

## **A discussion; helping people to learn about practising Systems Thinking ...**

Tony Korycki

**M GOO**

Practising Systems Thinking can be messy ...

... the situations we inhabit are messy ...

... the language of practise can be messy ...

... the landscape of practitioners, bodies, evangelists, methods, and educational providers is complex.

So how do we learn about how to practise ...

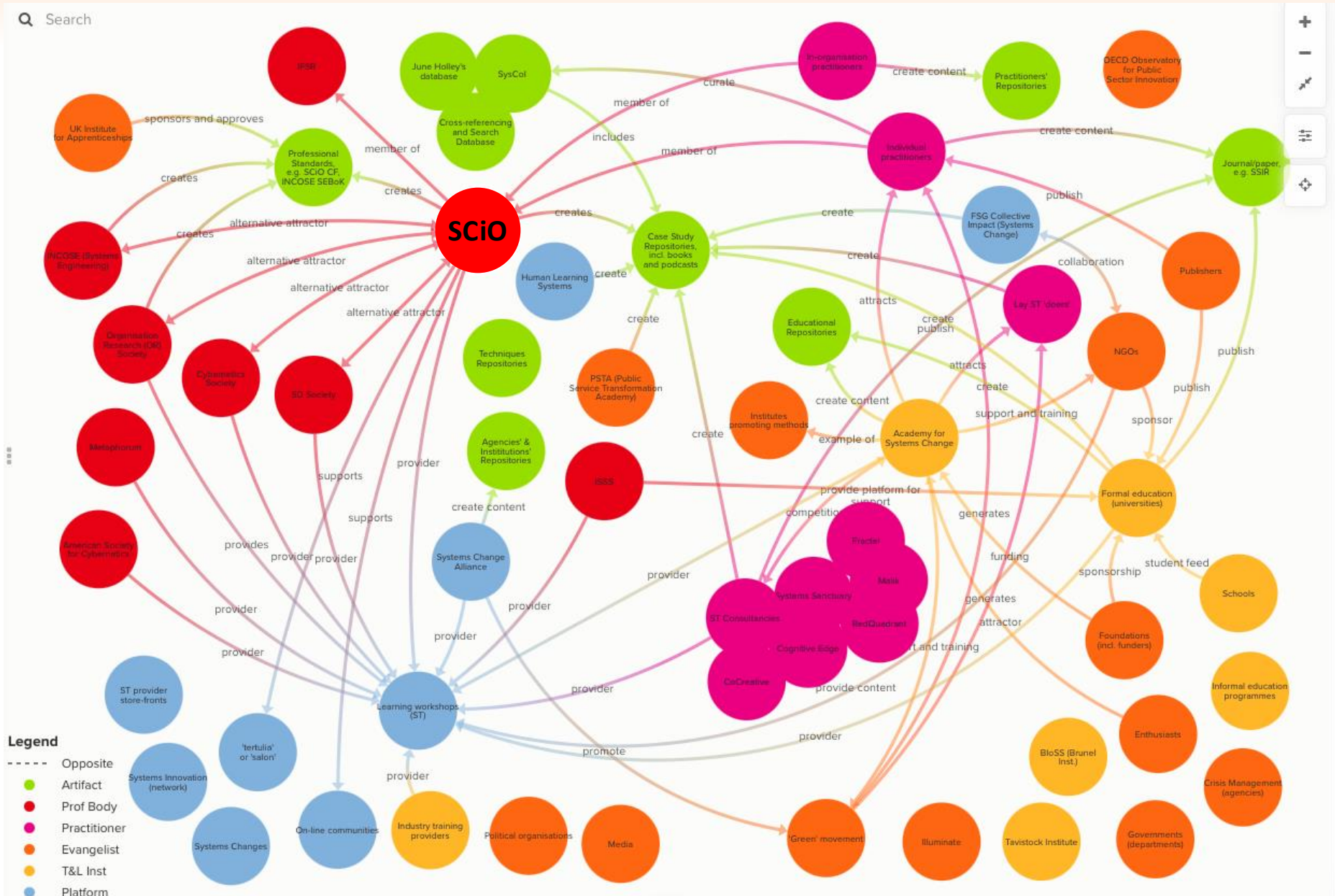
... how is that different to 'teaching' ...

... what opportunities are there out there for learning?

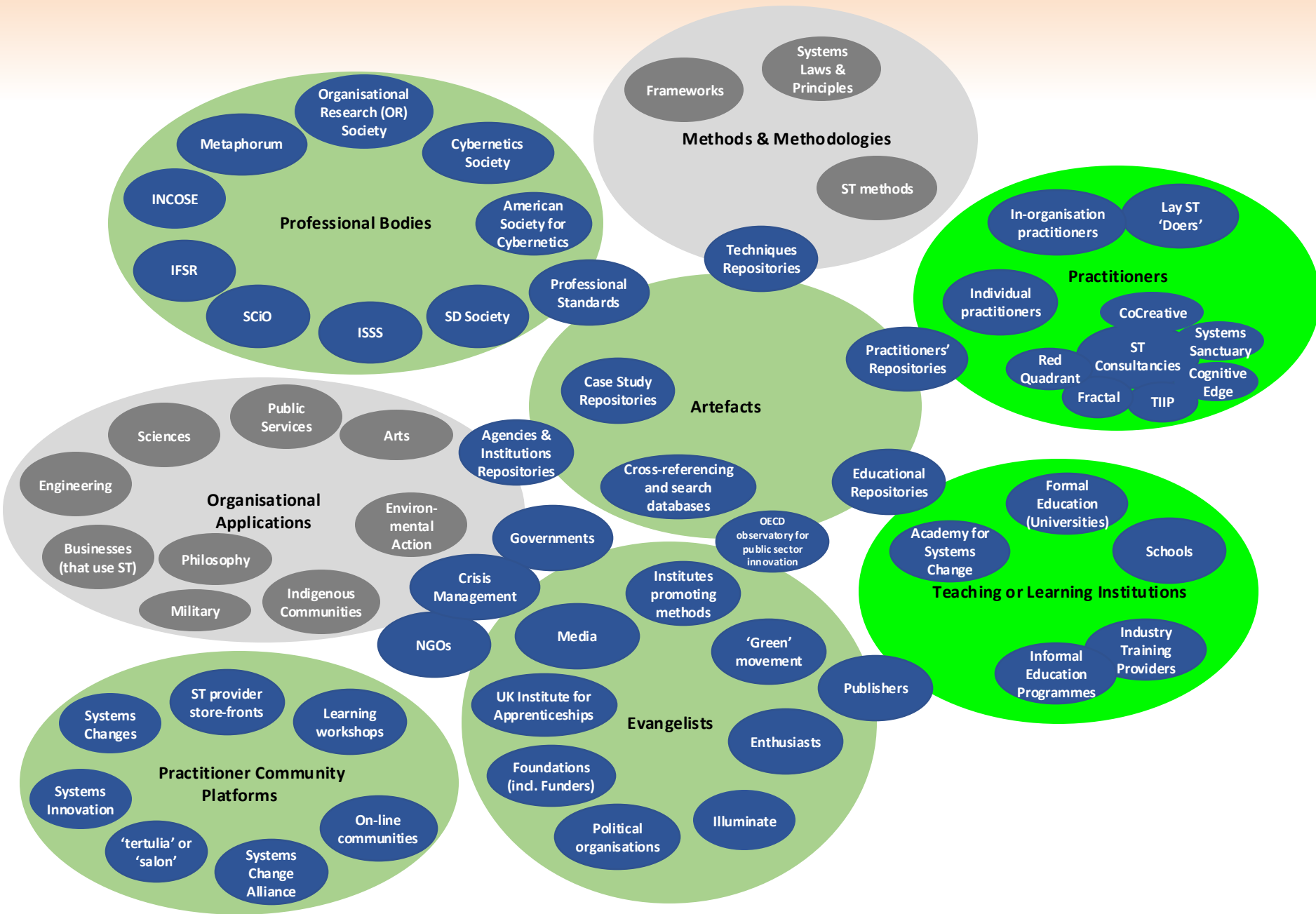
How can we learn to practise without becoming seen to be, or actually becoming ... technocratic?

## Practitioners inhabit a big, messy landscape

# SCiO



# Systems Thinking Practice learning 'feels like' a distinct domain





# Learning and/or Teaching - who, what and how?

# SCiO




**RESEARCH**

## Centre for Systems Studies

Today, society faces more complex challenges and opportunities than ever before. Our mission is to develop systems approaches to address this complexity for the benefit of organisations, communities and the natural world.


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Although all these courses have been prepared and are available for webinars or live presentation to groups, the recordings and documentation for our learning management system are still in progress. Please see the text "available now", "coming soon" or "please enquire" for this status. This is being regularly updated and other courses will be added.



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Systems Leader's Fieldbook Academy Stories Donella Meadows

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### Current programs

#### What we do

The Academy works across a wide range of activities related to personal, organizational approaches, three dimensions that when applied in combination (as opposed to in isolation) and escalate collective energy for positive change.

Given the multi-disciplinary nature of social change, the scope of the Academy is broad across multiple thematic areas and geographical boundaries, and involving individuals, teams or corporate, non-profit, government, academic and research sectors.

## What can you study with the OU?

As an early pioneer of the subject, our qualifications in systems thinking in practice have broken new ground in how to teach systems ideas, and have been studied by more than 30,000 people.

We offer the following qualifications:


- Postgraduate Certificate in Systems Thinking in Practice
- Postgraduate Diploma in Systems Thinking in Practice
- MSc in Systems Thinking in Practice

[Request a prospectus](#)

## Why study systems thinking in practice?

Our portfolio of Systems Thinking in Practice qualifications provides students with:

- The ability to engage with complex and problematic situations and change them systemically or holistically.
- An alternative approach to solving 21st century management challenges.
- Solutions and techniques which apply to a diverse range of job roles, organisation types, industry sectors and public and voluntary sector services.
- The possibility to tailor content to individual and professional needs so that new skills can be applied straight away
- A practice-focused qualification that equips you to find out "what to do when you don't know what to do".



Training providers for  
**Systems thinking practitioner (level 7)**

### STIP Apprenticeship Providers

More than ten UK-based apprenticeship providers offer Systems Thinking Practitioner education, and some information can be found in the registered apprenticeship providers list on the DoIT website (click left).

You can also directly review the active providers from the list below (click on the images for the providers' websites):



**Cherith Simmons**  
Learning & Development  
Academy Design & Innovation Experts



**Coventry University**



**Cranfield University**



**JGA**  
Developing Futures



**Leeds Trinity University**



**UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM**



**University of Exeter**

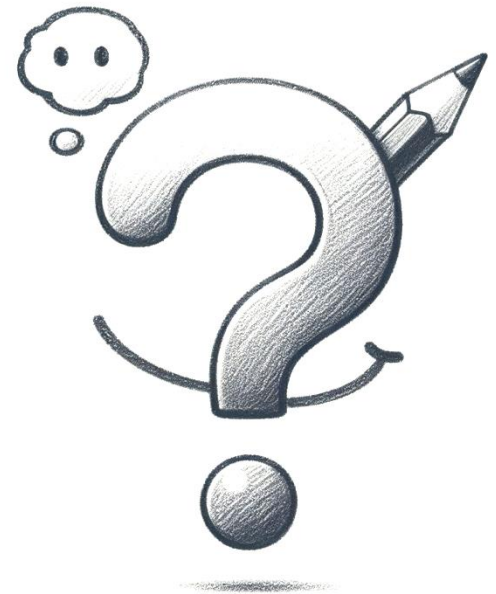
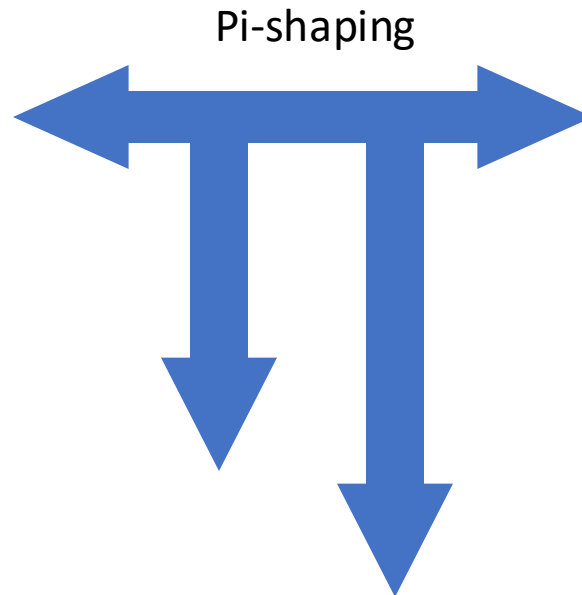
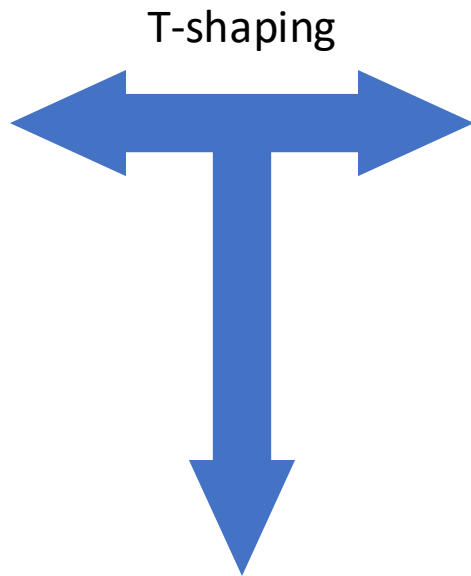


**University of Strathclyde Glasgow**

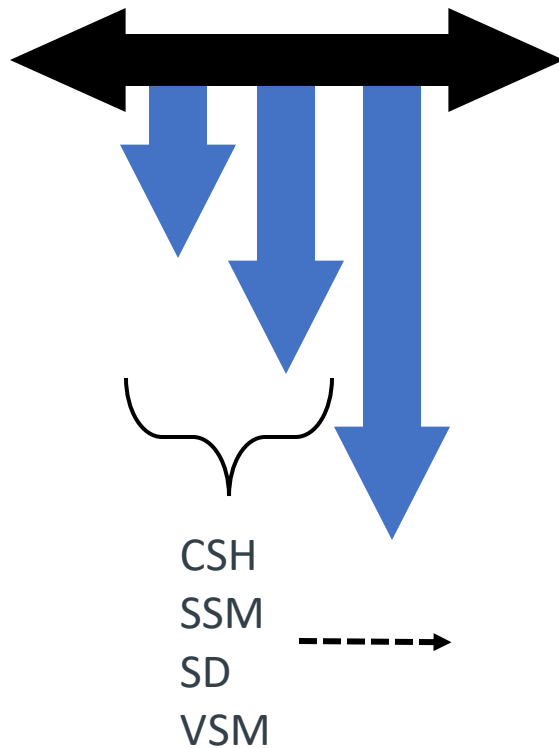


**TESS GROUP**

There's a skills and training design orthodoxy that's built up since the 1980's with McKinsey and then 1990's with IDEO Design – but is that any good for Systems Thinking?



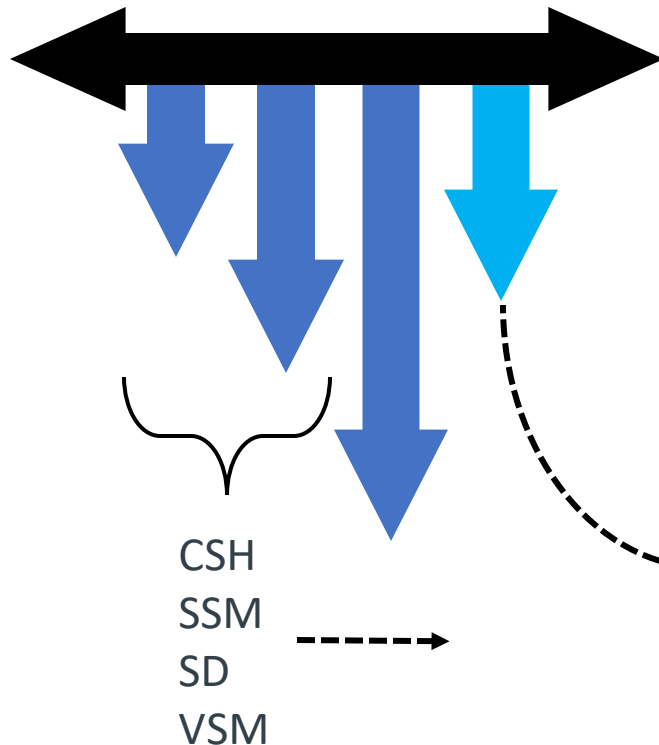
Because of the variety that we find in complex messes, we don't expect that practitioners can function merely with one deep skill, or even two ... this expectation is set out in England's Systems Thinking Practitioner apprenticeship standard ...



*“Has a sound working knowledge of at least three modelling approaches, as defined in the SCiO Competency Framework, including at **least two** of the widely-used systems methodologies or approaches:*

- *Critical Systems Heuristics,*
- *Soft Systems Methodology,*
- *System Dynamics,*
- *Viable Systems Model.”*

... but to show competence as a practitioner, one may draw from up to thirteen deep systems thinking skills ...



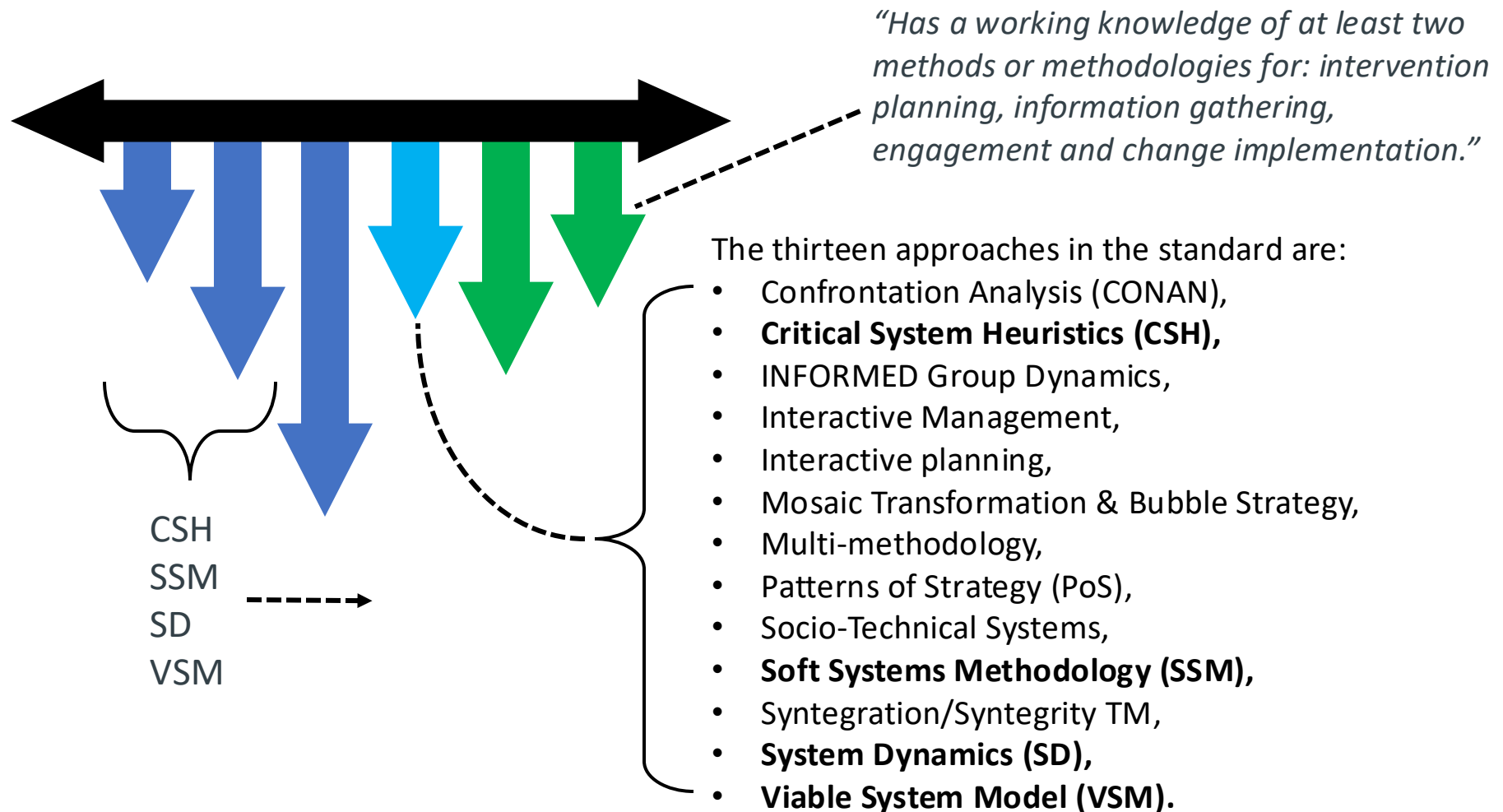
The thirteen approaches in the standard are:

- Confrontation Analysis (CONAN),
- **Critical System Heuristics (CSH)**,
- INFORMED Group Dynamics,
- Interactive Management,
- Interactive planning,
- Mosaic Transformation & Bubble Strategy,
- Multi-methodology,
- Patterns of Strategy (PoS),
- Socio-Technical Systems,
- **Soft Systems Methodology (SSM)**,
- Syntegration/Syntegrity TM,
- **System Dynamics (SD)**,
- **Viable System Model (VSM)**.

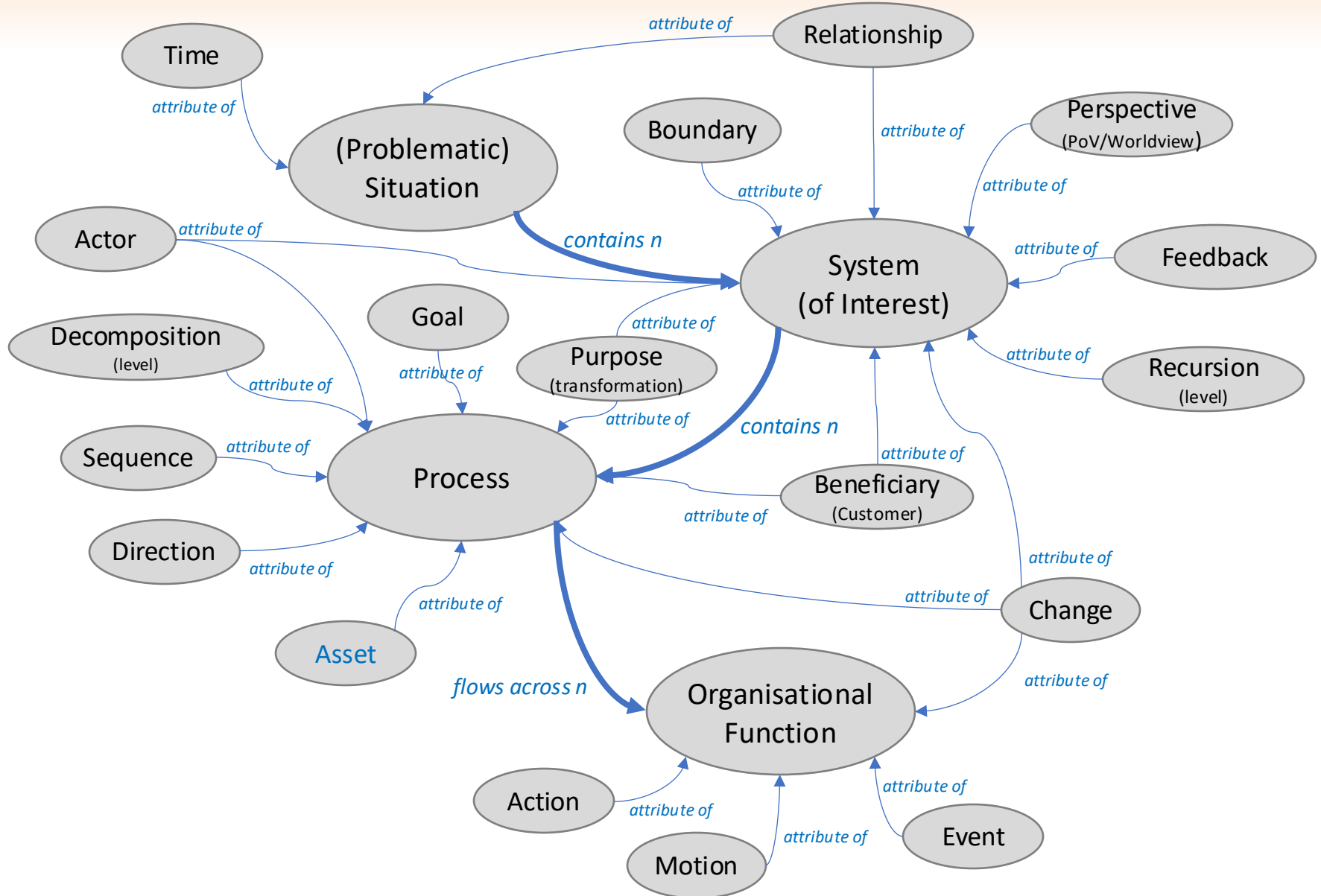


# Patterns of Learning – what's best? appropriate?

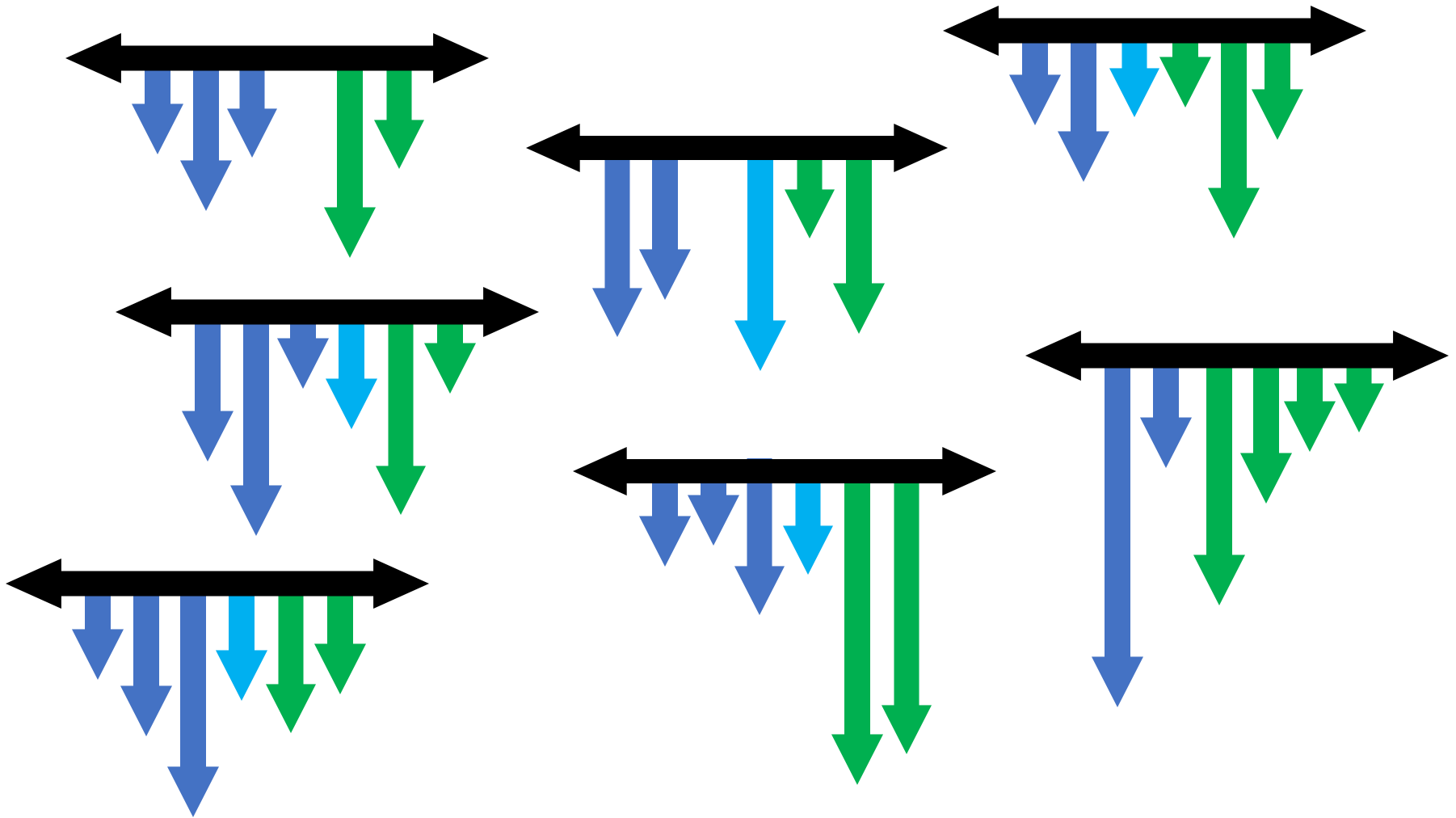
... and that's not all; what about handling the intervention in a systemic way? There are c.50 intervention skills to consider ...



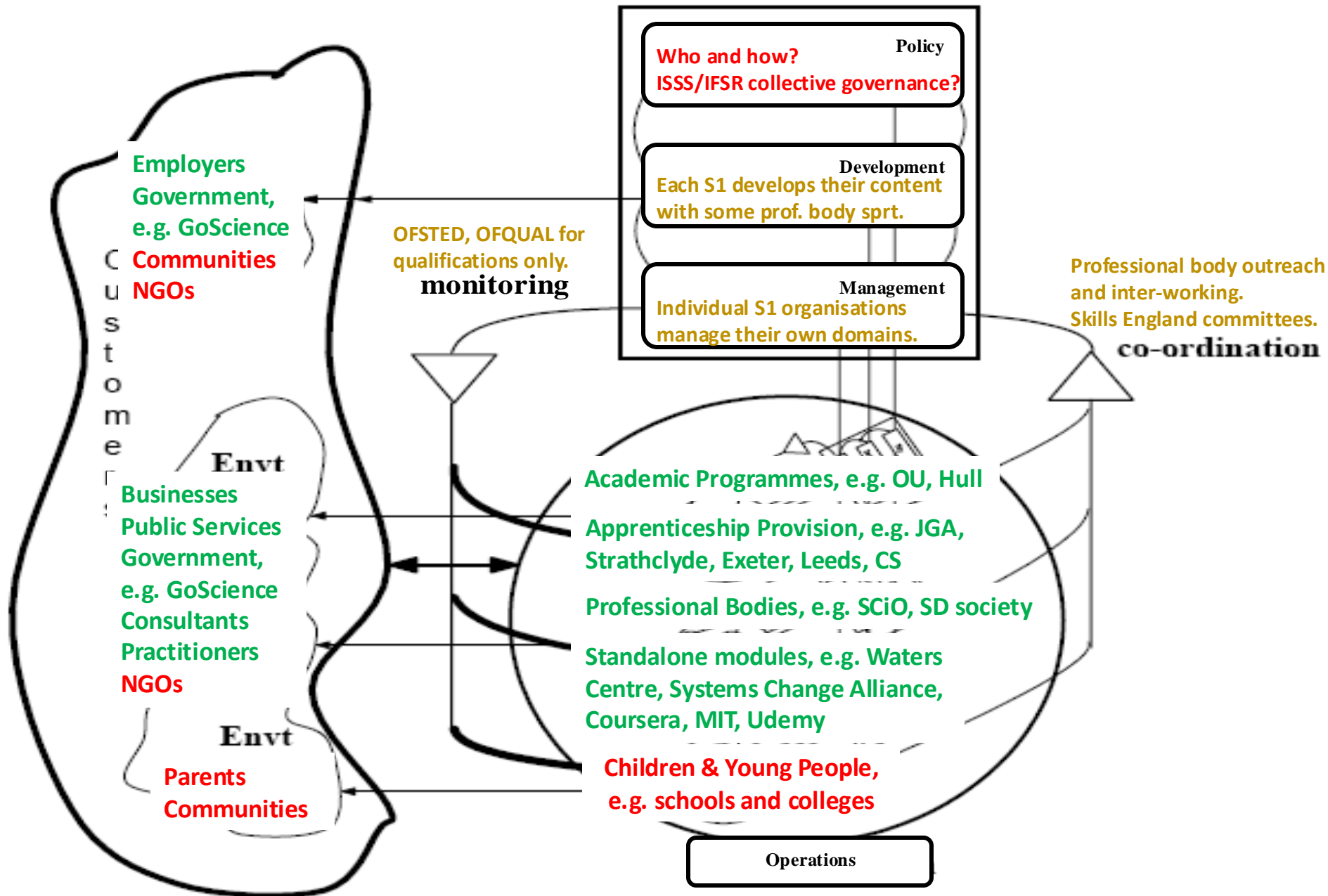
But dealing with relationships in a systemic inquiry can be difficult



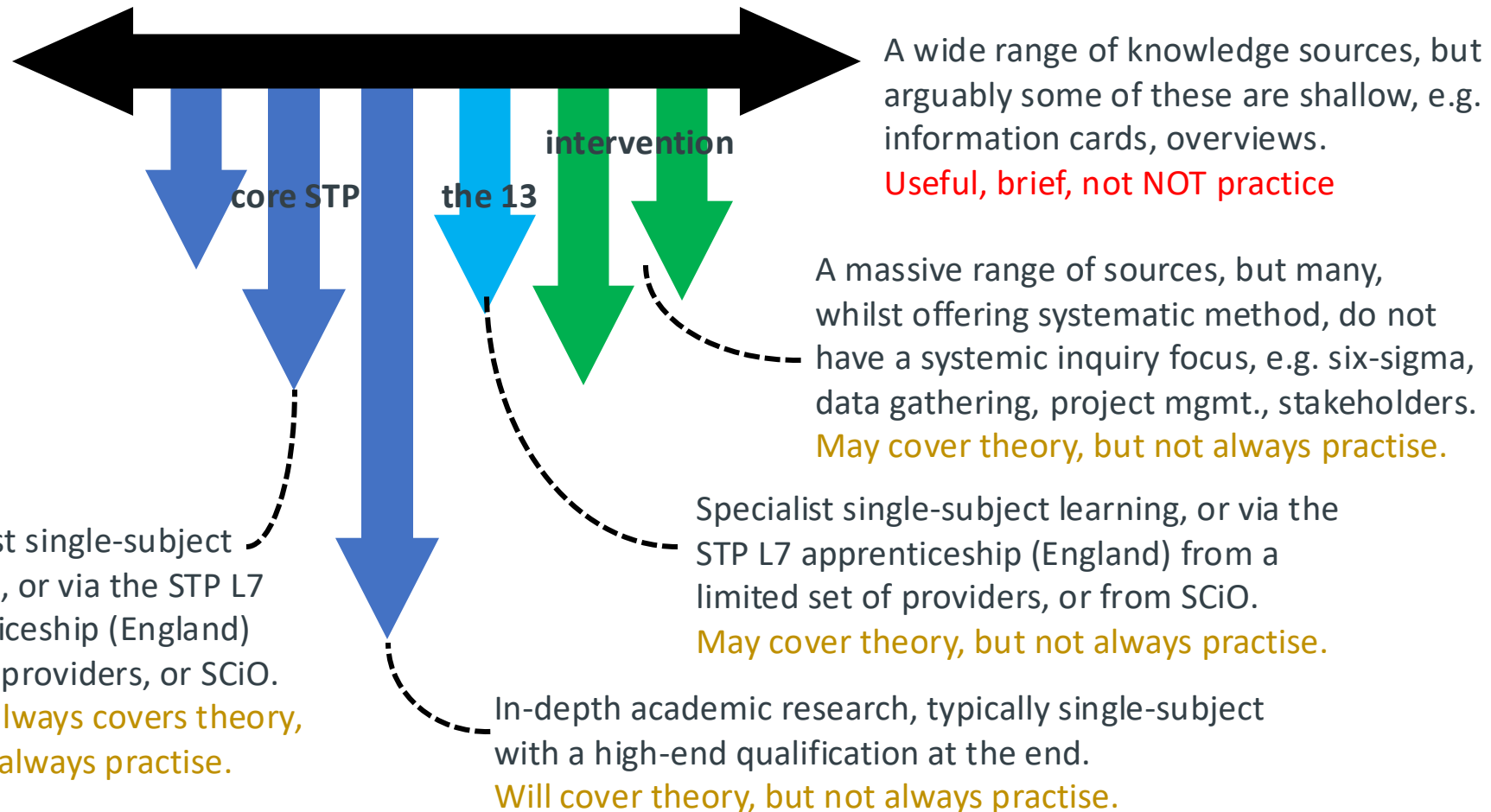
In actual practise, because no situation of interest is like any other, these skill sets can display huge variety.



# A possible VSM for STP learning (in the UK)?



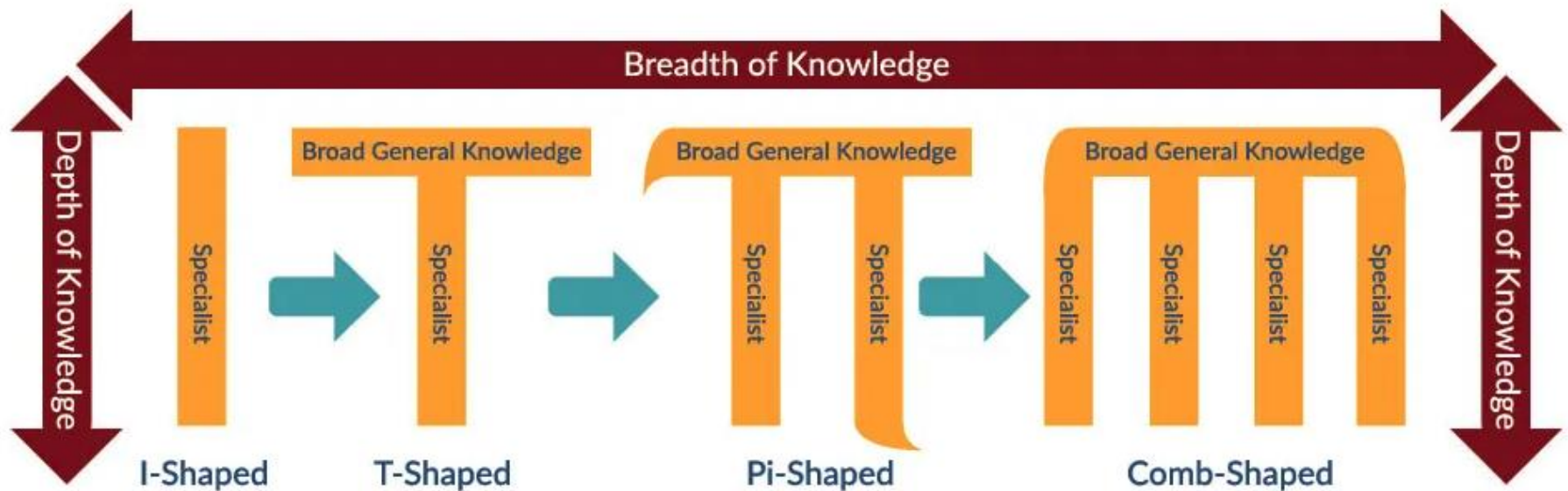
The offerings to STP professionals address some of the potential need, but not in a joined-up way.



# An alternative way of regarding the space?

Courtesy of Des Brown and MIRO

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There is so much more to understand ...

- How are decisions made about STP learning – macro/micro levels?
- What is a ‘good’ trajectory for learners? What destinations are there?
- What are the dynamics, shifts, changes in this situation?
- How do we learn about the experience or wisdom of ‘lay-doers’?

Thank you for listening ... questions?

... find out more at:

**<https://www.systemspractice.org/en/courses>**