] is about future capability and not current warfighting capability
- Cardiff Metropolitan University offers a modular Change Project approach to DProf

Guiding Principles

Any Level 8 provision should be:

- run for the benefit of NATO and NOT solely the learner or their home nation - NATO's needs are paramount
- NOT be financially driven
- about creating change NOT managing change once it has been created
- about developing professional skills and mindset in a wide cohort of NATO staff
- about learning in action NOT gaining qualifications

It is envisaged that participants would demonstrate:

- that their learning enhances professional practice in their NATO role
- increased self-efficacy and levels of cognitive reasoning
- increased output and standard of products of work within their normal duties
- increased recognition of organisational outputs
- reduced dependence on external contractors / decreasing need and costs for external reports

NATO's focus is on the skill development offered by a comprehensive Level 8 training programme as opposed to the end-product itself.

Learners

- Two cohorts of learners drawn from both military & civilian staff within NATO.
- Cohort 1 was picked by NATO ACT:
- Cohort 2 was opened for EOI and research ideas sifted for relevance to NATO strategic objectives.
- All qualified to at least L7

Cohort 1	
Aged	36-52yrs (mean 40.1yrs)
Female:Male	3:21
Military:Civilian	19:5
Nationalities	9
Base of operation	2 (US and Belgium)
Rank range	OR8-OF6

Cohort 2	
Aged	38-57yrs (mean 46.6yrs)
Female:Male	4:11
Military:Civilian	8:7
Nationalities	9
Base of operation	4 (US, Norway, Poland, Belgium)
Rank range	OF3-6; A2-4

Roles/Services: Army, Navy, Airforce, Sp Ops, Cyber, Intelligence, Training, Finance, Media, Cognitive

Staff

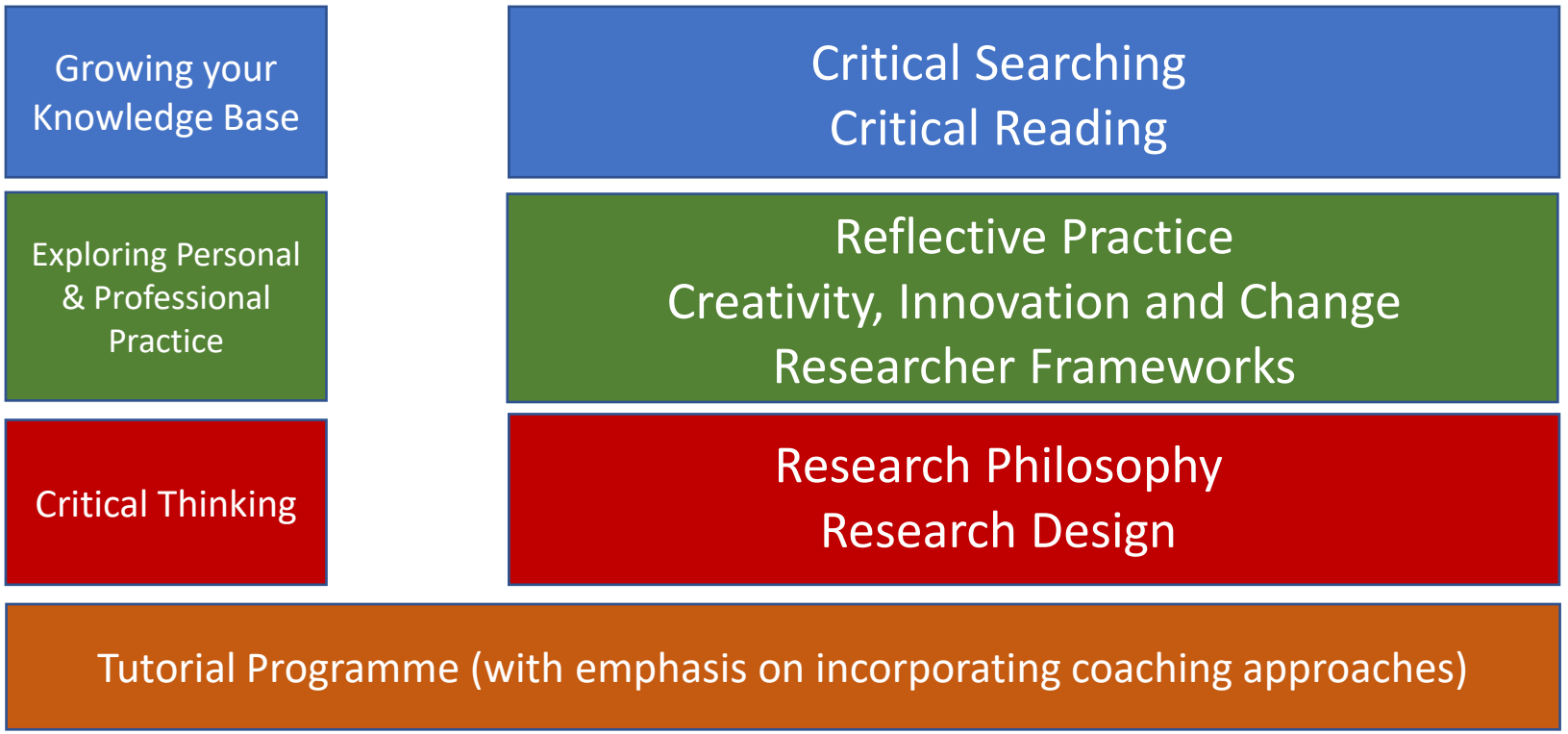
- All teaching staff were experienced educators at L7/8 including doctoral supervisors
- Drawn from three UK HEIs
- Two cohort managers were qualified and experienced performance coaches as well as academic supervisors

Programme Content

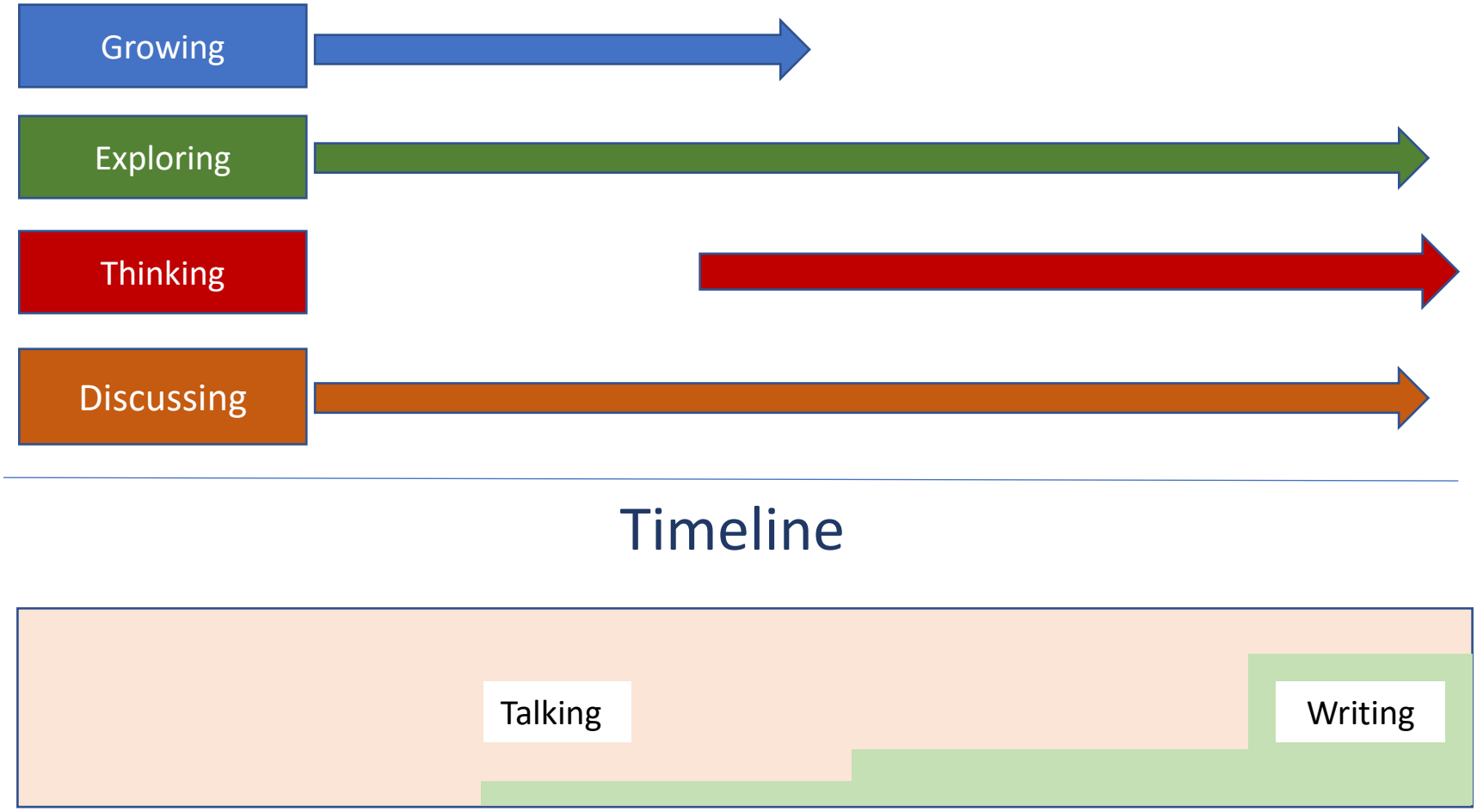
Three taught strands commensurate with DProf taught programme content

Delivery is on-line mix of synchronous and asynchronous sessions/tasks

Supported by an active tutorial programme



Programme Phasing



Data gathering & programme review

Framed as professional evaluation as much as academic research

Pragmatic paradigm

Ethnographic approach

Two primary researchers – both experienced reflective practitioners and researchers; each managed a cohort of learners

Information gathering processes

- Scheduled fortnightly discussion of issues and learning
- Feedback from NATO ACT staff
- Third party review of Cohort 1 experiences

Challenges & questions

'Practical' challenges

Geography – a double edged sword

Pace of development v Consistency of contact

Managing the point of transition – the local and informal expanding in to broader formality

Organisational understanding is diffuse and transient

'Cognitive' challenges

Perceptions of the parent organisation impinge on discussion and thinking – 'cognitive baggage'

Advantages & Gains

'Practical' gains

Increased confidence to debate within the group

Shift in critical **reading** & thinking

Enhanced connectivity between colleagues – crossing rank and task boundaries. Communities of Practice emerging organically & increased cross-fertilisation of fields

'Cognitive' gains

'Coherent Variability' - commonality of broad strategic purpose in a disparate group

Opening up differences in perception and cognition

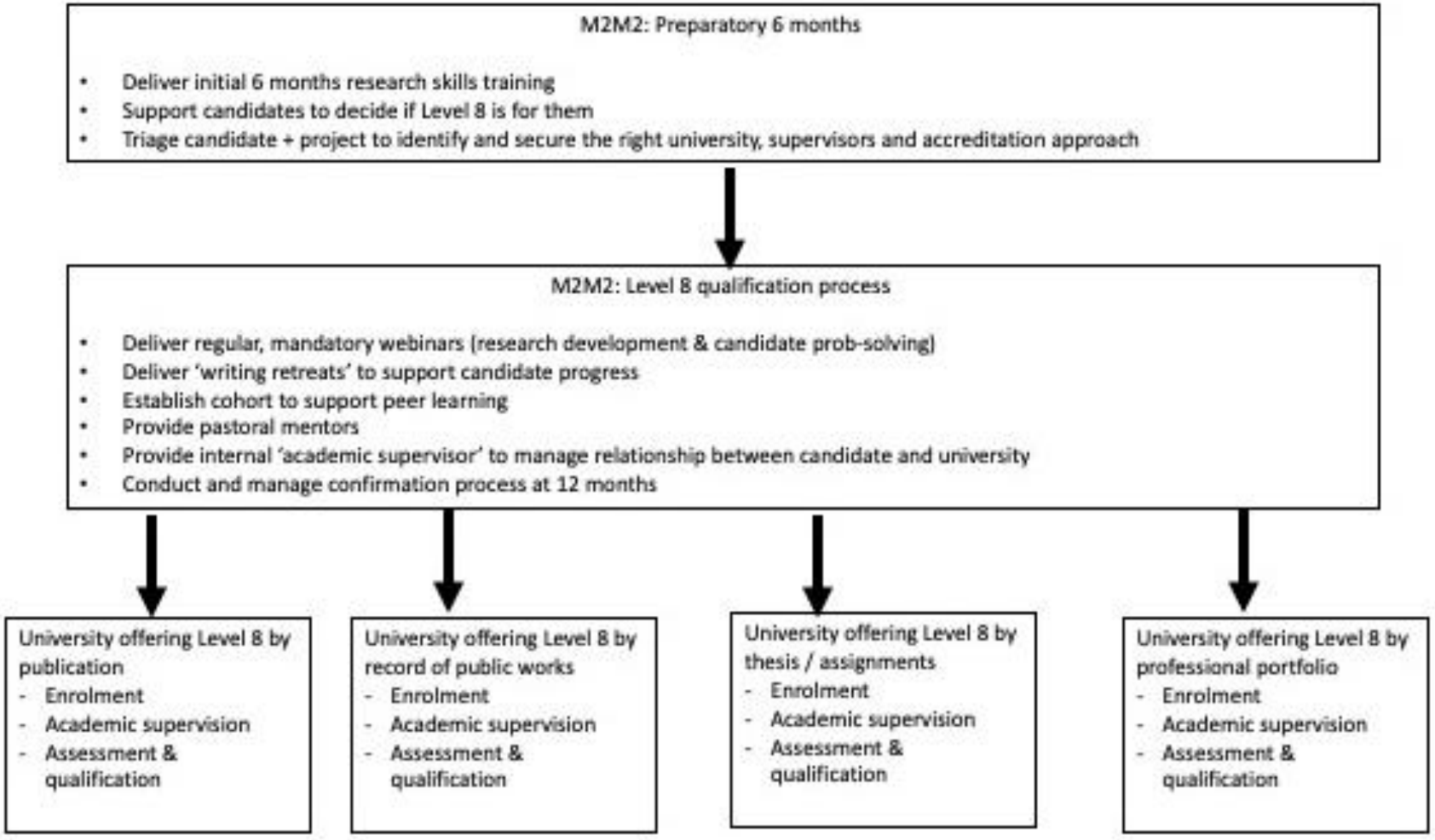
The programme as a 'safe-zone' for growing thinking

Future Developments

- Bespoke Level 8 professional development programme that suits client's needs and could lead candidates to a Professional Doctorate qualification
- Two phase Programme

  i) Skill development – critical thinking, professional practice, research design and philosophy

  ii) Research/Change project/Portfolio of Evidence of Level 8 informed outputs
- Taught elements are credit-rated / validated at Level 8 to allow RPL
- Programme remains 'detached' from any single university to allow flexibility
- Panel of universities, offering different types of level 8 DProf qualifications
  - Change Project; Modular; Thesis; By publication; By works of public record; By professional portfolio
- Panel of approved Supervisors to help frame project proposal
- Transition into appropriate University DProf

Any questions?

Level 8 professional doctorate delivery model