Recognizing, Validating, and Credentialing Prior Learning

Texas Success Center

Talent Strong Texas Pathways

Good Morning!

Dr. Nan L. Travers

Director, Center for Leadership
in Credentialing Learning,
SUNY Empire State College

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Today's Agenda
10:00 am – 1:30 pm

- Quick Questions – What are your key issues?
- Black Box
- Recognition/Misrecognition
- Lunch 11:45 – 12:15
- What Do We Cherish?
  - Assessment/Validation
  - Academic Integration
  - Credentialing

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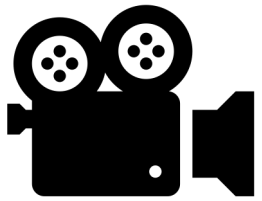

SNEAK PREVIEW

(coming in January 2024 to a Computer near you)

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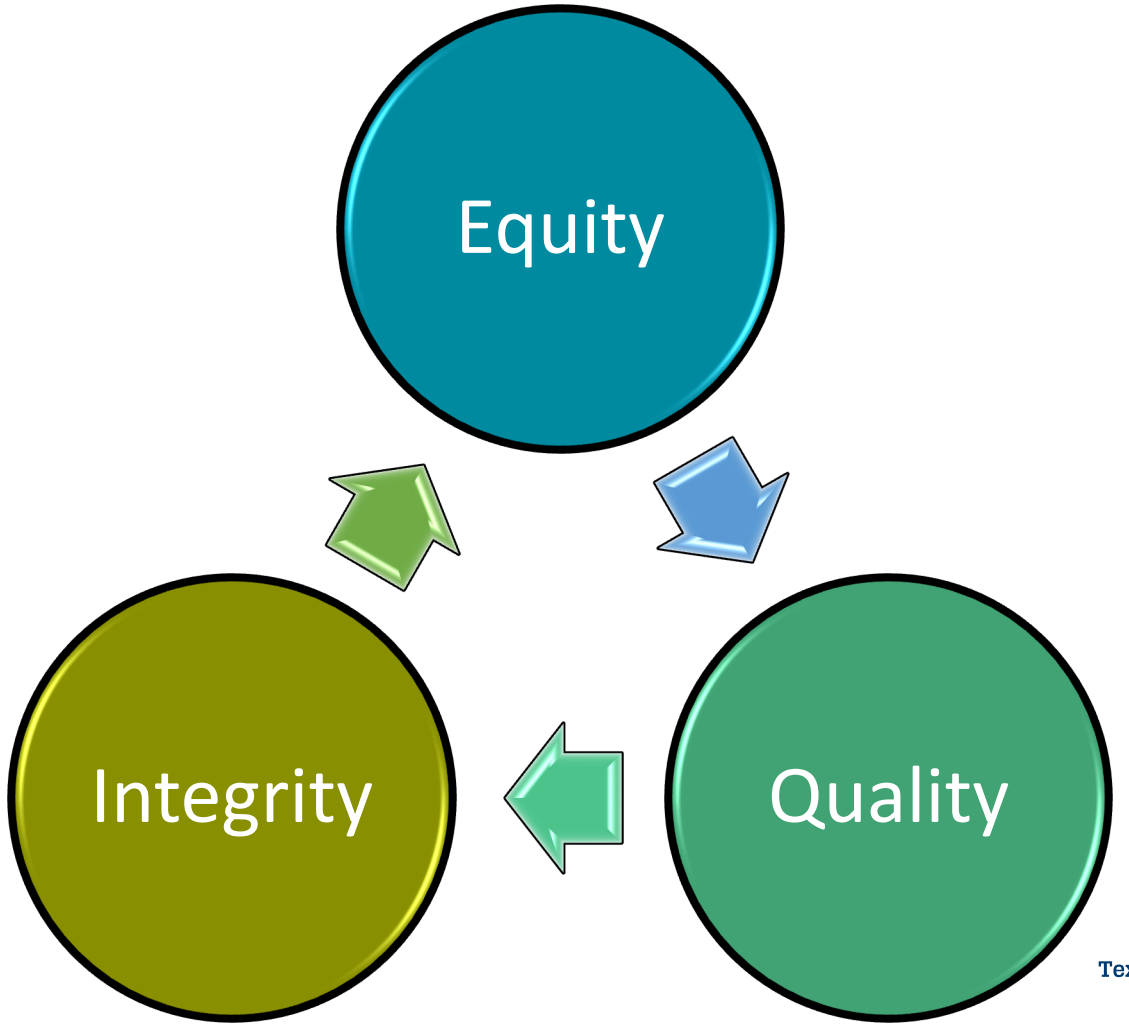
Prior Learning Assessment



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It is all in the name...

- Learning Recognition
  - Prior learning assessment (PLA)
  - Credit for prior learning (CPL)
  - Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR)
  - Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
  - Validation of prior learning (VPL)

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Key Components - Learning Recognition

Recognition

- What a person knows and can do
- Contextual

Validation

- Assess evidence of learning
- Snapshot of competencies

Credential

- Signal of completed competencies that are related

Recognition → Validation → Credential

PLA Provides Students Opportunities

- Earn college credit for learning outside of the classroom.
- Complete degrees sooner at a lower cost.
- Recognizes students for what they know.

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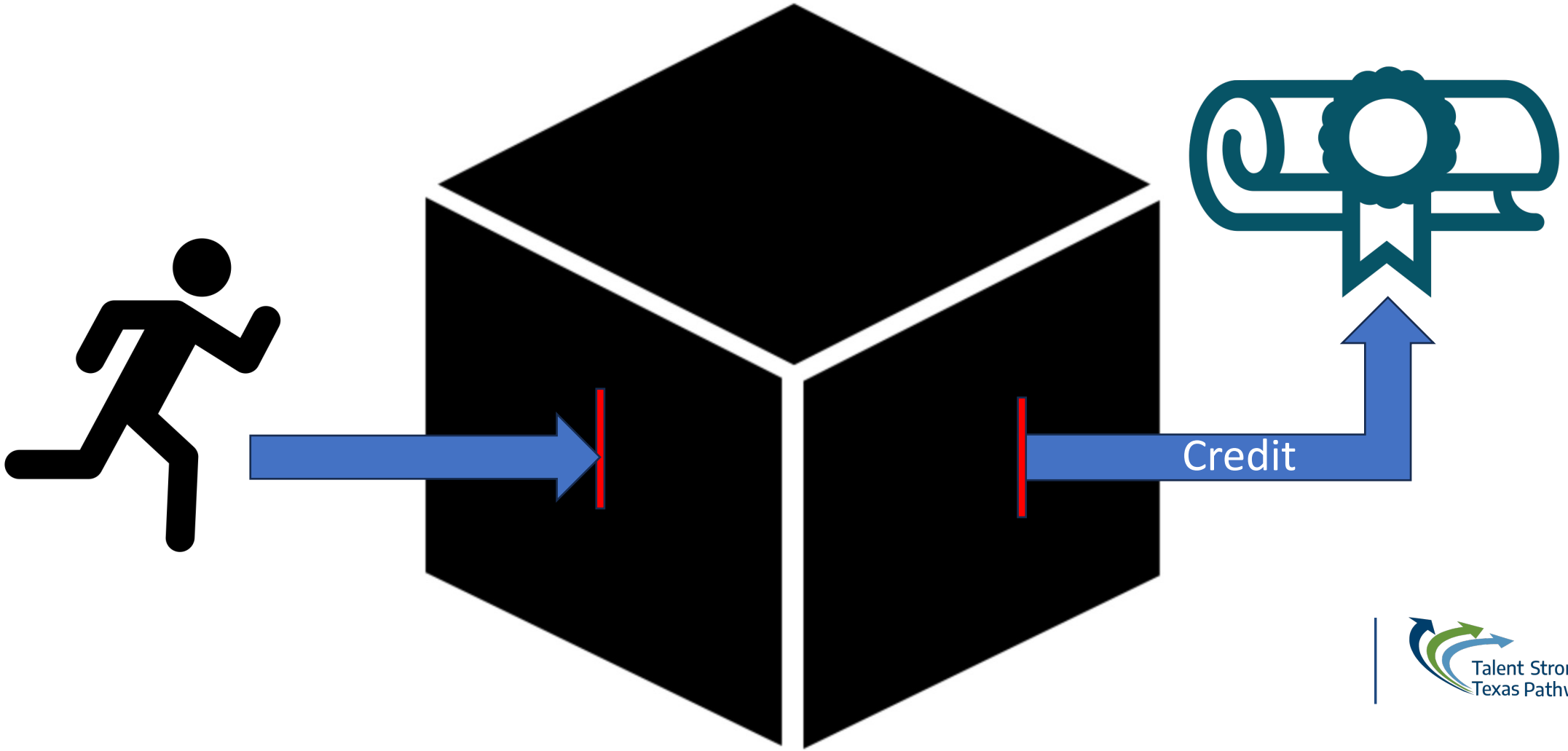
The Prior Learning Black Box



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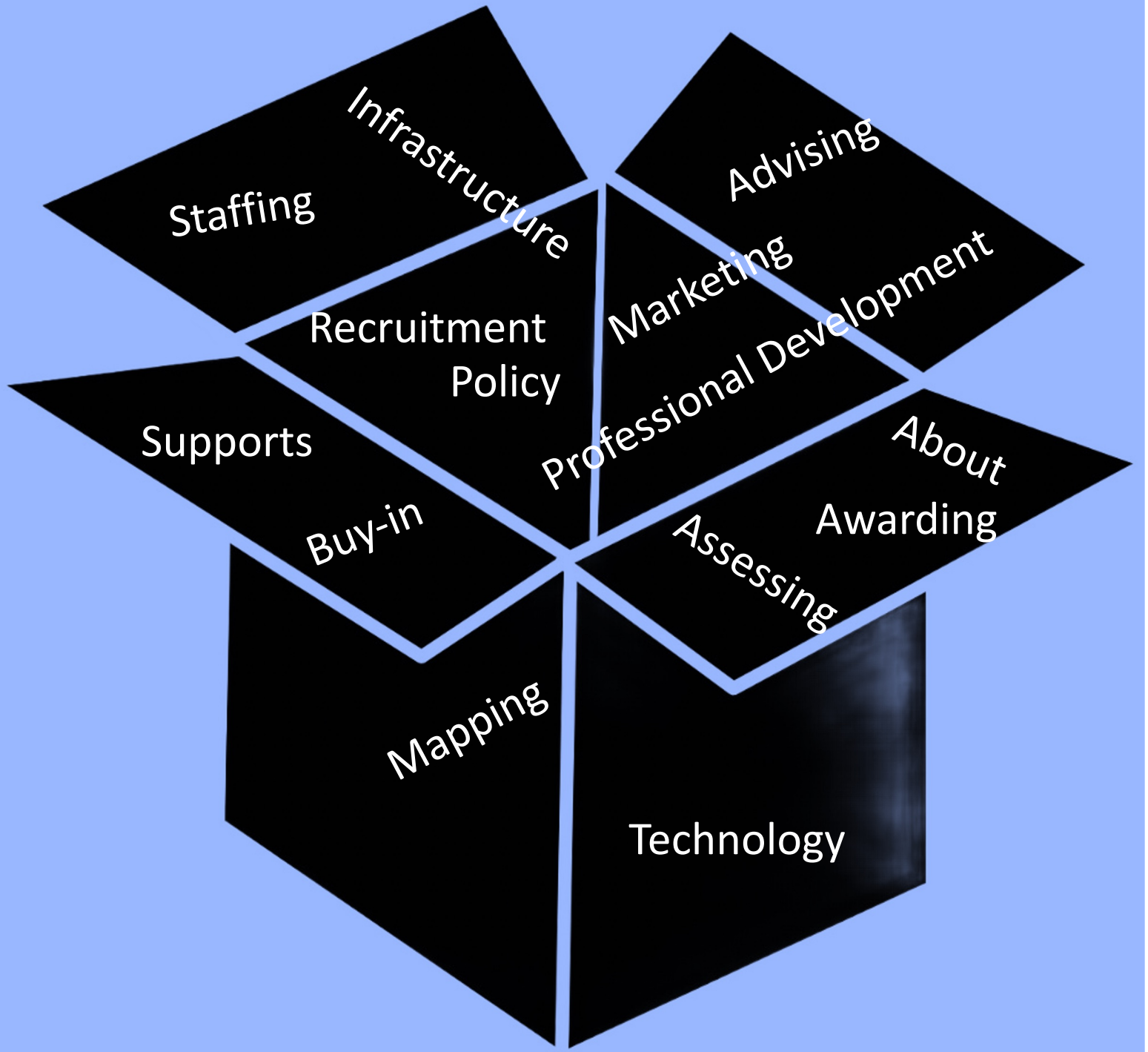

The Black Box can be Pandora's Box

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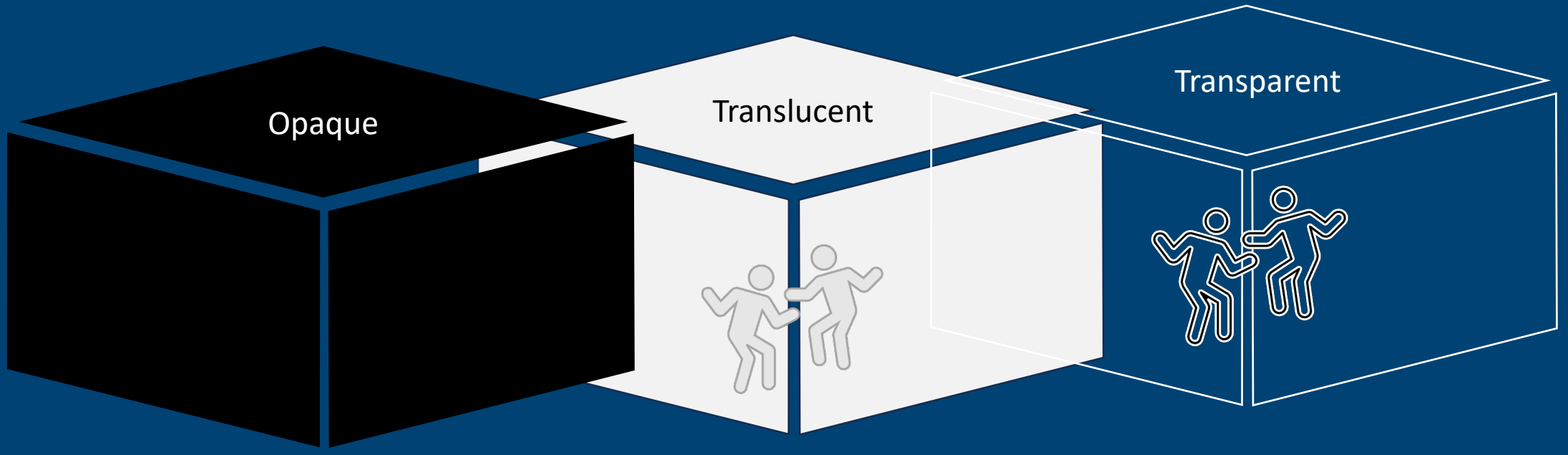
Quick Assessment -
In what ways are your policy, processes, and practices:



Recognition/Misrecognition

- Recognition – seeing what people know and can do
- Misrecognition – not seeing what people know and can do, or seeing it through a different lens

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Do You See What I See?

Do You Know What I Know?

Do You See Me?

Philosophical Approaches

Every practice has underlying philosophies

Understanding Philosophy

Align Policies to Philosophy

Align Practices to Policy

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Philosophical Underpinning Activity

1. Complete philosophical statement scoring sheet (side 1)
2. Total scores for each type (side 2)
3. Create a coordinate pair with like letters (R1,R2) (A1,A2) (D1,D2) (C1, C2)
4. Graph coordinate points on the graph
5. Connect the points to create a 4-sided figure

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Where are you Philosophically with PLA? Philosophical Statements	Do Not Agree = 0 Somewhat Agree = 2 Absolutely Agree = 4
1. All knowledge (beyond a secondary level) has the potential to be part of higher education.	2 ♣R1
2. Only those people who meet specified criteria should be accepted into higher education.	4 ♦A2
3. Regardless of the outcomes, the process of higher education is what matters.	♥D1 2
4. Learning should be assessed against existing standards.	□R2 4

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Add your score for each of the following statement types.
Combine scores of pairs as coordinates for grid.
Plot the coordinates on the grid and connect the points to make a 4-sided shape.

Type	♣R1	□R2	♦A1	♦A2	♥D1	♠D2	☎C1	✿C2
Score								
Coordinate	(8 , 8)		(10 , 6)		(10 , 2)		(8 , 6)	

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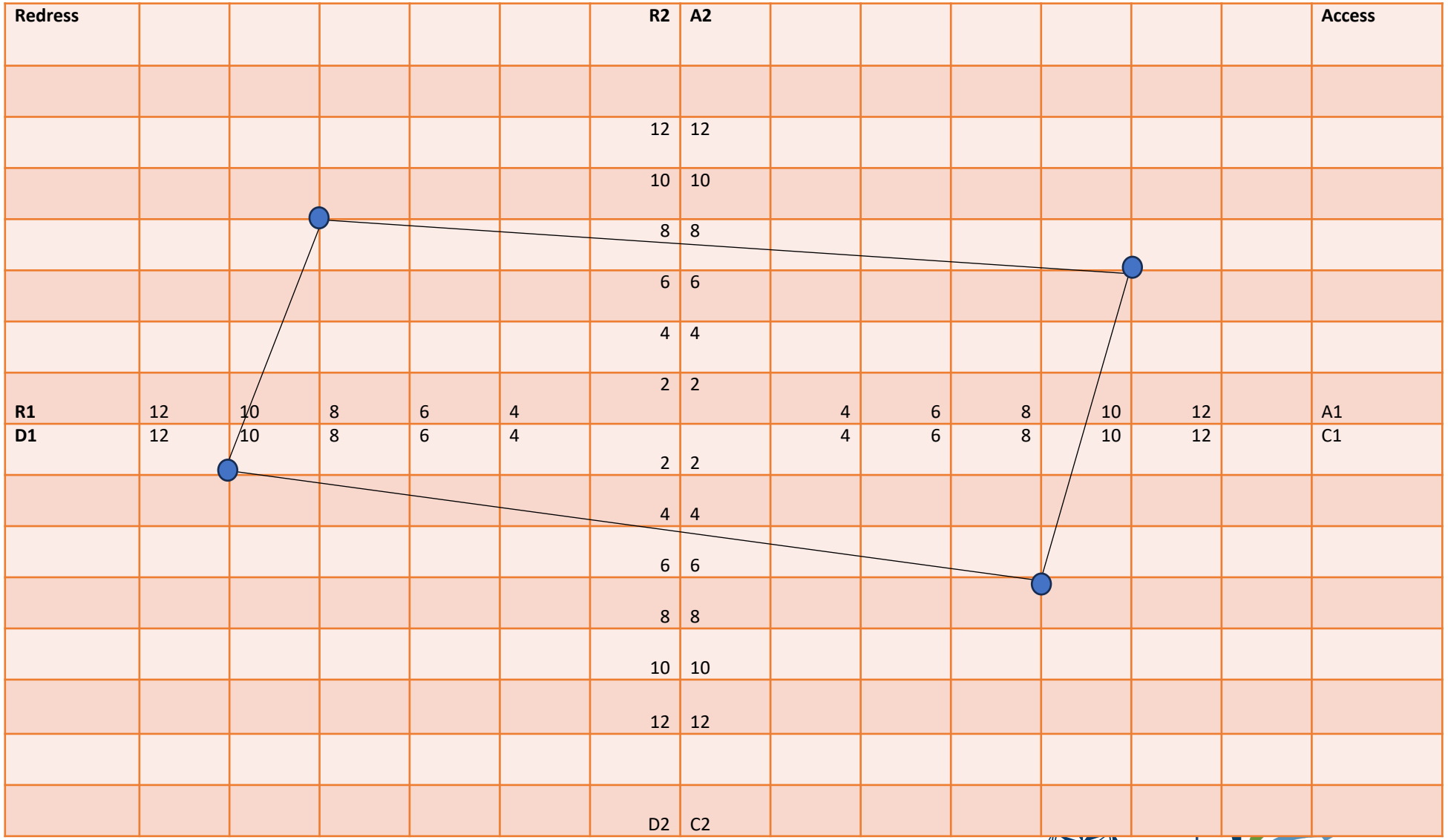
Graphing Your Responses



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Recognition: Focus on Knowledge

Viewpoint

- All knowledge (beyond a secondary level) has the potential to be part of higher education.
- PLA allows for an expansion of knowledge in higher education through the student.

Policy: Learning can be assessed regardless of when, where or how it was learned.

Counterpoint

- Only sanctioned knowledge is part of higher education.
- PLA is assessed against standards that reaffirm existing tenets.

Policy: Assessed prior learning must match existing curriculum.

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Access: Focus is on Inclusion

Viewpoint

- All people have the potential to learn in higher education.
- PLA is provided through all disciplines and applied towards all degree requirements.
- PLA can be used as admissions criteria and placement within the system.

Policy: PLA is open to all learners.

Counterpoint

- Only those people who meet specified criteria are accepted into higher education.
- PLA is restricted to only specific disciplines and/or degree requirements.
- PLA is not part of admissions or placement criteria.

Policy: PLA is limited by criteria.

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Lifelong Learning: Focus is on Development

Viewpoint

- Higher education is developmental and transformative.
- PLA provides opportunities to explore personal, educational and professional goals.

Policy: Students are supported though various resources, workshops, courses and/or advisement.

Counterpoint

- Higher education is a path to a means.
- PLA provides a way to meet degree requirements.

Policy: PLA is used to meet degree requirements.

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Credentialing: Focus is on Obtainment

Viewpoint

- The purpose of higher education is to acquire all types of credentials.
- PLA provides ways to validate and accredit learning toward credentials.
- Through PLA, individuals leverage existing knowledge, competencies and skills to move into or progress within a field.

Policy: PLA is connected to and built into degree and career pathways.

Counterpoint

- Credentials are restricted to formally recognized knowledge.
- PLA is constrained to standard assessments (e.g., CLEP) and/or applied only to noncore elements of the credential (e.g., electives).

Policy: PLA is restricted to selected disciplines or through limited means.

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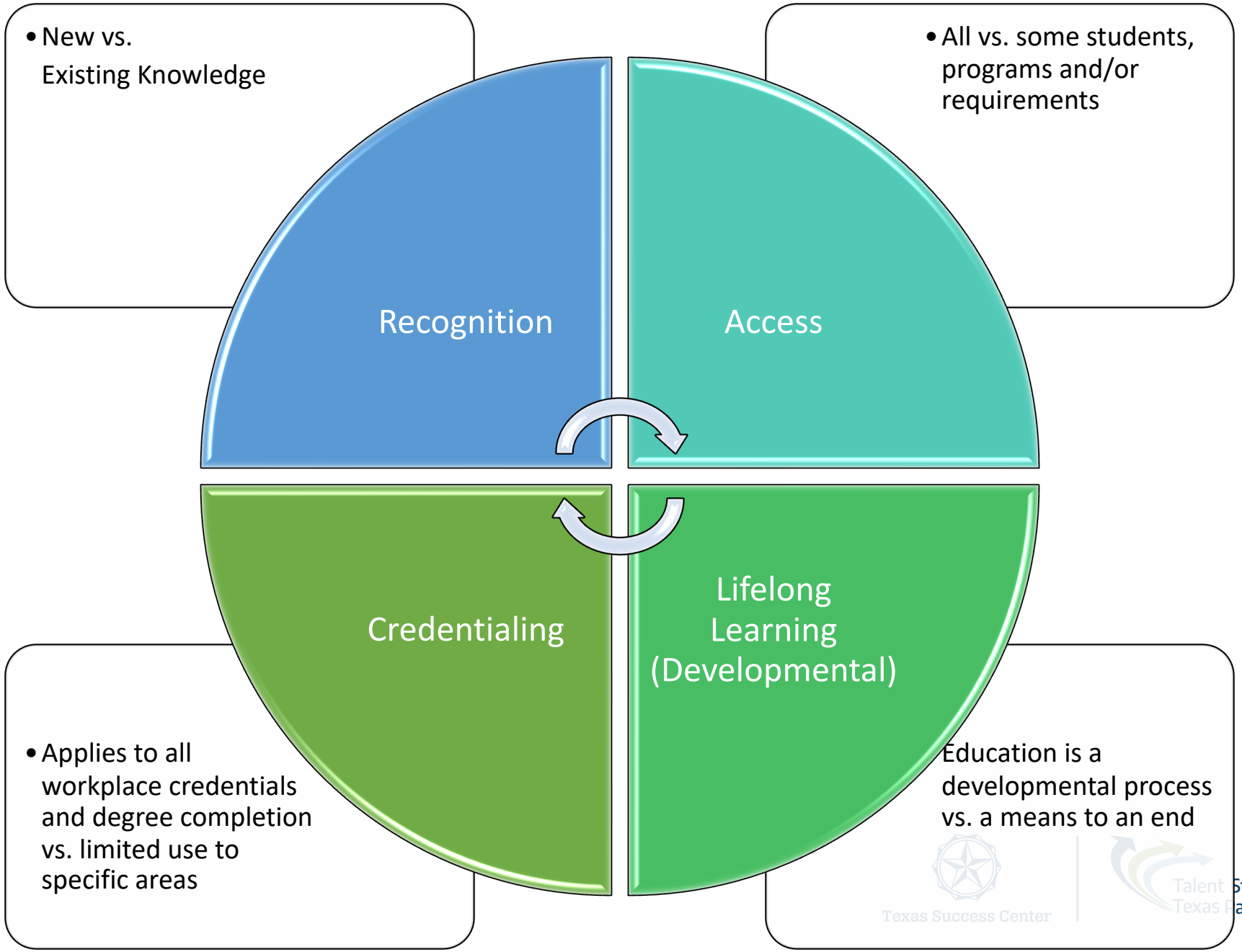
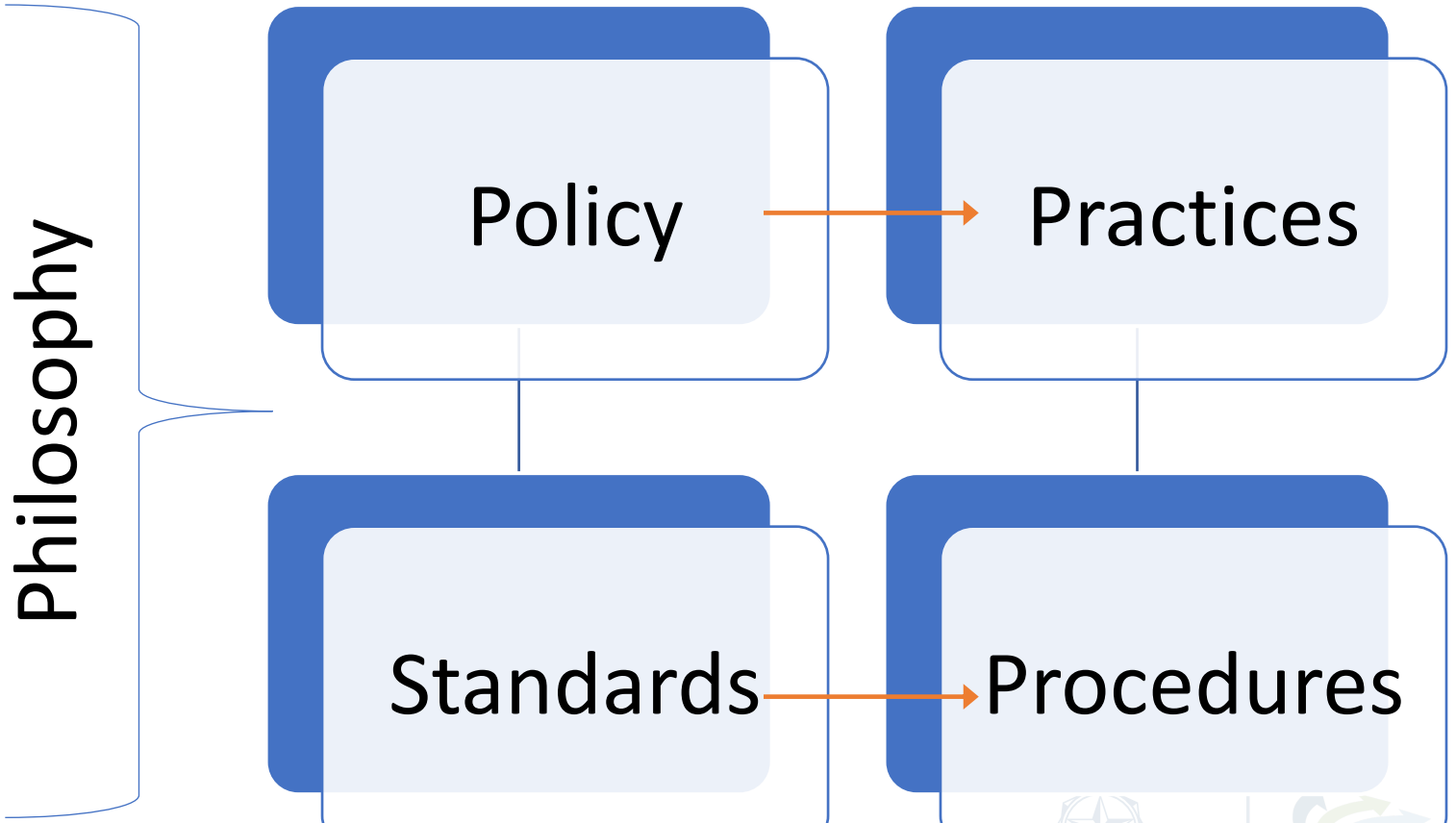
Philosophical Approaches



Policy Considerations



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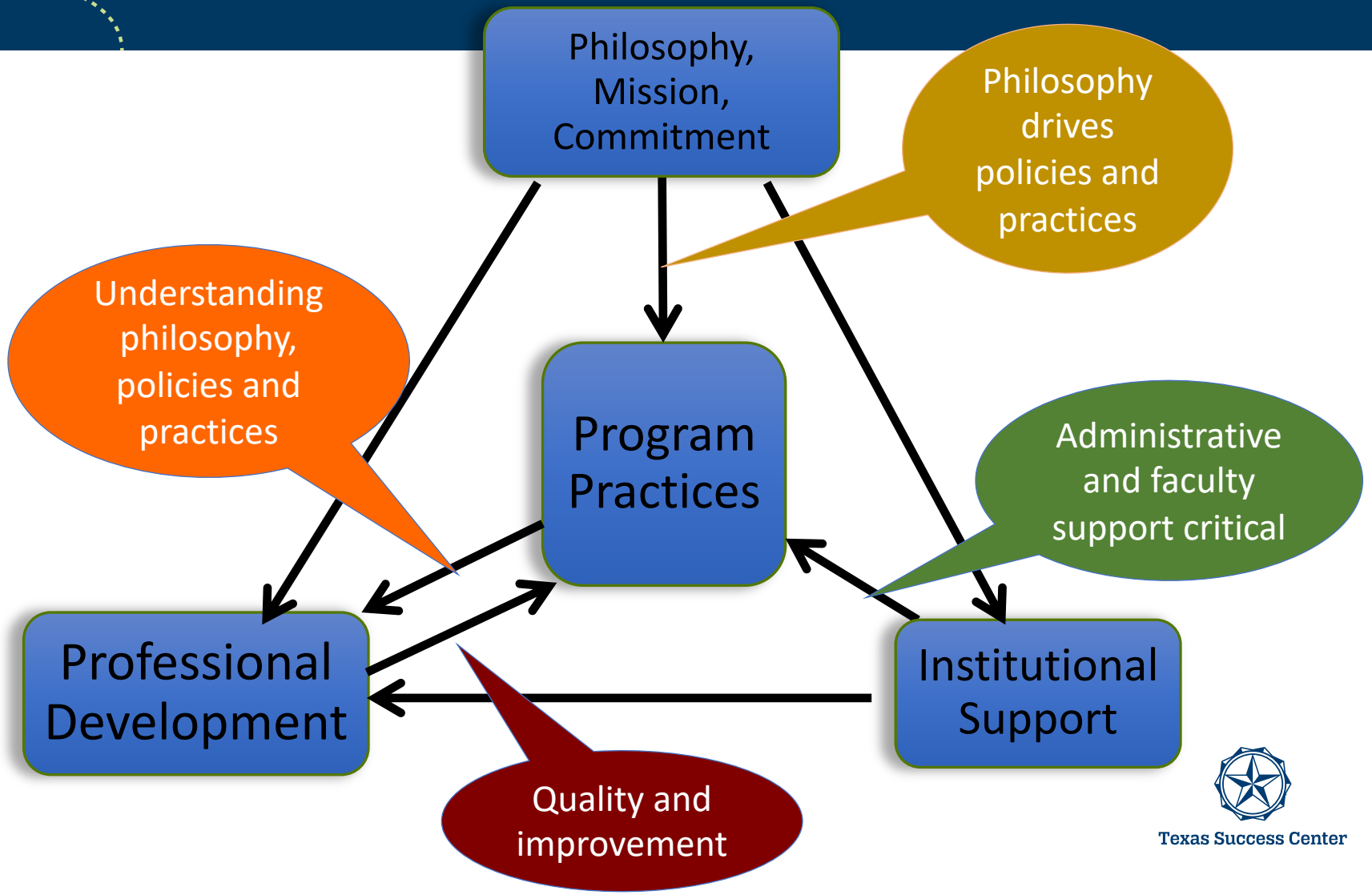
Interrelationships across practices



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Equity

- Who defines the line?
- Who draws the line?
- What does the line divide?
- Who sits on either side of the line?

Quality

- Where is the line drawn?
- Why is the line drawn?
- What framing does the line provide?
- What do we gain by drawing the line?

Integrity

- How is the line drawn?
- By what criteria is the line drawn?
- What are the line's characteristics?
- How is the line evaluated?

Policy Standards

Policy Standards – 16 standards

- Philosophy, Mission and Policy
- Institutional Support
- Academic Integration
- Professional Development
- Program Evaluation

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The Learners

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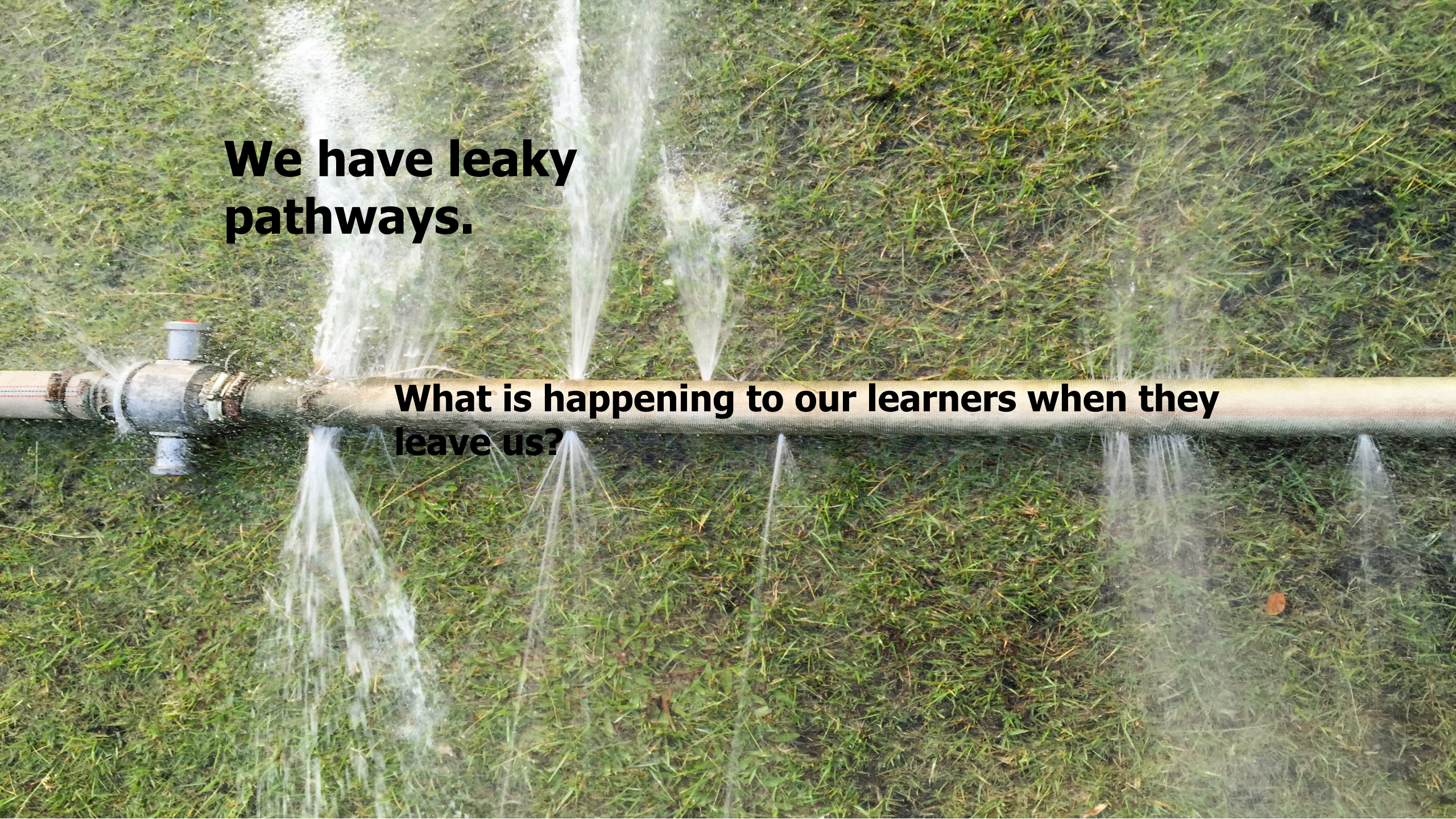

We have leaky pathways.
What is happening to our learners when they leave us?

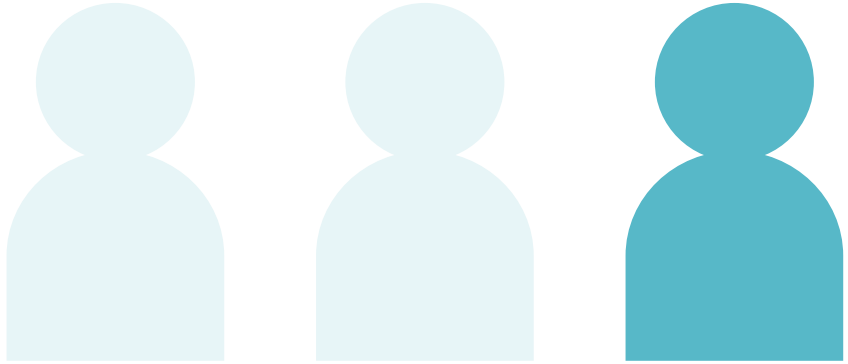
National Institutional Retention and Completion Rates

- Fall 2020 to Fall 2021 retention rate
  - Four-year institutions is 82%
  - Two-year institutions is 61%

- Fall 2014 cohort 6-year graduation rate for 4-year institutions = 64%
- Fall 2017 cohort 150% time to graduation rate for 2-year institutions = 34%

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/2022/ctr_508.pdf

Postsecondary Attainment in the U.S.



2 out of 6
Upper secondary or below

1 out of 6
some college no credential

3 out of 6 have a college credential

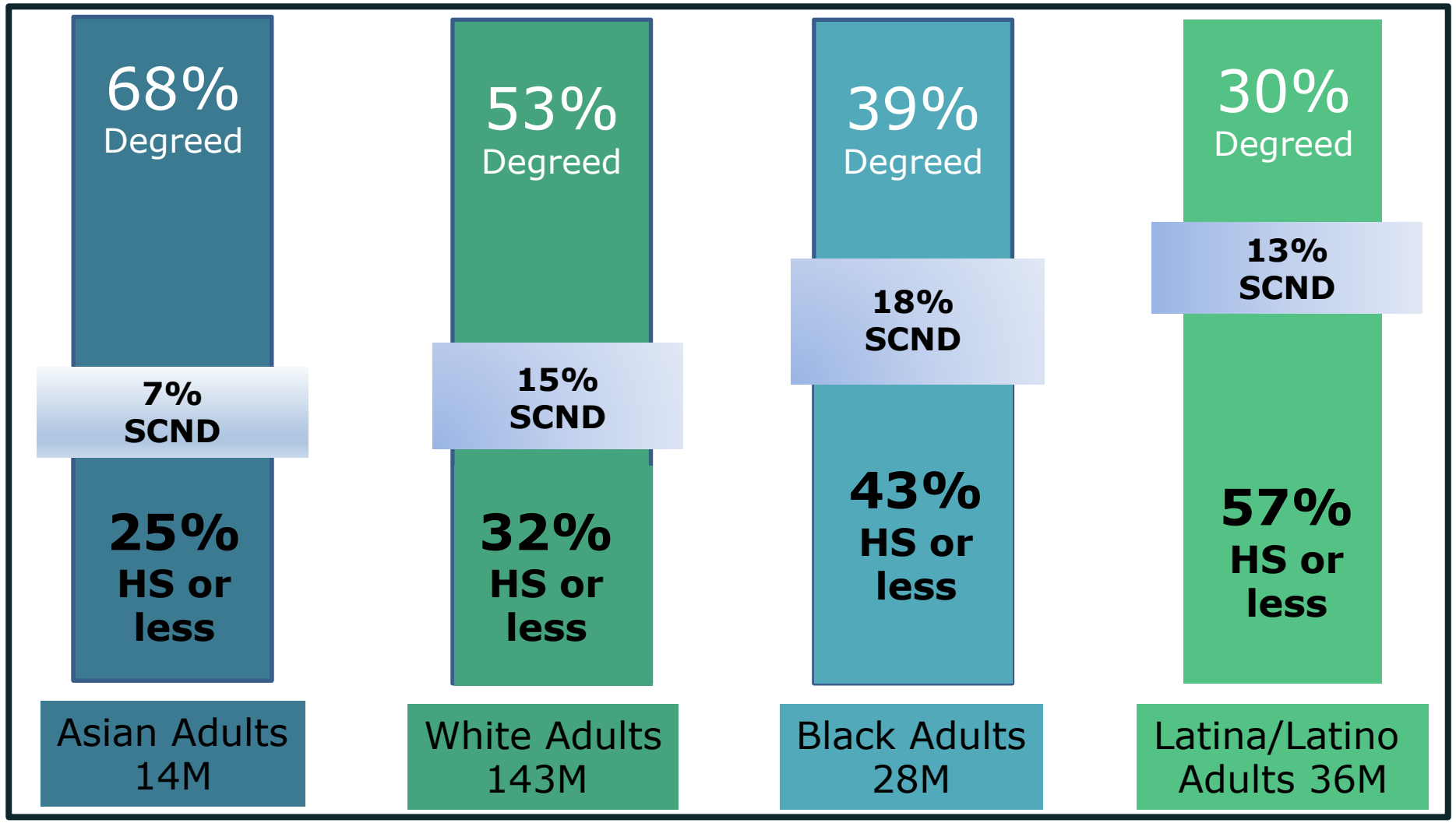
White – 71%
Black – 10%
LatinX - 10%
Asian – 9%

CREDENTIAL AS YOU GO

Source: Data based on 224.5M adults 25 years and older (Acquired from U.S. Census Bureau 2021)

Within Group Comparisons Degreed & Non-Degreed

SCND = Some College No Degree
HS = High School

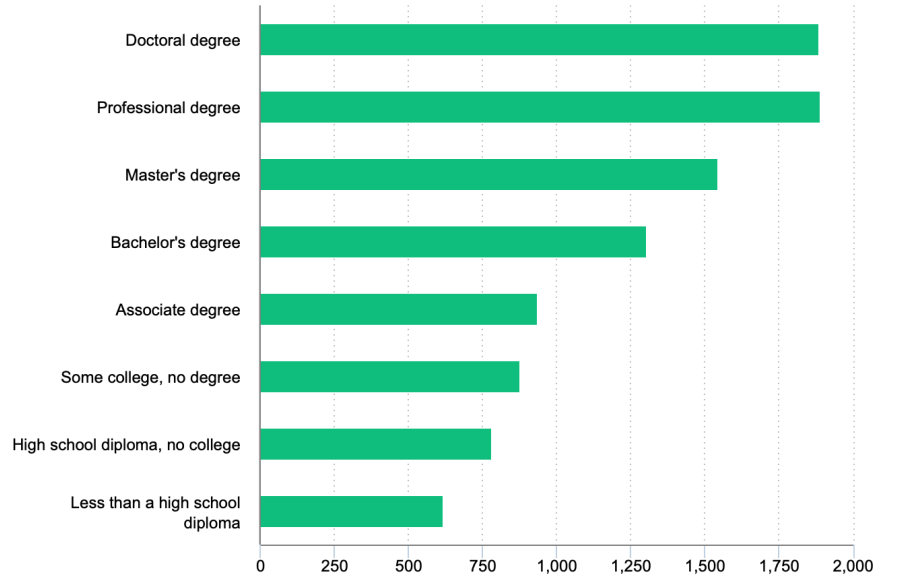


Data based on 224.5 million adults 25 years and older (U.S. Census Bureau 2020)

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

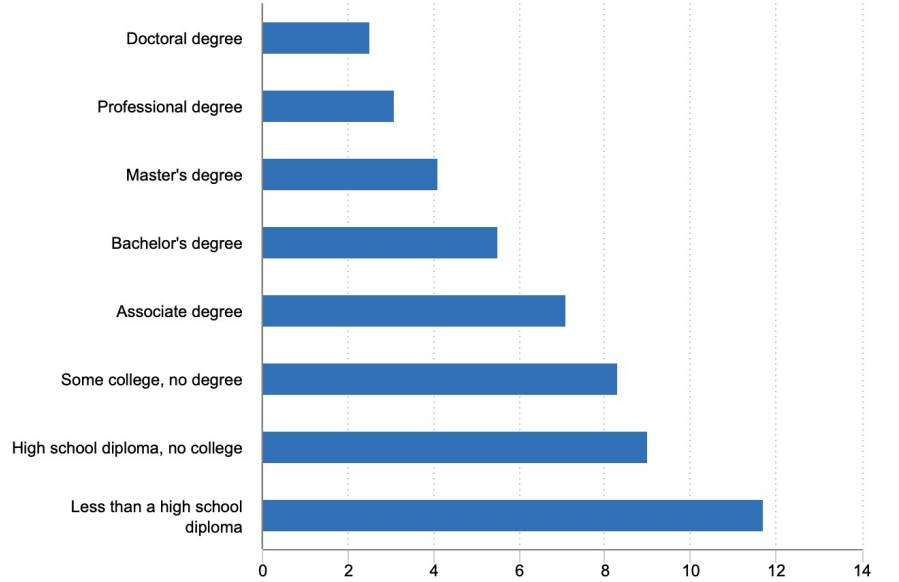
Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment (2020)

Earnings



Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

Unemployment Rates



Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2021/data-on-display/education-pays.html

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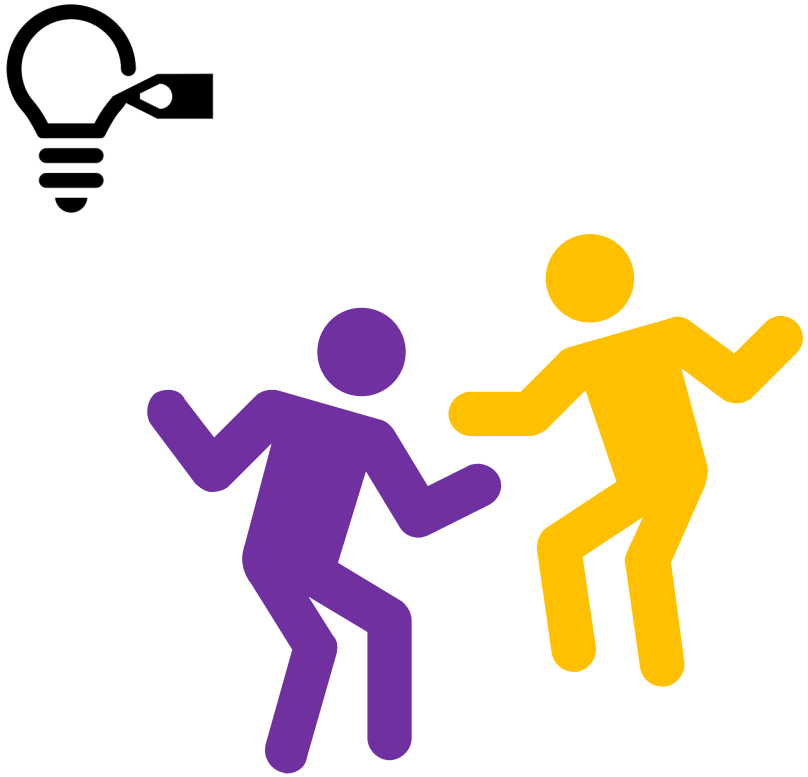
Ideal Candidate



- What are the characteristics, experiences, skills, and knowledge of good candidates?
- What are the clues that a learner would have prior learning?
- What are the competencies needed to be successful in having learning evaluated?
- What are the supports that need to be in place?

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Unrecognized vs. Recognized Learning

Unrecognized Learning

- Prevents learners from being recognized
- Reduces job acquisition and advancement
- Lowers ability to complete a credential
- Greatest impact is on equity

Recognized Learning

- Increases persistence and completion
- Can be validated and sealed into a credentialed
- Can be recognized by others
- Greatest impact is on equity groups

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Photo by Pavel Danilyuk: https://www.pexels.com/photo/group-of-men-doing-high-five-7942542/

Who are the typical PLA students?

Adult Students

- Professional Learning
- Volunteer Learning
- Self-Study
- Personal Experiences

Younger Students

- Home schooled
- Dual-enrollment
- Advanced Placement
- Self-study
- Work Experience

Currently Enrolled Students

- Service Learning
- Extra research/study
- Work Experience

Learners orchestrate their own life, work & school

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Learner responsibility

Segmented Learning Experiences

Learners must make sense of their experiences on their own

Collated Learning Experiences

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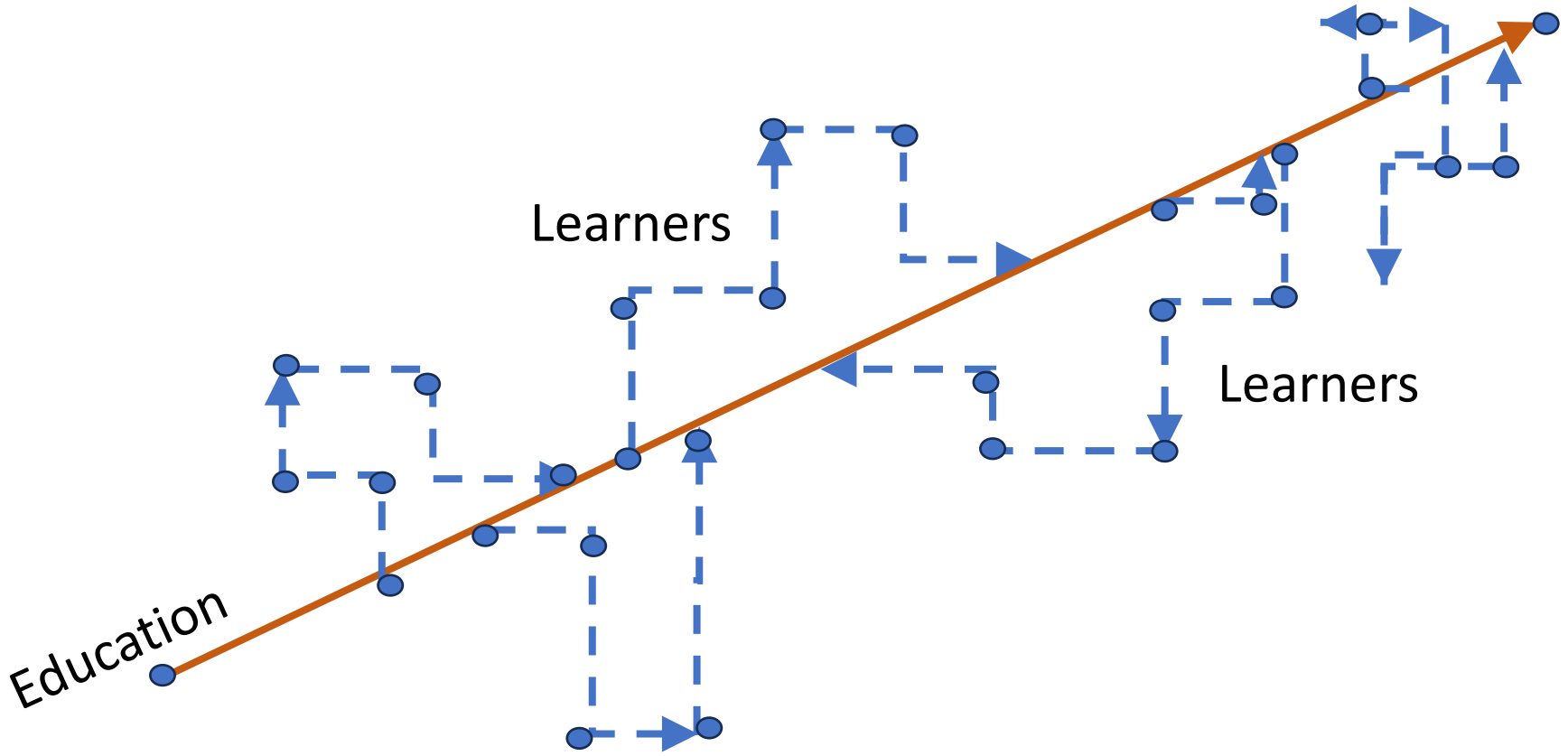
Learning is a continuum



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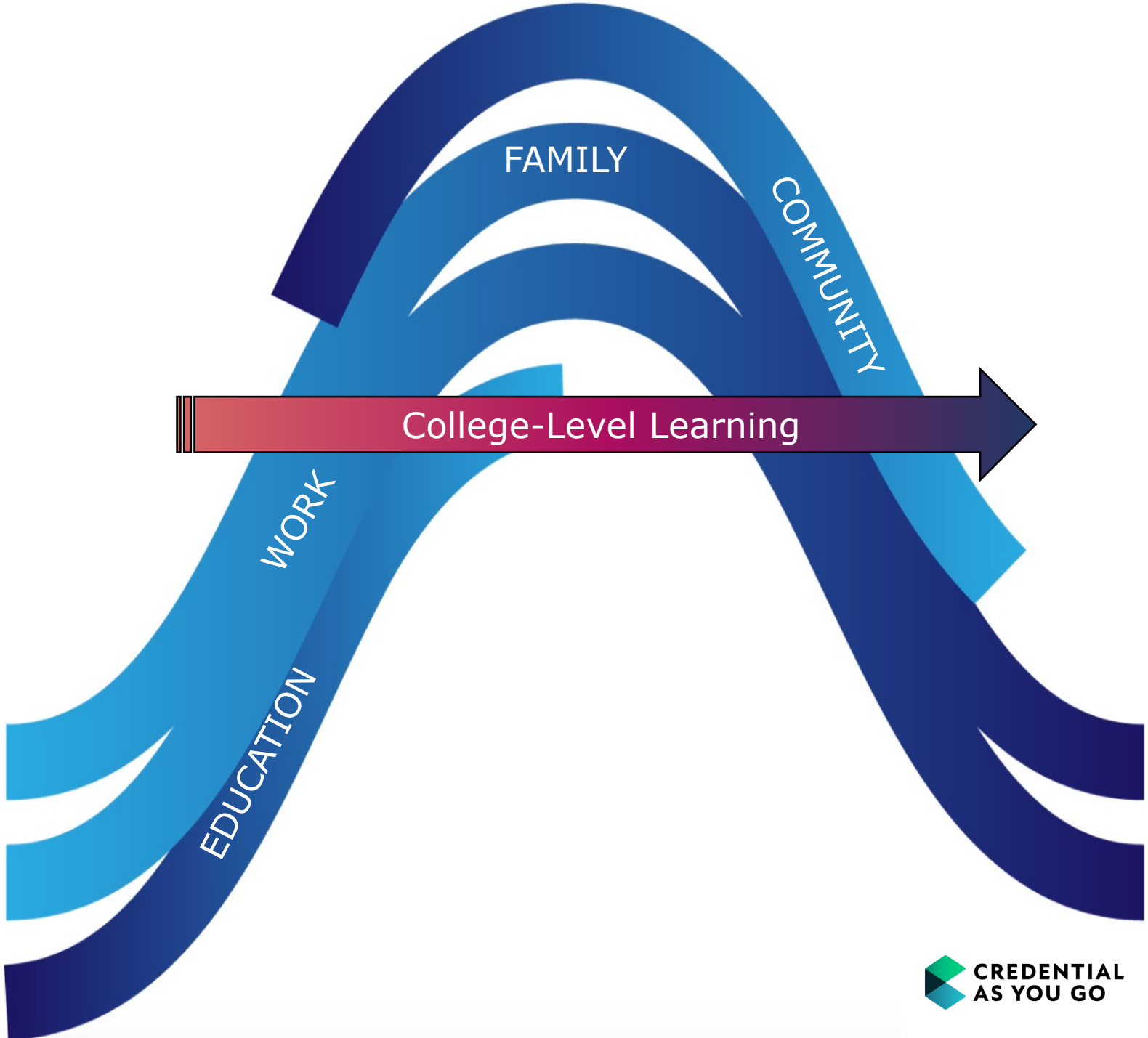
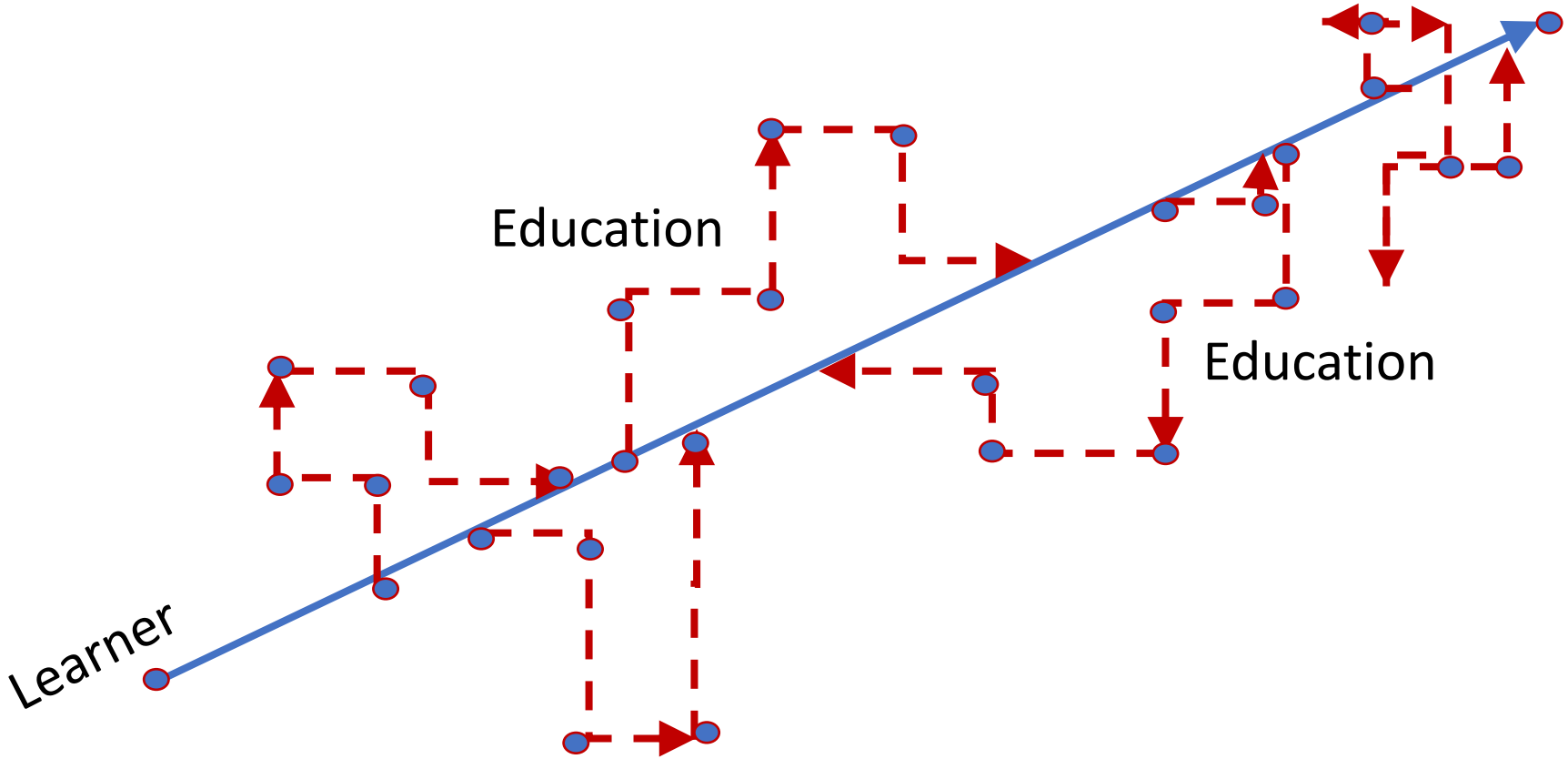
Learners have their own cycles

WHERE DOES COLLEGE-LEVEL LEARNING BEGIN AND END?



CREDENTIAL AS YOU GO

Learning is a continuum



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What this means for higher education…

Majority of students are working while in school

More adult learners going to college

Many students will have prior learning – workplace learning and different experiences

Many students have series of starts and stops – could create gaps but they also continue learning

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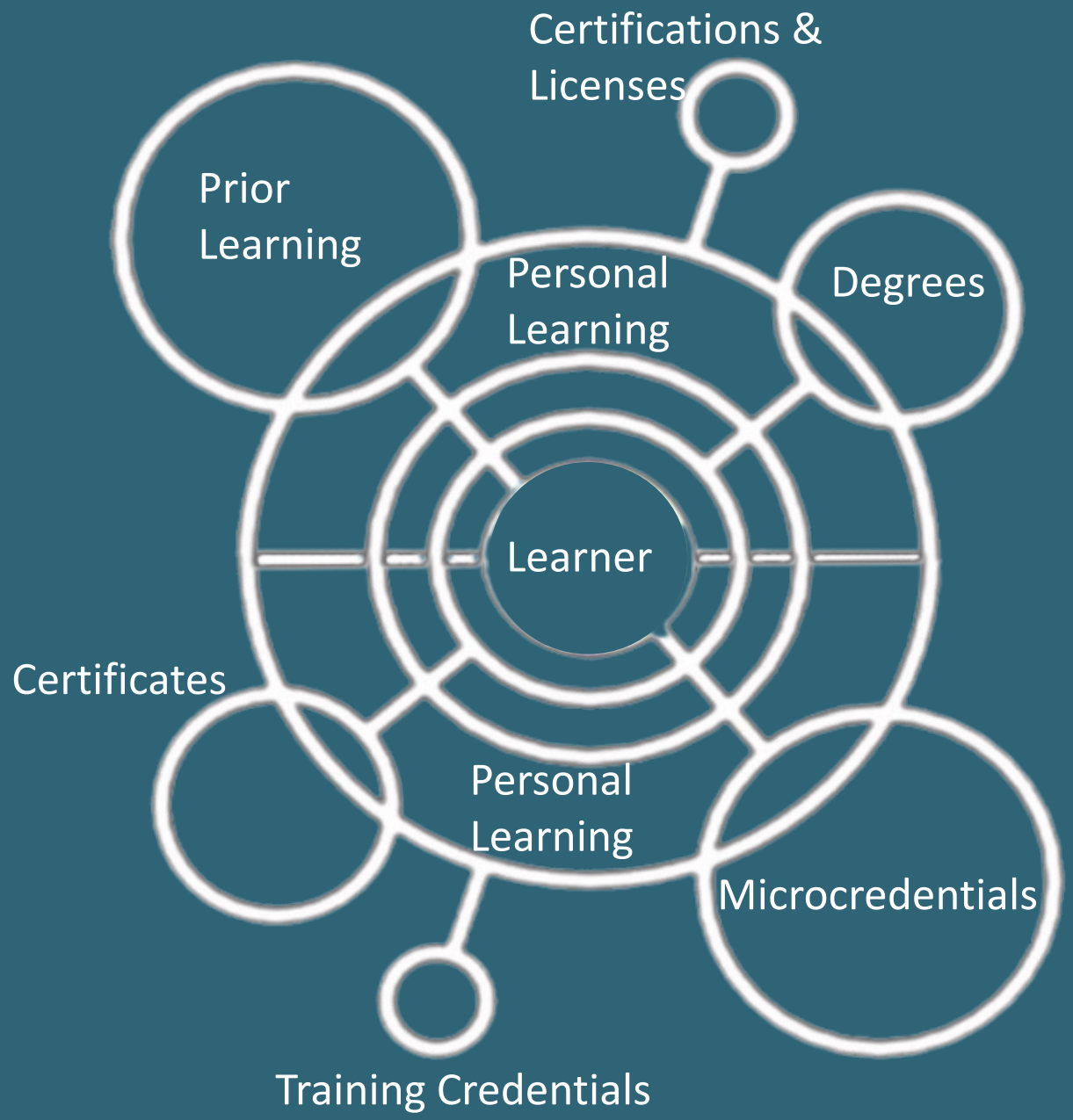
CREDENTIAL AS YOU GO



Learner-Centered Credentialing System

Captures learner's cycles of living, learning and working

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CREDENTIAL AS YOU GO

Learners' PLA Lifecycle Where do we need supports?

Advertising Website

Academic Advising

PLA Processes

Graduation

Recruitment

Admissions

Program Development

Course Completion

Enjoy Lunch!

11:45-12:15

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What do we cherish?

Assessment and Validation

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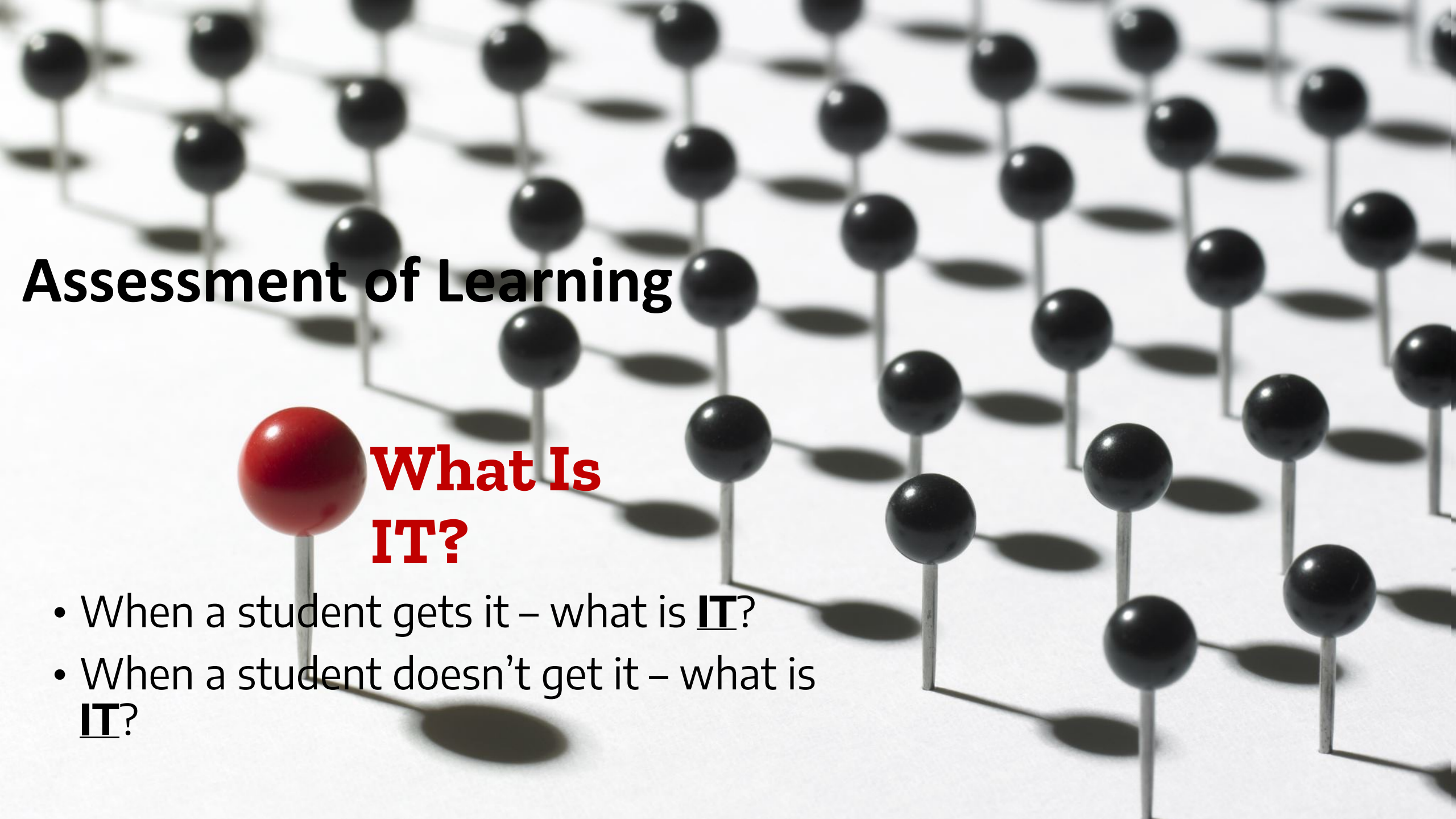
Why do we assess learning?

- What is in it for the learner? For the instructor? For the institution?
- What are we trying to assess?

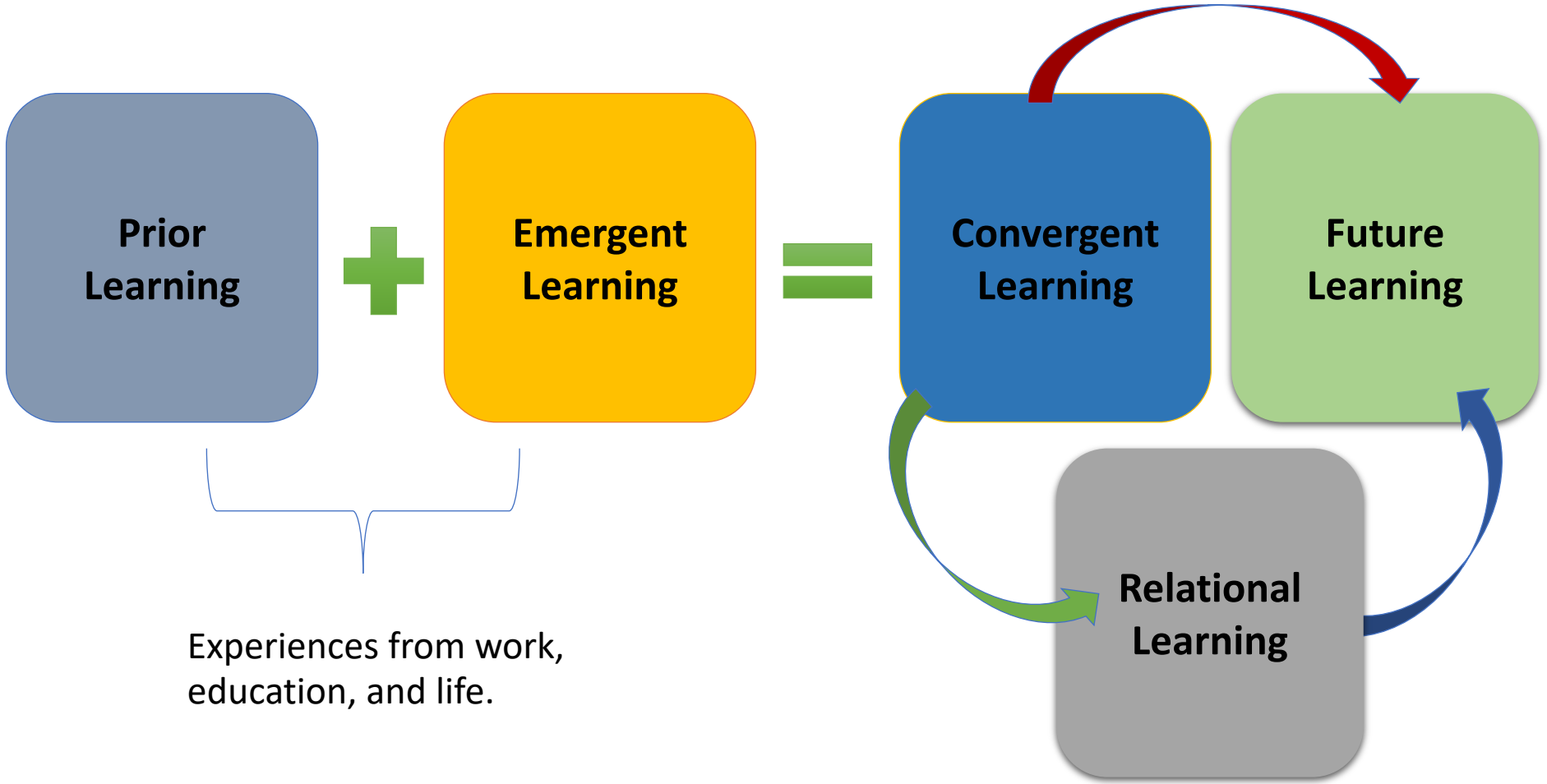


Assessment of Learning

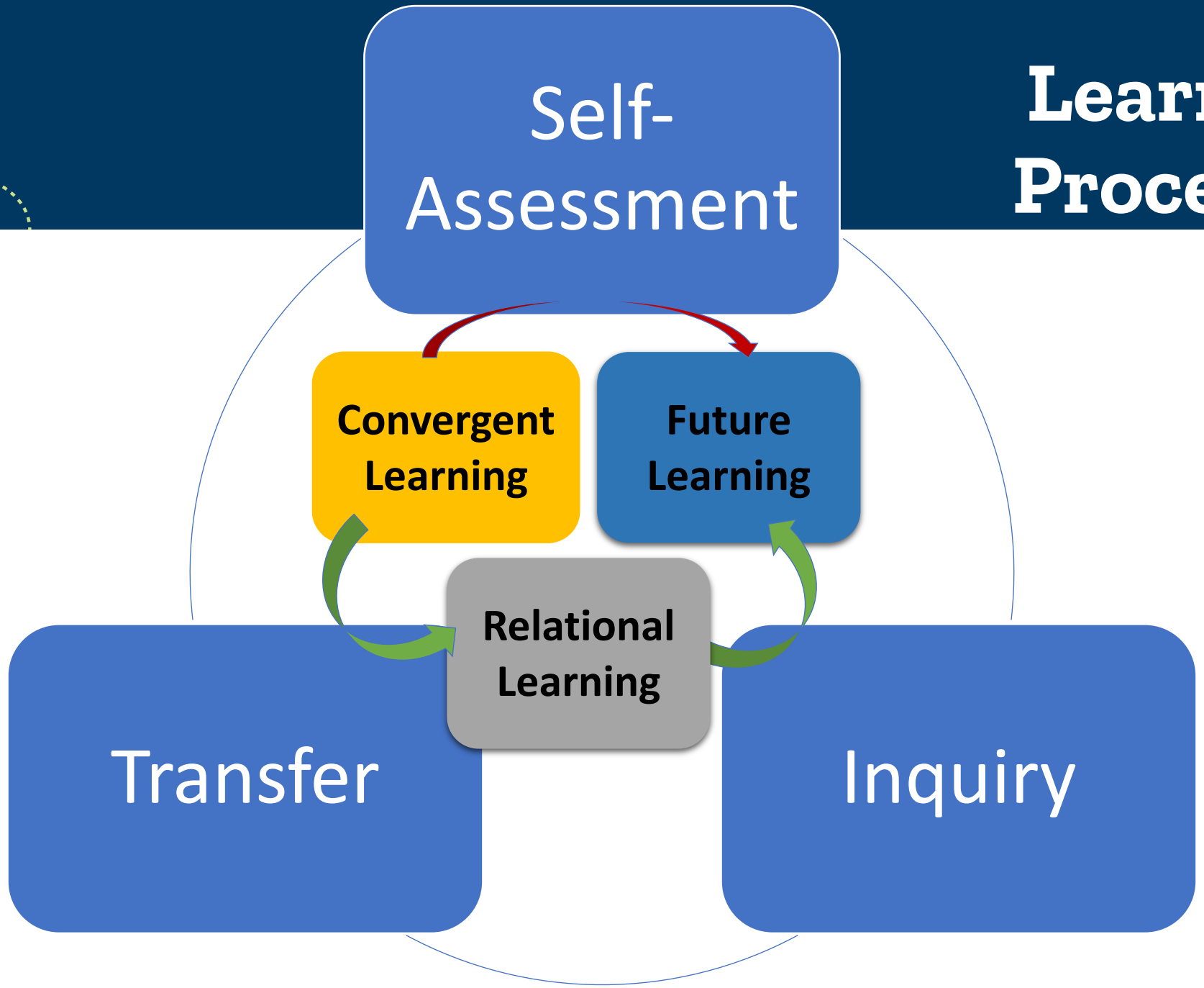
What Is IT?

- When a student gets it – what is **IT**?
- When a student doesn't get it – what is **IT**?

All learning is experiential
Learning is lifelong and life-wide

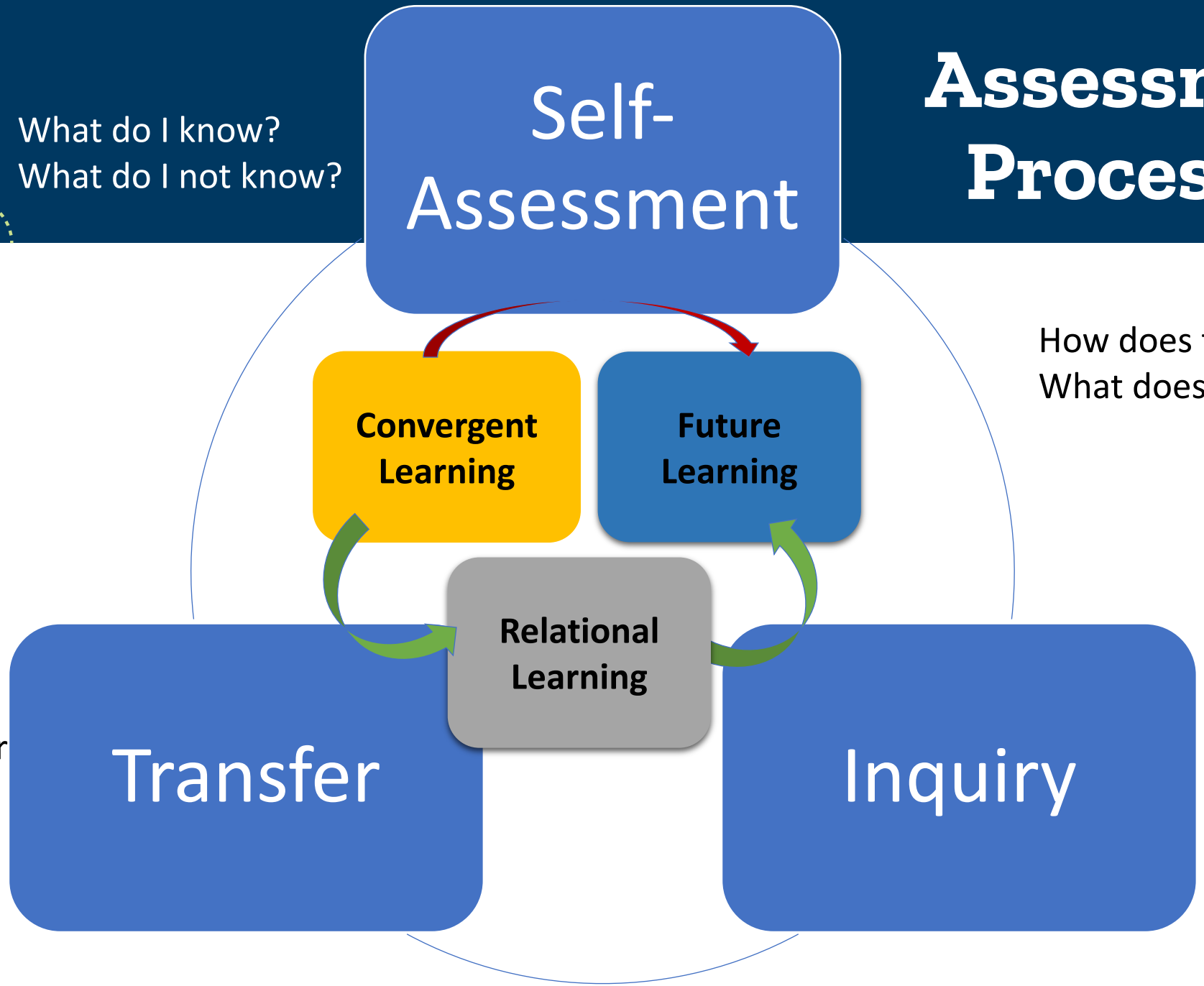


Learning Processes



Assessment Processes

What do I know?
What do I not know?



How does the learner …
What does the learner …

How do different pieces fit together?

How do different parts relate to other areas?

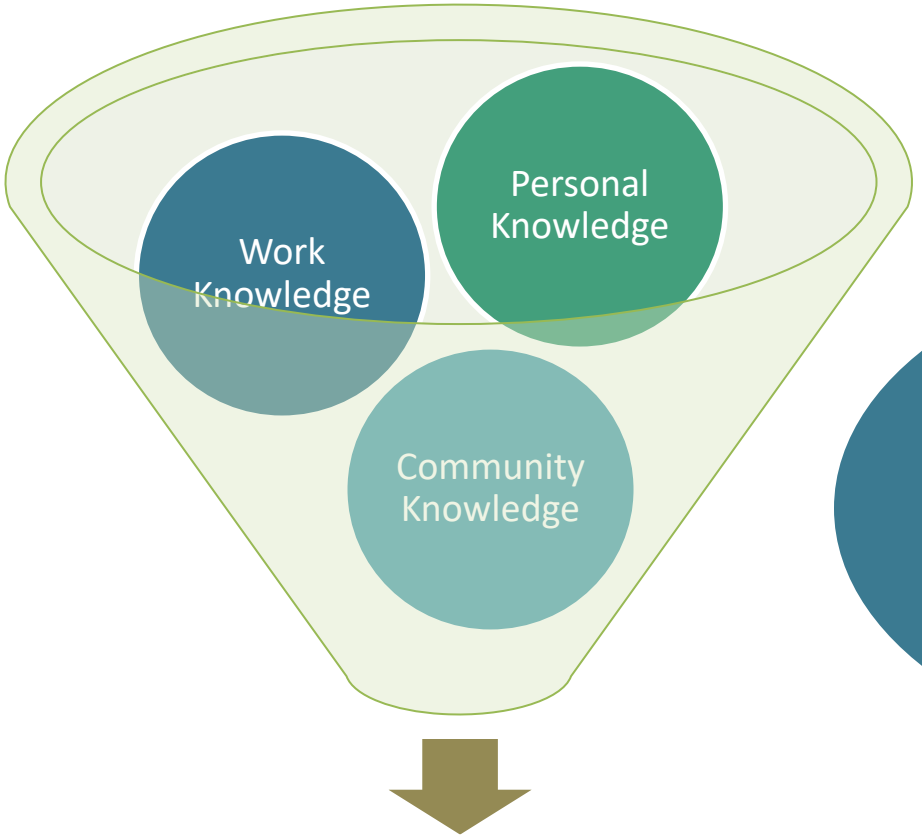
How does it fit with novel situations?

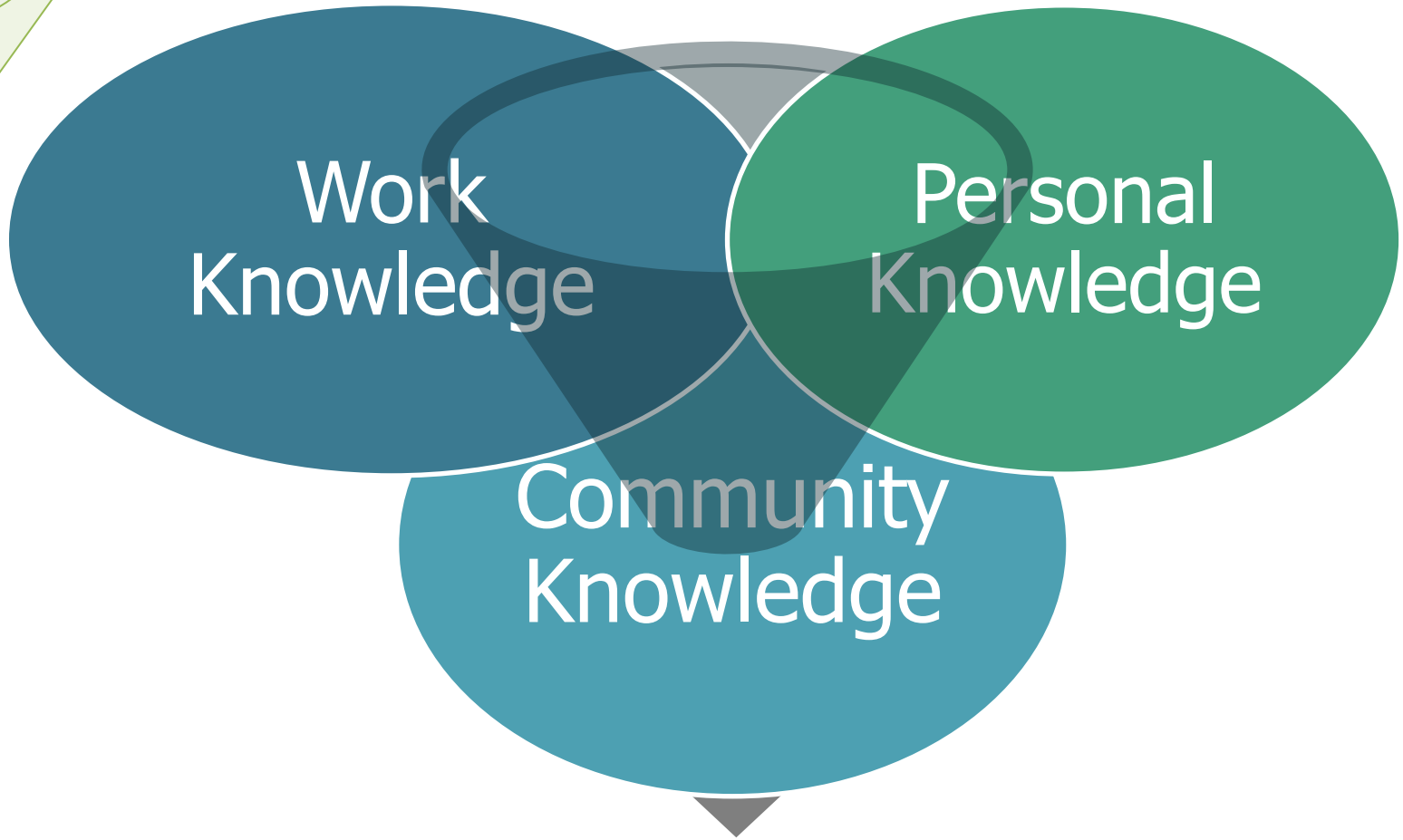
What questions do I need to ask?

How do I answer those questions?

We Only Measure Evidence of Learning

Not Actual Learning


Work Knowledge
Personal Knowledge
Community Knowledge
Expected Knowledge


Work Knowledge
Personal Knowledge
Community Knowledge
Expected Knowledge

Nomological Network

(Cronbach & Meehl, 1955)

Content vs. Construct Validity

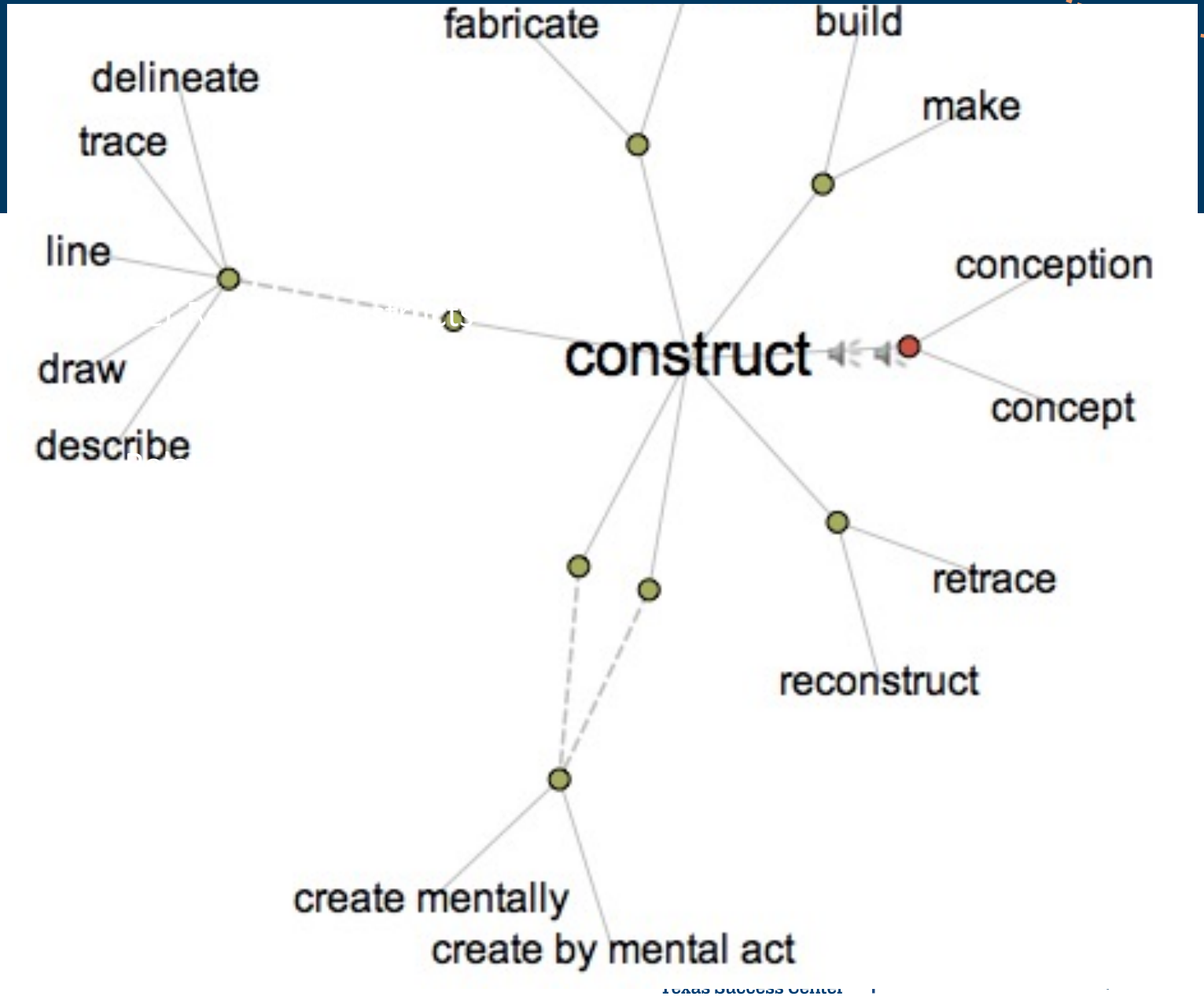
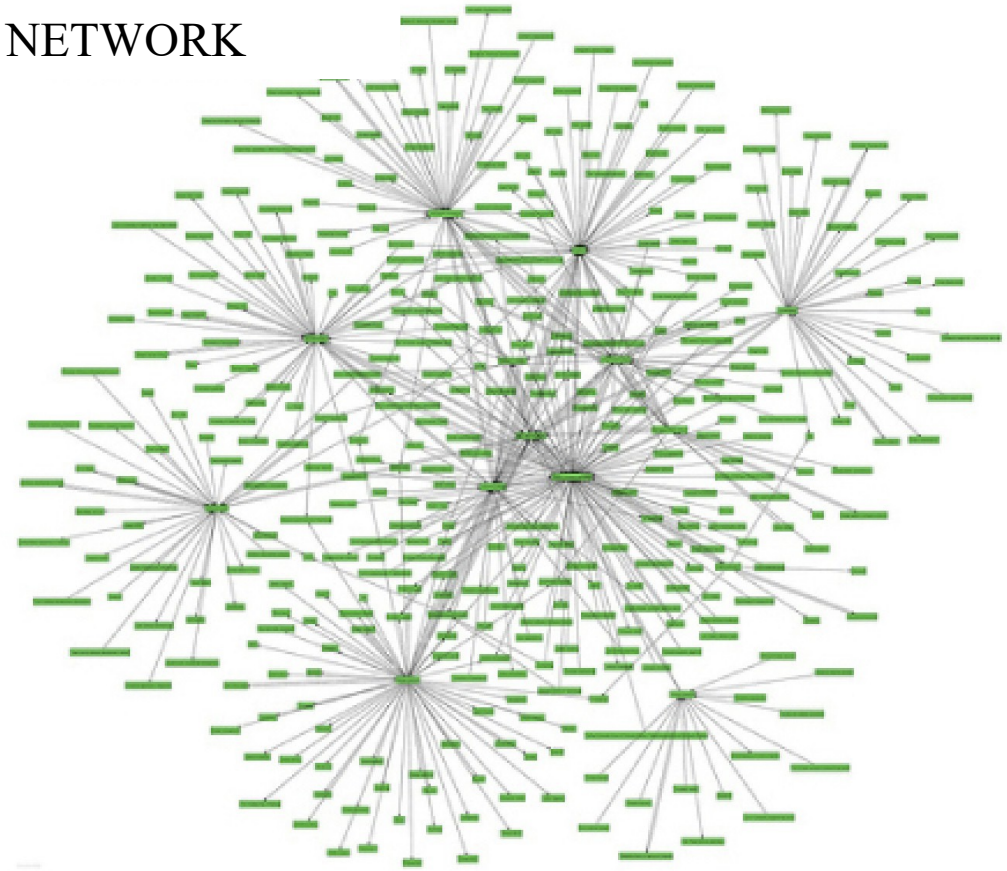
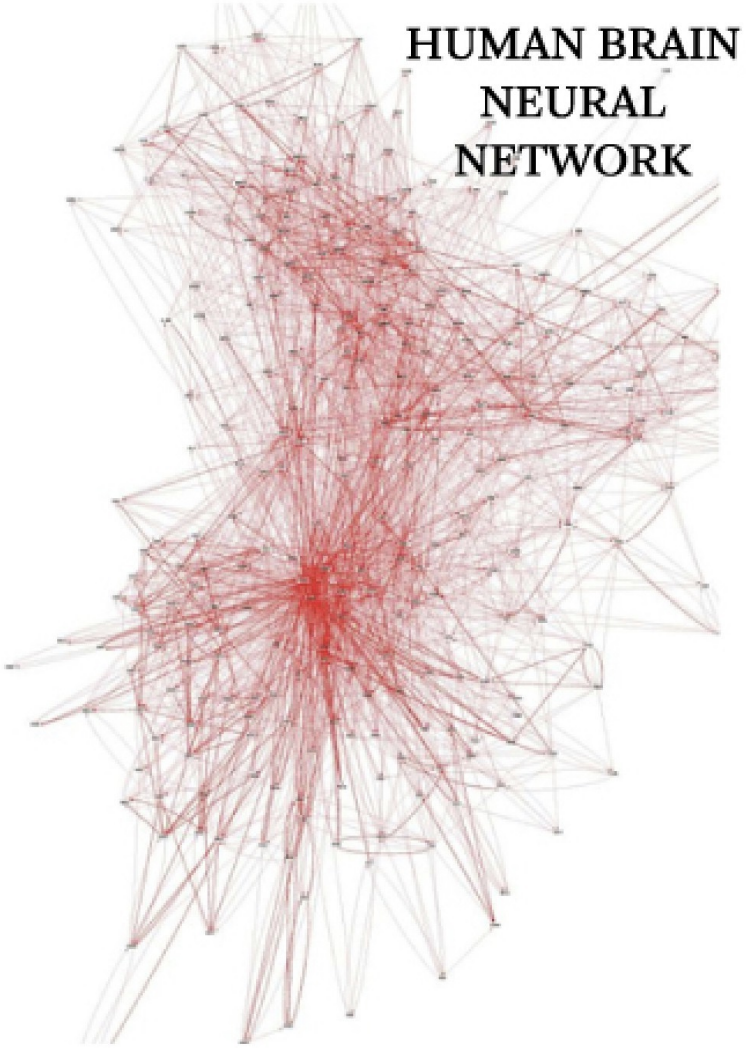


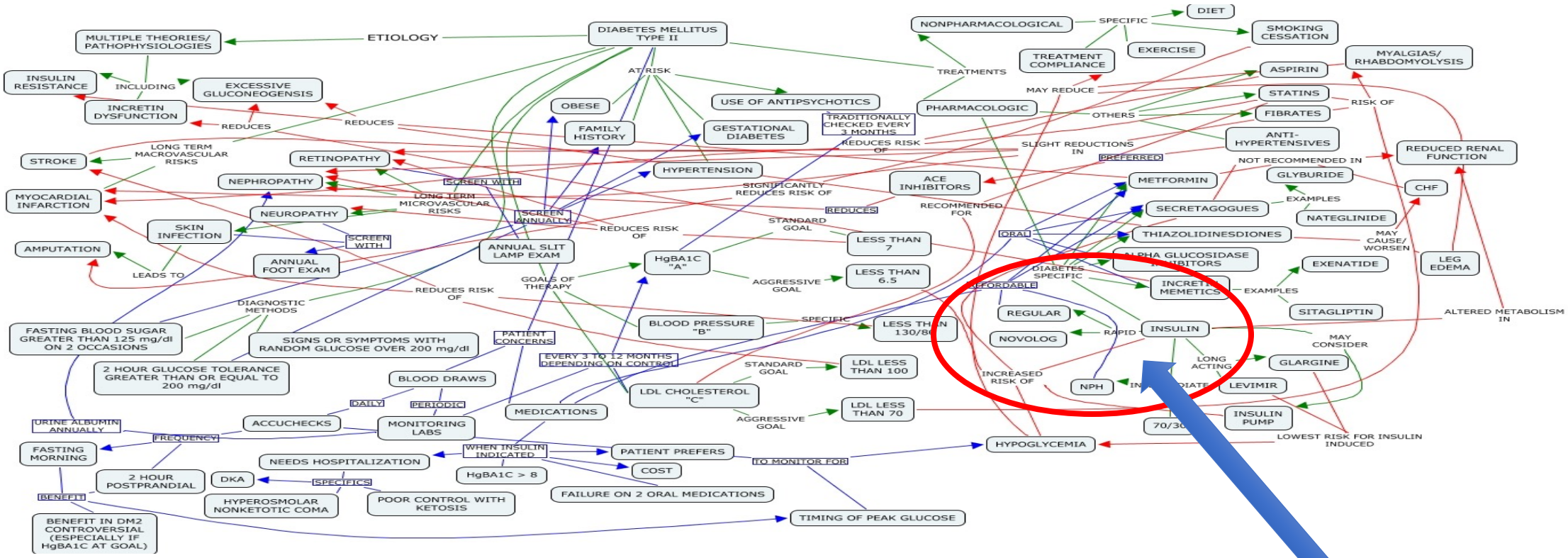
Image from VisualThesaurus.com

NOMOLOGICAL NETWORK





Nomological Network

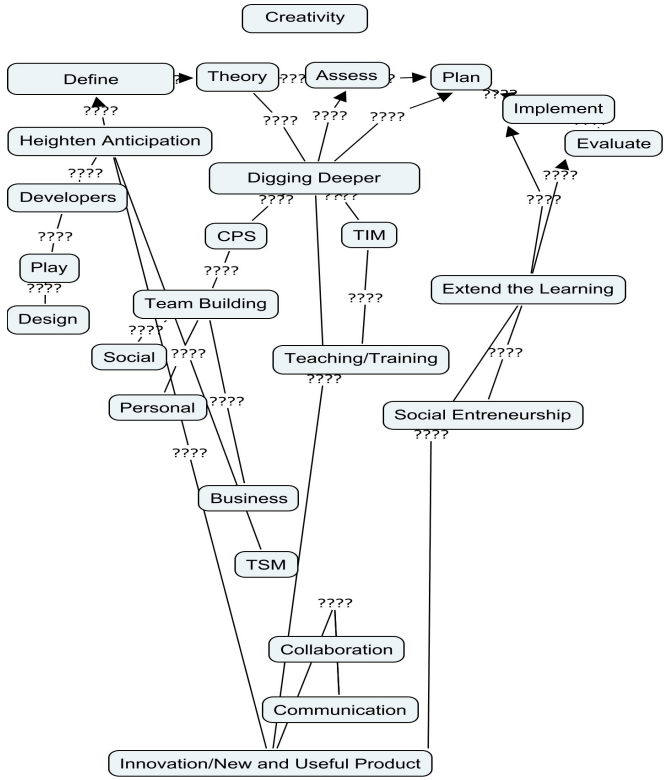


Course content only targets a small portion of the nomological network

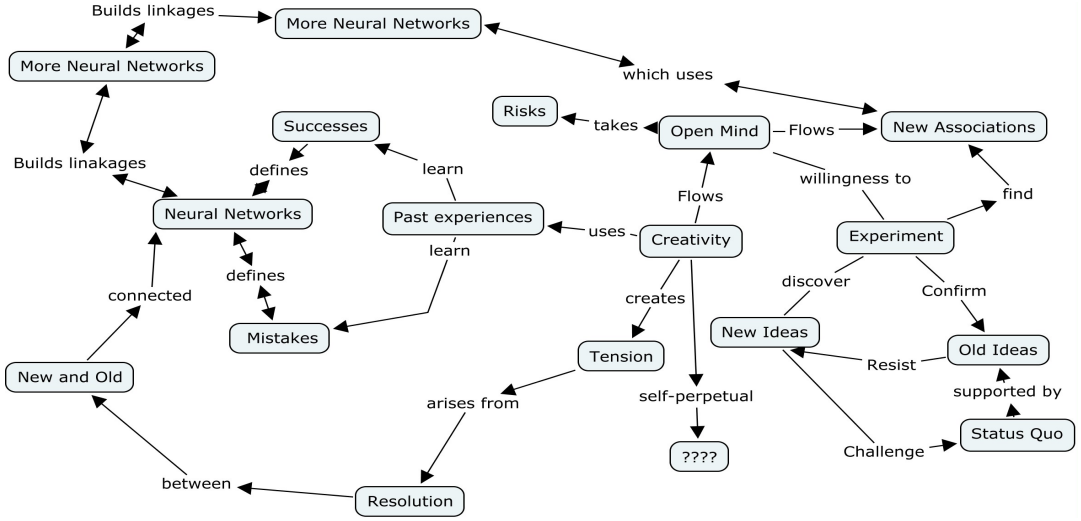
http://cmap.ihmc.us

Concept Map - Creativity

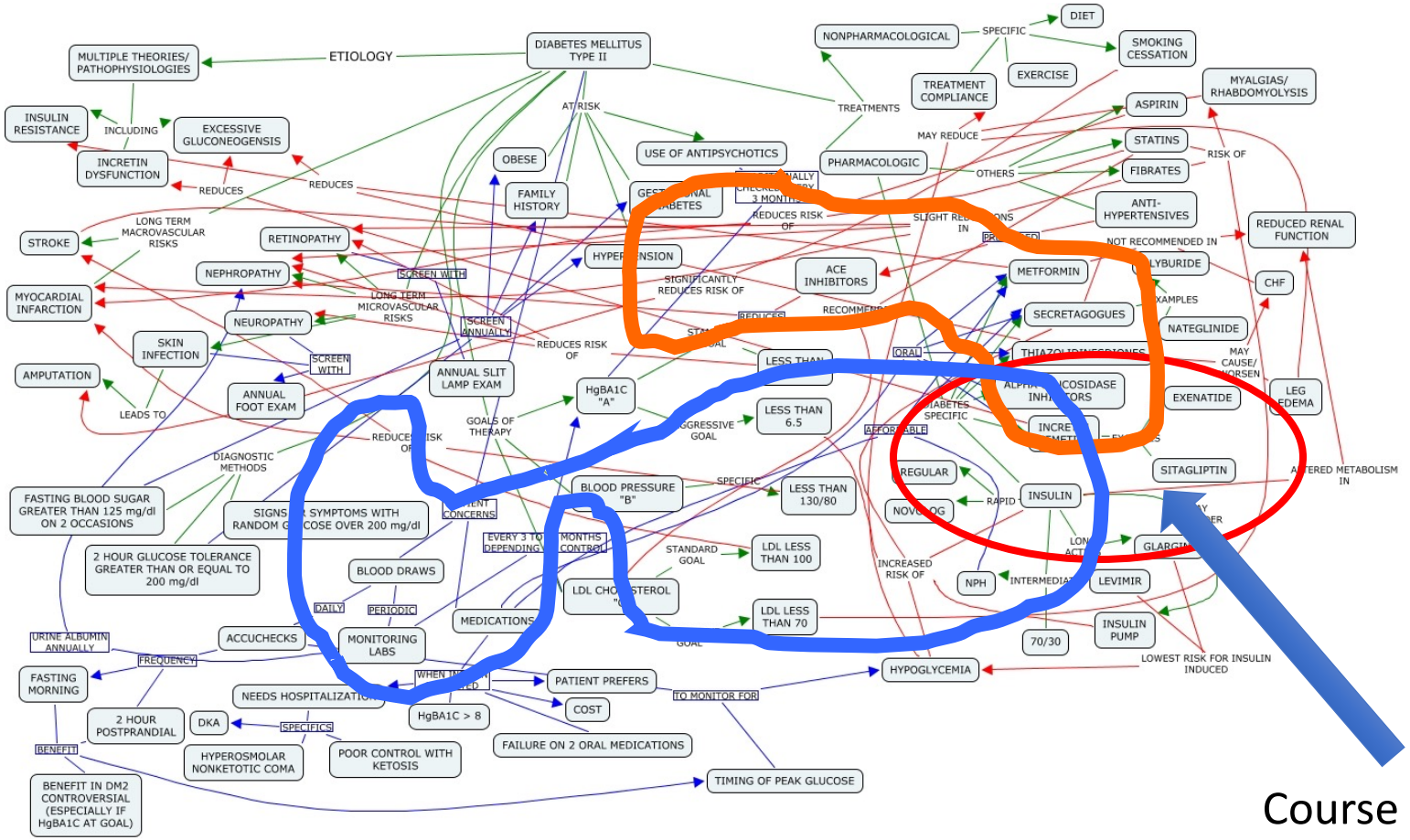
Business Faculty



Psychology Faculty



Nomological Network



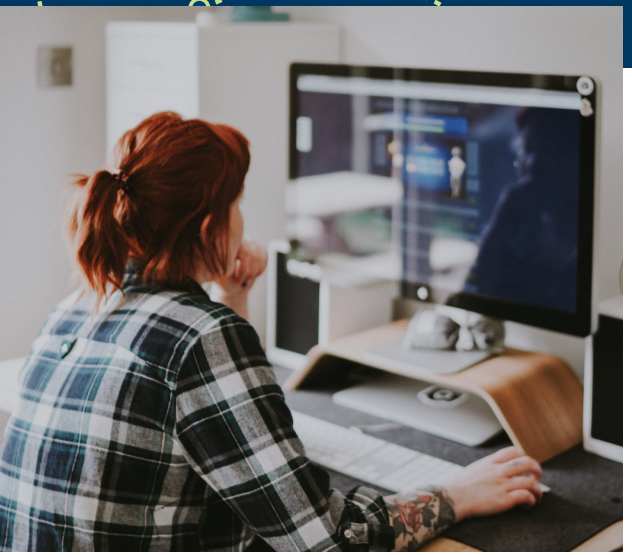
Course content

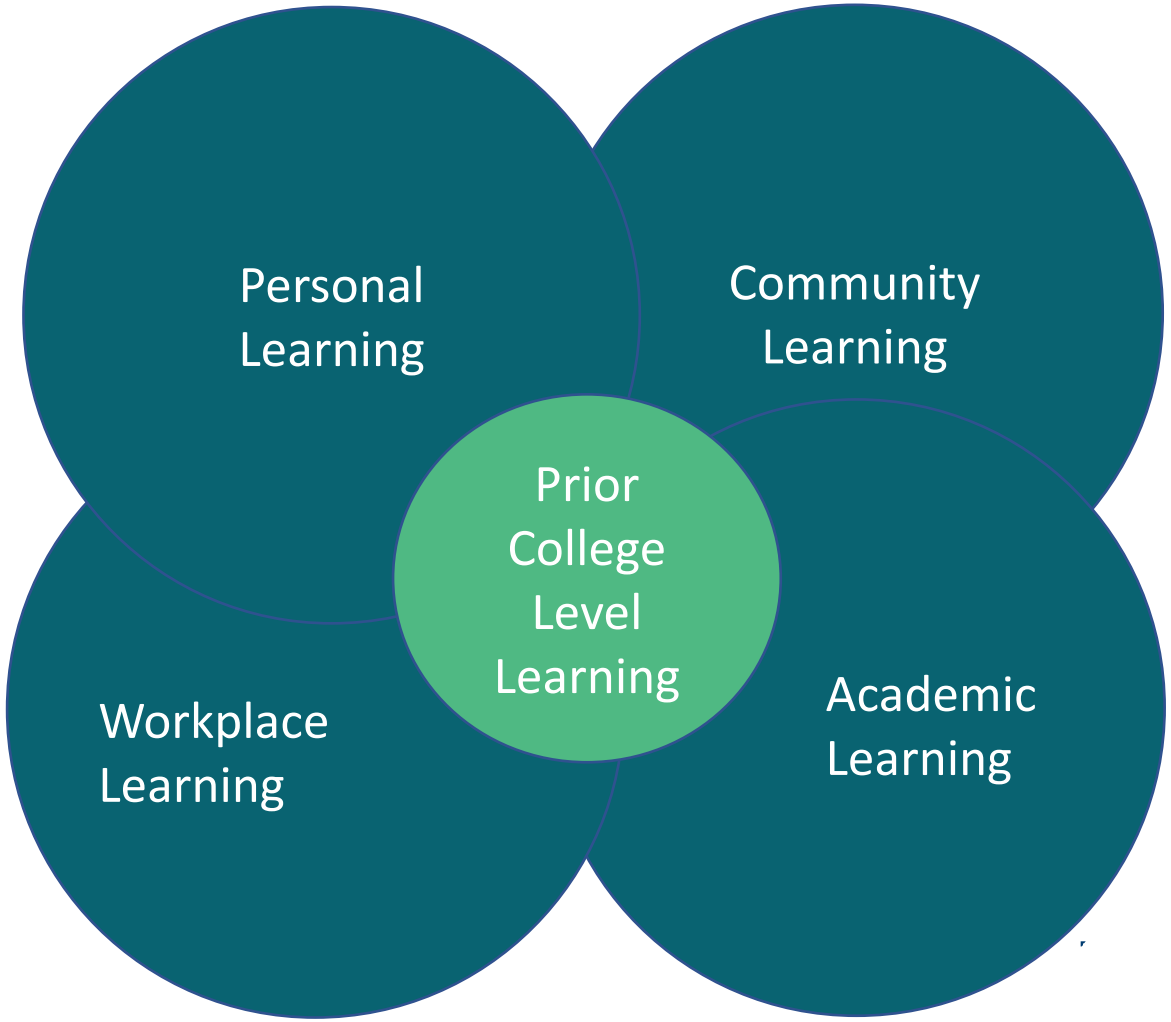
http://cmap.ihmc.us

Some thoughts about assessing learning

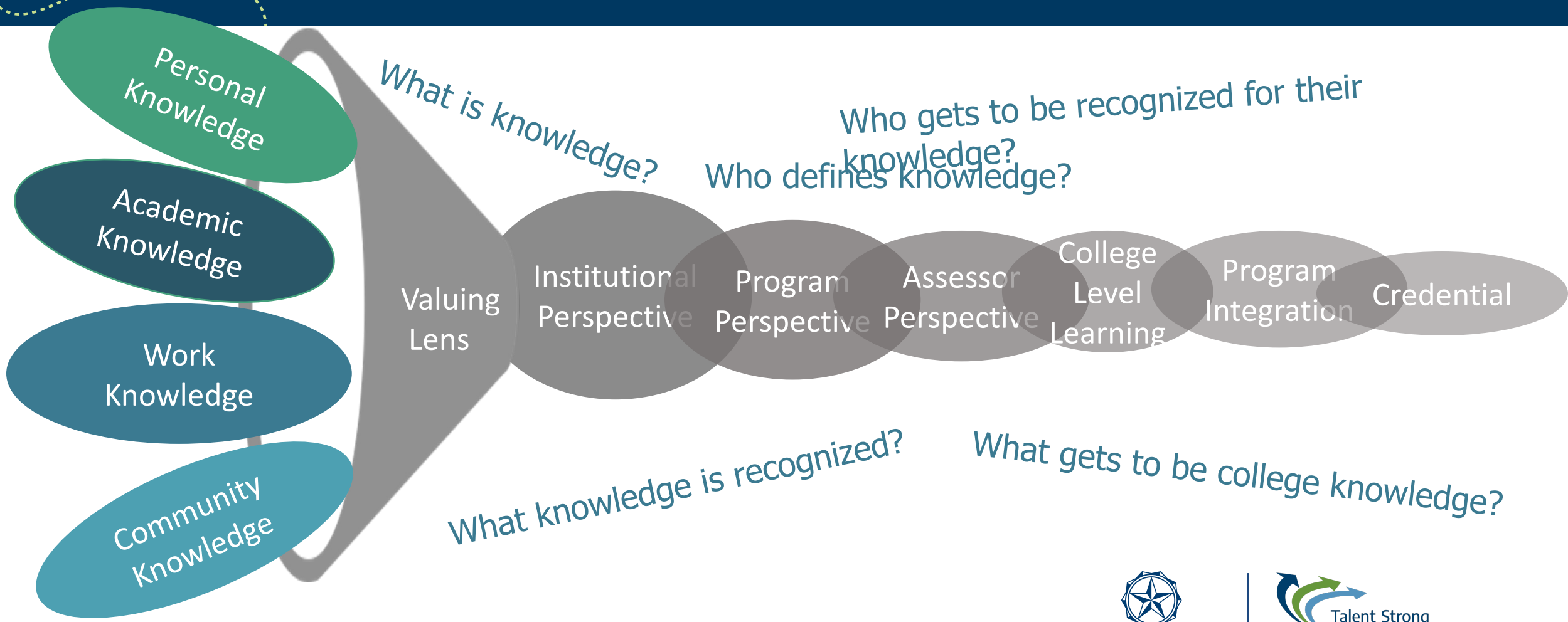
1. What is learned within or outside of a class is >, <, =, or ≠ what is taught in the class
2. Not everyone learns the same within a class
3. How one learns and the context of learning is important – but how learners connect learning is essential
4. College-level learning can be assessed regardless of the source

Prior Learning is embedded within experiences





Knowledge Definition



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Credit for Prior Learning Process

1

Recognize Learning

- Various sources of learning
- Articulating learning
- Documenting learning

2

Validate Learning

- Different types of assessments
- Assessment Criteria

3

Credential Learning

- Award non-credit recognition
- Award academic credit
- Apply towards a course and credential

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Types of CPL

CPL Assessment	Criteria	Knowledge Domains
Standardized Examinations	Set Standards	Declarative
Military Learning	Set Standards	Declarative, Procedural, Strategic
Workplace Learning	Workplace Standards	Declarative, Procedural, Strategic, Integrative
Licenses, Certifications, & Other Credentials	Set Standards	Declarative, Procedural
Course Challenge Exams	Set Standards	Declarative, Procedural, Strategic
Individual Portfolio Assessments	Determine individual learning	Declarative, Procedural, Strategic, Integrative, Self-Knowledge

Aligning Student Learning

Course Learning & Assessment

Learning Outcomes → Learning Activities → Assessment

Prior Learning & Assessment

Learning Competencies → Assessment → Learning Experiences

Discussion Question

What is college-level learning?

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Parallel strategies from work to school

HIGHER EDUCATION

- Degree Pathways
- Degree Planning
- Programs
- Learning Outcomes
- Instruction
- Student Supports
- Team Projects
- Technology to Learn
- Individual & Cohort Focus

INDUSTRIES

- Career Pathways
- Career Planning
- Job Categories/Descriptions
- Competency/Skill Sets
- Professional Development
- Just-in-time Learning
- Work Teams
- Technology to Work
- Individual & Work Teams Focus

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College Level Learning

Theory - The application, demonstration and context within which the concepts are formed and function.

Communication - The ability to engage in and use sources of communication to share a discourse of thoughts, opinions and information.

Relationship Among Ideas - The ability to shape, engage and interpret ideas to provide analytical and critical perspectives, strategies, abstractions, and synthesis and to explore those ideas through focused questions and discourse.

Utilization of Ideas - The ability to apply and demonstrate ideas and concepts within experiential contexts.

Understanding Self in Relationship to Ideas and Learning - The ability to self-regulate and own one's learning through reflection, suspension of disbelief, intellectual honesty and goal setting and to use self-regulation to engage the learning process.

Understanding of Self, Learning and Ideas in a Broader Context of the World - The ability to bring contextual awareness from an expanded viewpoint to the learning with the awareness of and appreciation for the perspectives of others.

Relationship to the Field and Academe - The learning is related to historical and field relevant perspectives and is consistently viewed as college-level across experts within a field and/or

Types of Knowledge	Indicators of Knowledge	Assessment Strategies
Declarative Knowledge	Learners communicate information, arguments and theories	Request specific information and explanations
Procedural Knowledge	Learners address methodology and application and/or demonstrate procedures or tasks	Observation of an action or explanation of how something is done
Strategic Knowledge	Learners analyze elements, relationships, techniques, and principles to solve problems and create and implement plans	Problem-based assessments, planning solutions
Self-Knowledge	Learners manage learning to make use of the environment, information, and feedback	Self-assessments, analyzing performance and solutions
Integrated Knowledge	Learners link different knowledge structures and create new interpretations, strategies and/or new knowledge during novel situations	Applications to new situations, analyze relationships and linkages

Global Learning Qualifications Framework

Framework to assess college-level learning:

- Knowledge, Engagement and Integration
- Eight learning domains
- Two levels: Associate & Bachelor's

www.sunyempire.edu/glqf

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Undergraduate Lower-Level Competencies (Handout)

Build a foundational knowledge-base using broad and specific knowledge, skills, and competencies as applied to relevant theories, methodologies, practices and quantitative applications.
Gather, review, analyze, evaluate and respond to defined or routine problems drawing on relevant theoretical, practical, and prior knowledge and experiences.
Apply relevant concepts, theories, and technical and professional knowledge in the analysis and resolution of practical issues within particular contexts.
Research and collect information and relevant data from a wide range of resources to answer questions and/or solve problems; evaluate the quality, relevance, currency and accuracy of that information; and select and interpret appropriate information for the situation, problem or question.
Engage in decision-making according to the standards of practice and ethics of the field.
Communicate knowledge and demonstrate skills in content areas accurately, coherently and clearly that are informed by key concepts, techniques, developments and ethical standards in the field through the use of appropriate techniques, including: written, oral, visual and/or technology-facilitated methods.

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCY CLUSTERS

1. Engages self-assessment and inquiry to transfer and apply learning throughout life.
2. Engages interpersonal, cross-cultural and empathy competencies to communicate effectively.
3. Collaborates and works in teams with a customer focus.
4. Uses critical thinking, reflective learning and creativity to plan, organize, and solve problems.
5. Has initiative to be a catalyst and resilient, while also being adaptive and flexible.
6. Approaches work and learning with quality and integrity.
7. Knows the basic principles and concepts, mathematics, and tools and technologies of the field.

Learning Frameworks & Schemas

- Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) – http://degreeprofile.org
- Connecting Credentials Framework – http://connectingcredentials.org/framework/
- Global Learning Qualifications Framework – www.esc.edu/glqf
- Employment & Educational Competencies Clusters – (nan.travers@esc.edu)
- Essential Learning Outcomes & Value Rubrics (AAC&U) – https://www.aacu.org/essential-learning-outcomes and https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics

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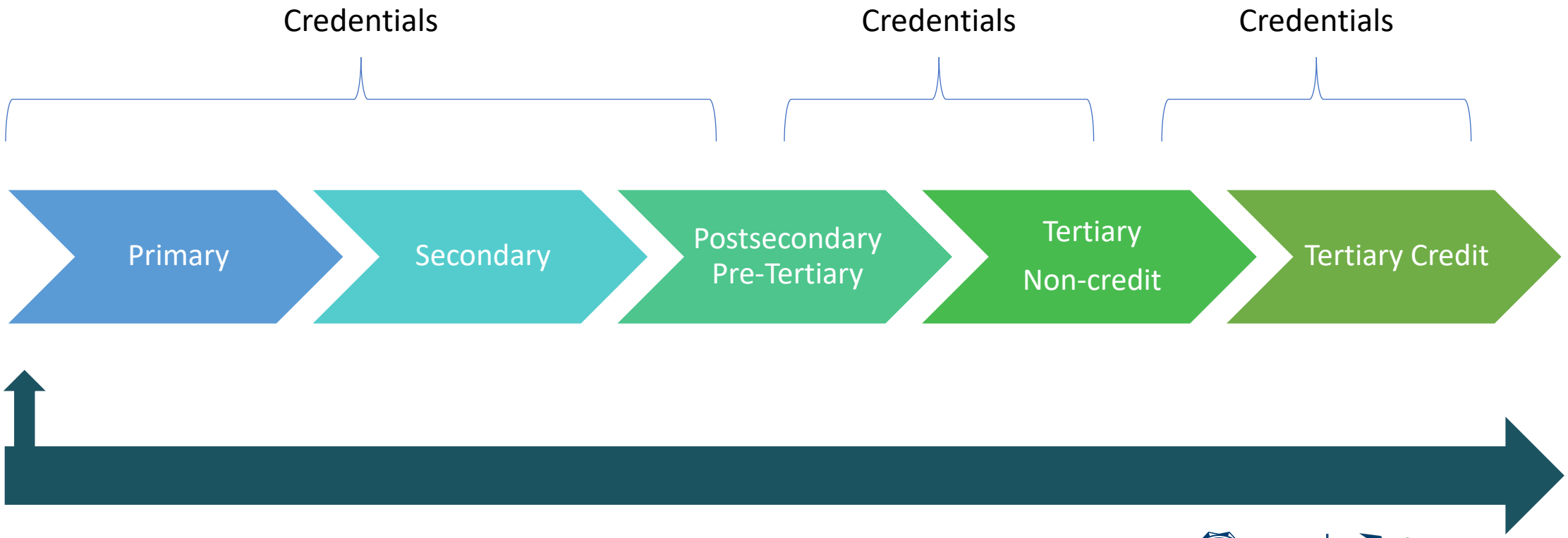
What do we need to know?

How would you describe this learning?

What types of questions would you ask someone to learn more about what they know?

What type of evidence would you want to see to validate the learning?

Where does the learning fit on a continuum?



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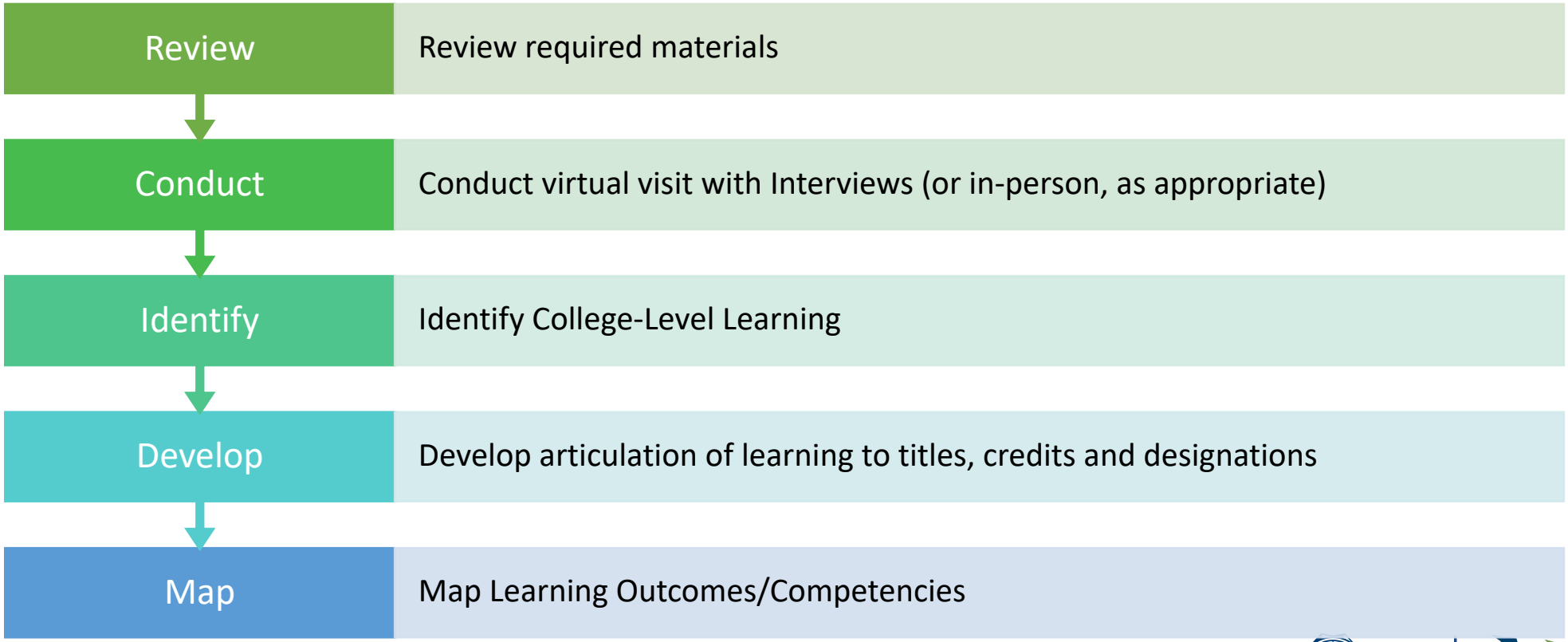
Workplace Learning Evaluation Process



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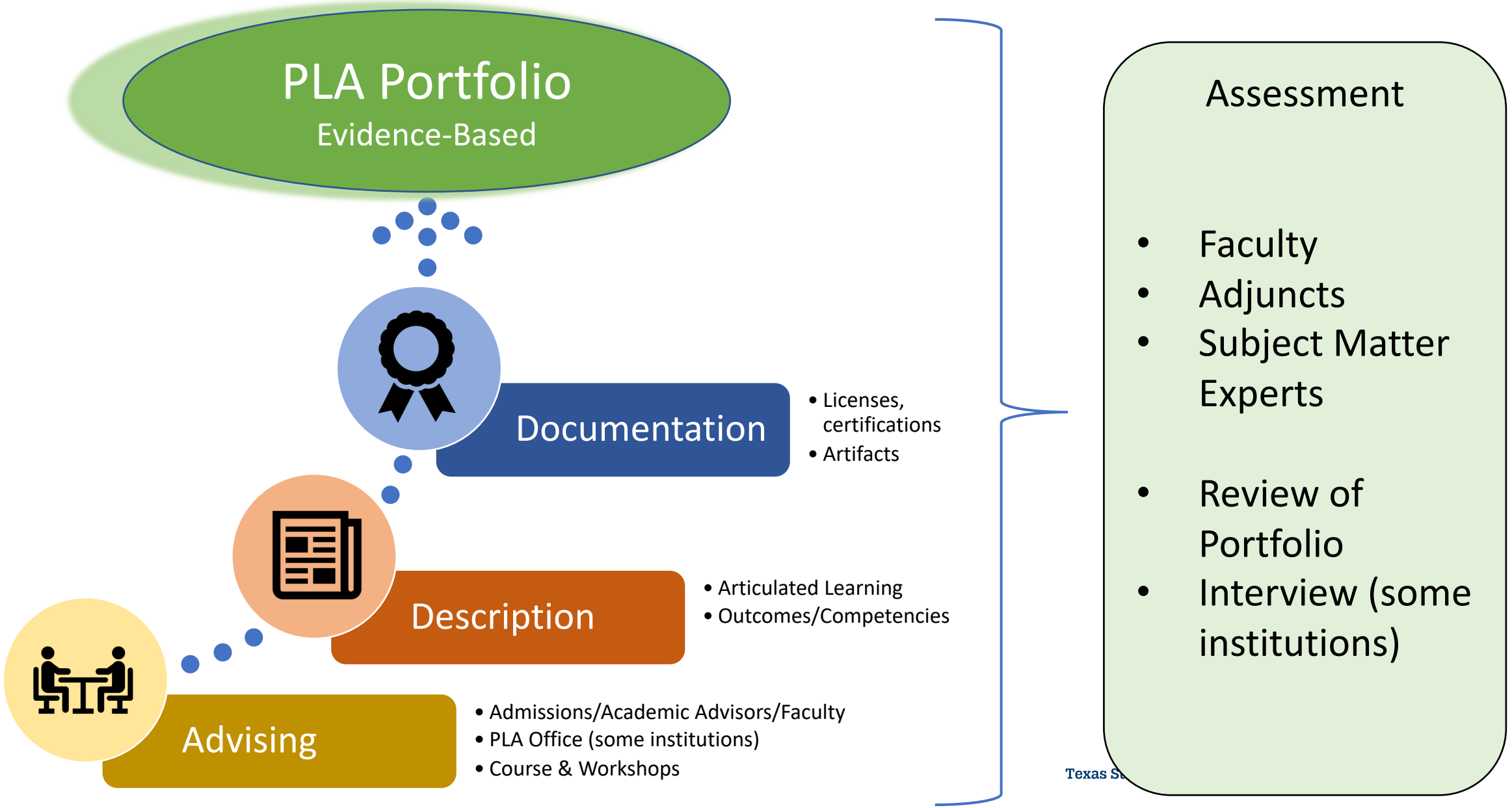
PLA Portfolio
Evidence-Based
Documentation
• Licenses, certifications
• Artifacts
Description
• Articulated Learning
• Outcomes/Competencies
Advising
• Admissions/Academic Advisors/Faculty
• PLA Office (some institutions)
• Course & Workshops
Assessment
• Faculty
• Adjuncts
• Subject Matter Experts
• Review of Portfolio
• Interview (some institutions)

PLA Portfolio Competencies

1

Competency 1:

Identify Your Learning

2

Competency 2:

Use Your Learning

3

Competency 3:

Position Your Learning

4

Competency 4:

Communicate Your Learning

What criteria would you use to assess this learning?

Approaches Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Criteria 1	Criteria 1	Criteria 1
Criteria 2	Criteria 2	Criteria 2

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Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Evaluations Continuum (DRAFT)

Classic iPLA

- ✓ Individual student's work is individually evaluated by experts affiliated with educational institution

Cohort PLA

- ✓ Group focus
- ✓ Shared process; different learning topics for each student or same learning topic

Assisted PLA

- ✓ Designed for students with similar learning, executed at an individual level
- ✓ Could use challenge guides/exams

Embedded PLA

- ✓ Surround PLA with course learning.
- ✓ Could embed PLA within microcredential which could then be embedded in a degree program.
- ✓ Could be input for a PLE

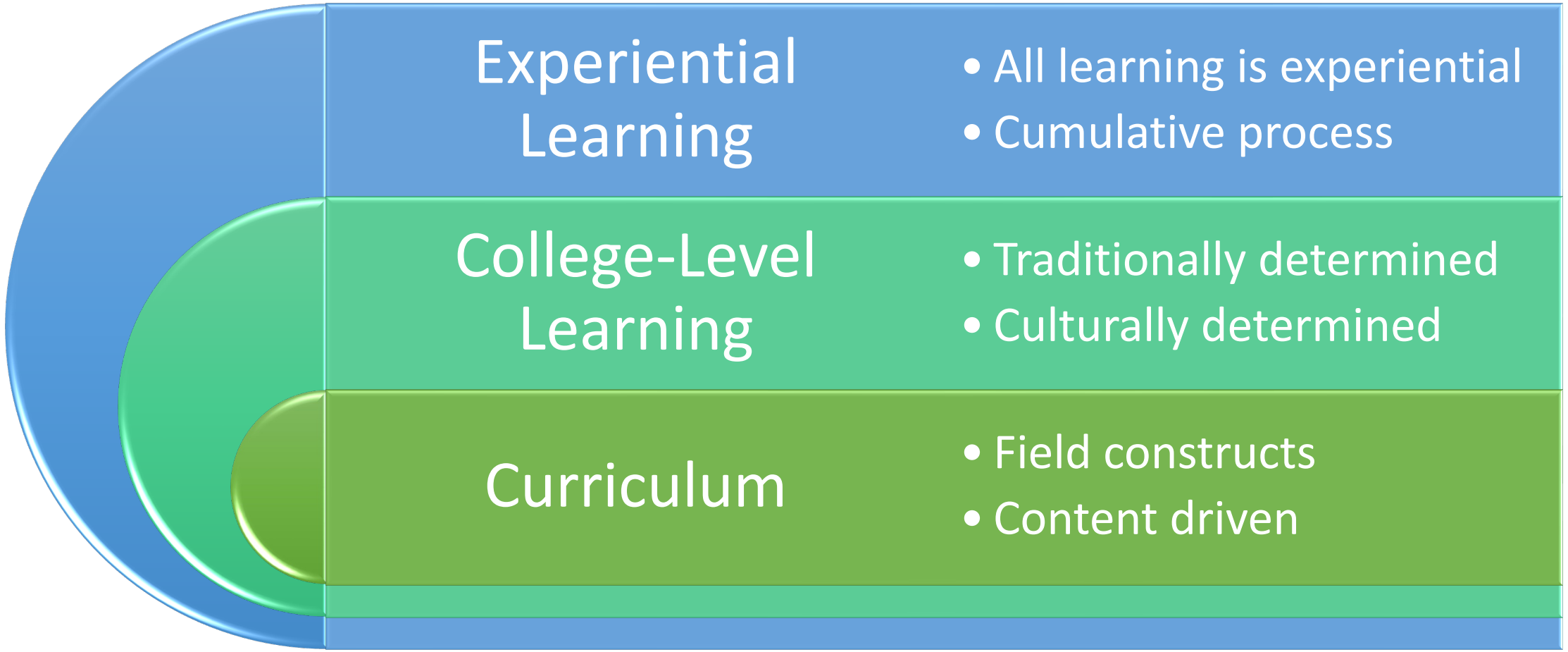
Classic PLE

- ✓ Pre-evaluated; focused on specific workplace/industry certifications, trainings and licenses.
- ✓ Could embed PLE within microcredential which could then be embedded in a degree program.

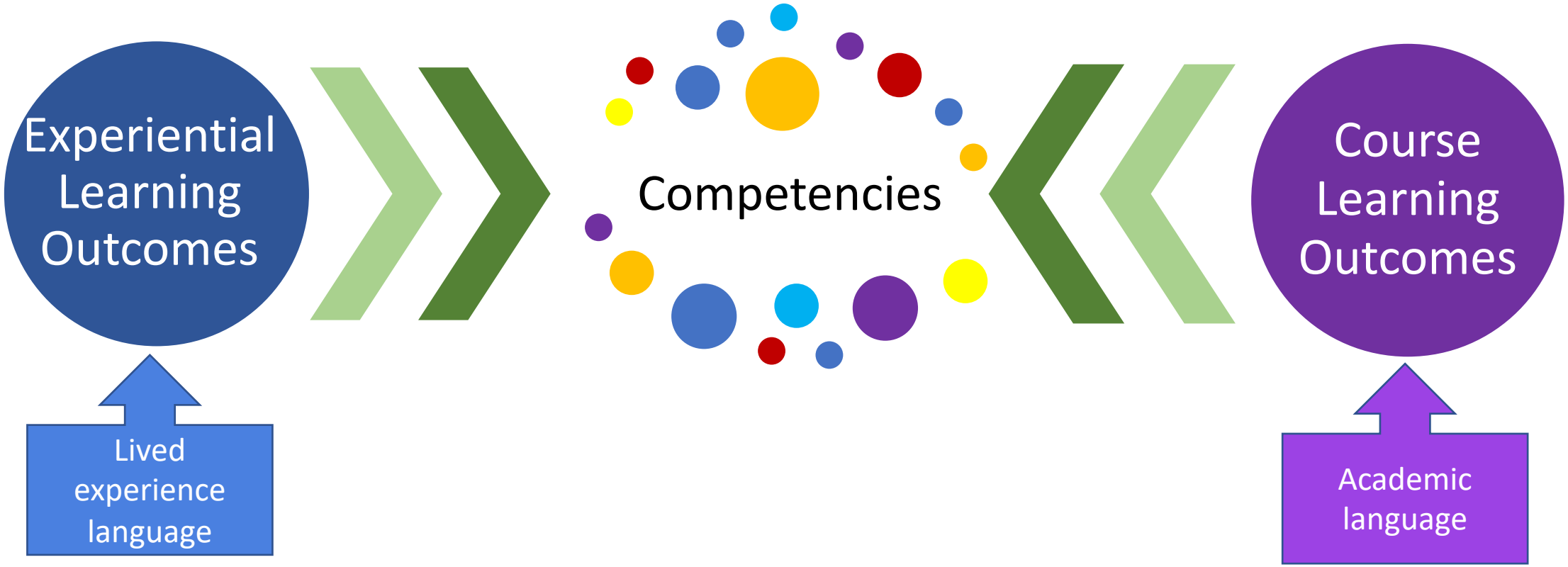
✓ Collaboration with a partner and/or tied to workplace certification(s)

✓ College credit

Integrating Learning into College Curriculum



Competencies are a universal translator



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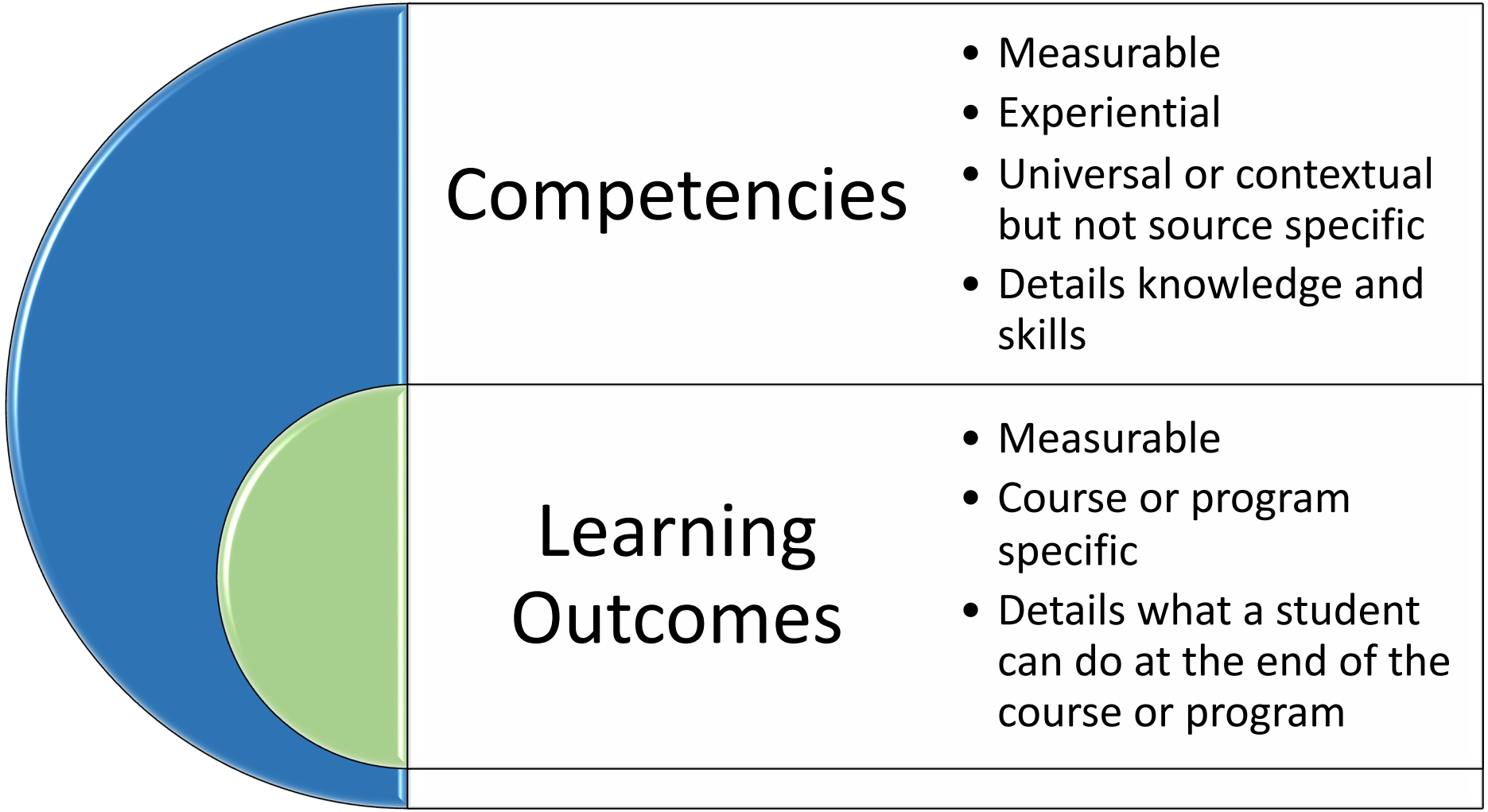
Competencies vs. Learning Outcomes



Anatomy of Competencies & Learning Outcomes

Competencies

- Verb – level & complexity
- General transferability
- Application statement

Learning Outcomes

- Verb – level & complexity
- Specific transferrable
- Output statement

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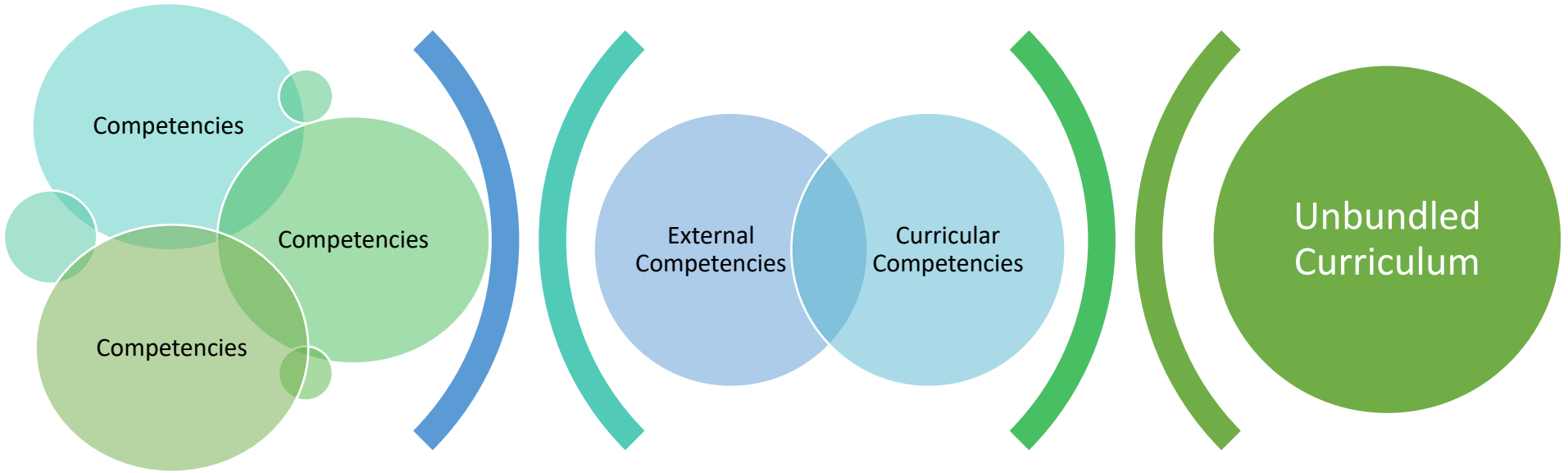
Curricular Integration



Learning Gained from Work & Experiences

Connect Competencies Across the Curriculum

Embed Competencies Within the Curriculum

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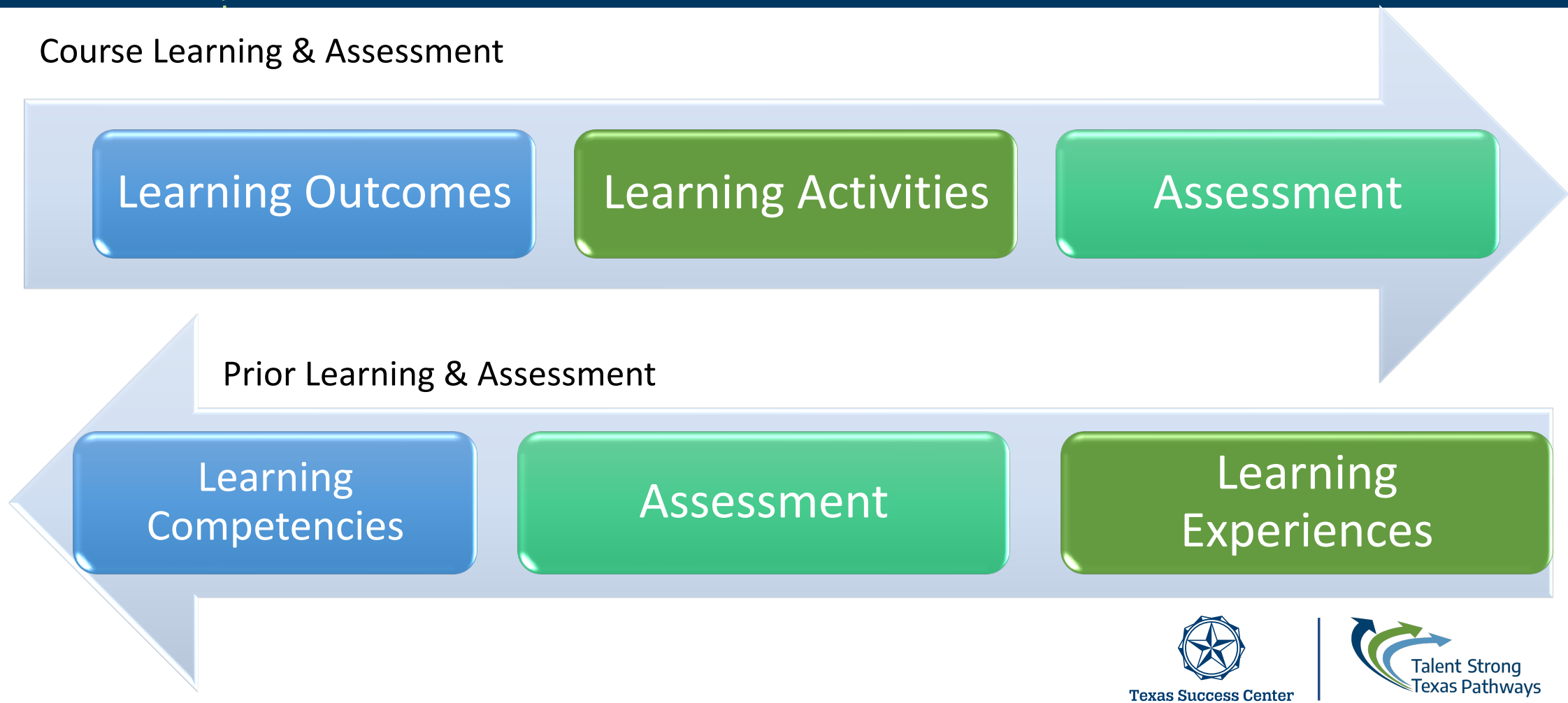
Aligning Student Learning



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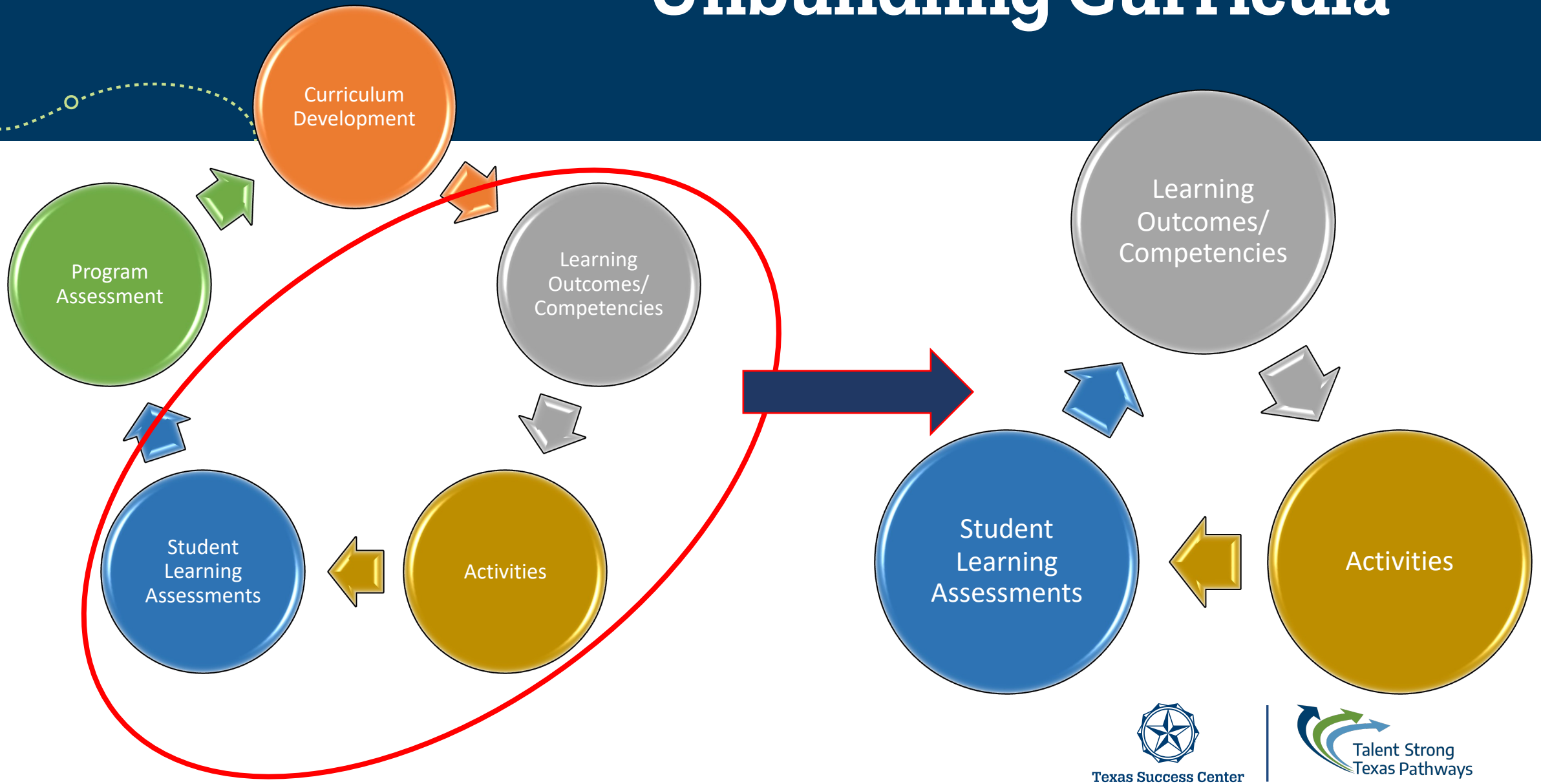
Unbundling Curricula



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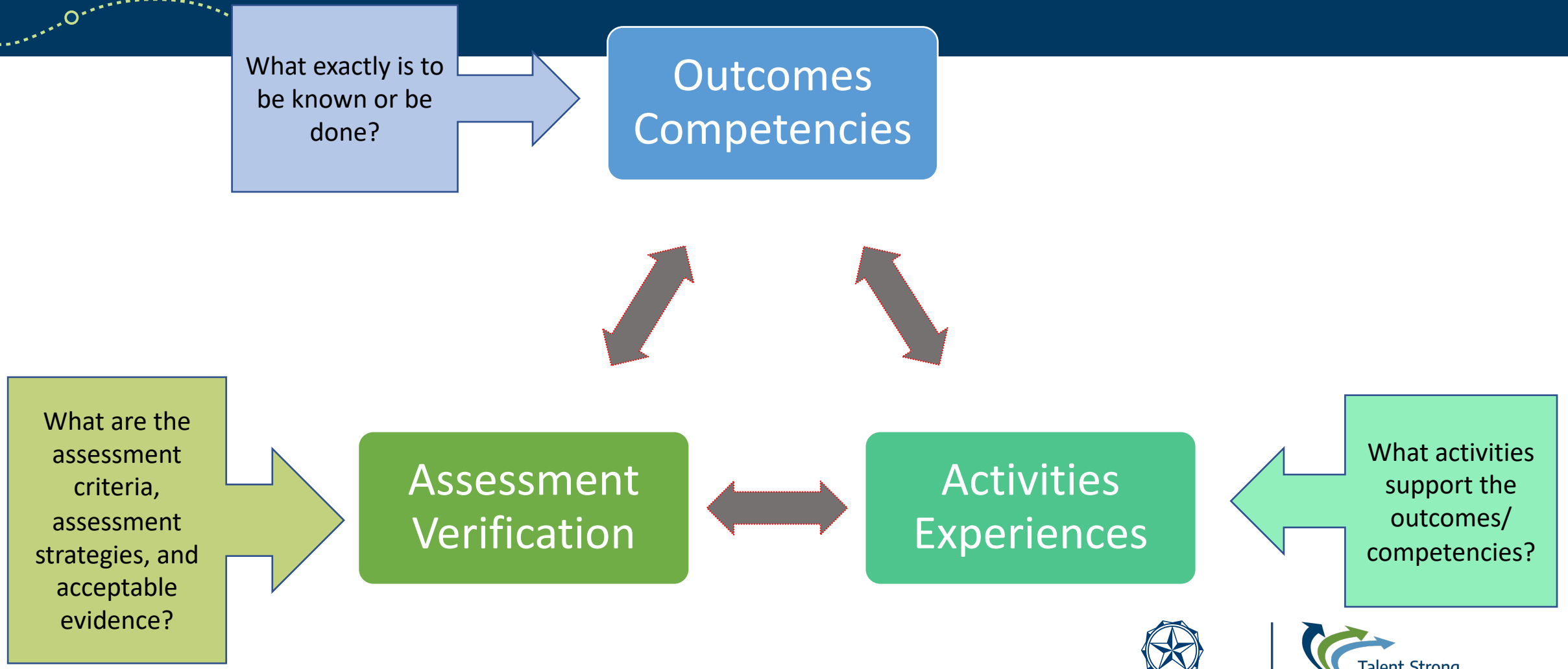
Relationship remains the same regardless of the order



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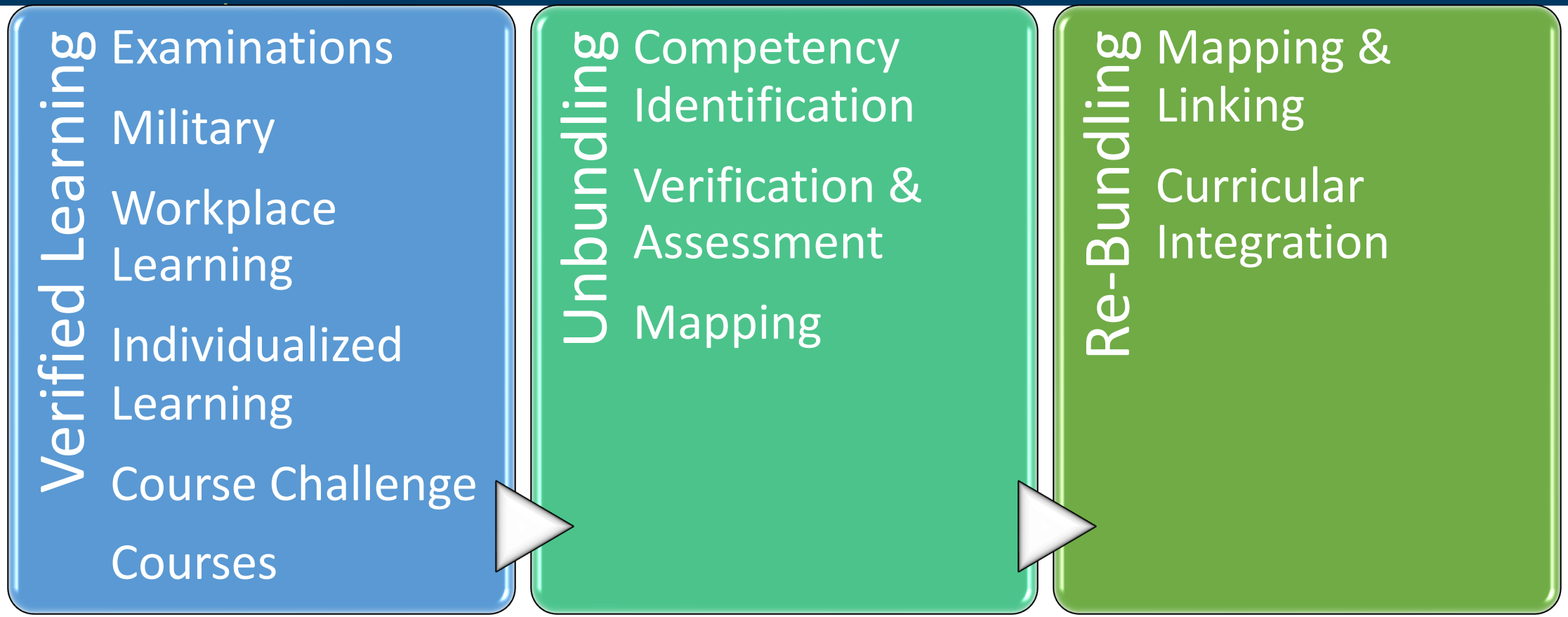
Unbundling & Re-Bundling Learning



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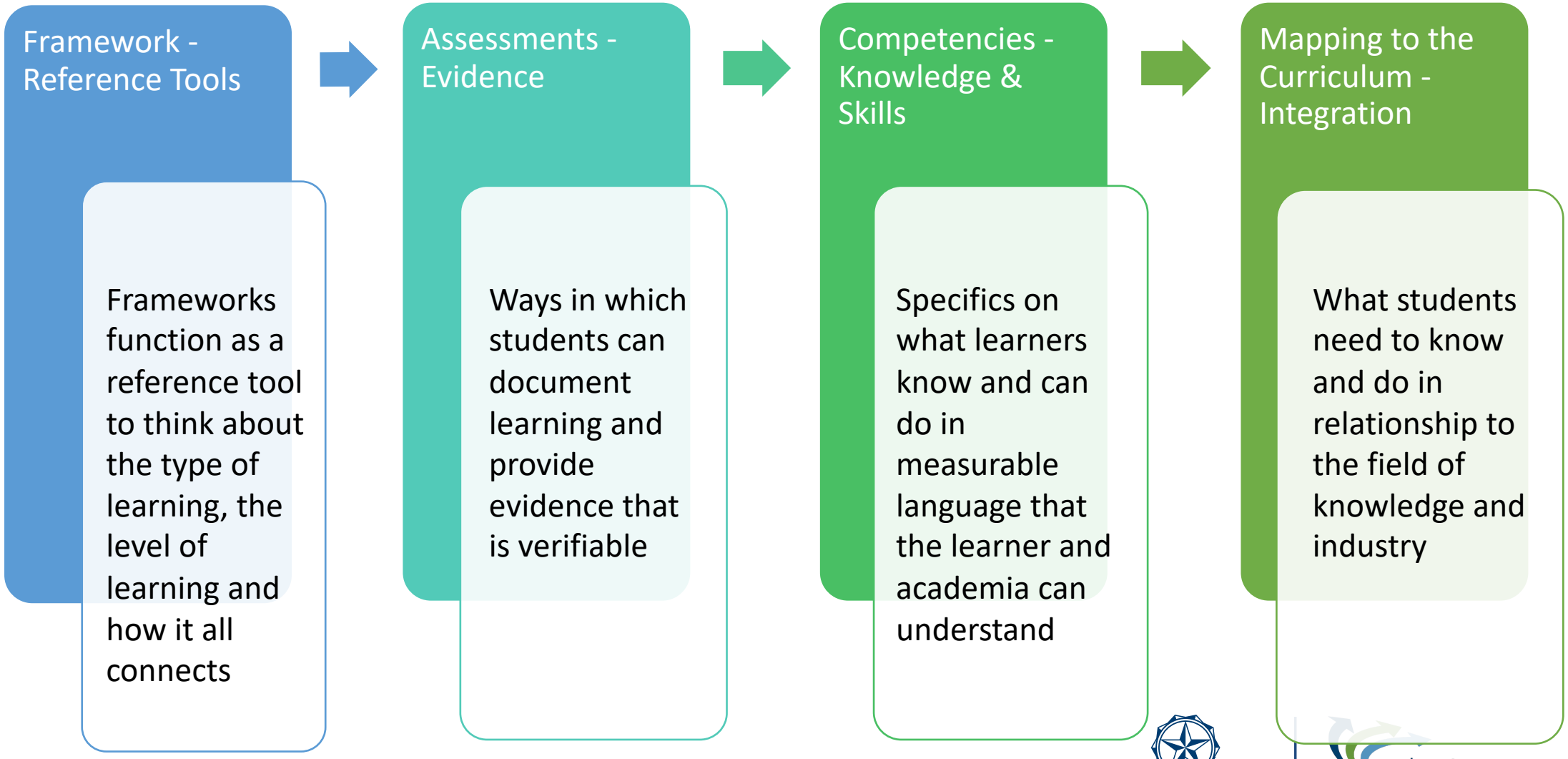
Competency-Based Learning Analysis



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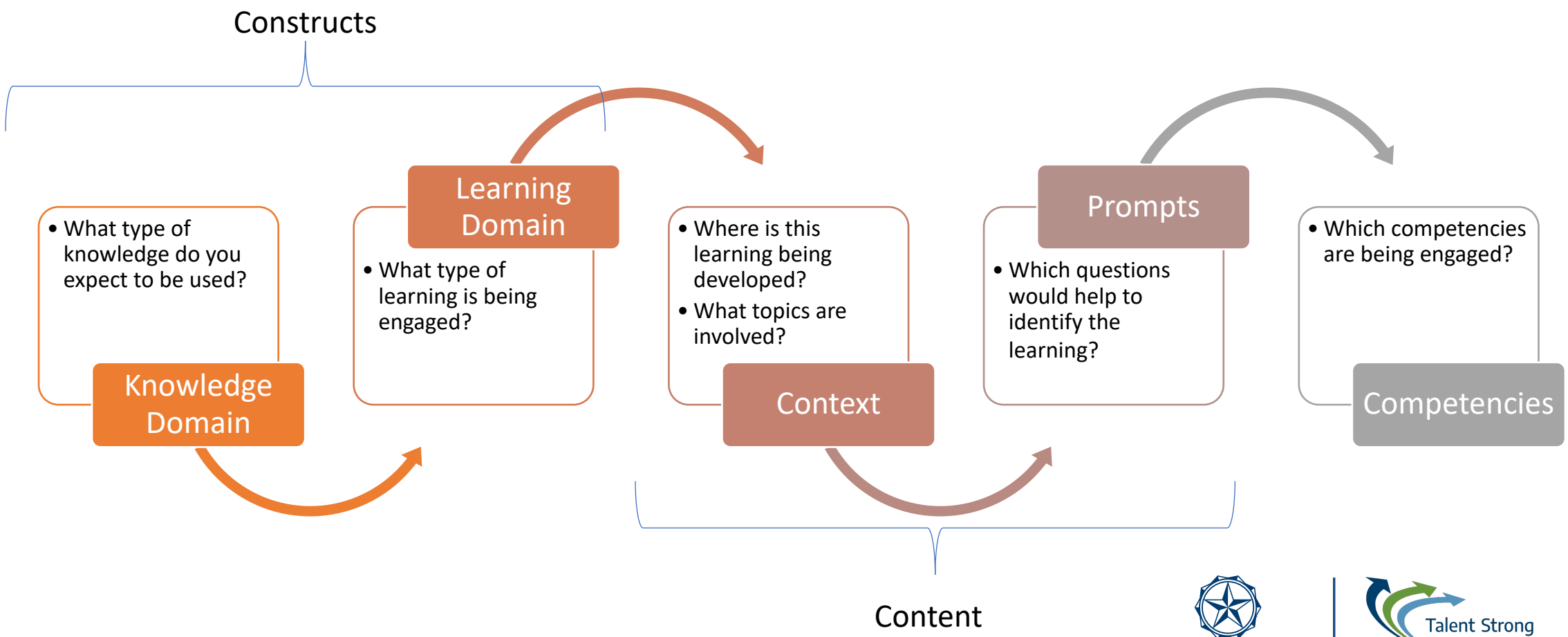
Mapping Competencies



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Bottom Line – Credit for Prior Learning must have:

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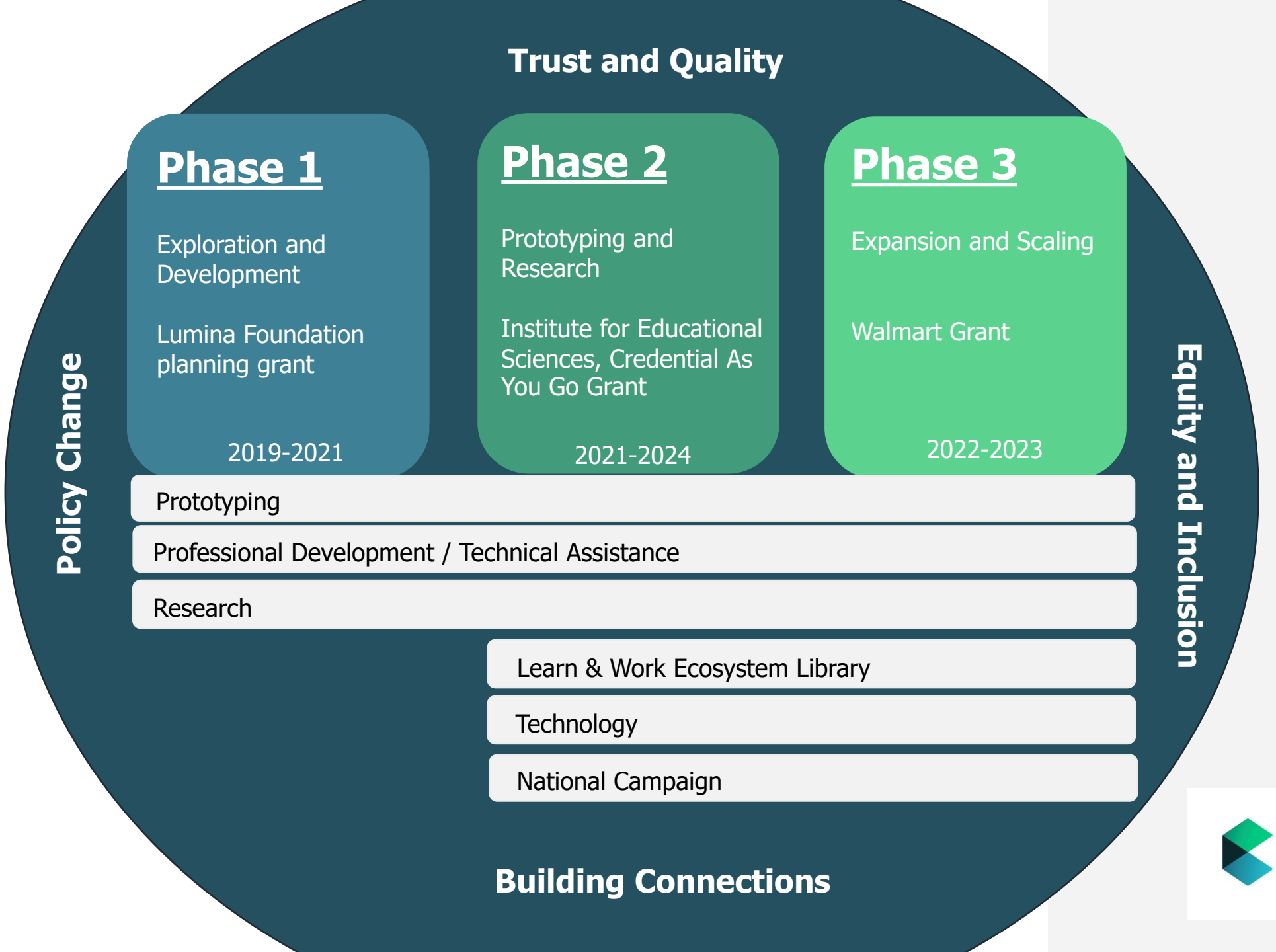
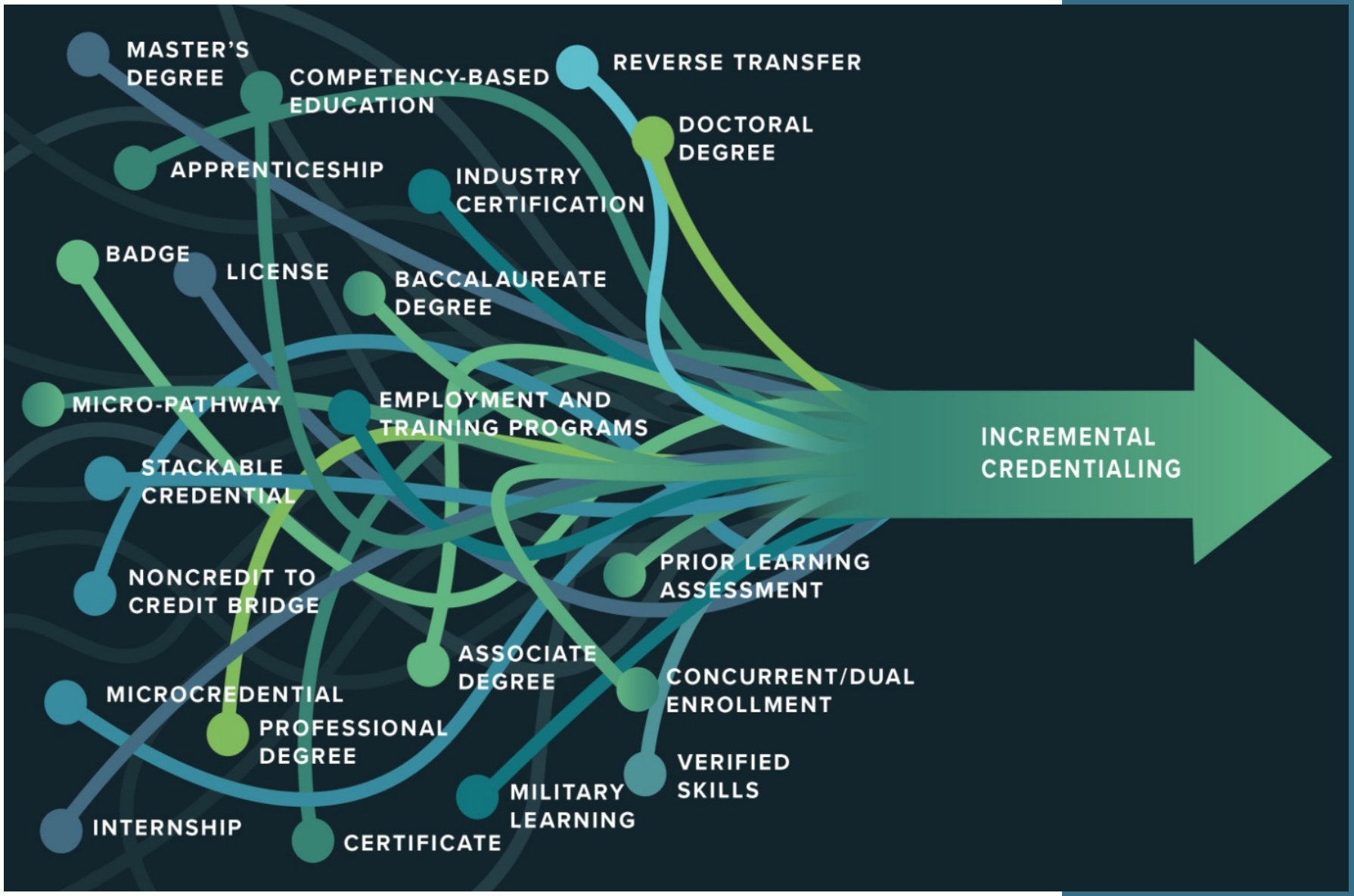
CREDENTIAL AS YOU GO

TRANSFORMING THE NATION'S **CREDENTIALING SYSTEM**



CREDENTIAL AS YOU GO
INCREMENTAL CREDENTIALING

What are Incremental Credentials?

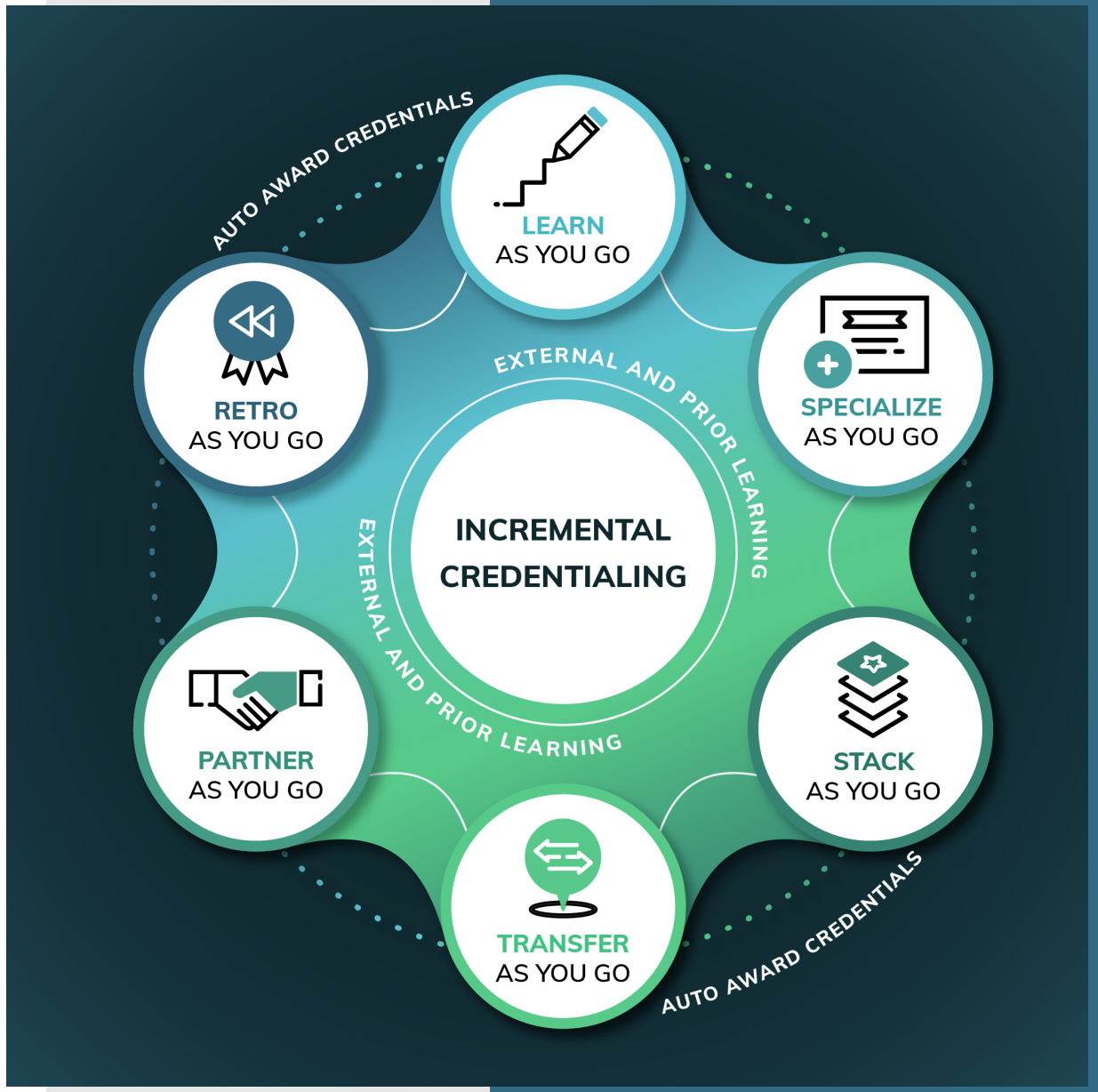


Incremental Credentialing Framework

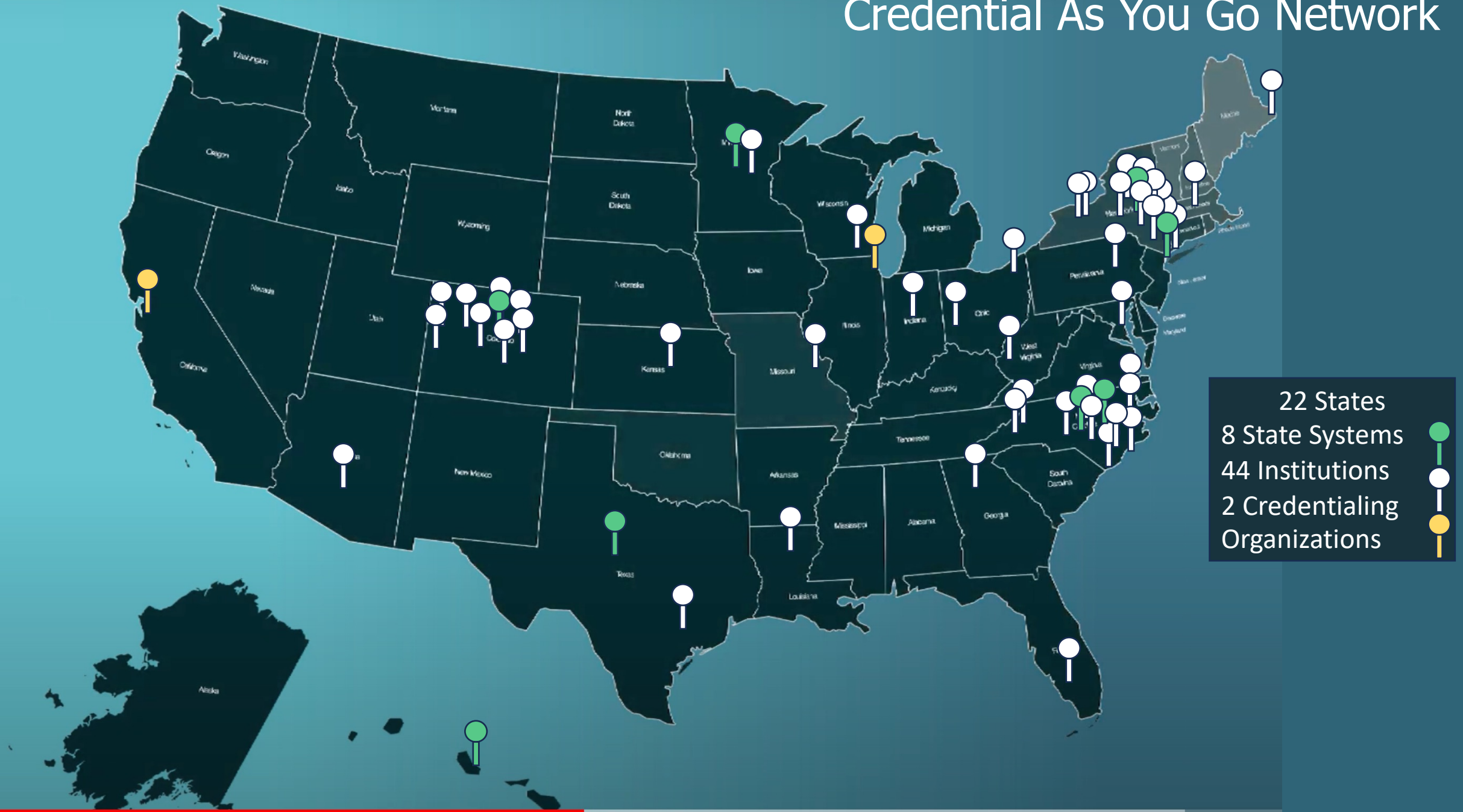
The incremental credentialing process formally credentials learning that individuals acquire along the way so that they can be recognized for employment and further education. The framework provides six approaches to developing and implementing incremental credentials.

Auto-Award

Prior Learning



Credential As You Go Network



Key Features

- Video
- Playbooks
- Summits (videos & briefs)
- Dictionary of Terms
- Case Studies
- Member Profiles
- Briefs
- News Articles & Blogs
- YouTube Channel
- Advisory Board Directory
- Link to Learn & Work Ecosystem Library

https://credentialasyougo.org

Feedback & Questions?

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Talent Strong Texas Pathways Institute #2

Mapping Pathways to Student Post-Completion Goals

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