



Tracking Changes in the Bachelor of Arts Program Across Australia

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A historical analysis in partnership with Dr Deanne Gannaway to track the trends in the transformation of the BA program, building on *Benchmarking the Australian Bachelor of Arts*, conducted in 2012.

Through this current project we are revisiting all 36 Australian universities who currently offer a BA program to examine any further developments and identify trends across Australia. To date, this study is finding that universities are beginning to emphasise the employability of graduates by introducing more structure to the program through Core Courses and Work Integrated Learning (WIL).

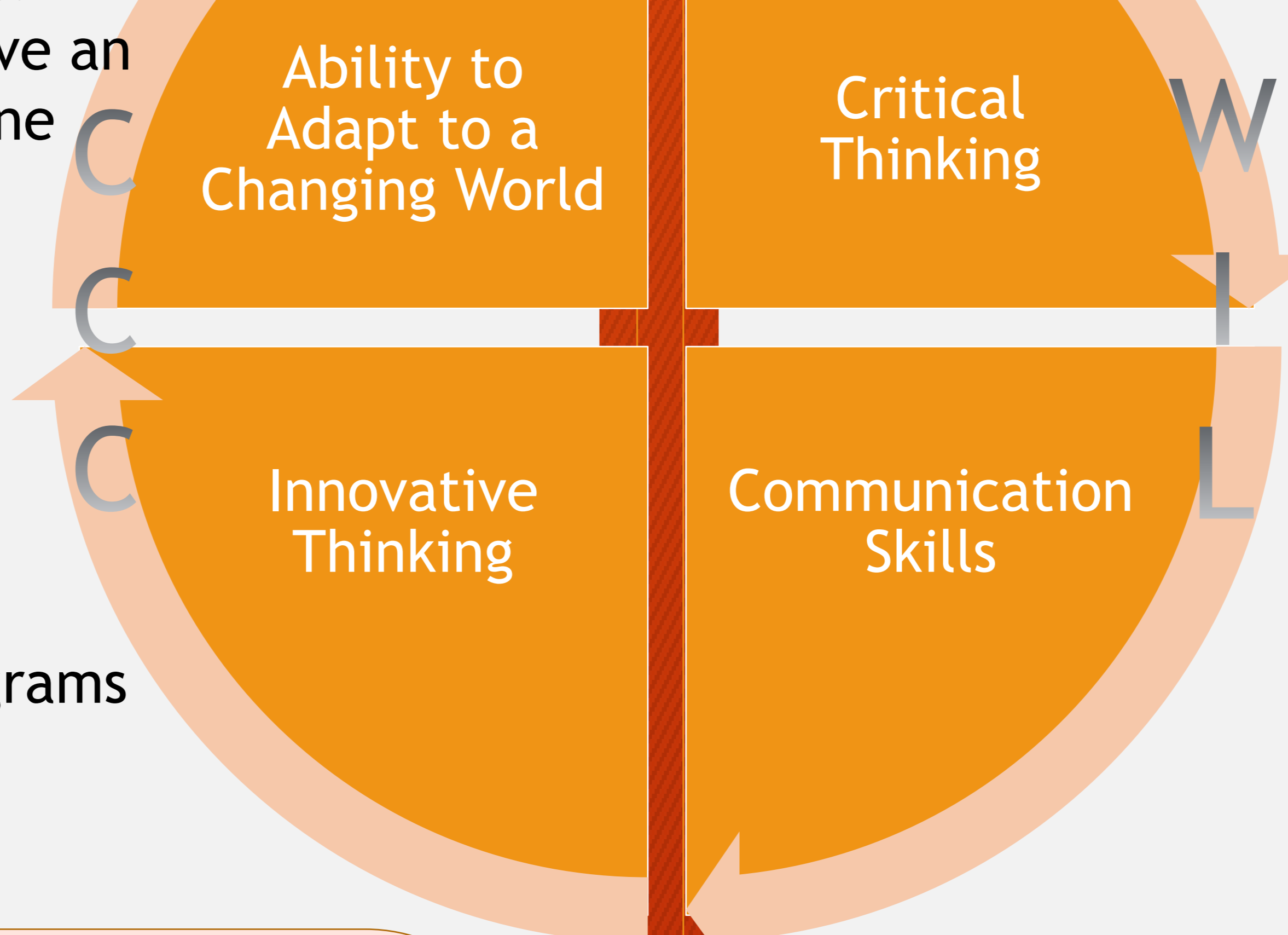
'Employability' over 'Flexibility'

Program marketing is less likely to describe BA programs as offering 'flexibility' to students, instead choosing to emphasise the employability of a BA graduate. Program descriptions often describe graduates as having highly developed critical thinking and communication skills, as well as innovative thinking and the ability to adapt to a changing world. However, the course descriptions of the BA component of a dual degree (where the other half of the degree is a professional program like law, business or science) are more likely to describe their program as offering 'flexibility' to complement the rigorous structure of the professional program.

International Experience and Knowledge

It appears that the majority of new majors being offered generally have an international focus. These discipline areas include political science, international relations, language studies, and intercultural communication. Students are increasingly being encouraged to go overseas on exchange or to complete an international internship. Few programs specify compulsory exchange.

The Australian BA Graduate



Content

In examining new and discontinued majors being offered in each BA program, it is becoming apparent that majors in particular discipline areas are more likely to be discontinued than others. Such majors include journalism, film, drama, art, religion and gender studies. No clear rationale for why it is these majors that are disappearing is evident, though it is a question prompting further research.

Dual Degrees

It has become clear that far fewer dual degrees are being offered in conjunction with the BA program. Many universities have drastically reduced the dual degree offering and further, it is far less likely to find a dual arts program such as BA/film or BA/Social Sciences degree. The BA is now more likely to be found paired with a professional component as part of a dual degree such as BA/Laws or BA/Business. And, again, these programs often refer to the BA component as offering 'flexibility' to complement the structure of the professional program.

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