



**Symposium on the
Scholarship of Teaching
and Learning (2022)**

Mokakiiks Centre for
Scholarship of Teaching
and Learning
Mount Royal University

Architecture of the Unexpected: **Beyond the Learning Paradigm**

Randy Bass
(Georgetown University)

November 10, 2022

If the past two years have taught us anything, it is that we should be preparing for the unexpected.



1995

Naming a Paradigm Shift: From Teaching to Learning

“A paradigm shift is taking hold in American higher education. In its briefest form, the paradigm that has governed our colleges is this: A college is an institution that exists to provide instruction.

Subtly but profoundly we are shifting to a new paradigm: A college is an institution that exists to produce learning. This shift changes everything. It is both needed and wanted.”

Robert Barr and John Tagg [From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education](#) (*Change Magazine*, 1995)

1995

From Teaching to Learning

Instruction Paradigm

- Provide/deliver Instruction
- Transfer knowledge from faculty
- Offer courses and programs
- Achieve access for diverse students
- Quality of entering students

Learning Paradigm

- Produce learning
- Elicit student discovery
- Create powerful learning environments
- Achieve success for diverse students
- Quantity and Quality of outcomes

1995

From Teaching to Learning

Instruction Paradigm

- Atomistic, parts prior to whole
- Time held constant, learning varies
- Degree equals accumulated credit hours
- “Live” teacher, “live student” required
- Faculty are primarily lecturers

Learning Paradigm

- Holistic, whole prior to parts
- Learning held constant, time varies
- Degree equals demonstrated knowledge and skills
- “Active” learner required, but not “live” teacher
- Faculty are primarily designers [of learning experiences]

1995

From Teaching to Learning

The change ... is a small change that changes everything. Simply ask, how would we do things differently if we put learning first? Then do it.

It will take decades to work out many of the Learning Paradigm's implications.

Robert Barr and John Tagg [From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education](#) (*Change Magazine*, 1995)

2020

1995

2045?

“It will take decades to work out many
of the Learning Paradigm’s implications.”

Transition to the Learning Paradigm

It was our progress
on the 'learning paradigm'
that prepared us for the unexpected.



EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE



EVIDENCE-BASED ENGAGED LEARNING



Beyond 'Instruction': Decoupling Contact Time from Time on Task



**An Ethos
of Community
& Care**



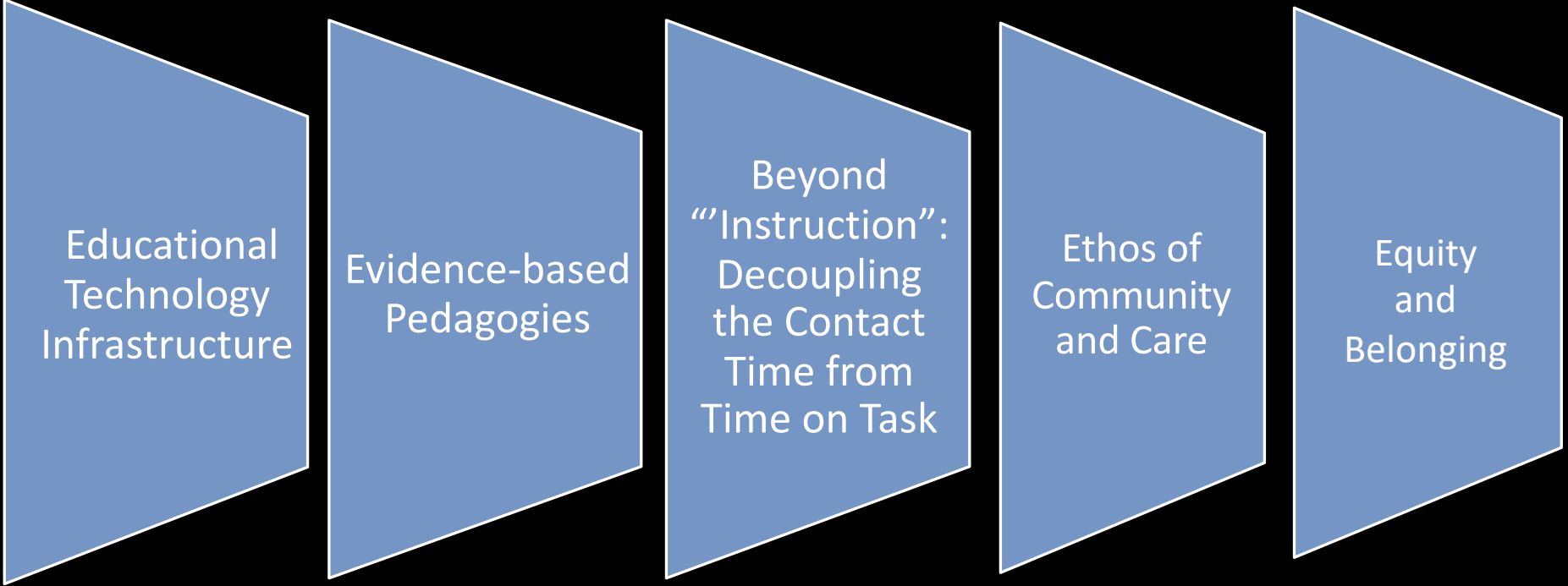
Attention to Equity

A Push for Equitable Assessment

COVID-19 and nationwide antiracism protests have intensified conversations about inequity in higher education. One research group hopes to use the moment to promote more inclusive ways to validate learning.

By [Madeline St. Amour](#) // June 25, 2020





Educational
Technology
Infrastructure

Evidence-based
Pedagogies

Beyond
“Instruction”:
Decoupling
the Contact
Time from
Time on Task

Ethos of
Community
and Care

Equity
and
Belonging

ARCHITECTURE OF THE UNEXPECTED

2020

1995

2045?



If our ability to manage the pandemic crisis was rooted largely in our advance of the *learning paradigm* then accelerating and expanding that project is key to our ability to prepare for a complex and perilous future.

Architecture of the unexpected.

By "architecture" I mean the structures, processes and ethos that set up institutions to adapt to disruptive change.

At minimum, this architecture includes strong teaching and learning environments based on evidence-based pedagogies, engaged learning, and a robust vision for a culturally-responsive and equitable quality education that is focused on the future.

It includes any tools, practices, and spaces that build capacity to live with *uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity*.

Existential Threats

Artificial
Intelligence

Inequality

Global
Health

Misinformation
& Polarization

Environment

Existential Threats

Environment



Misinformation
& Polarization

Global
Health

Inequality

“I Can’t Breathe”



Georgetown Black Student Athlete Coalition

Equity

Diversity

Inclusion



Anti-racism

Systemic
inequality

Decolonialism

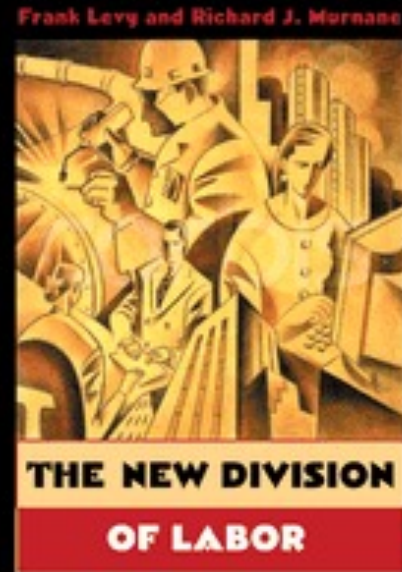
Humans in the age of artificial intelligence.

“The human labor market will center on three kinds of work:

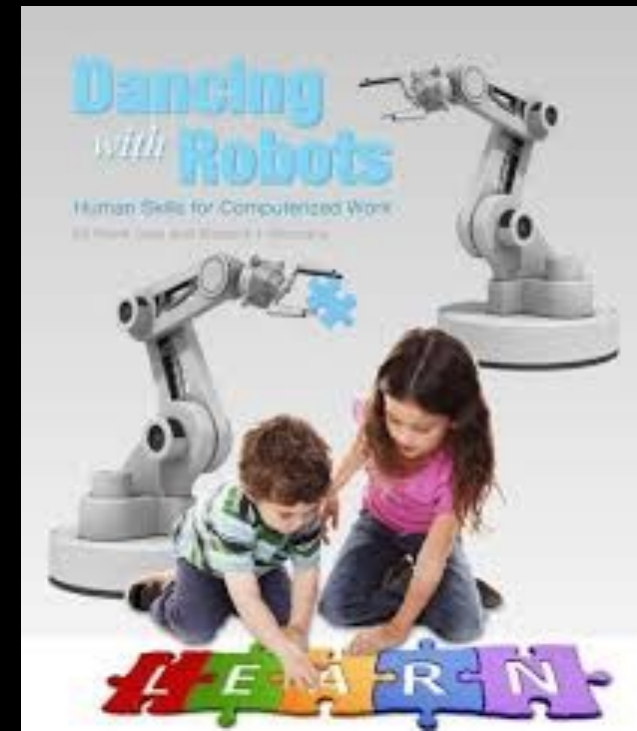
solving unstructured problems,

working with new information (including complex communication),

and carrying out non-routine manual tasks.”



How Computers are Creating
the Next Job Market



ROBOT-PROOF



HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

JOSEPH E. AOUN

Joseph Aoun, Robot-Proof

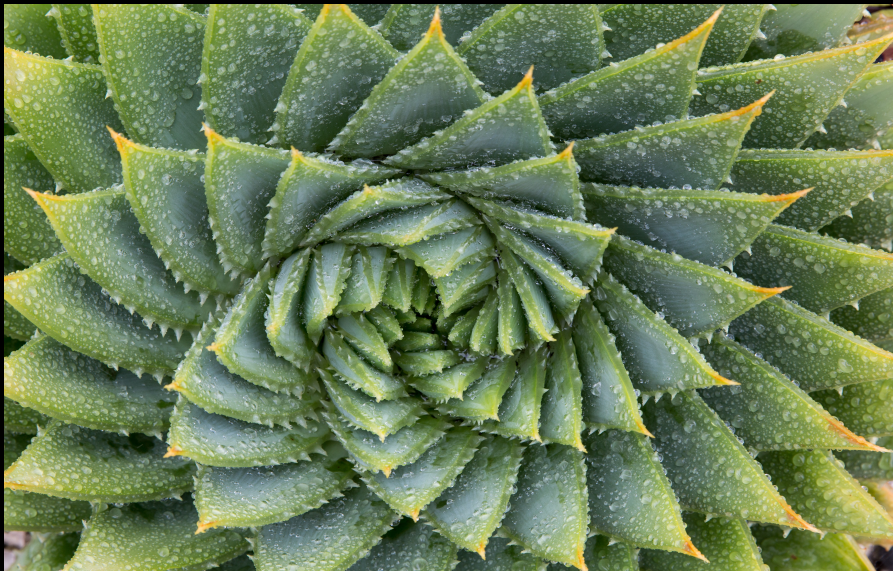
No computer has yet displayed creativity, entrepreneurialism, or cultural agility. And although machines are continually improving in their ability to map knowledge onto recognizable problems—in other words, improving in their near transfer abilities—they cannot perform far transfer well, at least not in the infinite contexts of real life.

Aoun, Joseph E.. Robot-Proof: Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (MIT Press)

As machines get better
at being machines,
are humans getting better
at being human?



We only need an architecture of the unexpected if you believe that the future is volatile and challenging.



And you only need to think about new approaches to education if you believe that the problem of education is complex or “wicked.”

Education as a Wicked Problem

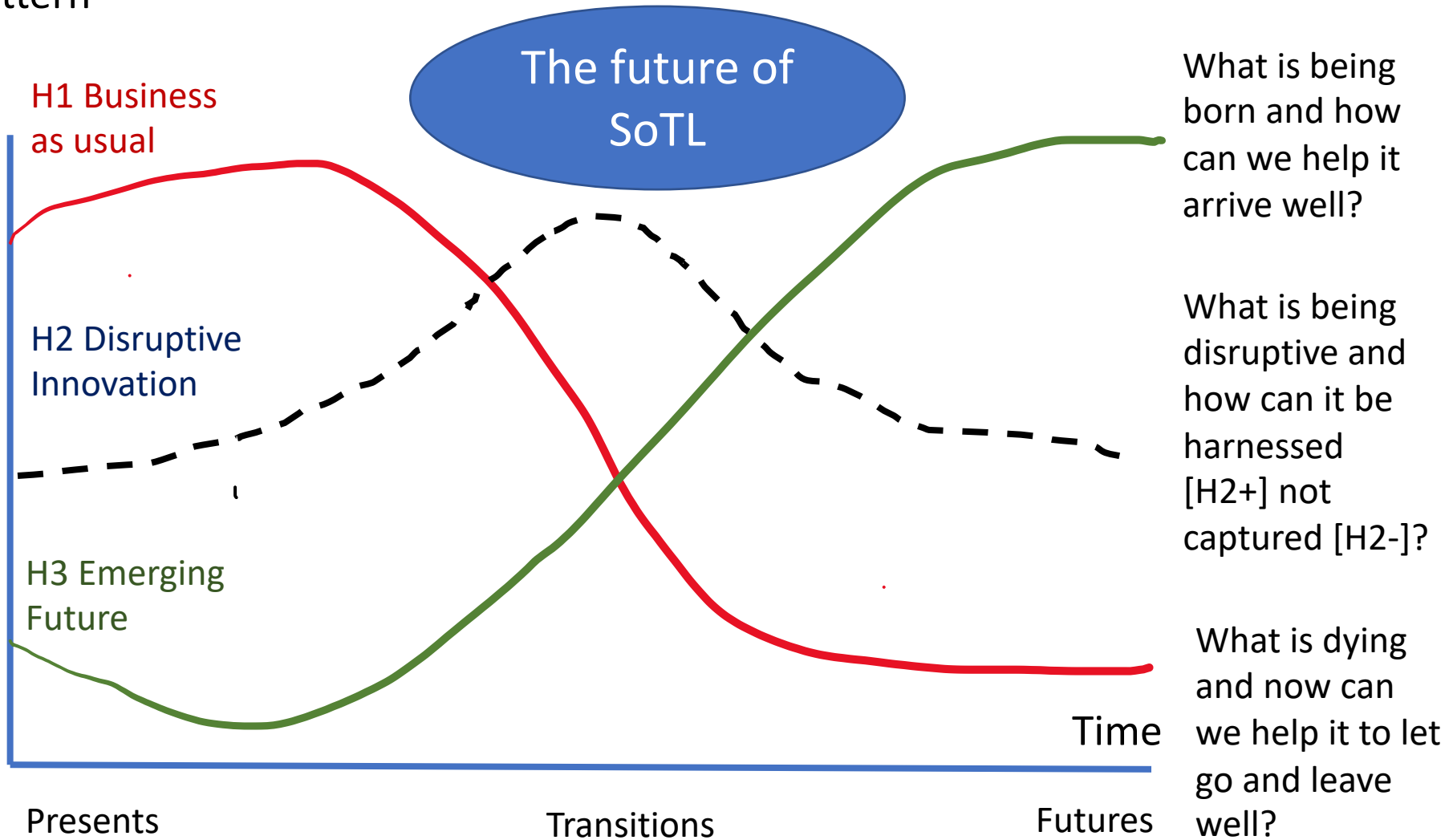
The problem of learning in higher education is really a complex interplay of three related problems:

- 1. We have the problem of better understanding human learning.*
- 2. We have the problem of applying our understanding of learning to scaling and sustaining quality education to everyone, equitably.*
- 3. Finally, we have the long-term problem of reimagining and enacting education so that it plays a meaningful role in creating a more just society and fostering a sustainable human future.*

Bass, “What’s the Problem Now?” *To Improve the Academy* (2020)

Pattern

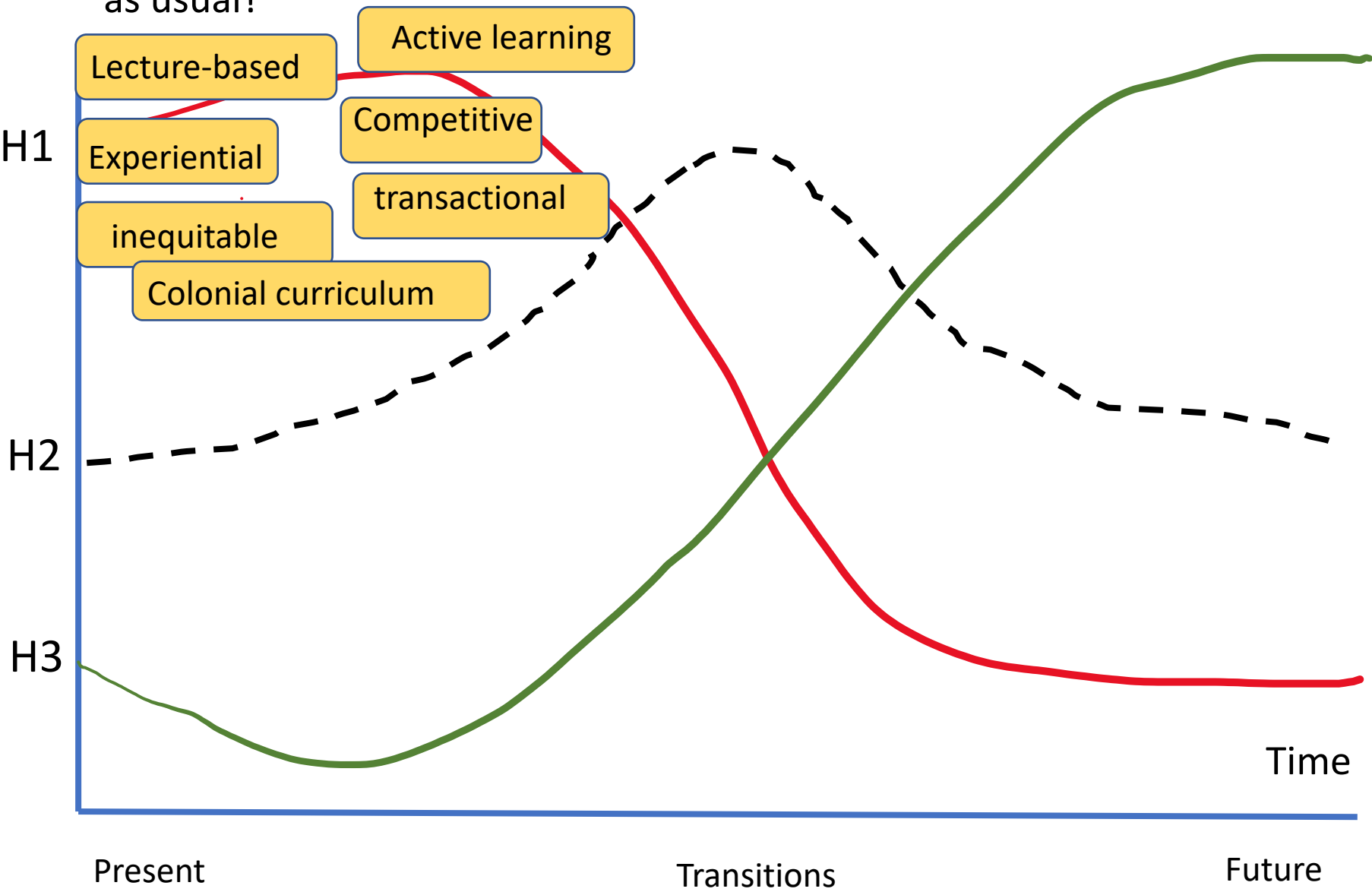
THREE HORIZONS THINKING

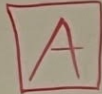


BILL SHARPE, INTERNATIONAL FUTURES

THREE HORIZONS THINKING

What is business as usual?

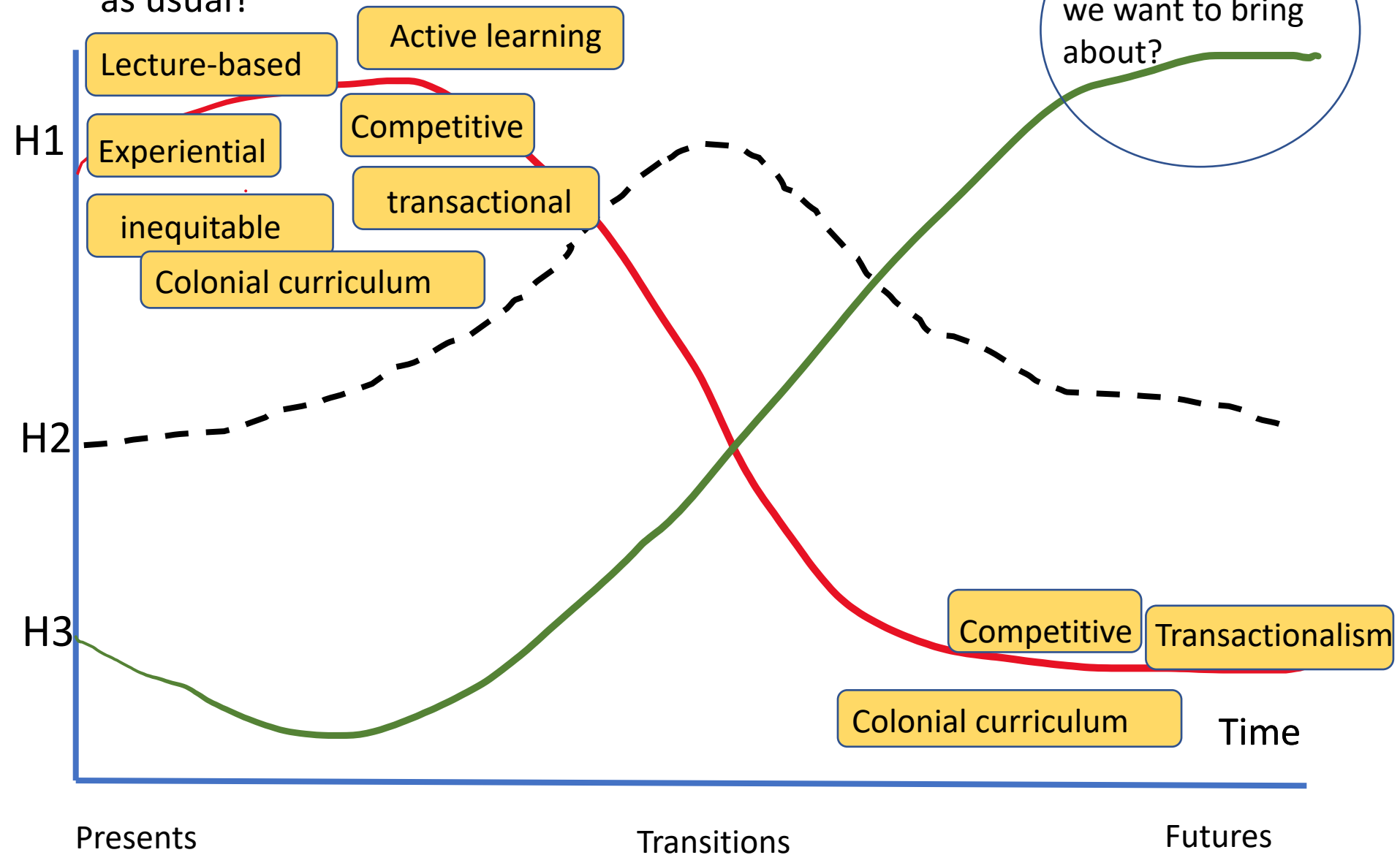


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THREE HORIZONS THINKING

What is business as usual?

What is the future we want to bring about?



VISIONS of H3

I join the many existing voices of educational transformation to contribute to the generation of *a new tipping point*—a movement that wishes to create a new dream of education.

The foundation of this dream is a more harmonic, holistic vision of education that honors the whole of who we are as intellectual, compassionate, authentic human beings who value love, peace, democracy, community, diversity, and hope for humanity.

Laura Rendón, *Prelude to a New Pedagogical Dreamfield*

THREE HORIZONS THINKING

What is business as usual?

Lecture-based

Active learning

Experiential

Competitive

inequitable

transactional

Colonial curriculum

Holistic

equitable

Harmonic

compassionate

Hope for humanity

Serve society and planet

Competitive

Transactionalism

Colonial curriculum

Time

H1

H2

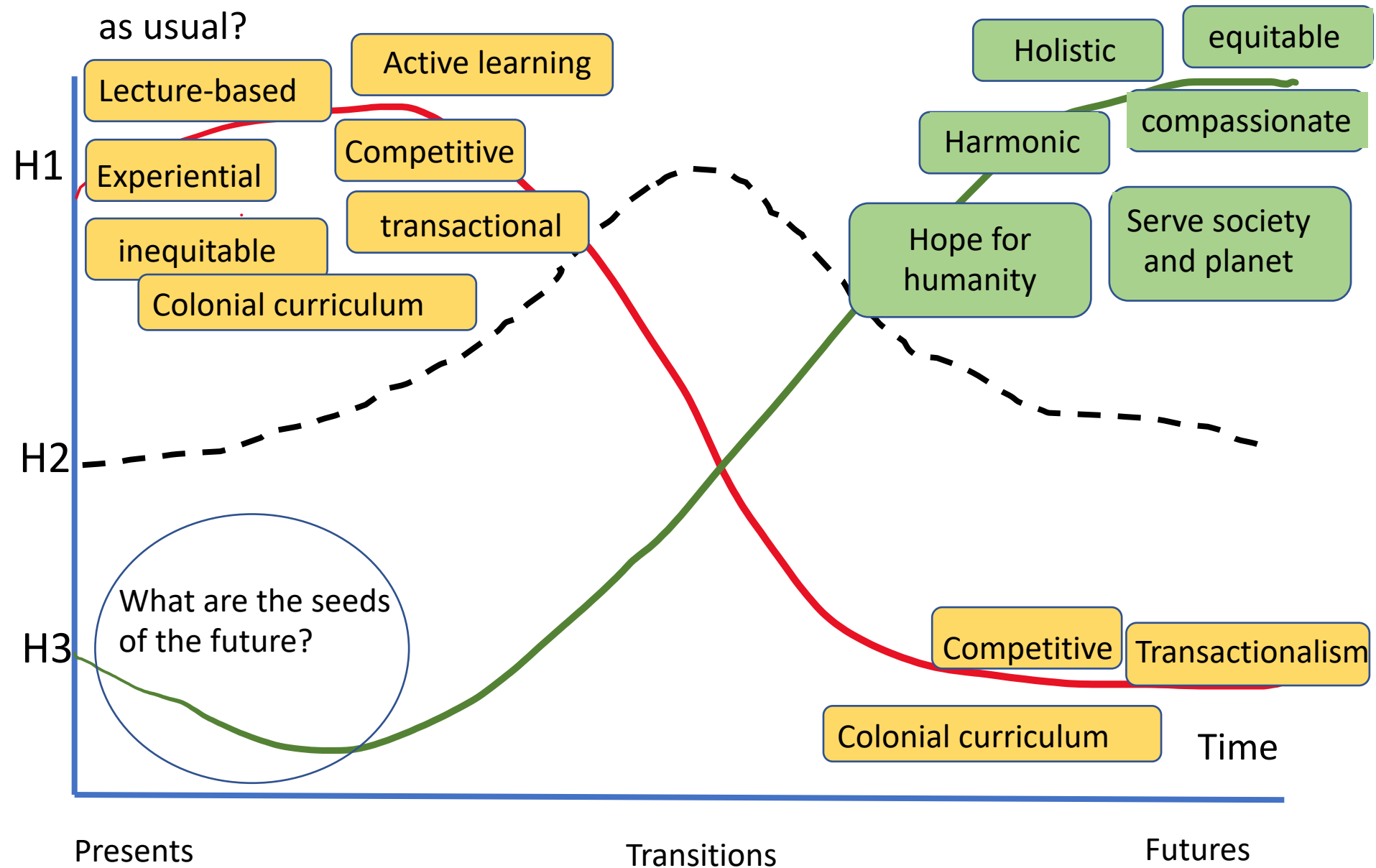
H3

What are the seeds of the future?

Presents

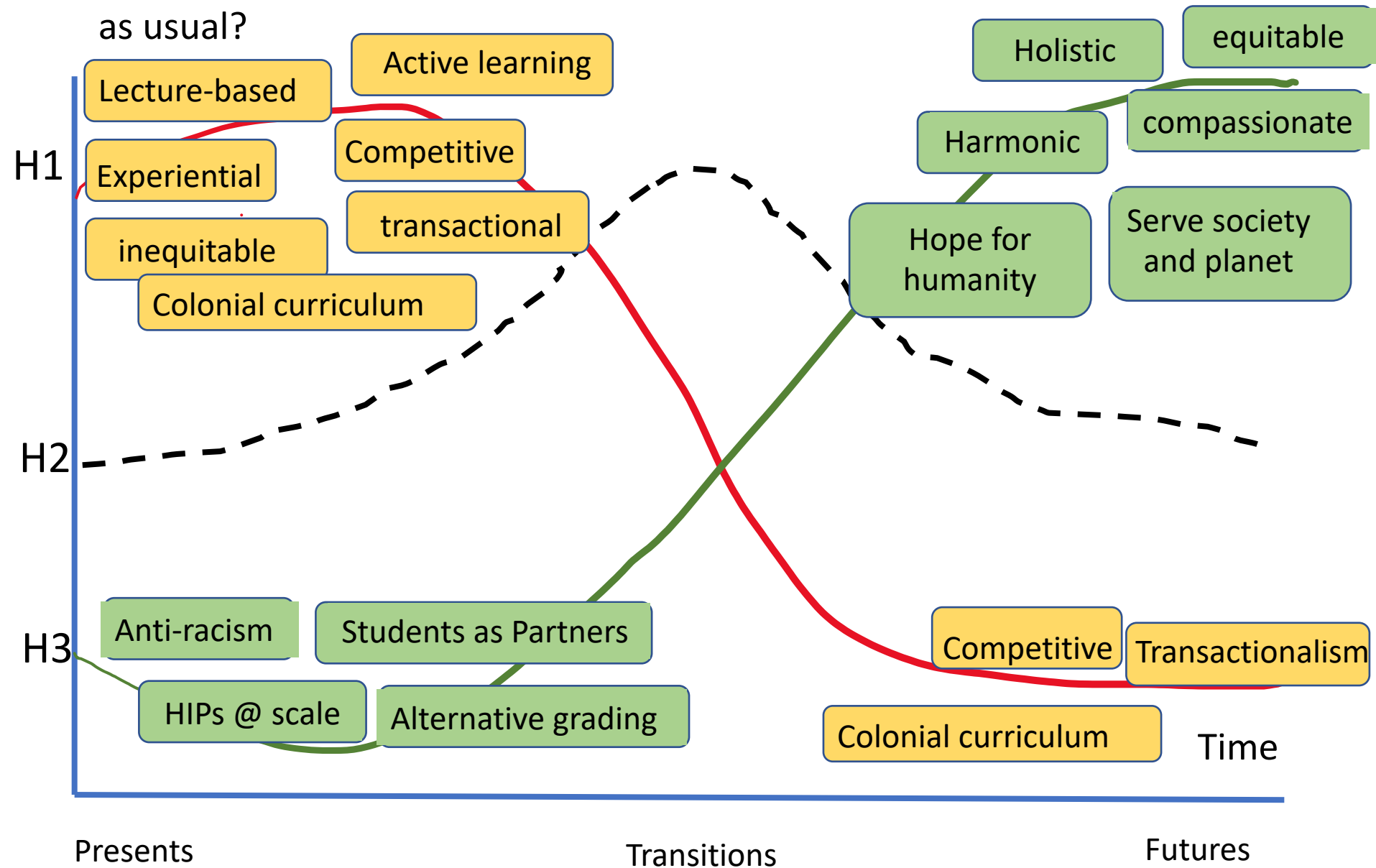
Transitions

Futures



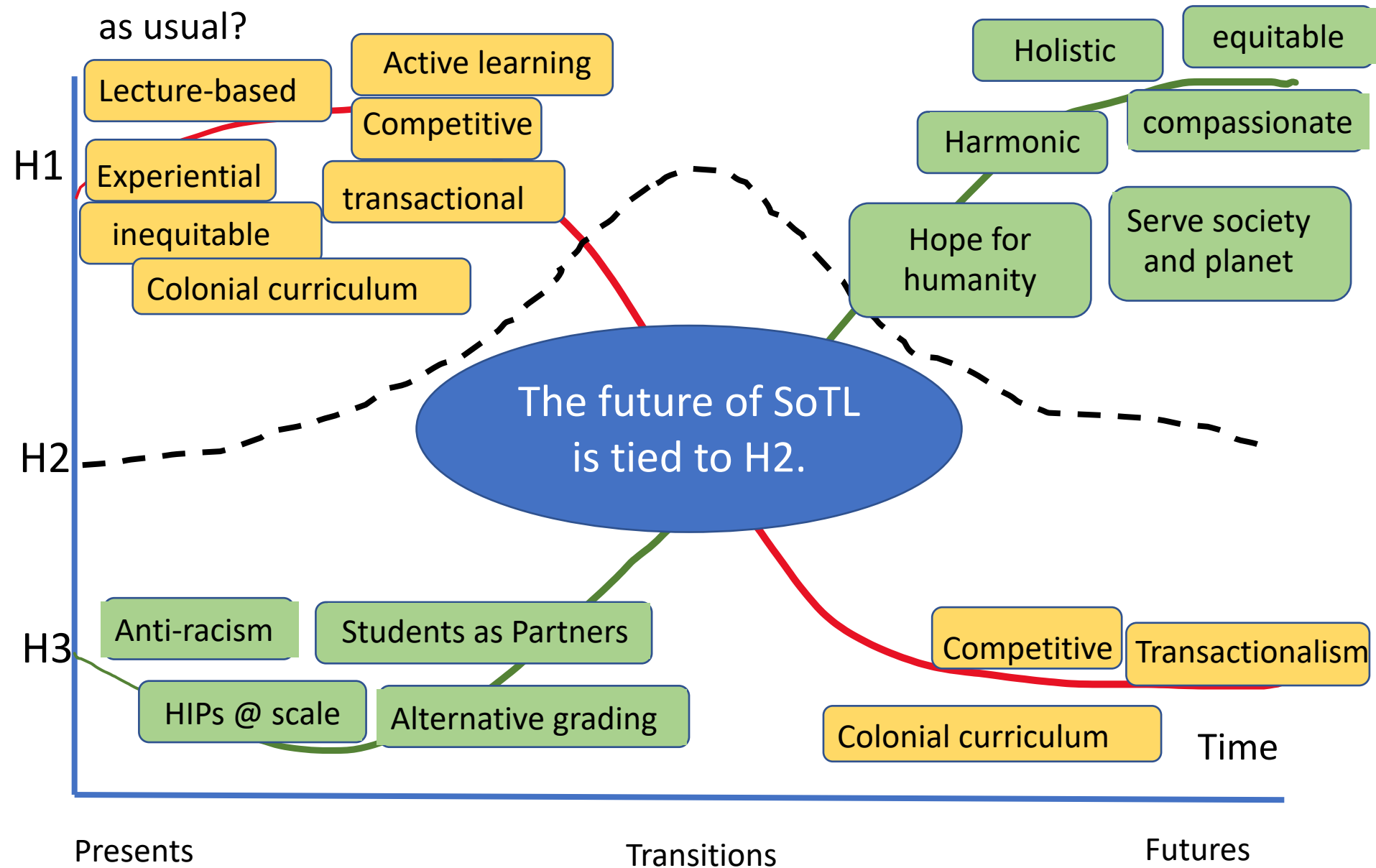
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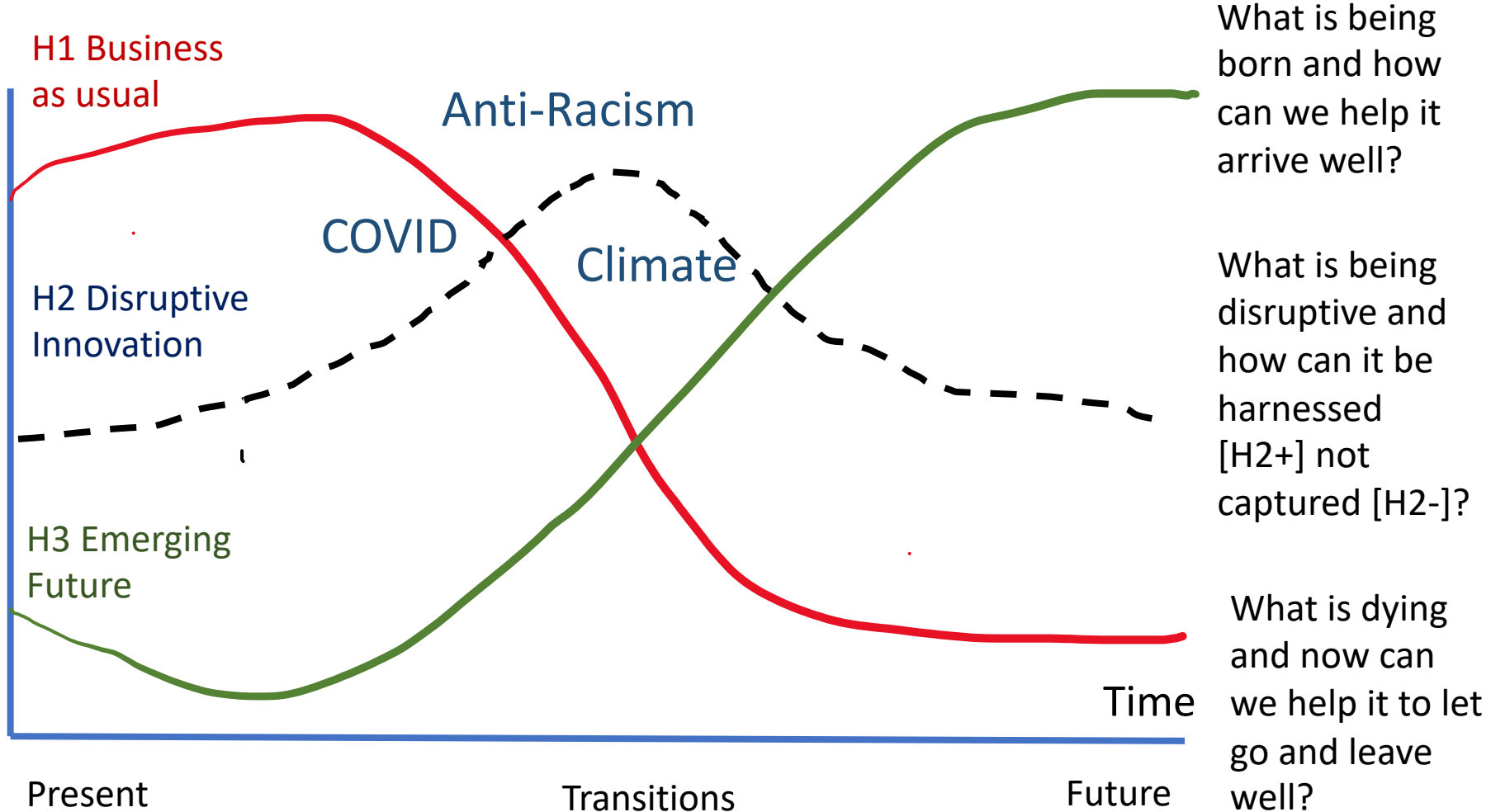
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THREE HORIZONS THINKING

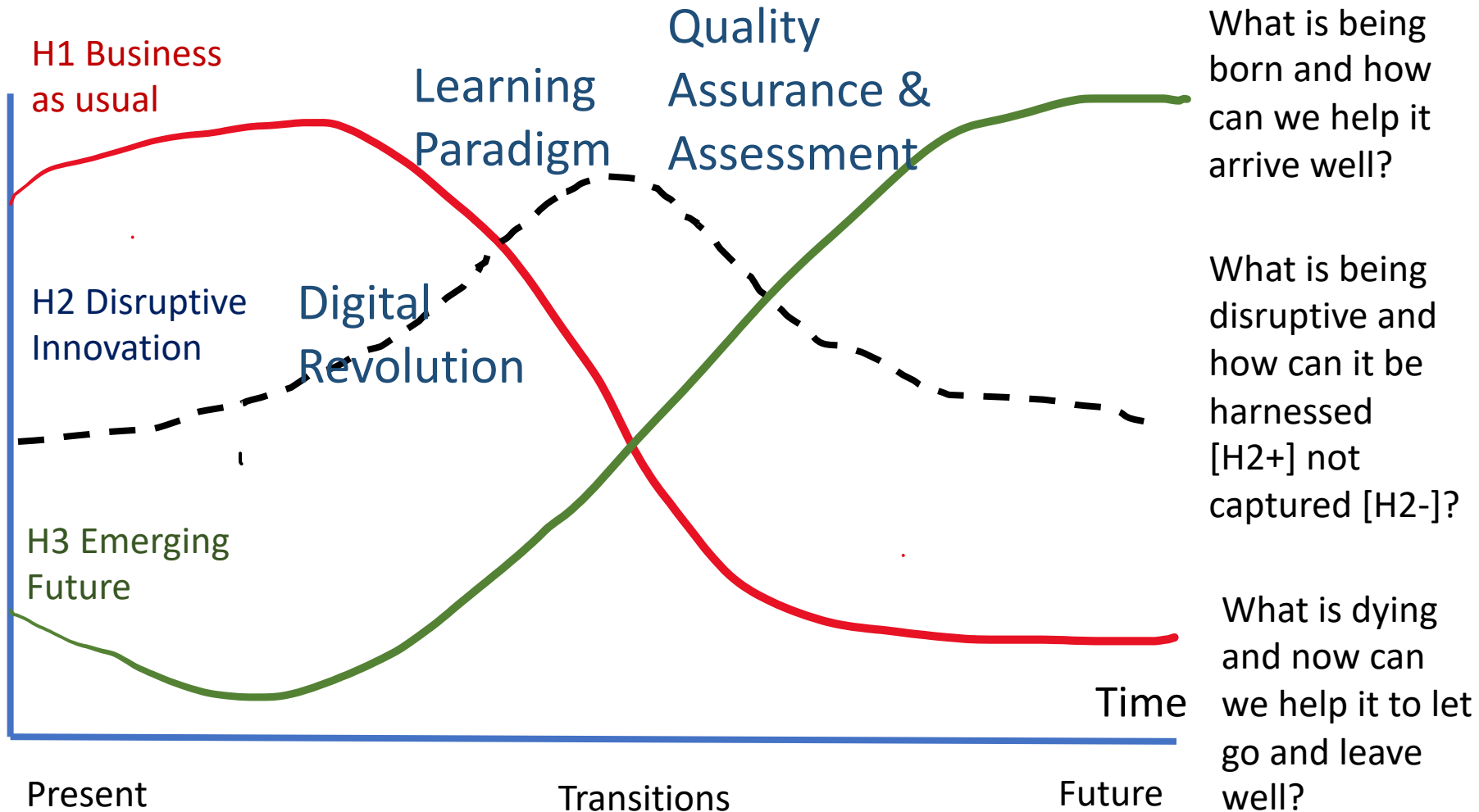
Pattern



BILL SHARPE, INTERNATIONAL FUTURES

Pattern

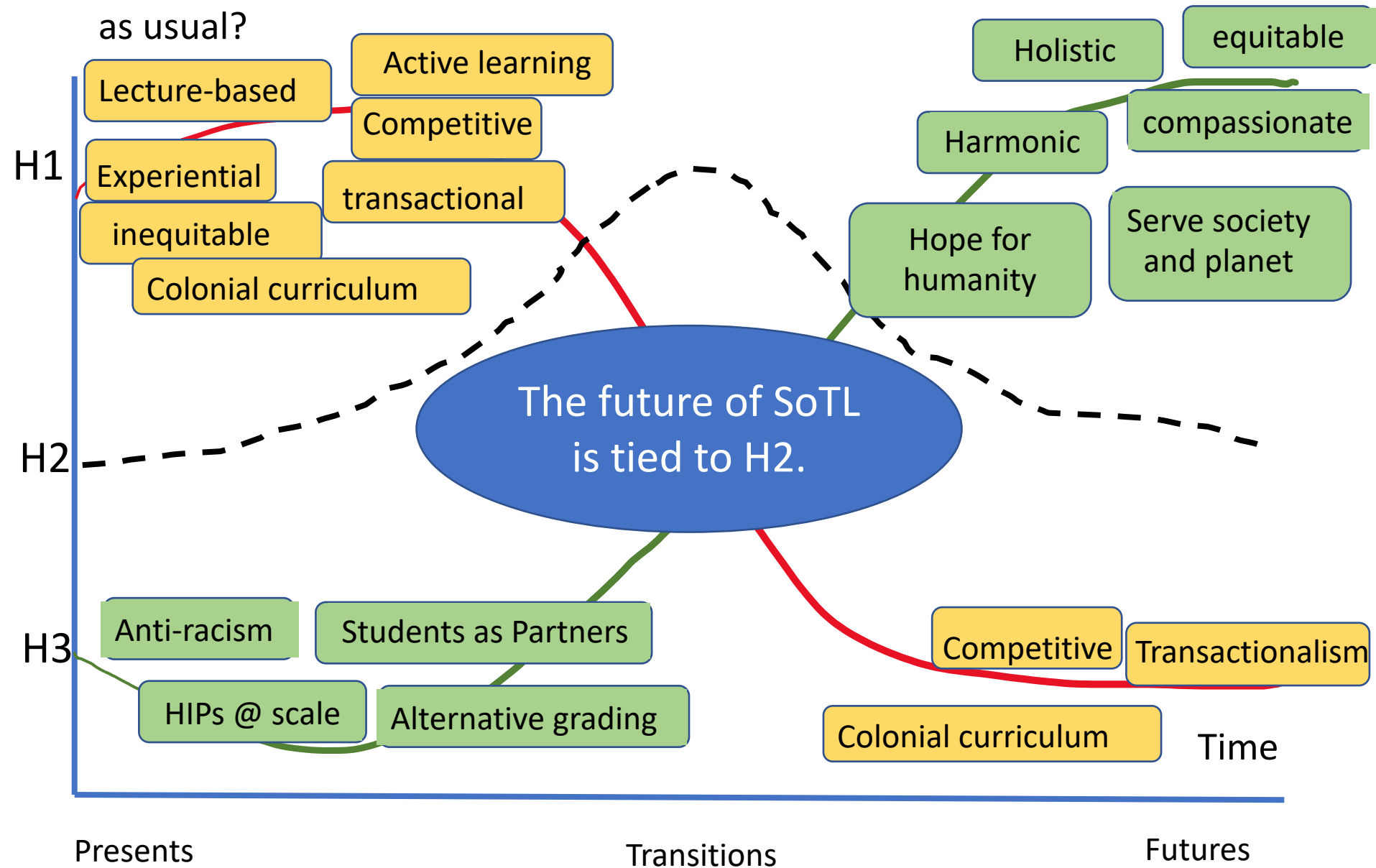
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BILL SHARPE, INTERNATIONAL FUTURES

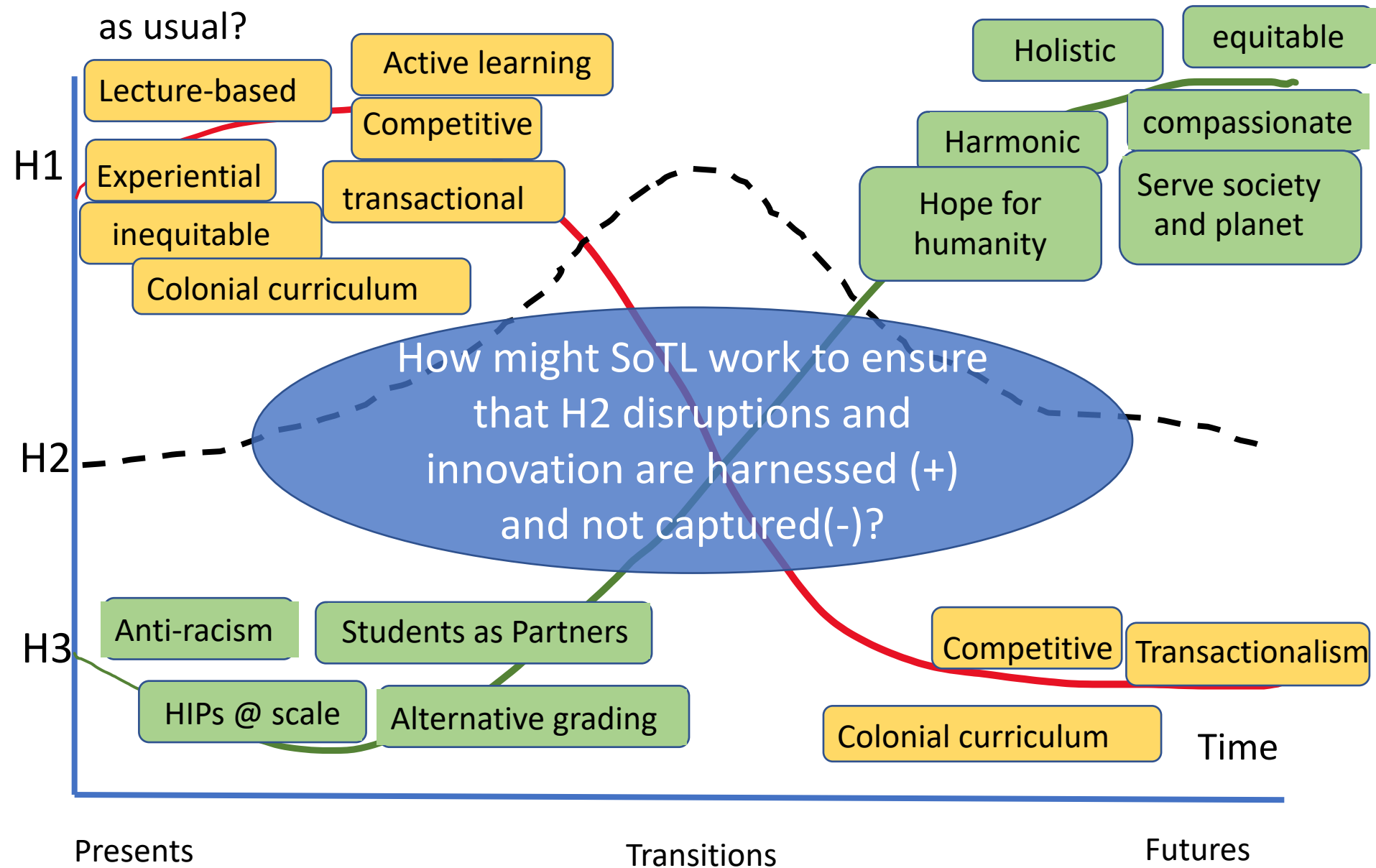
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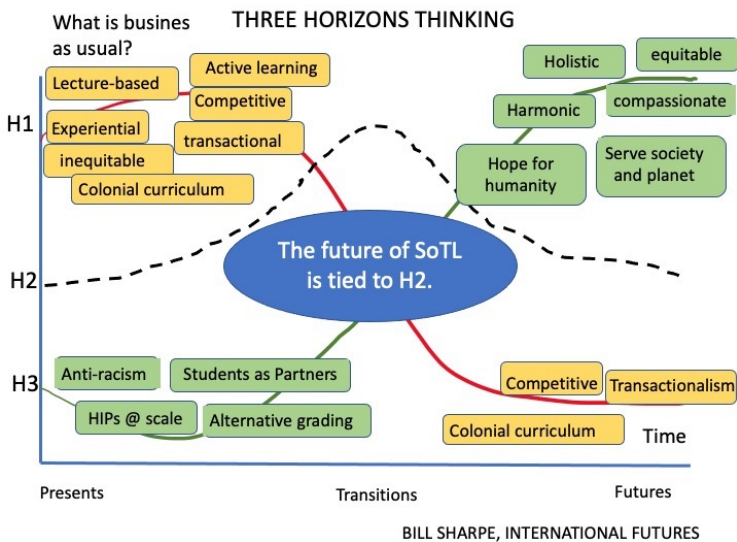
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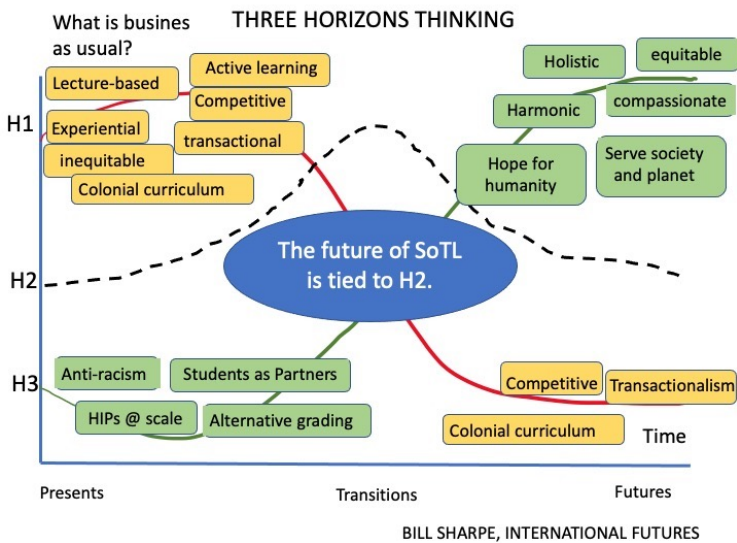


What might this look like?

What are you already doing that is doing this work?

Two Georgetown Examples

- 1) A new degree in Environment and Sustainability that fully integrates inner transformation (“Ecological Belonging”) and outer change (“Environmental Changemaking”).
- 2) A new project on grading and feedback literacy, but taken on in the context of “assessment” and “humanization / dehumanization.”



What might this look like?

What are you already doing that is doing this work?

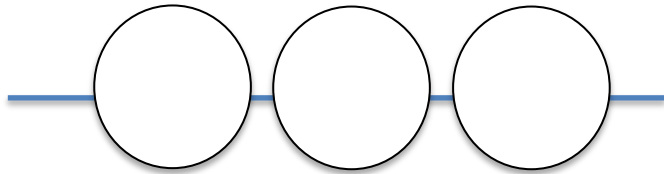
Two Fundamental Questions

Does the situation of education ask us to distinguish "soft reform" from "radical reform"?

Are we simply fulfilling the vision of the learning paradigm? Or...Is there something beyond the "Learning Paradigm"?

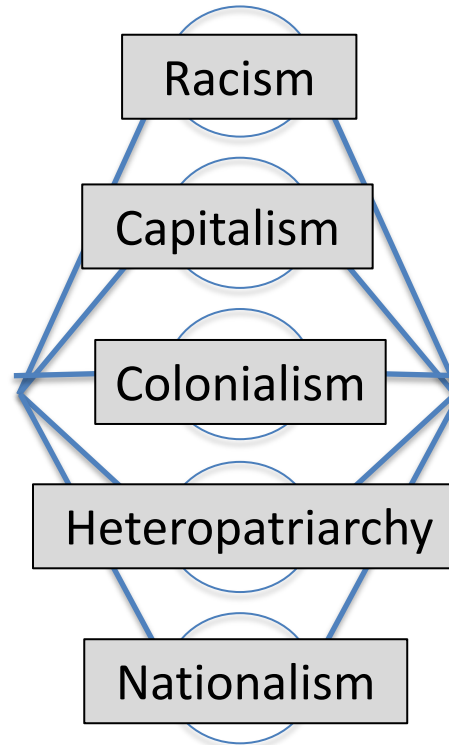
Soft-reform Space

The system is fine. It just needs to be optimized.



Radical-reform Space

The system is rigged. If we want real transformation we have to change the rules.



Beyond-reform Space

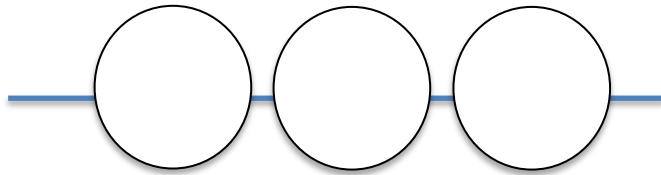
Conditions of modernity are unfixable.

The systems contains the seeds of its own failing.

Move modernity to palliative care.

Soft-reform Space

The system is fine. It just needs to be optimized.



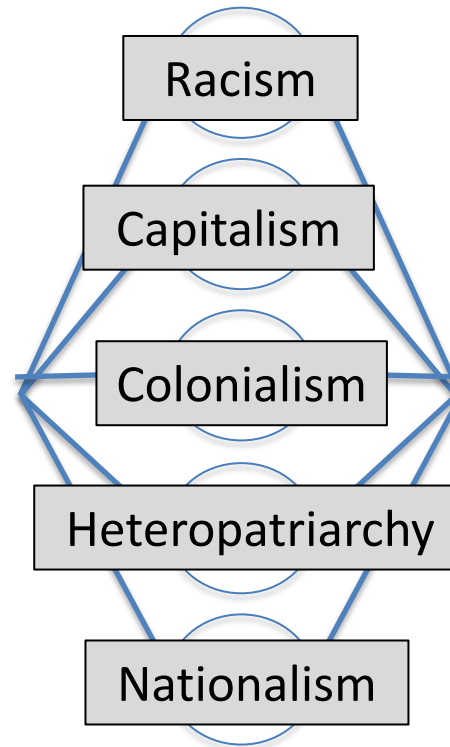
The difference between soft reform and radical reform:

Soft reform tries to improve the system without explicitly questioning assumptions.

Radical reform steps back to ask basic questions about values that inform structures. Radical reform suggests that change only comes with shifts in power, hierarchy, and roles.

Radical-reform Space

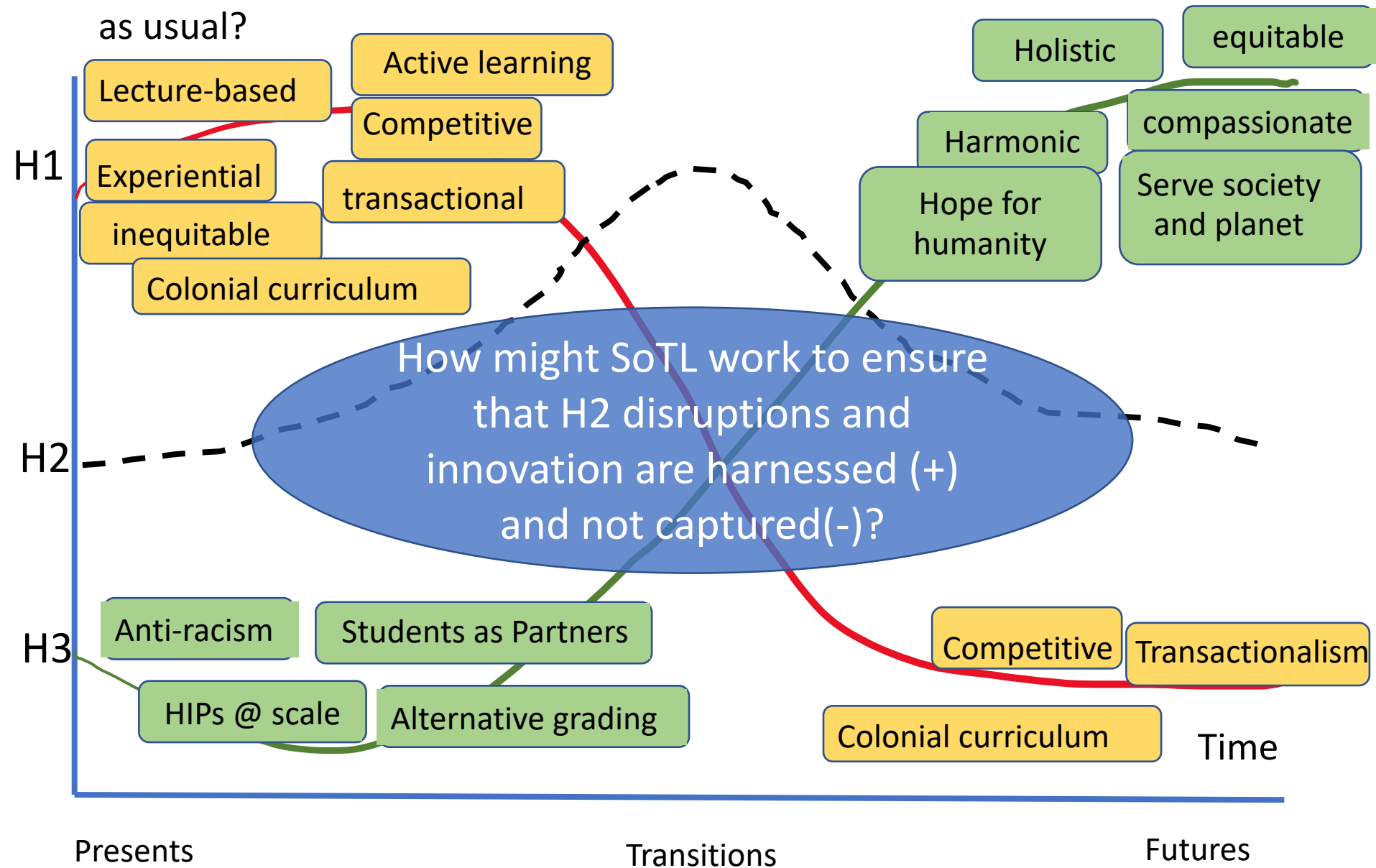
The system is rigged. If we want real transformation we have to change the rules.



Anything that reduces harm or amplifies the voices of the marginalized, or redistributes resources is worth doing.

THREE HORIZONS THINKING

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1995

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Instruction Paradigm

- Provide/deliver Instruction
- Transfer knowledge from faculty
- Offer courses and programs
- Achieve access for diverse students
- Faculty are primarily lecturers

Learning Paradigm

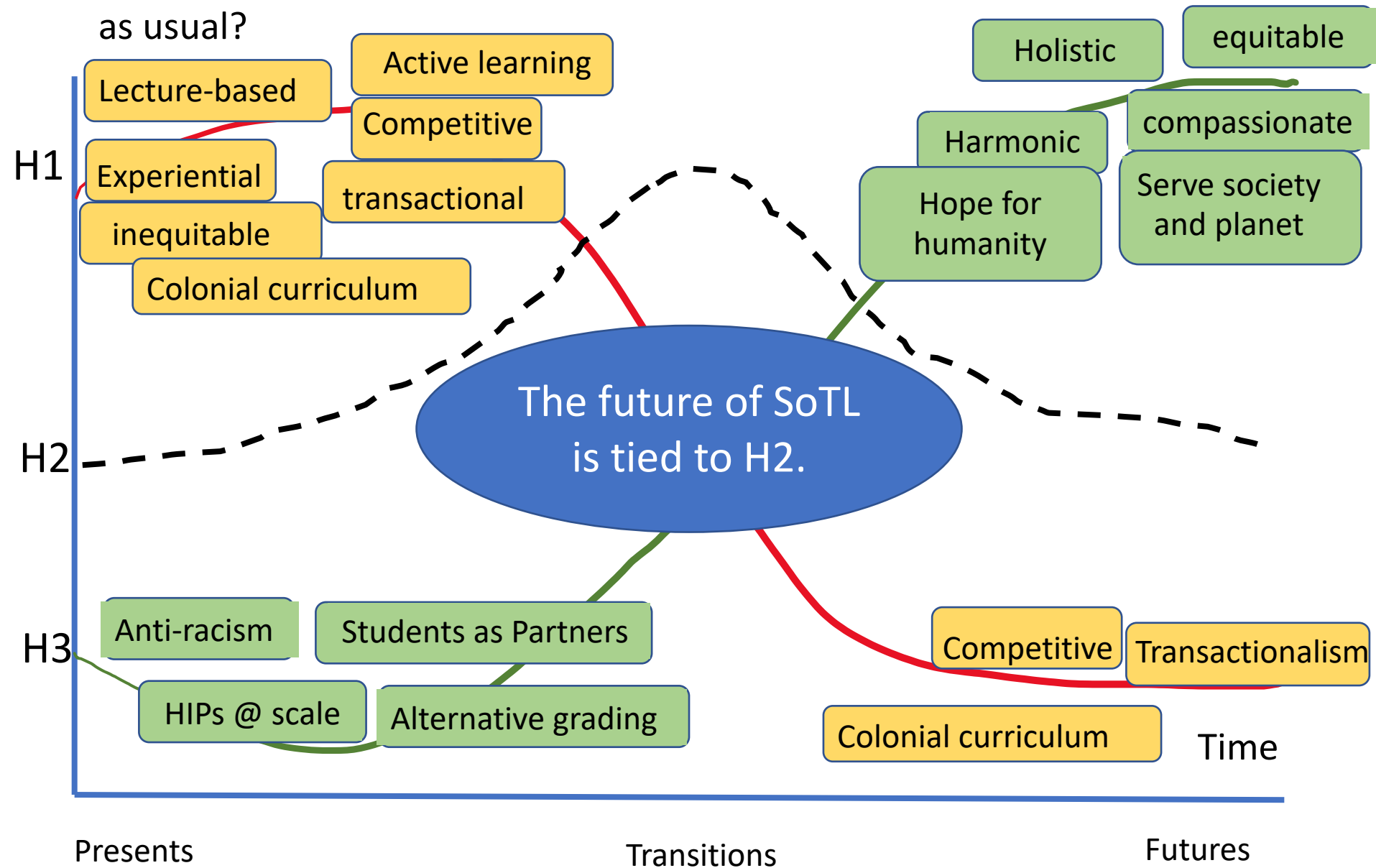
- Produce learning
- Elicit student discovery
- Create learning environments
- Achieve success for diverse students
- Faculty are primarily designers

Beyond the Learning Paradigm

- Support transformative education
- Develop change agents
- Build partnerships with community for impact
- Help redistribute power and privilege
- Faculty and students are partners, co-designers

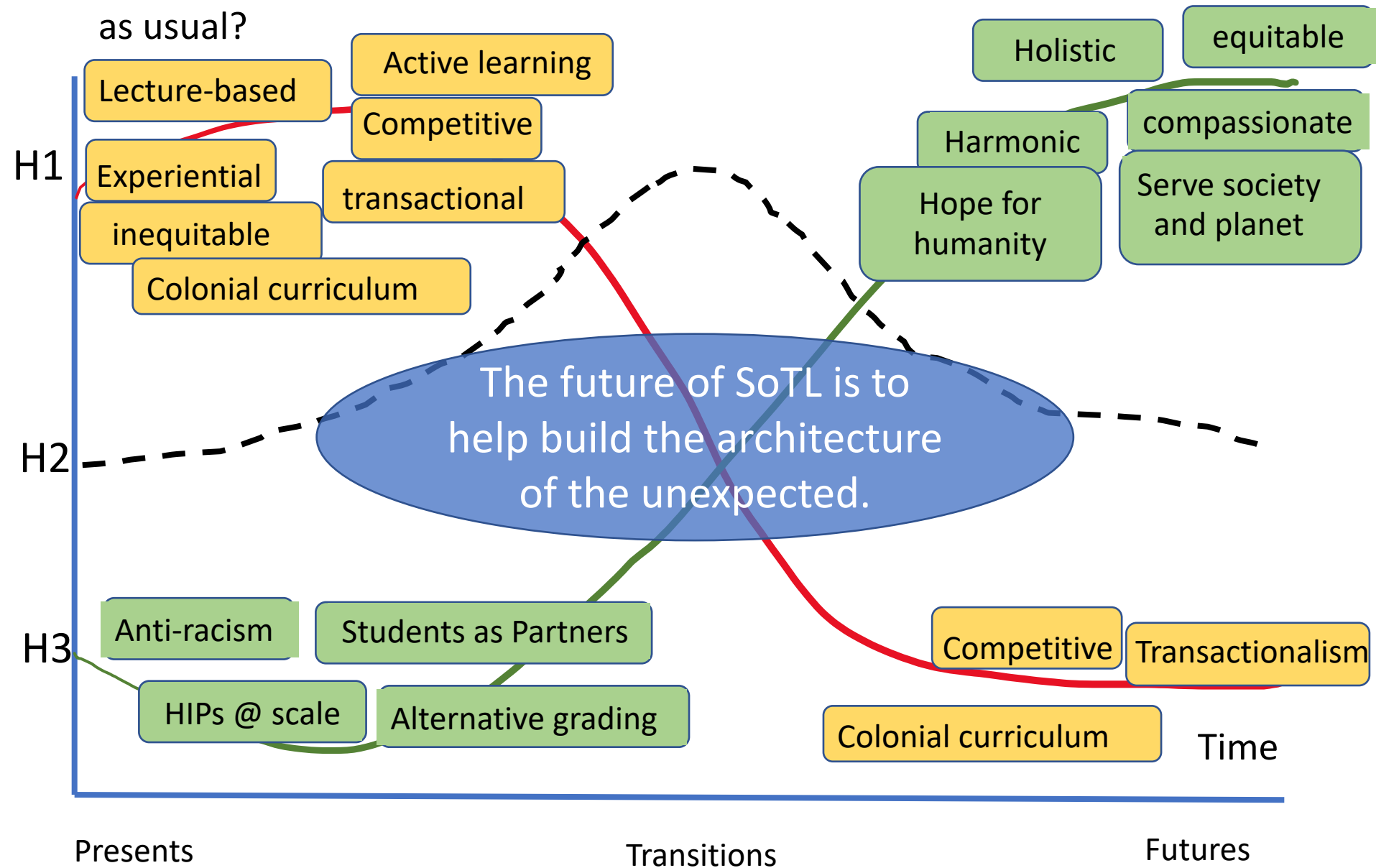
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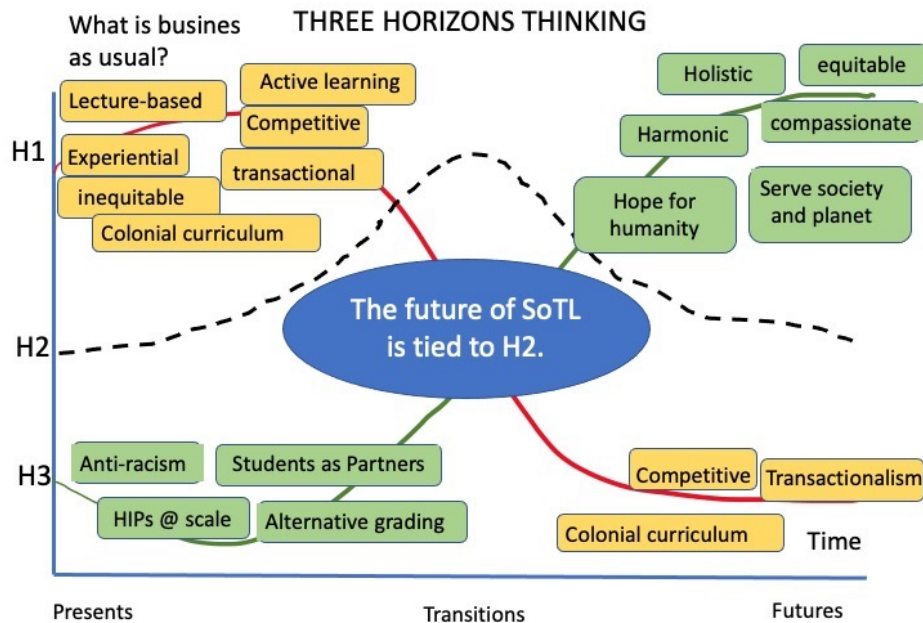
To Sum UP:

The future of higher education, the very survival of your institutions, and potentially **the future of humanity**, largely pivots on what you will be doing over the next couple of days.

Thank You for Your Attention and the Work that You DO!

Comments, Questions and Follow up Welcome!

bassr@georgetown.edu



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