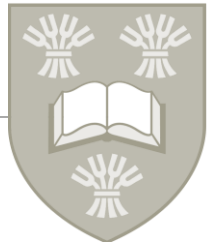# What can Students Contribute to Assessment and Improvement of Teaching Quality?
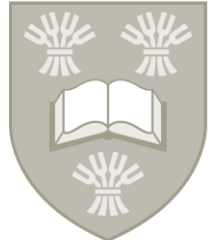
Dr. Nancy Turner
Director, Teaching and Learning Enhancement
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

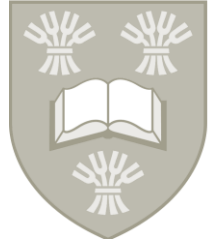**Treaty Six Territory and the traditional Homeland of the Métis**

USask's Journey

- ⏱ Context – the journey begins
- 🎖 Defining Teaching Quality
- ⚖ Development of Principles
- ☰ Instrument and System selection
- 🔄 Pilot and Implement
- 📖 Policy Development
- ✔ Informed Use
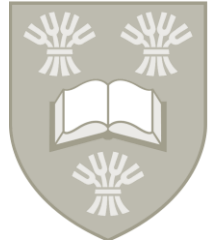
Context

Medical/Doctoral
Research Intensive (U15)

~21,000
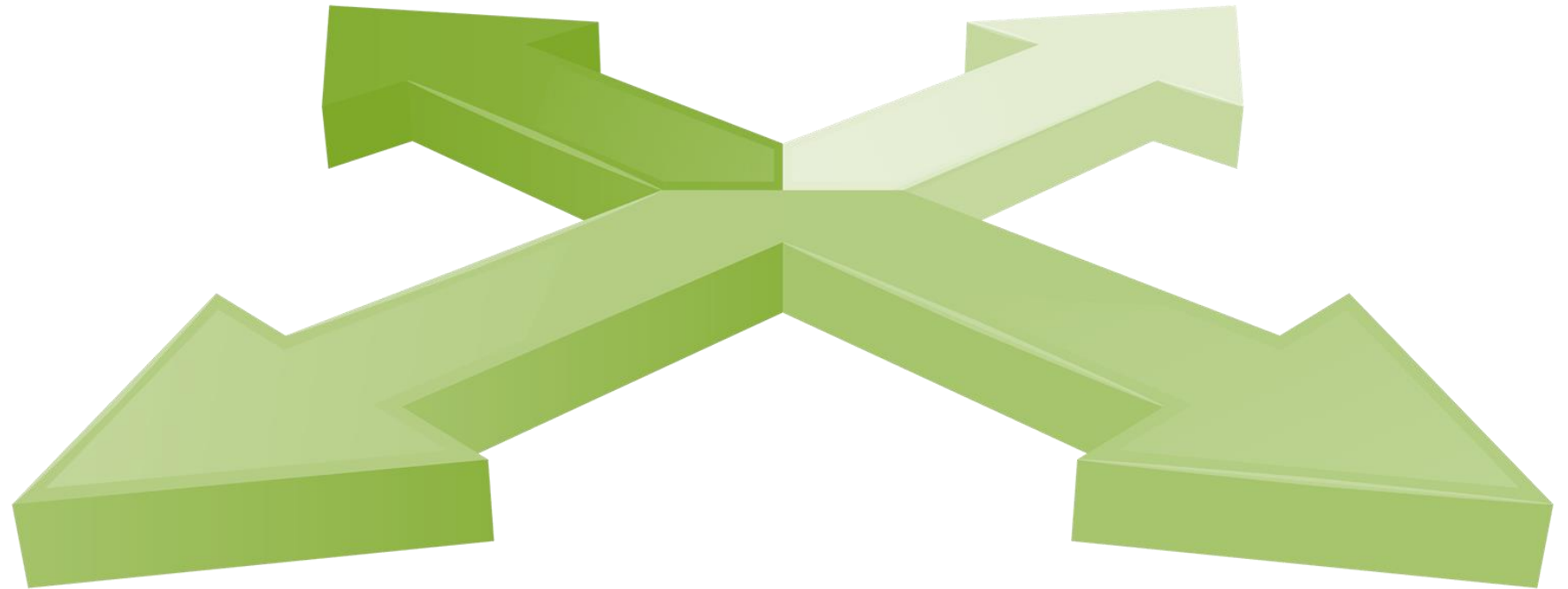Undergraduate students

~4,400
Graduate Students

Teaching Quality

Teaching Quality

2015: Student Evaluations of Teaching

- Multiple SET instruments used; one centrally supported, <50% use

- Over reliance on SETs for teaching related performance decisions

- SETs not used widely for teaching quality enhancement

- Contestation regarding student voice in performance decisions:
  - Bias in SETs
  - What students are positioned to tell us about teaching quality
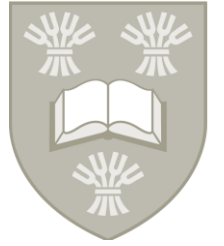 - Relevance of SET instrument across varied contexts

Poll questions
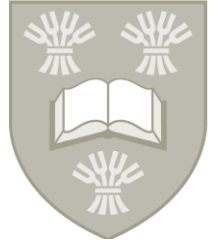
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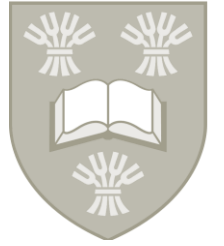 - Relevance of SET instrument across varied contexts

Timeline

1. Teaching Quality

How is teaching quality conceptualized at our institution?

Teaching Quality

Develop Principles

Instrument & System

Pilot & Implement
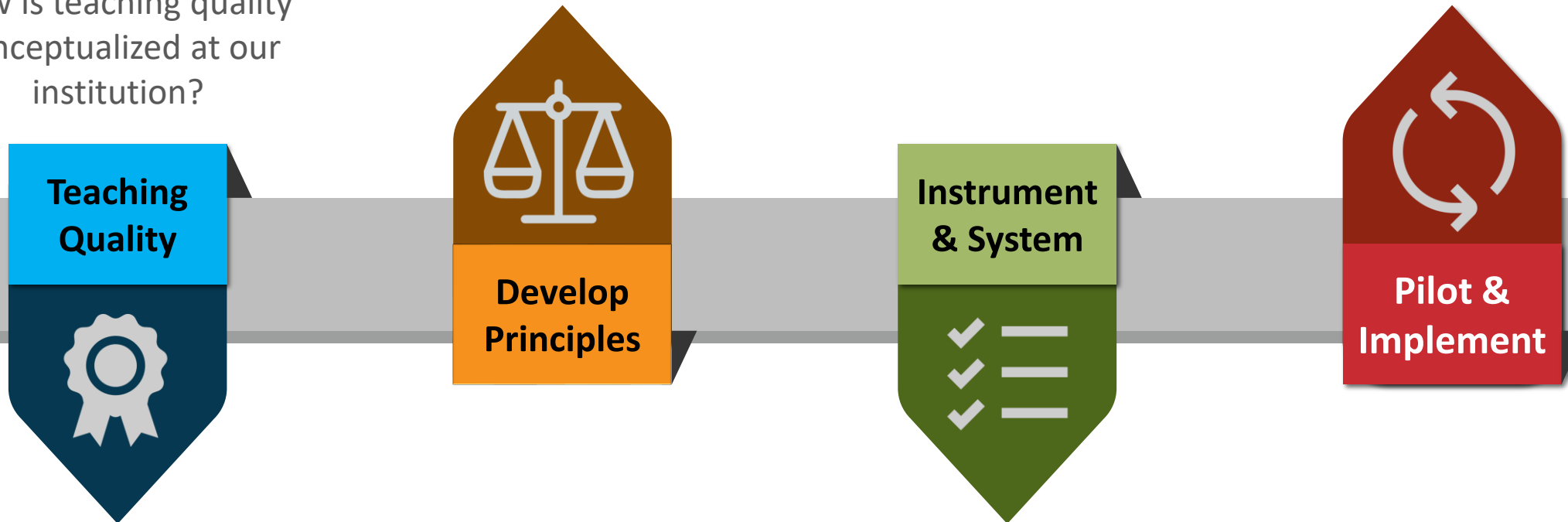
Teaching Quality

How do we understand and describe teaching quality at the U of S?

What might this mean for us as we develop, evidence and assess teaching quality?

2015/16: Teaching Quality

Collect documentation that describes teaching quality

Analyze content thematically re: how we conceptualize teaching quality

Gather and review peer comparison institutions' practices

Consult with internal stakeholders, develop Framework
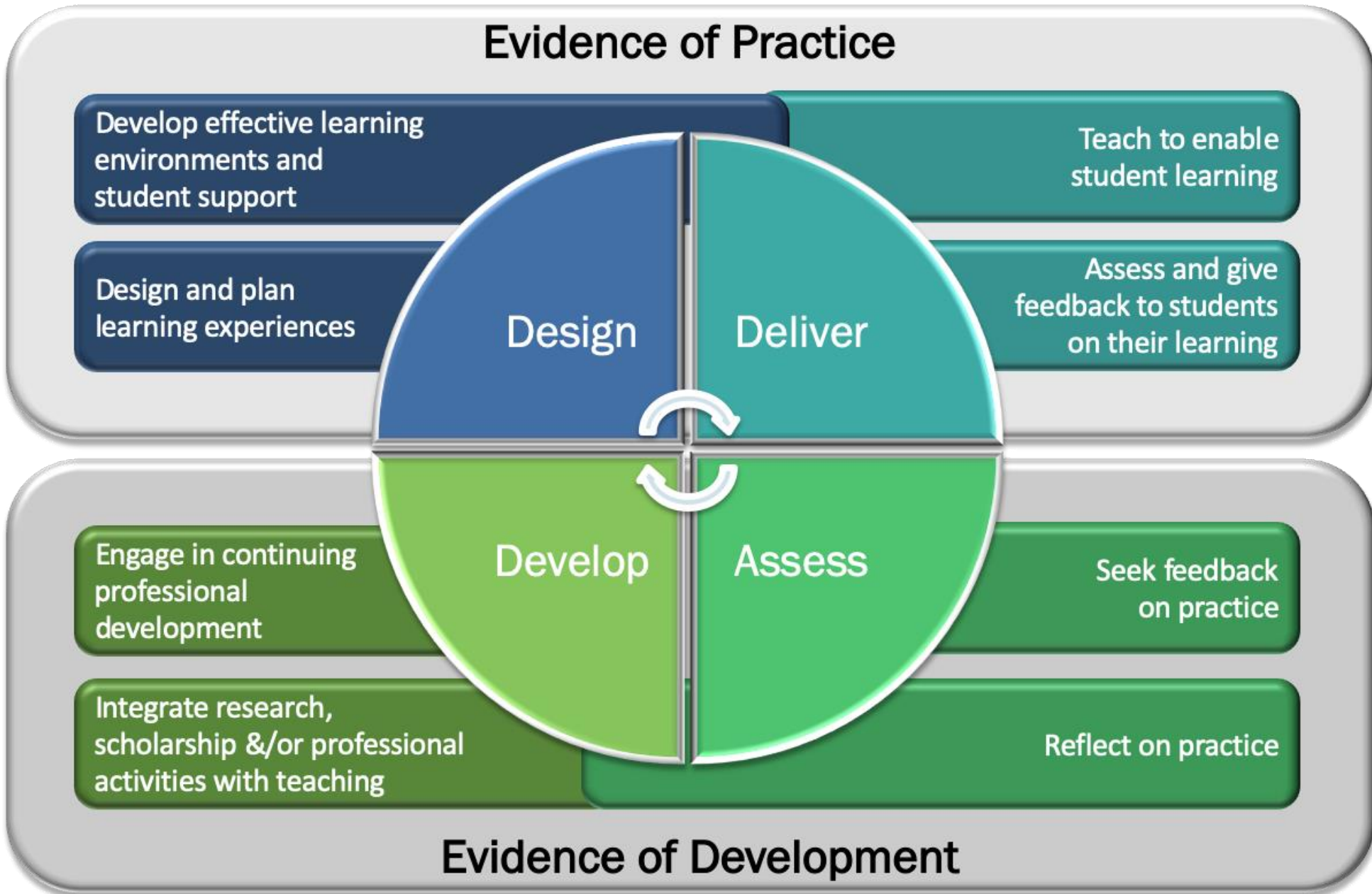
Map to evidence we currently use to document teaching quality

Aimed to collaboratively develop a teaching quality framework that could be used as a common point of reference for processes that relate to quality teaching across the institution.

Teaching Quality Framework

University of Saskatchewan Teaching Quality Framework

Evidence of Practice

Develop effective learning environments and student support

Design and plan learning experiences

Teach to enable student learning

Assess and give feedback to students on their learning

Design

Deliver

Develop

Assess

Evidence of Development

Engage in continuing professional development

Integrate research, scholarship &/or professional activities with teaching

Seek feedback on practice

Reflect on practice

Timeline

1. Teaching Quality

How is teaching quality conceptualized at our institution?

Teaching Quality
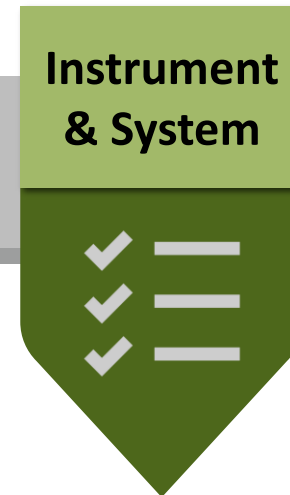
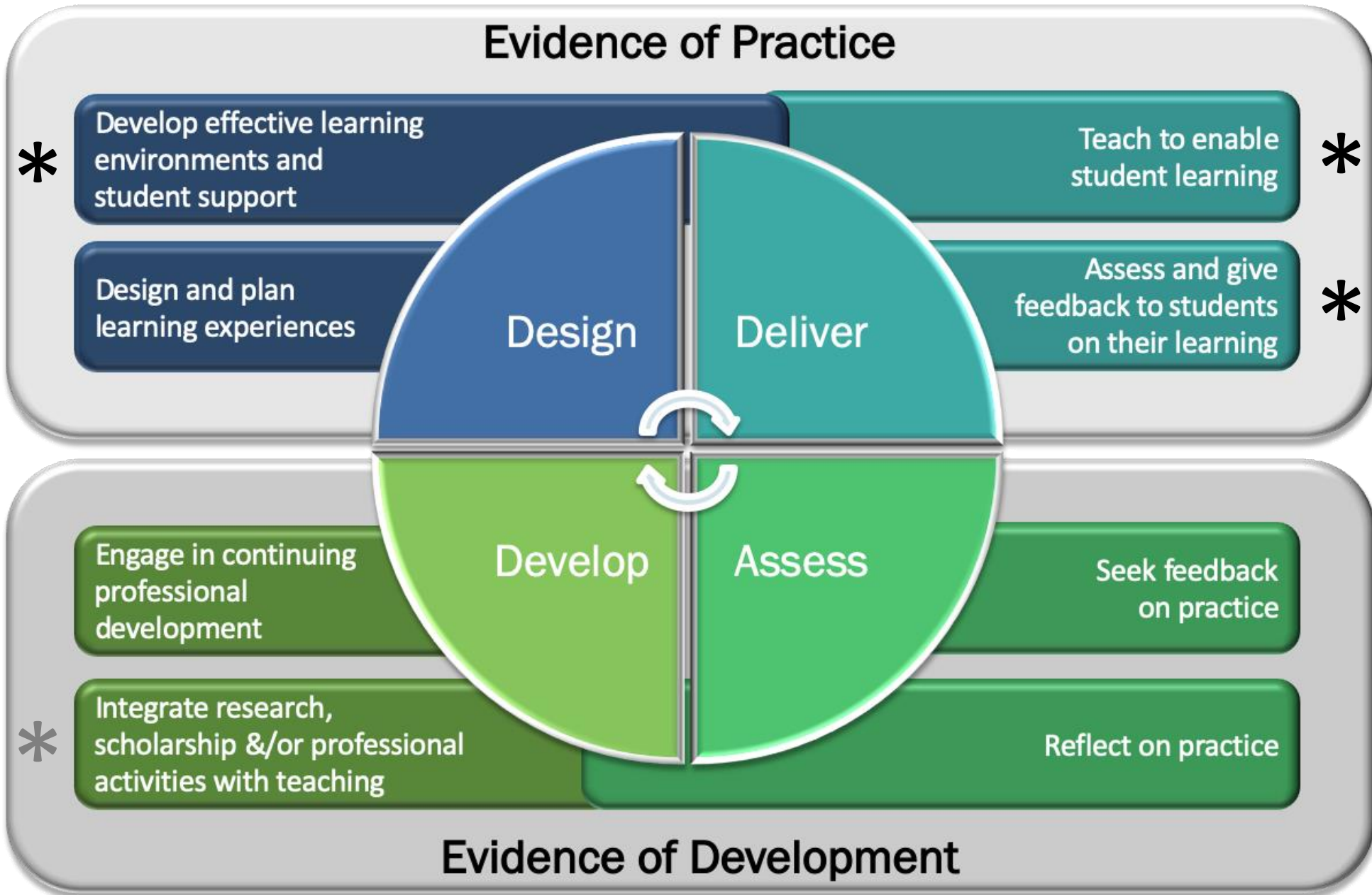**Develop Principles**

Instrument & System

Pilot & Implement

Timeline

1. Teaching Quality

- Reviewed policies, plans, process
- Developed Teaching Quality Framework

Teaching Quality

Develop Principles

Instrument & System

Pilot & Implement

University of Saskatchewan Teaching Quality Framework

Timeline

1. Teaching Quality

- Reviewed policies, plans, process
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Teaching Quality

Develop Principles

Instrument & System

Pilot & Implement

2. Develop Principles

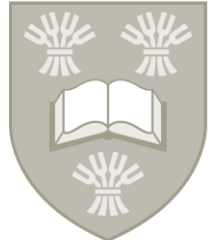What principles for an instrument & system fit good practice & our framework?
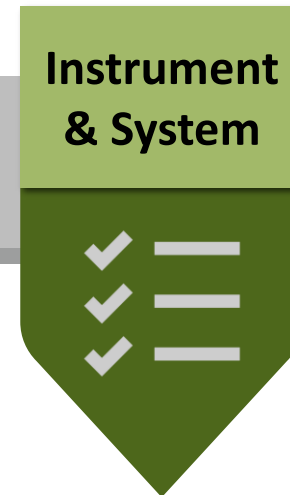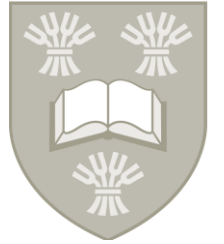
2016/17: Principles

- reflect institutional, college and departmental priorities in teaching and learning;

- be valid and reliable in our institutional context;

- ask students questions that they are well positioned to answer;

- be useful in informing enhancement of teaching quality; and

- be appropriate for use as one element within collegial teaching quality processes.

Instrument Parameters

Experience focused

Limits bias

Evidence of Validity

Flexible configuration

Modular structure

Customizable

Enables student contextualization

Instrument would focus on gathering input from students about their

Instrument validated in one or more other contexts with access to validation process and outcomes

Instrument includes:
- •Institutional and college/department items
- •Items for different teaching methods/contexts (e.g. experiential, online)
- •Instructor added items
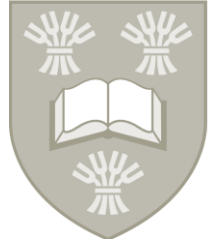
System Parameters

Easy to use

Clear and customizable reports

Facilitates formative feedback

Process efficiency

Mobile compatible

Access to aggregate data

- •Report includes contextual information about the course (e.g., type and level)
- •Allows comparisons to similar courses
- •Allows trend reporting

Enables in class completion by students

- •Facilitate ongoing examination of instrument effectiveness and bias
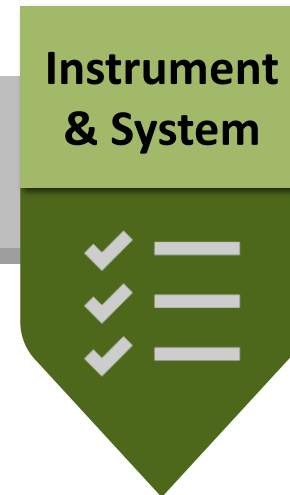- •Enable use in curriculum enhancement
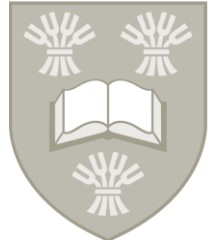
Timeline

1. Teaching Quality

- Reviewed policies, plans, process
- Developed Teaching Quality Framework

Teaching Quality

3. Instrument & System

What instrument & system will allow us to gather student perspectives and fit our principles?

Develop Principles

Instrument & System

Pilot & Implement

2. Develop Principles

Developed Principles for the instrument and system

2017/18: Instrument & System

- *What instrument and system will allow us to gather student perspectives and fit with our principles?*

- Assessed options against our principles

- Held campus site visits and gathered feedback from faculty, staff and students

- Working group selected an instrument and system to pilot

Timeline

1. Teaching Quality

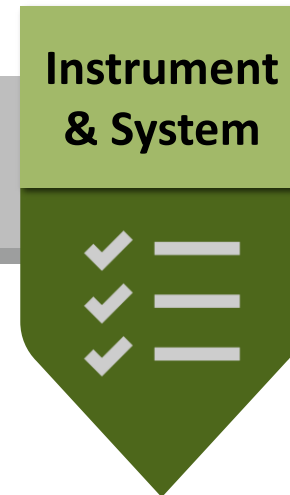- Reviewed policies, plans, process
- Developed Teaching Quality Framework

Teaching Quality

2. Develop Principles

Develop Principles

Developed Principles for the instrument and system

3. Instrument & System

Student Learning Experience Questionnaire (SLEQ)

Instrument & System

4. Pilot & Implement

Pilot & Implement

How does this system/instrument work in our context?

2017/18: Pilots

Pilots allowed for:
(1) testing of the system,
(2) development of an implementation process,
(3) conversations on purposes & value of student feedback and SLEQ,
(4) testing of the questionnaire & its fit in different contexts,
(5) refinement of the core items & development of college level items.

214 sections with considerable variability in 'type' and organization

Core items

➤ 6 closed & 3 open-ended questions
➤ Consistent across the Institution (with limited exceptions)

+ College, department items

➤ Selected or devised by college or department to reflect local context, need & priorities

+ Course specific items

➤ Sets of questions devised for particular teaching approaches (e.g., online, experiential, laboratory)

+ Instructor items

➤ Selected & seen only by instructor to elicit specific feedback

Timeline

1. Teaching Quality

- Reviewed policies, plans, process
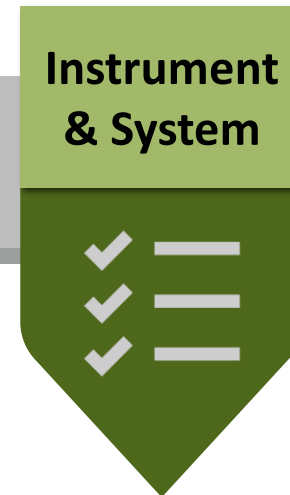- Developed Teaching Quality Framework

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Pilot & Implement

Tested & refined the system & instrument, discussed purposes, approved via academic governance processes

Timeline

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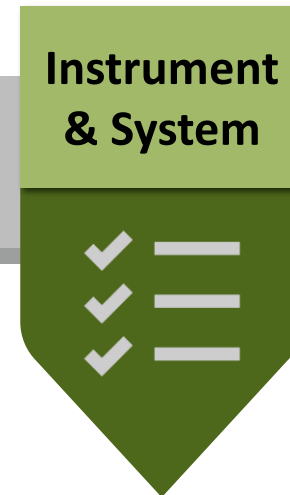- Developed Teaching Quality Framework

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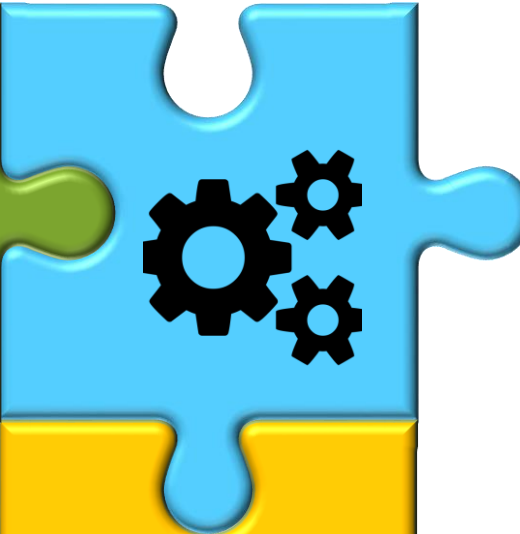Tested & refined the system & instrument, discussed purposes, approved via academic governance processes
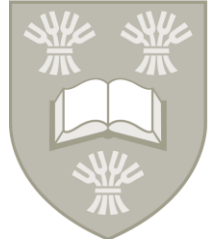
Effective overall implementation

Effective Instrument
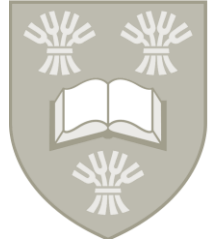
Efficient System
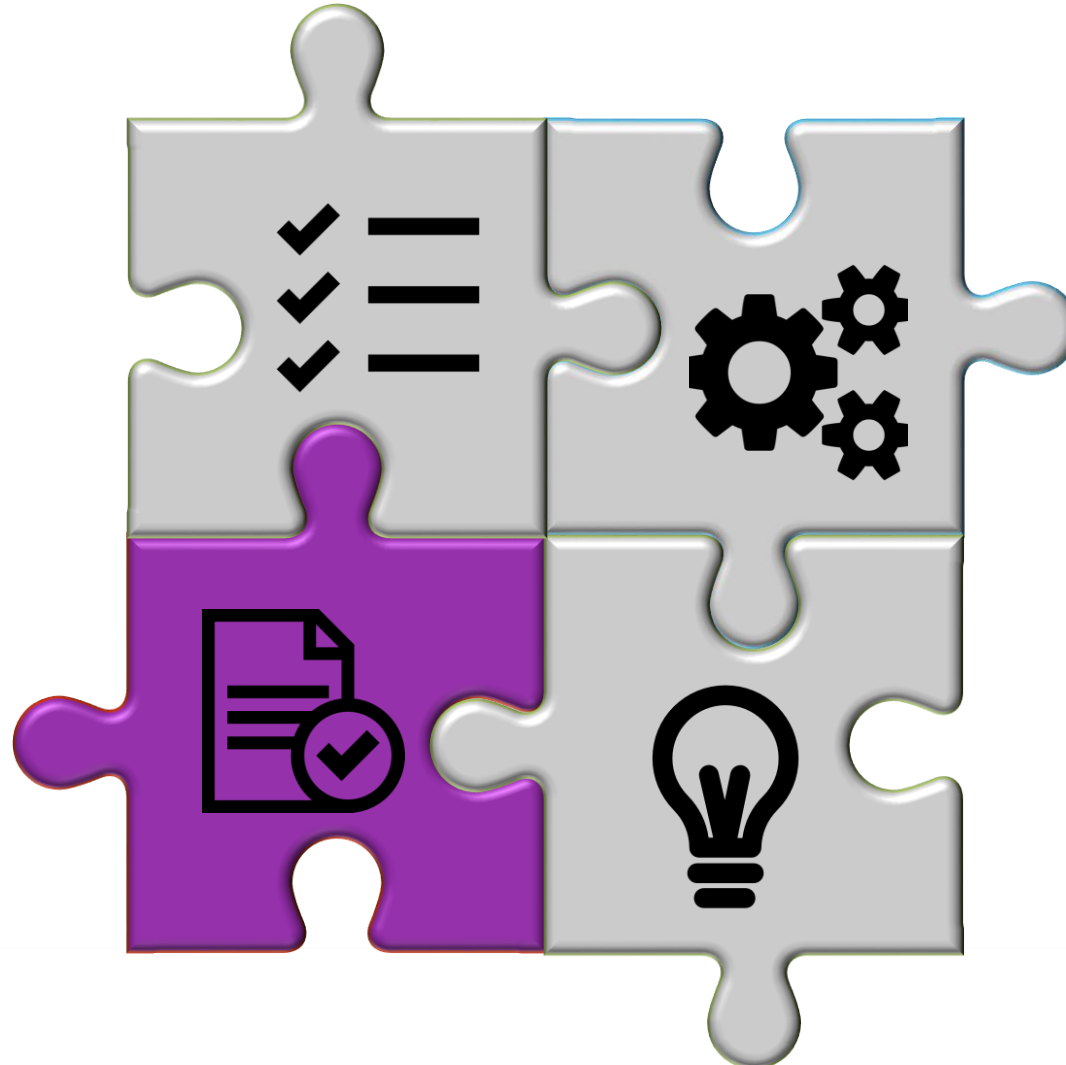
Robust Policy

Informed Use

Effective overall implementation

Effective Instrument

Robust Policy

Efficient System

Informed Use

Teaching quality landscape 2021

- Student learning experience feedback as one element of a portfolio of evidence of teaching quality, beyond just classroom practice

- Positioned for use in teaching quality enhancement at individual, course and program level

- Progressing implementation of centrally supported instrument across the institution

- Have gone some way in addressing concerns regarding use in performance related decisions
  - Students tell us about how their experience supported their learning
  - Cascaded structure allows for relevant and useful feedback in context

Keys to progress

- **Clarify aim at the outset**
- **Collaboratively develop principles**
- **Consult, Consult, Consult...**
- **Pilot, use to refine & make case**

USask's Journey

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- 📖 Policy Development
- ✓ Informed Use

Questions & Discussion