Real World Learning

Client-Connected Projects
An asset to guide your thinking

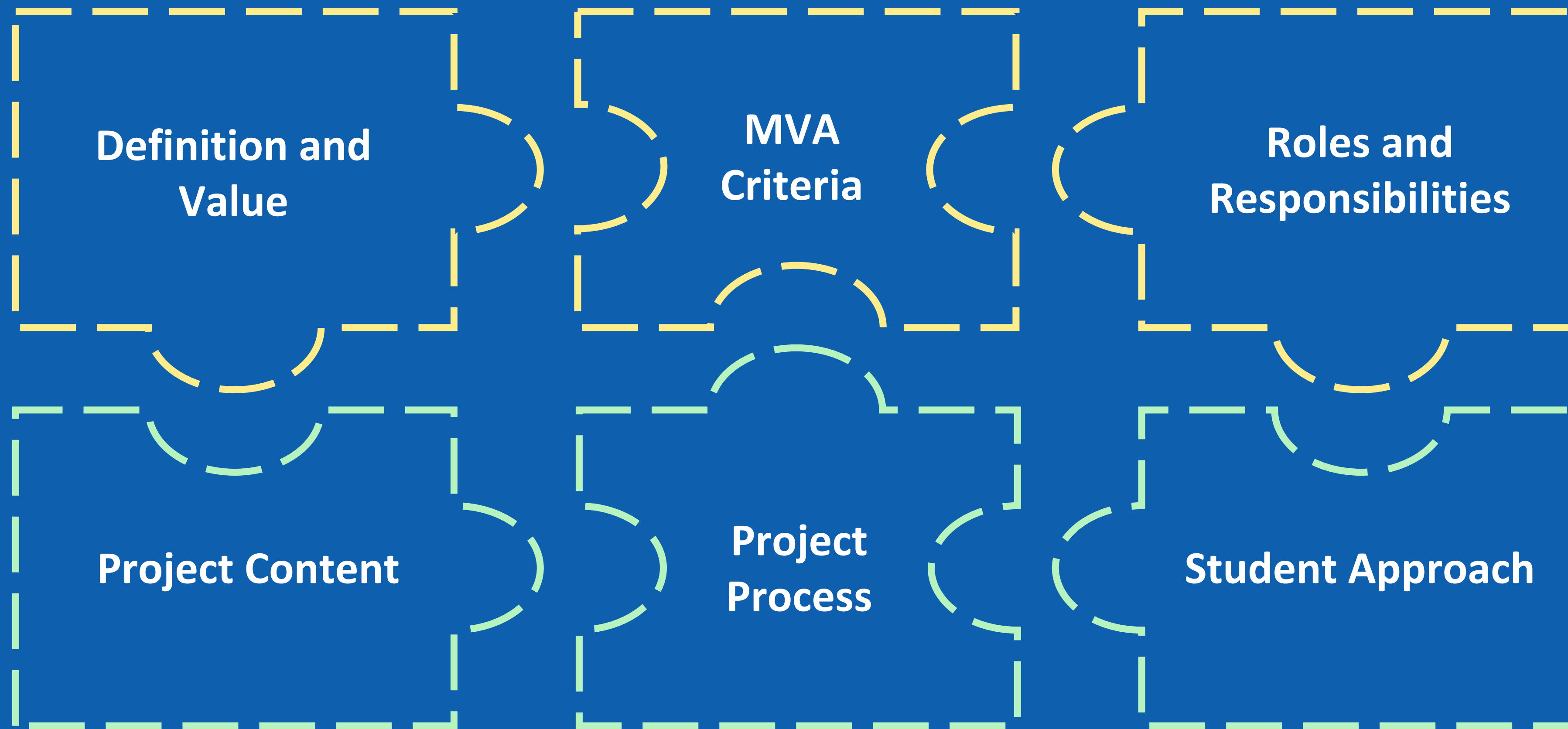Real World Learning

Quick Exercise

Jot down an idea for a client-connected project.

It could be
- One you're already engaged in
- One you'd like to launch

Think about some of the necessary elements and steps to put in place

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Building Client-Connected Projects

Definition and Value

MVA Criteria

Roles and Responsibilities

Project Content

Project Process

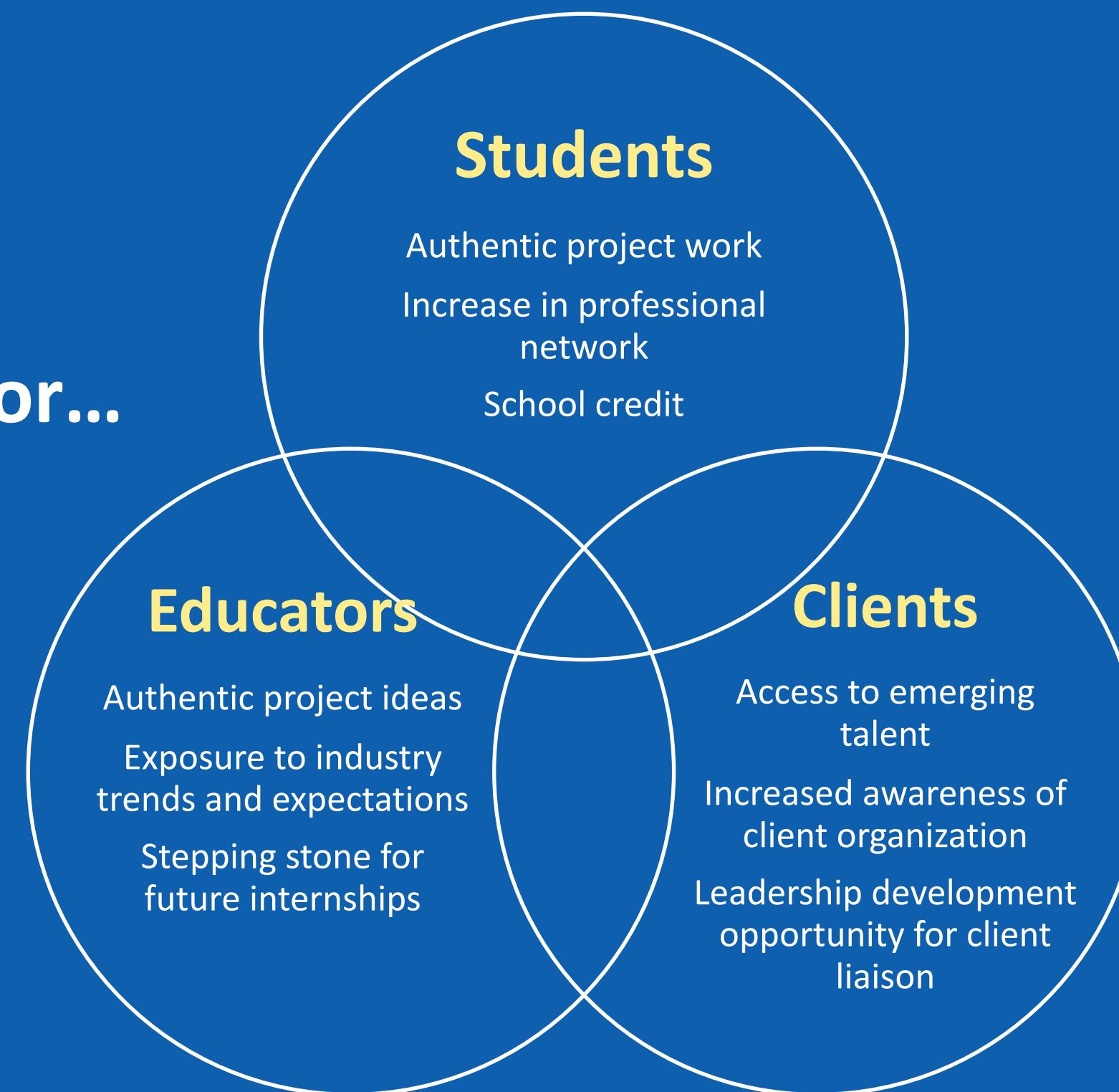Student Approach

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What are Client-Connected Projects?
What value do they provide?

Client-Connected Projects are...

Authentic problems which students solve in **collaboration with professionals** from industry, not-for-profit, or community-based organizations.

Client-Connected Projects provide value for...

Students

Authentic project work

Increase in professional network

School credit

Educators

Authentic project ideas

Exposure to industry trends and expectations

Stepping stone for future internships

Clients

Access to emerging talent

Increased awareness of client organization

Leadership development opportunity for client liaison

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What are the MVA Criteria for Client-Connected Projects?

Client-Connected Projects are MVA-level experiences when they are...

✓ **Sourced (at least sponsored) by the client**

✓ **Supplementary to students' professional network**

✓ **Resume-worthy (meaningful)**

✓ **At least 24 hours worth of work, with at least 4 hours engaged with client**

✓ **Jointly evaluated**

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What are potential roles and responsibilities?

Students
Learners
Will do the work
Responsible for self-management (attendance, effort, engagement)
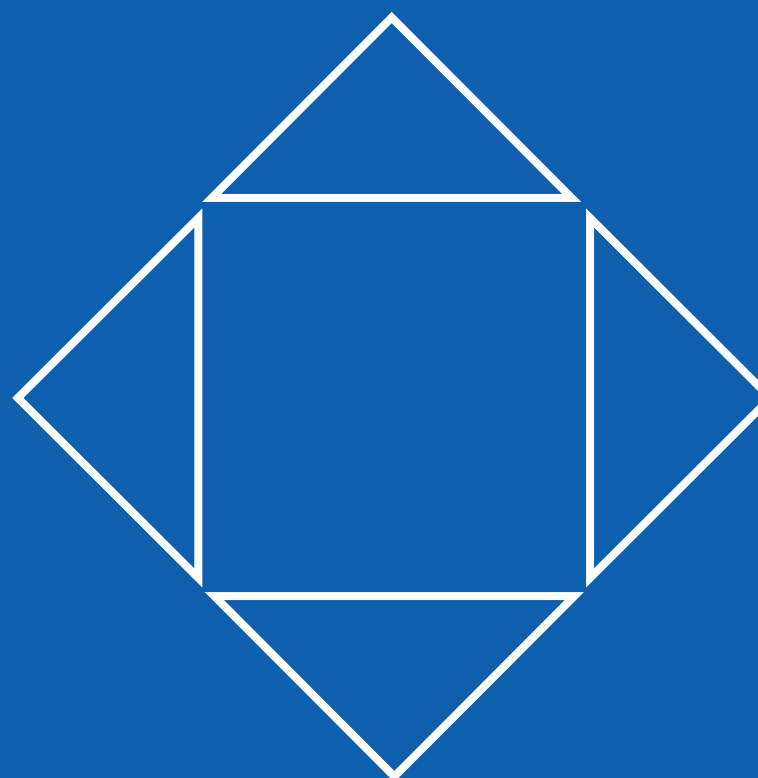Contact for direct feedback on project work

Client Liaison
Employer Representative
Will initiate/validate and react to the work
Responsible for initiating project prompt and evaluating student performance throughout process, will work hand-in-hand with Facilitator/Coach
Contact for feedback on job performance

Facilitator/Coach
Educator/Guide
Will "coach the daily work"
Responsible for helping students manage the project work and internalize lessons, will work hand-in-hand with Client Liaison
Contact for feedback on overall student performance and learning

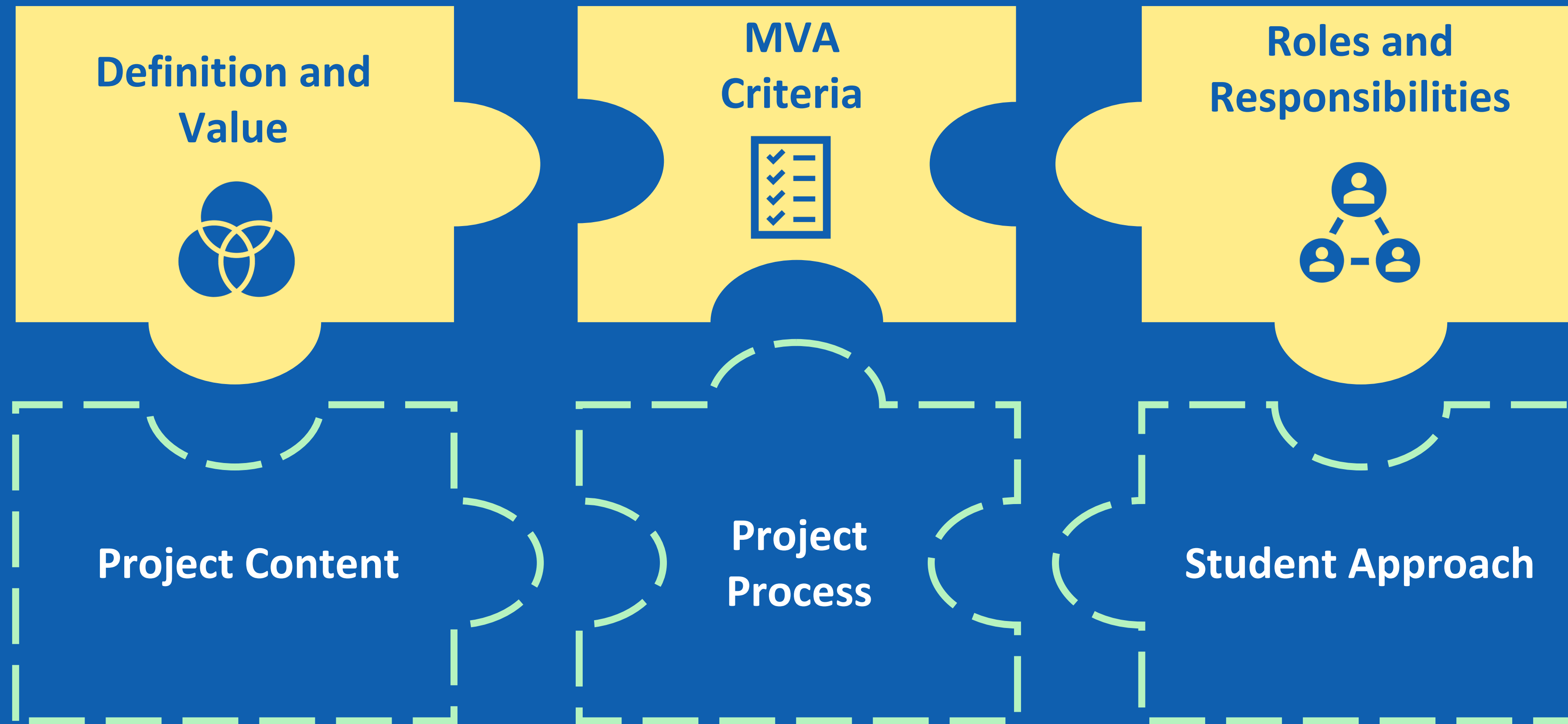**Subject Matter Experts**
Informal Consultants
Will serve as primary resource for industry know-how
Responsible for making sure students' approach is viable

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What should be considered in planning the content of the project? Who should lead?

To plan the work of the project, the Facilitator/Coach and the Client Liaison should work hand-in-hand while considering the following:

1

Evaluate Work

- What work is available?
- Is work appropriate for student involvement?
- Which work optimizes student and organizational needs?
- Who would be most appropriate to serve as the primary client contact?

2

Set Appropriate Goals

- What would make this client project experience a success for the employer?
- Which critical skills can be developed throughout this project?
  - *Self-directed learning*
  - *Adaptive problem solving*
  - *Project management*
  - *Documenting problem-solving process*
  - *Communicate and collaborate*
  - *Create value for others*
  - *Seek and use feedback*

3

Set Project Expectations

- Establish project parameters to help students understand the project and plan execution
  - *Key Challenge/Problem Statement*
  - *Student Goals*
  - *Engagement with SMEs*
  - *Feedback and Reflection Cycle*
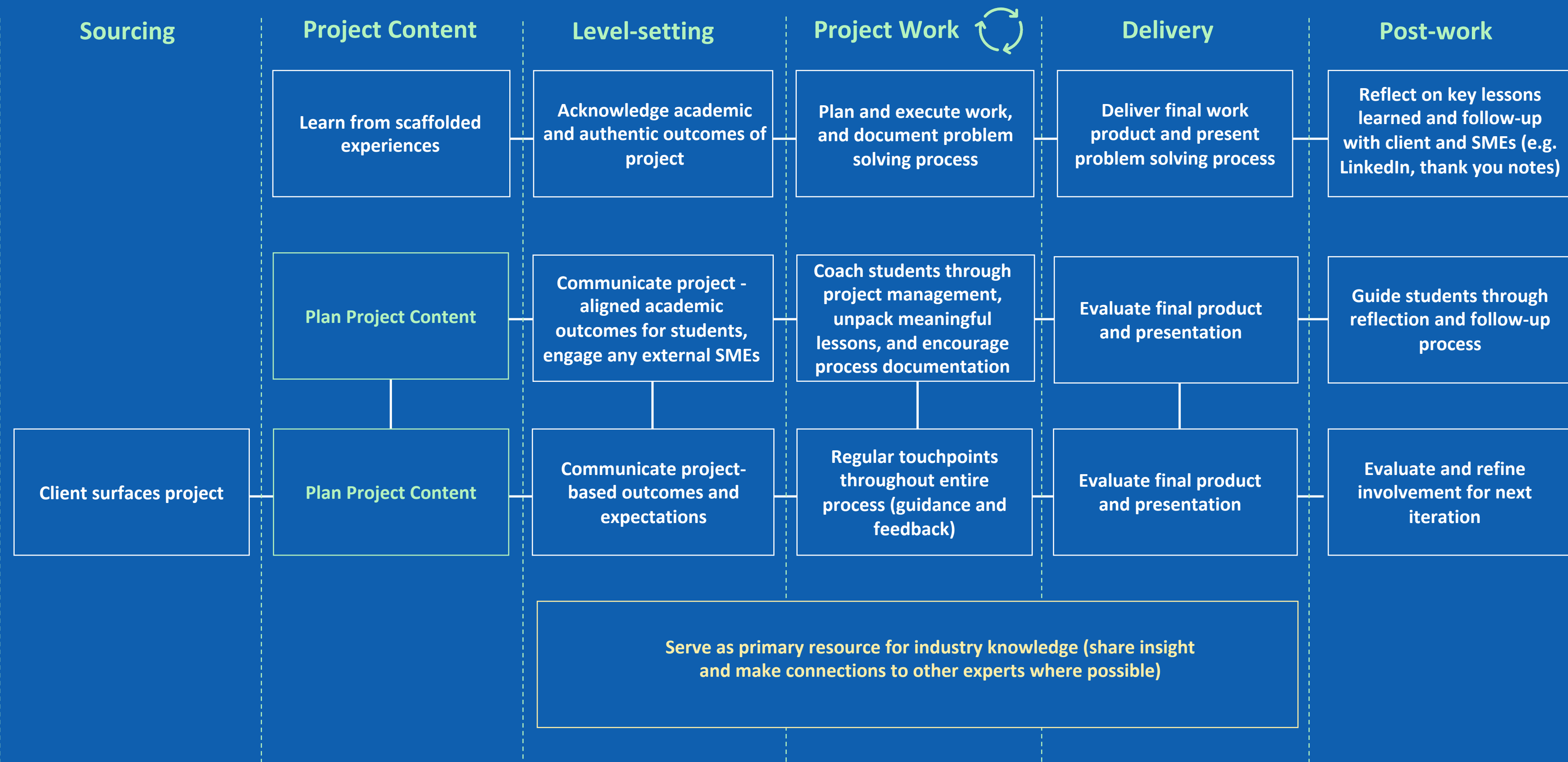 - *Documentation of Approach*
  - *Finished Product*

4

Create Timeline

- Establish key milestones for students
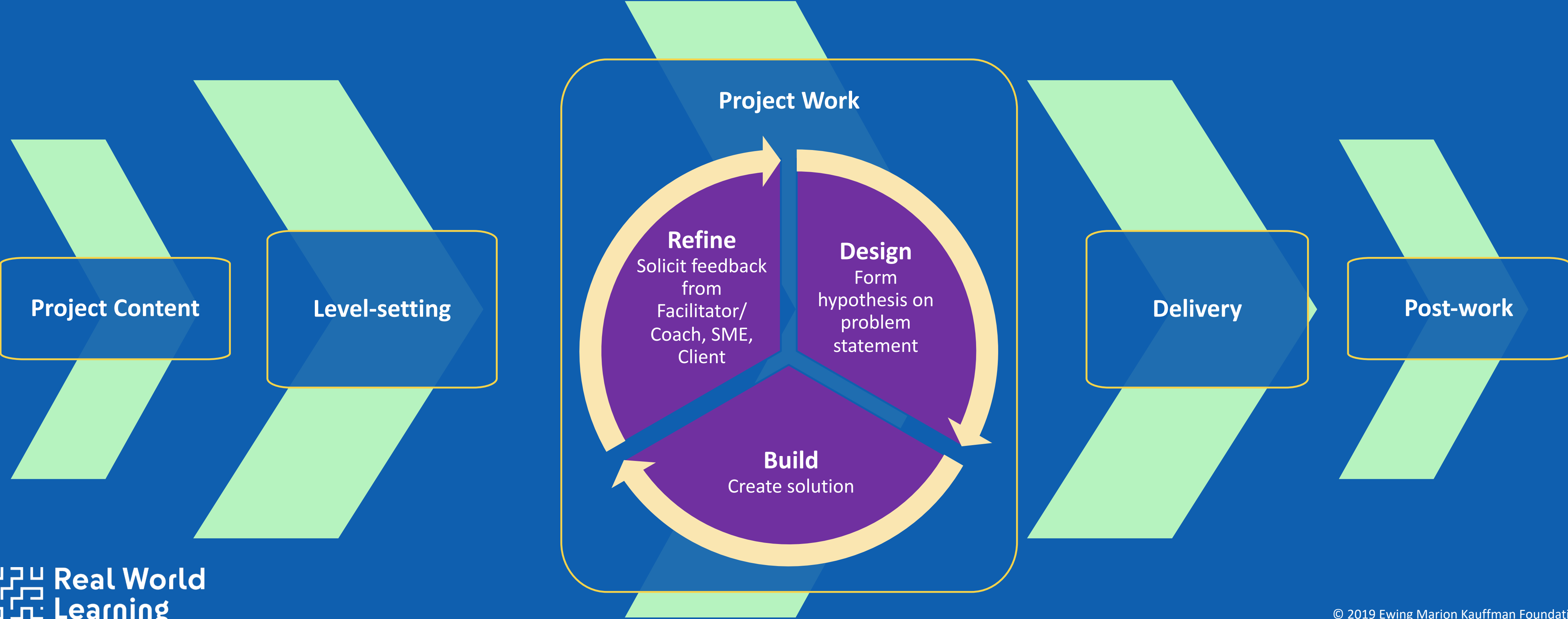- Ideate back-up plans for any surprises

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What would the process look like for everyone?

Consider this process outline as you plan the phases, roles, and respective activities throughout the project

	Sourcing	Project Content	Level-setting	Project Work ⟳	Delivery	Post-work
Students		Learn from scaffolded experiences	Acknowledge academic and authentic outcomes of project	Plan and execute work, and document problem solving process	Deliver final work product and present problem solving process	Reflect on key lessons learned and follow-up with client and SMEs (e.g. LinkedIn, thank you notes)
Facilitator/ Coach		Plan Project Content	Communicate project - aligned academic outcomes for students, engage any external SMEs	Coach students through project management, unpack meaningful lessons, and encourage process documentation	Evaluate final product and presentation	Guide students through reflection and follow-up process
Client Liaison	Client surfaces project	Plan Project Content	Communicate project-based outcomes and expectations	Regular touchpoints throughout entire process (guidance and feedback)	Evaluate final product and presentation	Evaluate and refine involvement for next iteration
Subject Matter Experts		Serve as primary resource for industry knowledge (share insight and make connections to other experts where possible)				

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How could students approach the project?

Within the greater process, set the conditions and expectations around *regular consultation with the client, and iteration*

Project Content

Level-setting

Project Work

Refine
Solicit feedback from Facilitator/ Coach, SME, Client

Design
Form hypothesis on problem statement

Build
Create solution

Delivery

Post-work

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