

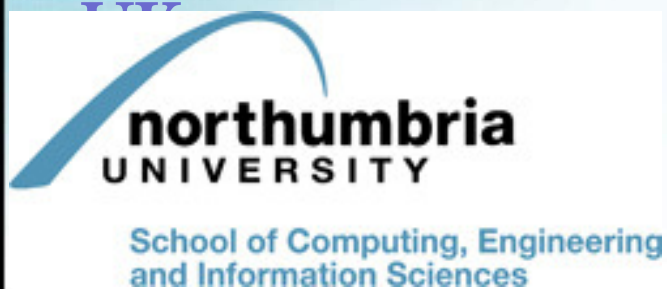
# Can Sri Lanka adapt ‘Work-Based Learning’?: Insights from UK Work-Based Learning cases

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# Acknowledgement

## My supervisory team:

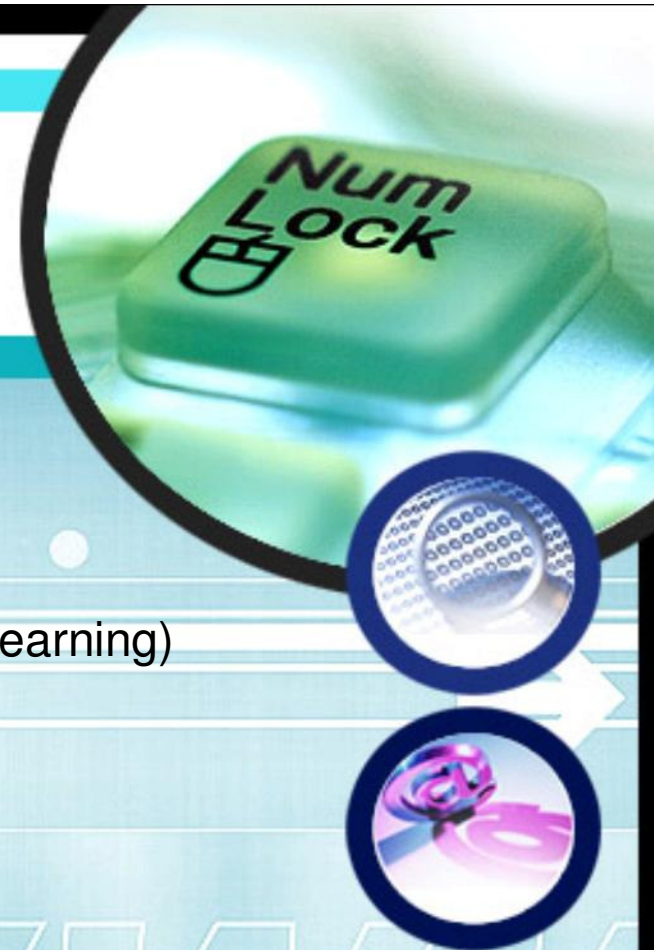
1. Dr Rebecca Strachan – Associate Dean (Teaching & Learning)

2. Dr Roger Penlington – Teaching Fellow

3. Ms Biddy Casselden – Senior Lecturer

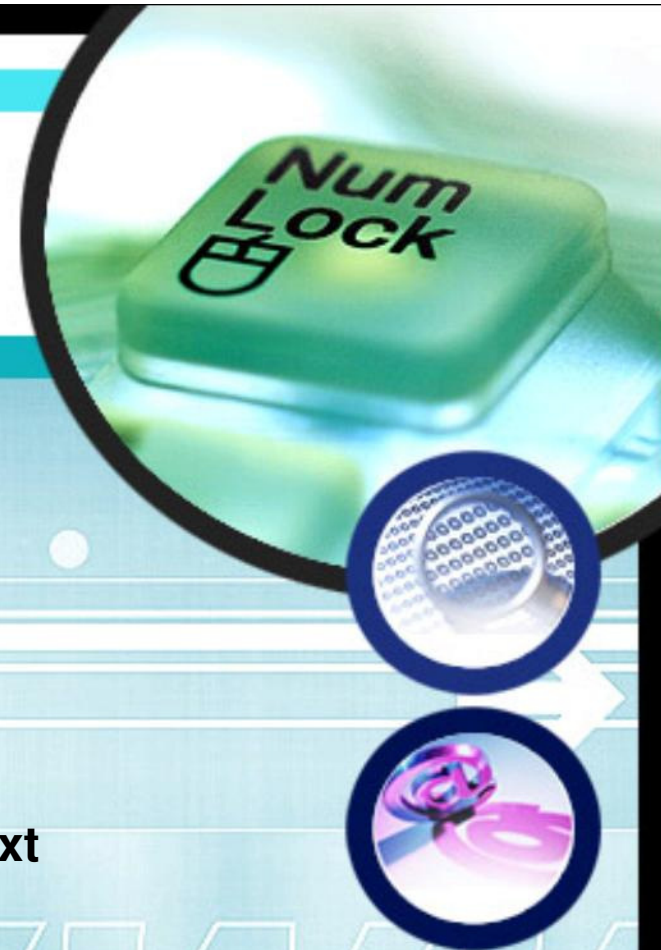
all from School of Computing, Engineering & Information Sciences, Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

4. Dr Mahesha Kapurubandara – Dean (International) – Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology



# Agenda

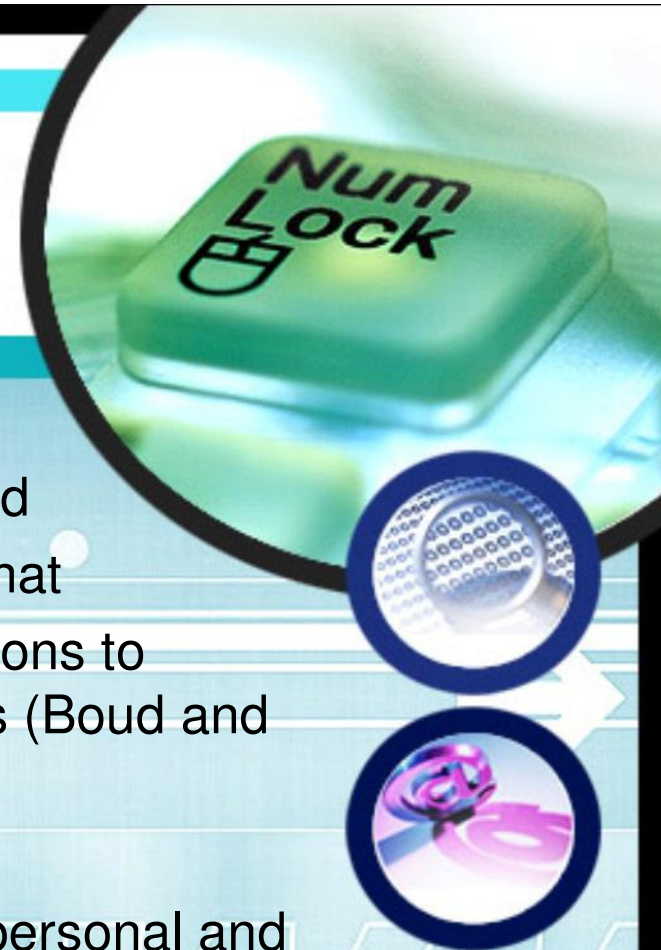
1. Introduction (What is Work Based Learning?)
2. Approach/Methodology of Research
3. Case study of Northumbria University
4. Case study of Sri Lankan online learning context
5. Research Findings as a Comparison
6. Original contribution
7. Recommendations for Sri Lanka



# Work Based Learning

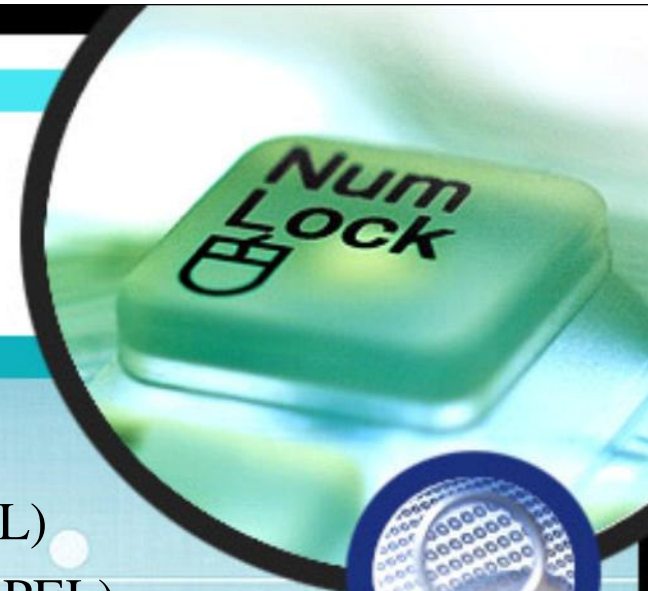
Work Based Learning (WBL) is the term being used to describe the class of university programme that brings together universities and work organisations to create new learning opportunities in workplaces (Boud and Solomon 2001, 4).

WBL is seen as a means by which to support the personal and professional development of students who are already in work, and the focus of the learning and development tends to be on the student's workplace activities (Brennan and Little 2006, 5)



# Work Based Learning Specifics

- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
  - Accreditation of Prior Certified Learning (APCL)
  - Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
- Tailoring concept
- Learning contracts between Employer/Employee and University
- Prior Accreditation from Professional Body
- ‘Learning while Earning’
- Employer sponsorships



# Aim & Objective of Current Research

## Aim –

- to develop recommendations/ a tool kit as a suggested way forward for work-based learning which takes account of needs of all stakeholders

## Objectives –

- To identify factors affecting effectiveness of online learning for WBL programmes
- To find out existing challenges and constraints of implementing Online Learning for WBL programmes



# Method/Approach

## Sri Lankan Study

### Method

Case Study of 17  
NODES online programmes

### Data

Online Questionnaire  
Interviews

### Who?

Students  
Academic staff  
Consultants/Experts  
Admin/Support staff

## UK Study

### Method

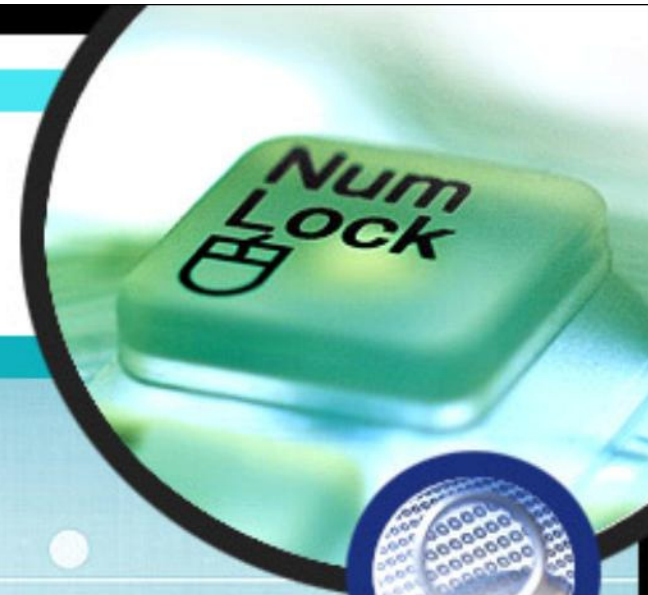
Case Study of  
Northumbria University, UK  
4 x MSc & 1 x BSc

### Data

Online Questionnaire  
Interviews

### Who?

Students  
Academic staff  
Admin/Support  
Employers  
Professional Bodies



# WBL at Northumbria University

- One of the leading universities in the UK for WBL delivery
- WBL Framework
- Work Related Learning Services
- LTech – Central Multi-media support unit for online content



# Online learning in Sri Lanka

- Distance Education (OUSL, External degrees)
- Web content offerings by some universities
- NODES programmes

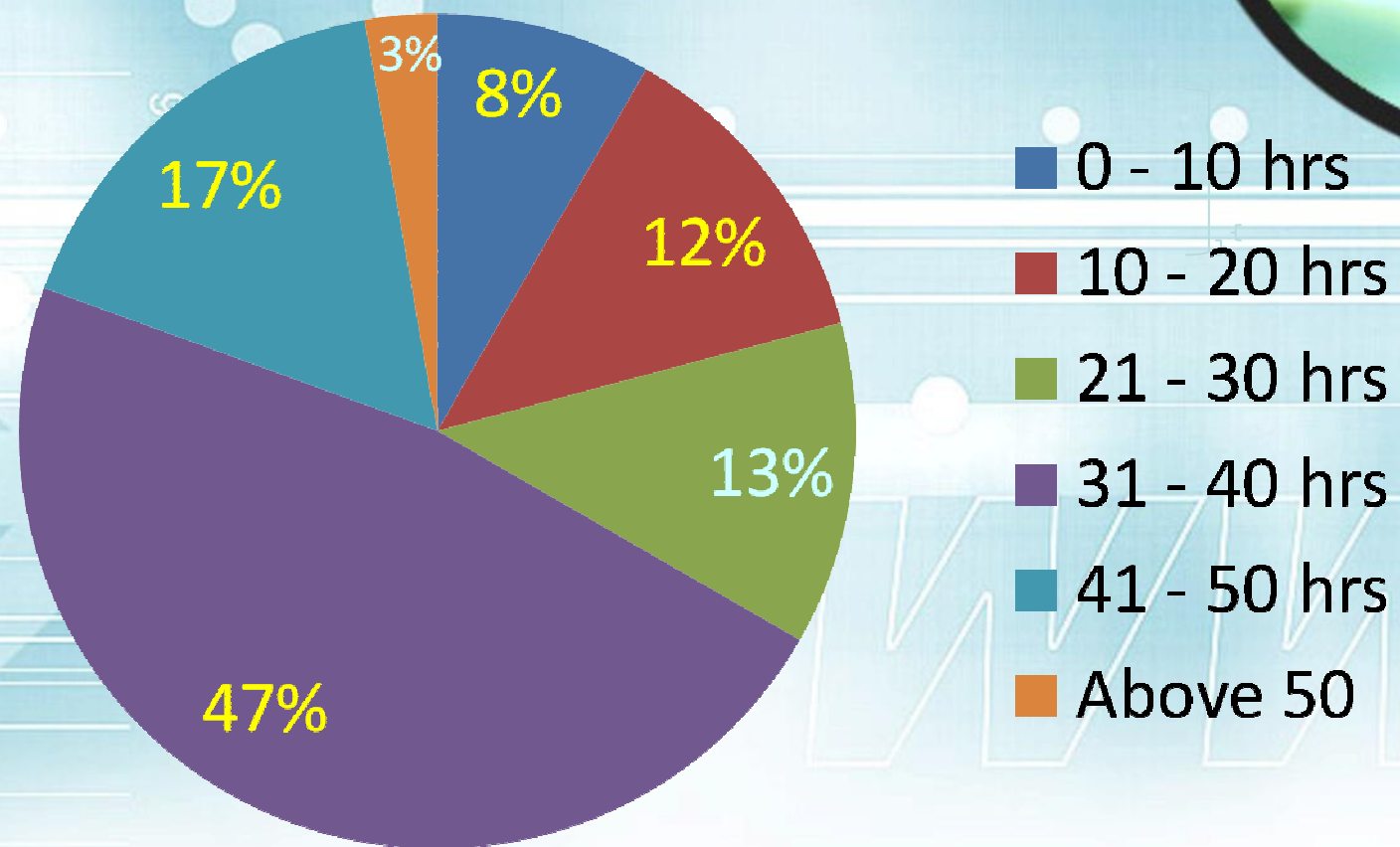
# Research Findings

1. Employment status of students
2. Use of ICT
3. Online discussion & collaboration
4. Design of assessment
5. Supporting WBL



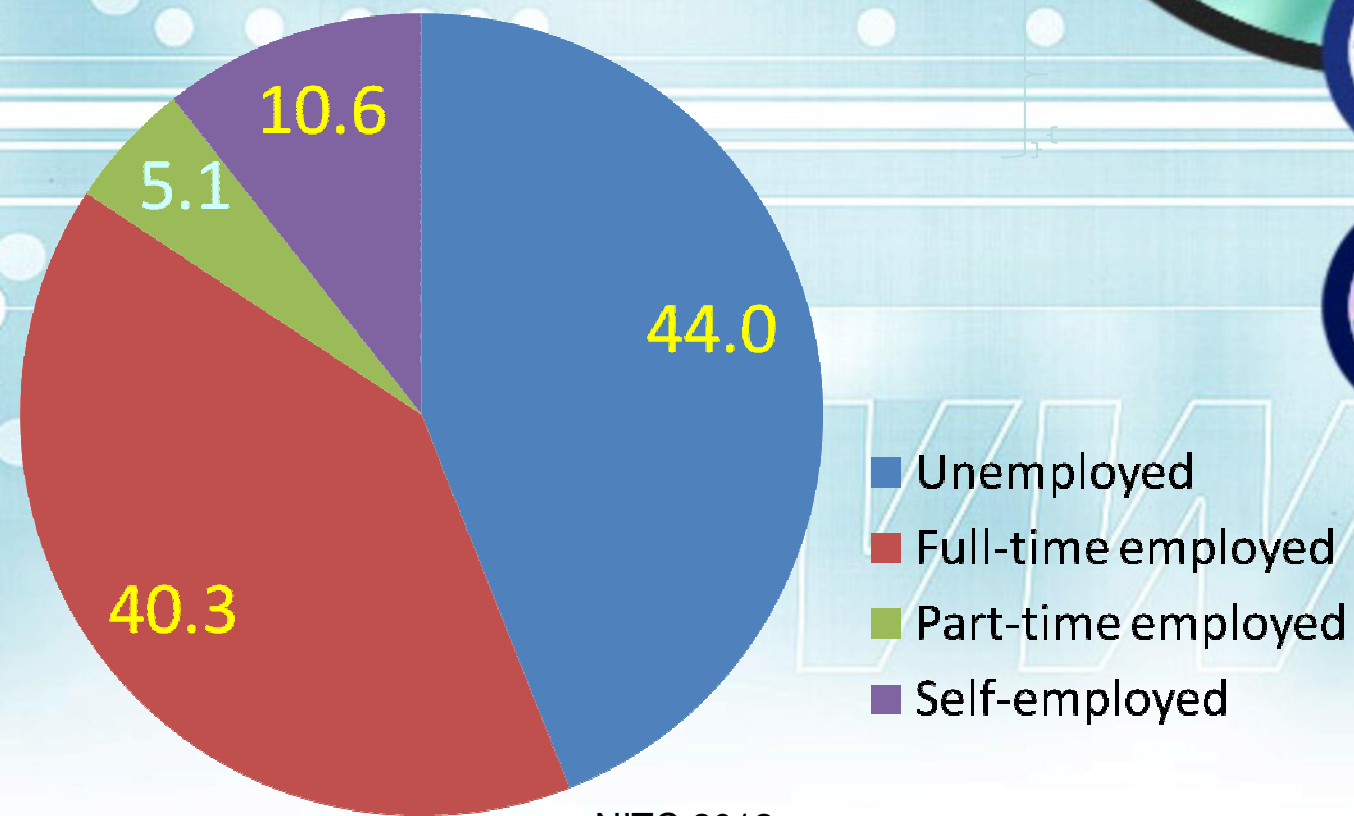
# 1. Employment Status of UK students

Students' weekly working hours



# 1. Employment status of NODES students

Employment status of NODES students, %



NITC 2012

## 2. Use of ICT

World e-Government Index Rank    ICT Development Index (IDI)

Country	Year	Rank	Country	Year	Rank
UK	2010	4 <sup>th</sup>	UK	2007	12 <sup>th</sup>
	2012	3 <sup>rd</sup>		2008	10 <sup>th</sup>
Sri Lanka	2010	111 <sup>th</sup>	Sri Lanka	2007	104 <sup>th</sup>
	2012	115 <sup>th</sup>		2008	105 <sup>th</sup>

World Literacy Rates 2011

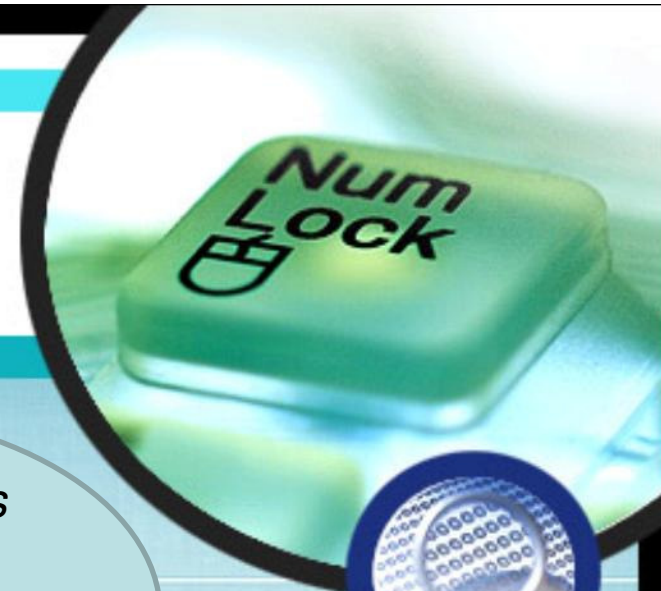
Country	%	Rank
UK	99.0	10 <sup>th</sup>
Sri Lanka	94.2%	32 <sup>nd</sup>

## 2. Use of ICT - UK

*"The learning materials could have been more interactive."*  
- **Student**

*"University provides loads of training on Multi-media but I don't have time."* -  
**Tutor**

*"Technology should not drive pedagogy but pedagogy should drive technology"* - **Tutor**



## 2. Use of ICT - Sri Lanka

*“Quality of online content depends on strengths of inclusion of multi-media and interactivity. Most content on NODES are flat.” - Tutor*

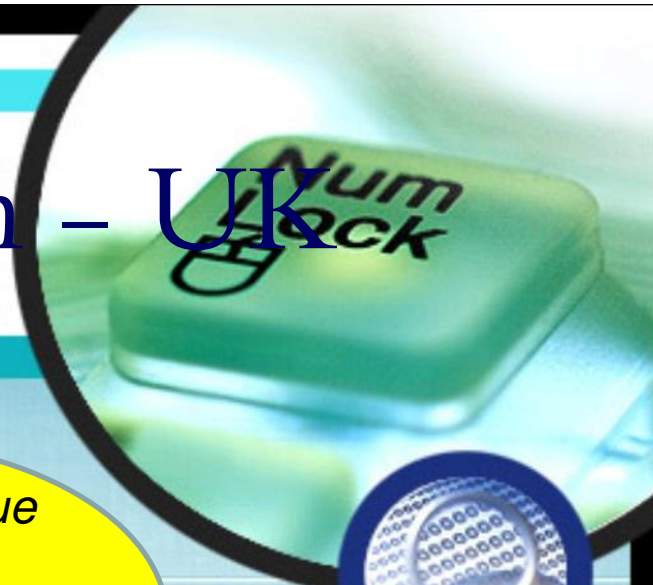
*” Most materials violate online instructional principles and underutilize ICT facilities. Much for improvement. ” - Reviewer*

### 3. Online Collaboration – UK

*“Although discussion boards are helpful they cannot replace the classroom atmosphere.” - **Student***

*“I feel isolated due to lack of online interactivity by other students” - **Student***

*“I have only discussion boards because chats cannot be synchronised with everybody” - **Tutor***





### 3. Online collaboration–Sri Lanka

*“Equitability is one of the key attractions of online learning where all students have the same opportunity to participate and earn marks regardless of whether they are shy or outspoken; have good or poor language skills; are male or female” – Tutor*

## 4. Design of Assessment – UK

*“Design of assessments is based on work-based so there is no room for plagiarism.” - **Tutor***

*“Online students could send work done by someone else so we use Turnitin/VC/Skype/telephone to clarify.” - **Tutor***

*“University used video conferencing in assessing my project so I had to demonstrate the project kind of a viva” - **Student***

## 4. Design of Assessment–Sri Lanka

*“I do not use any online facilities for assessments, ... I mark in the train, at home, etc so I mark on the paper by pen! - **Tutor**”*

*“Major exams & final thesis assessments should be F2F supervised. - **Tutor**”*

*“Online activities should be given a reasonable weightage to encourage student interactions.”*  
**Consultant**




## 6. Supporting WBL - UK

*"We recommend WBL programmes for employers as a way of staff training and CPD activities."* - **Professional Body**

*"The institutions no longer distinguish between F2F or WBL which has same degree of acceptance."* - **Support Services**

*"Employees value investment company is making in them, which has been proven with our low staff turnover and high level of qualified individuals in the company"* - **Employer**

## 6. Supporting Online learning – Sri Lanka



*“Online degrees offered by dual mode universities should have same level of acceptance provided their quality is accredited” – **Tutor***

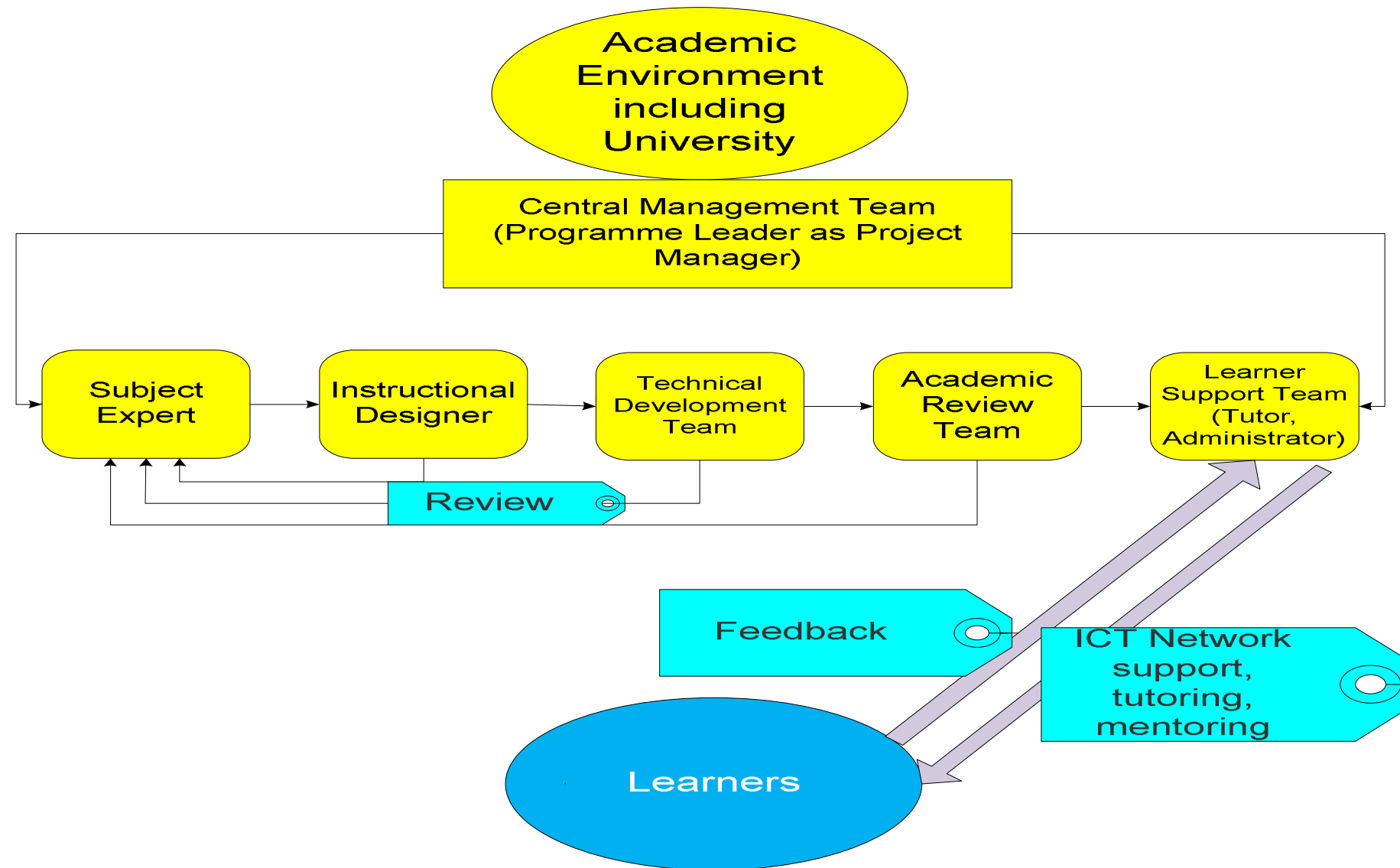
*“Online learning is new to Sri Lanka, yet there is a lot of interest and potential. It is important that university system provides leadership, which is visible sparingly in Sri Lanka.” - **Foreign consultant***

*“It is not only institution’s commitment, but also the Country’s and the Ministry’s.” – **Programme Head***

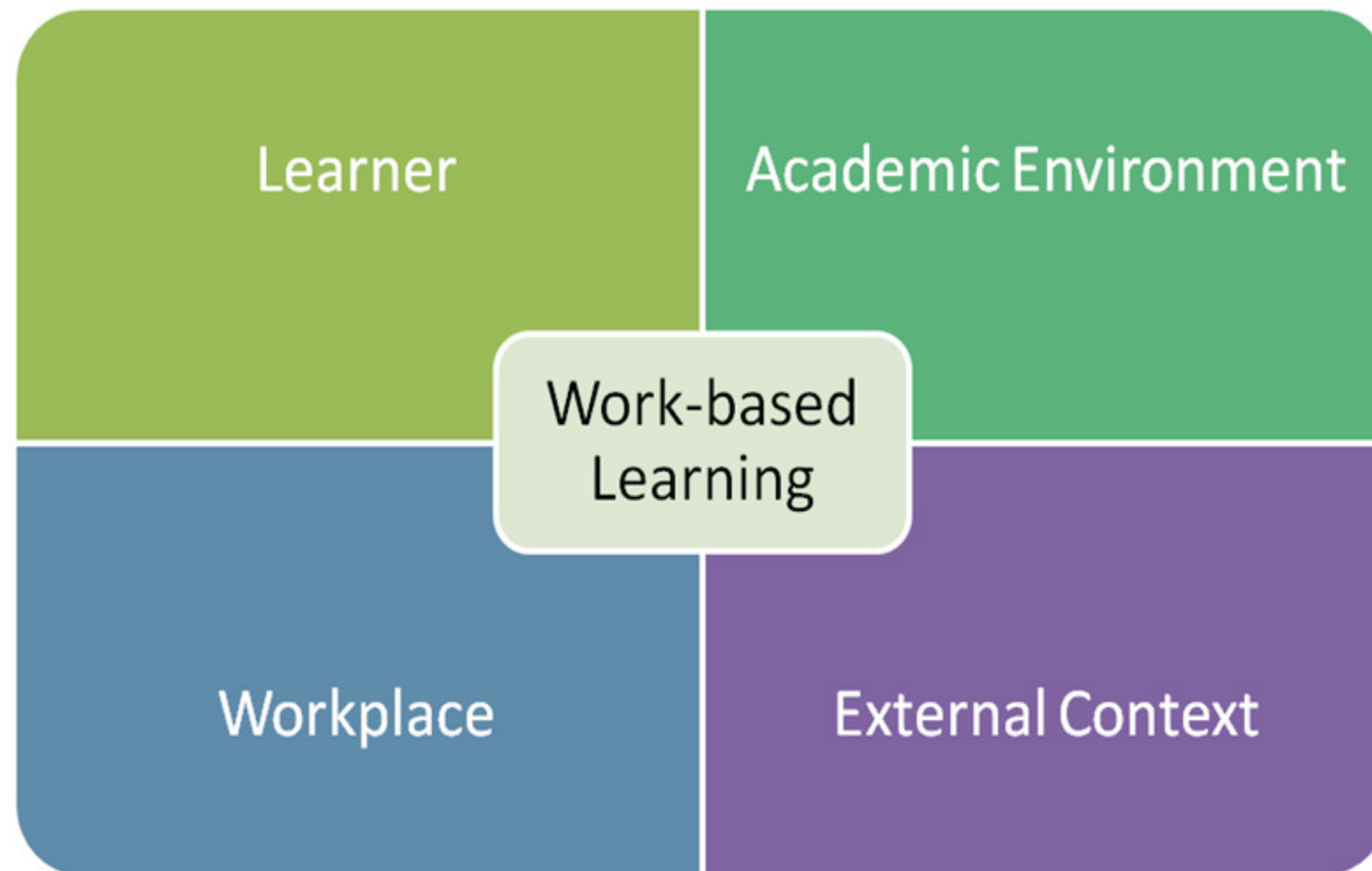
# Original Contribution



# The current online course design, development and delivery model

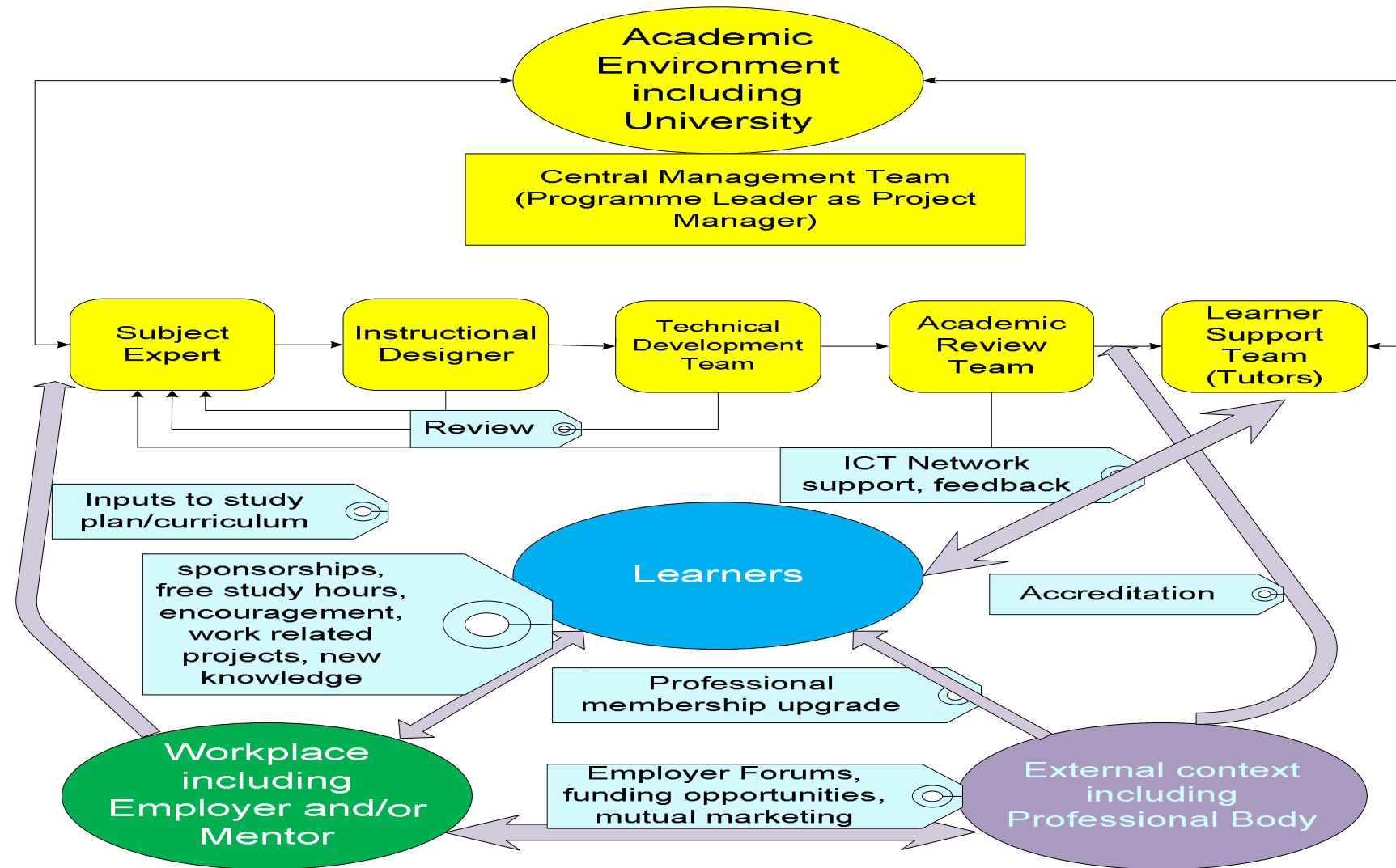


# Suggested Framework





# Recommended online course design, development and delivery model for WBL



# Conclusions so far ...

## Quality

- Quality of online material is good but not yet as interactive as it could be
- Quality of tutoring should be assured through QA measures

## Access

- eLearning portal is not user-friendly for tutors, yet students like it
- technology should enable access to learning resources & communication across all stakeholders

## Support

- support for all stakeholders including employers and professional bodies
- Government support to make policies & procedures for WBL

# Recommendations for Sri Lanka

## For All stakeholders

- ✓ Authorities, Professional bodies & employers should be made aware of the importance of WBL
- ✓ Formulate new policies and / or strengthen existing policies

## Institutions

- ✓ Institutions to provide technical support to academic staff to develop multimedia-rich content
- ✓ Use of VLEs to compensate for its distant disadvantage
- ✓ Quality assurance systems in place



# Recommendations for Sri Lanka

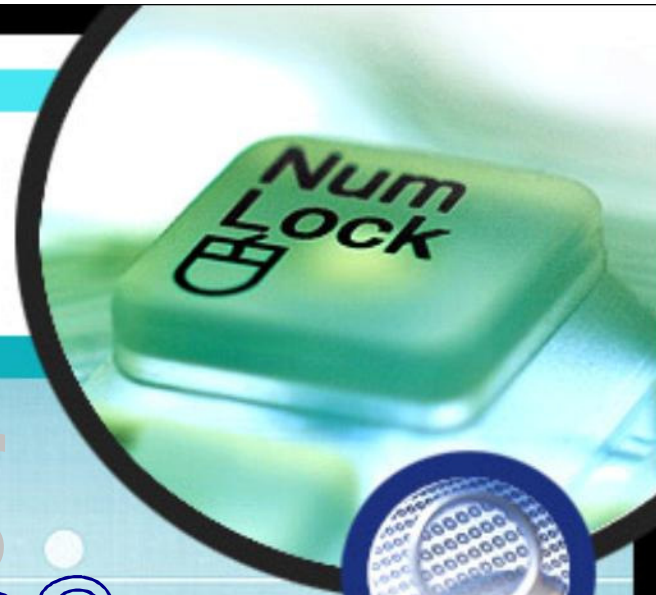
## Government

- ✓ Recognise the WBL model nationally such that all stakeholders could collaborate in initiating industry-oriented WBL programmes in Sri Lanka
- ✓ A strong commitment by the Government to recognize both F2F & WBL credentials being equivalent
- ✓ Develop Elementary IT literacy across the country with good bandwidth
- ✓ Rigorous marketing by all stakeholders to send the concept across

Thanks

for listening

Any Questions



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