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Language Assessment
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A systemic view of assessment within an educational context

Neil Jones

Nick Saville

Cambridge English Language Assessment

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Systemic view

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Systemic view

Assessment operates on multiple levels in educational contexts and takes many different forms

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Systemic view

Assessment operates on multiple levels in educational contexts and takes many different forms

How can quantitative and qualitative information, or assessment and teaching expertise, be best combined to promote learning?

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Systemic view

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Systemic view

Our thinking has come together into a model for Learning Oriented Assessment (LOA)

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Systemic view

Our thinking has come together into a model for Learning Oriented Assessment (LOA)

LOA encompasses assessment at all levels:

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Systemic view

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LOA encompasses assessment at all levels:

•the *macro level* - framing educational goals and evaluating outcomes

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Systemic view

Our thinking has come together into a model for Learning Oriented Assessment (LOA)

LOA encompasses assessment at all levels:

•the *macro level* - framing educational goals and evaluating outcomes

•the *micro level* - individual learning interactions which take place in the classroom or outside

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Macro level – the policy context

The wider milieu within which educational processes take place:

Current socio-economic, socio-cultural, and political factors

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Macro level – the policy context

National
or regional language
education policies

Nested
contexts

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Macro level – the policy context

Your educational goals

- Improved teaching and learning
- Improved standards of English language proficiency
- Meeting changing needs of society

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Macro level – the policy context

Goals

Your educational goals

- Improved teaching and learning
- Improved standards of English language proficiency
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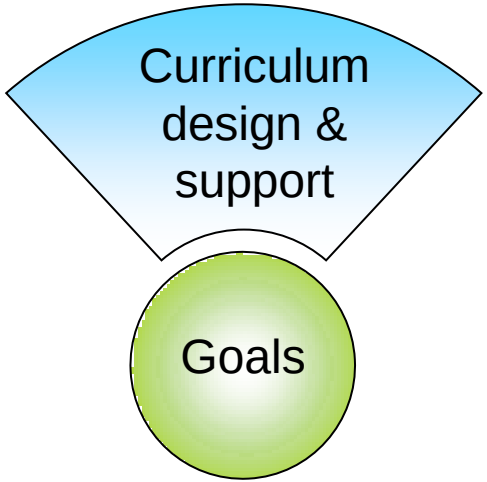
Macro level – the policy context



Your educational goals

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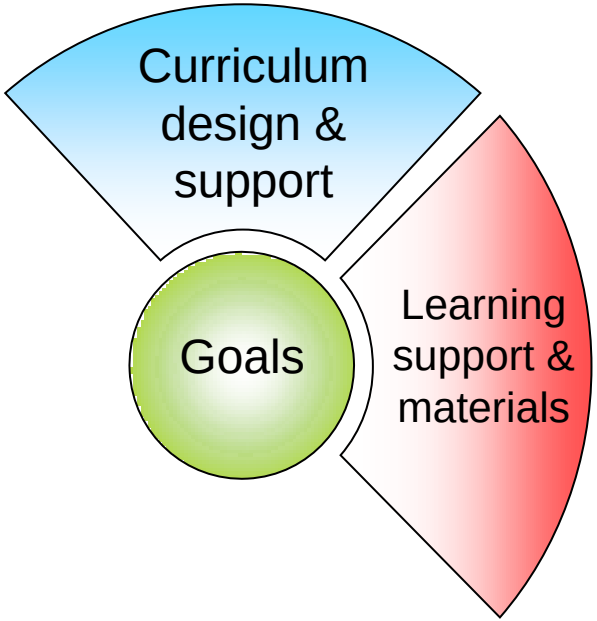
Macro level – the policy context



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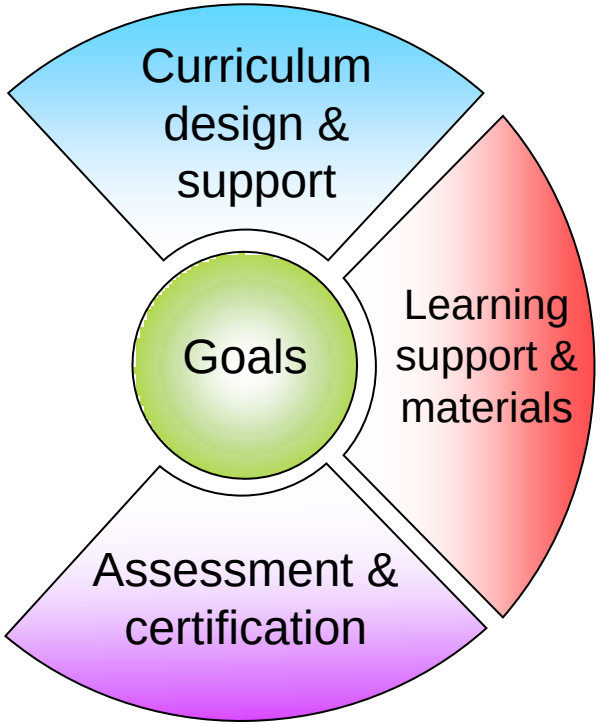

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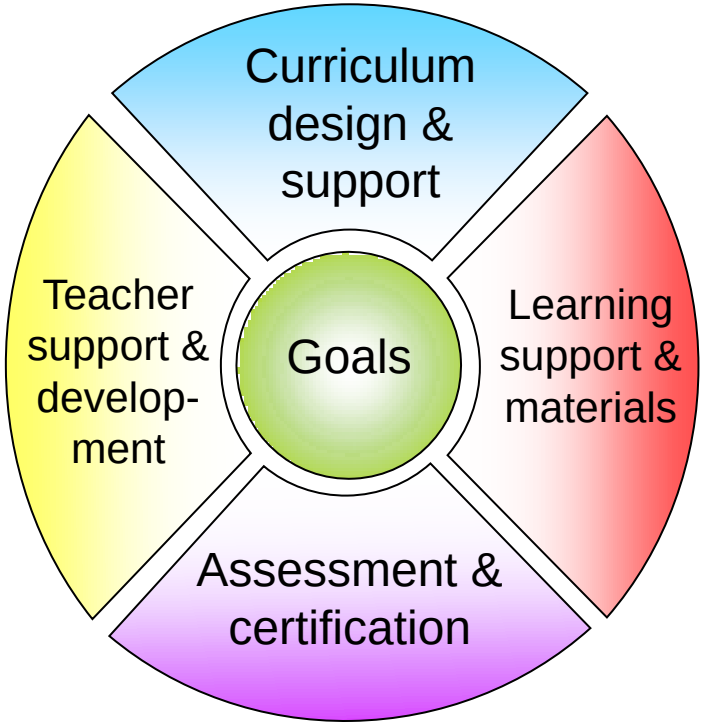
Macro level – the policy context



Your educational goals

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Micro level – the learning environment

The physical or virtual classroom

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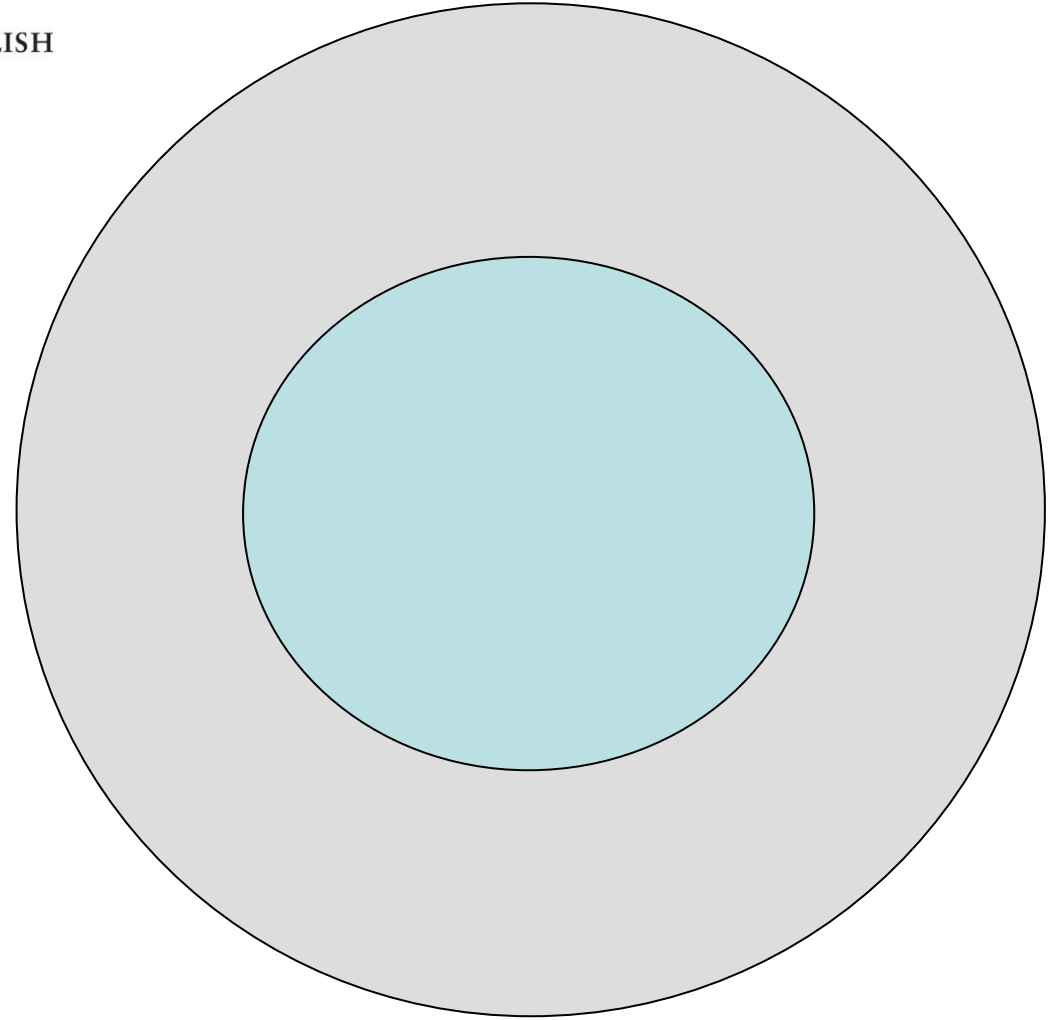

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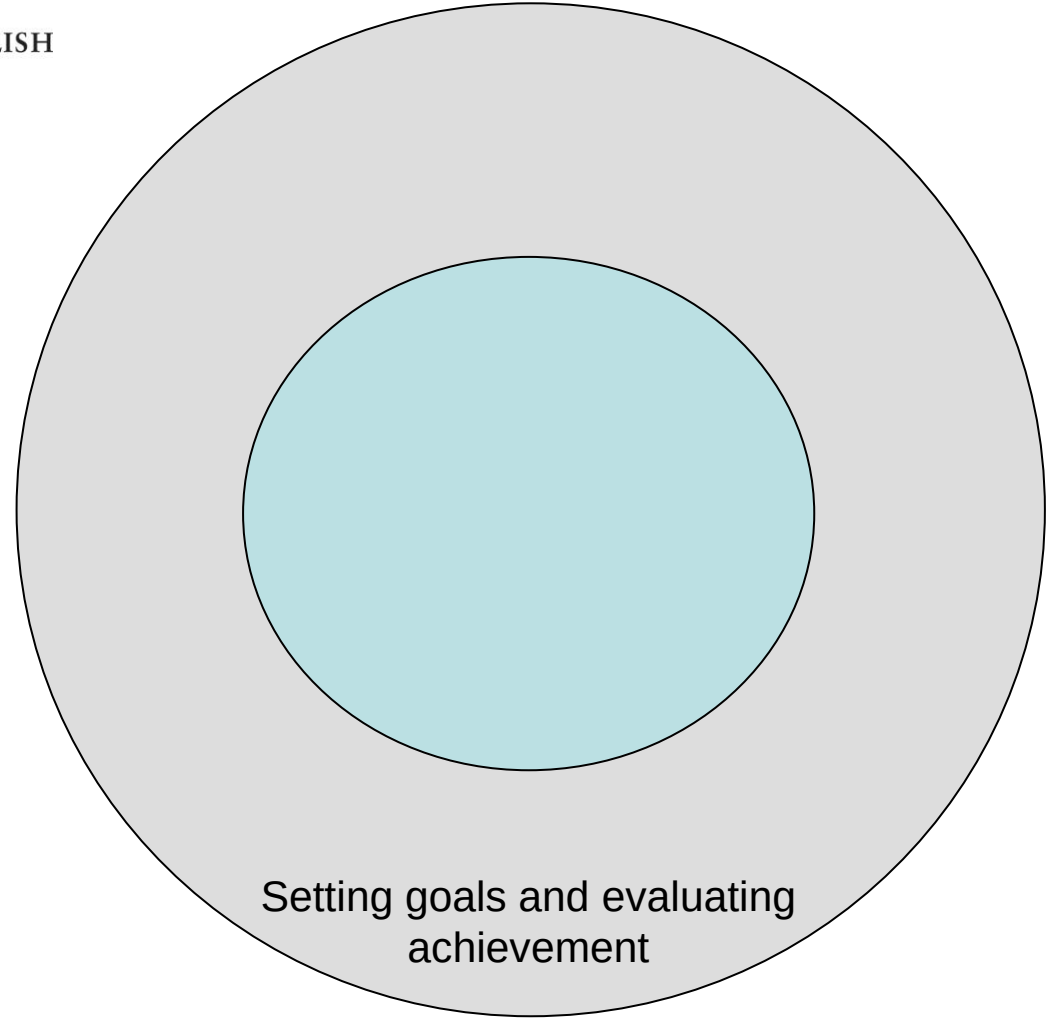

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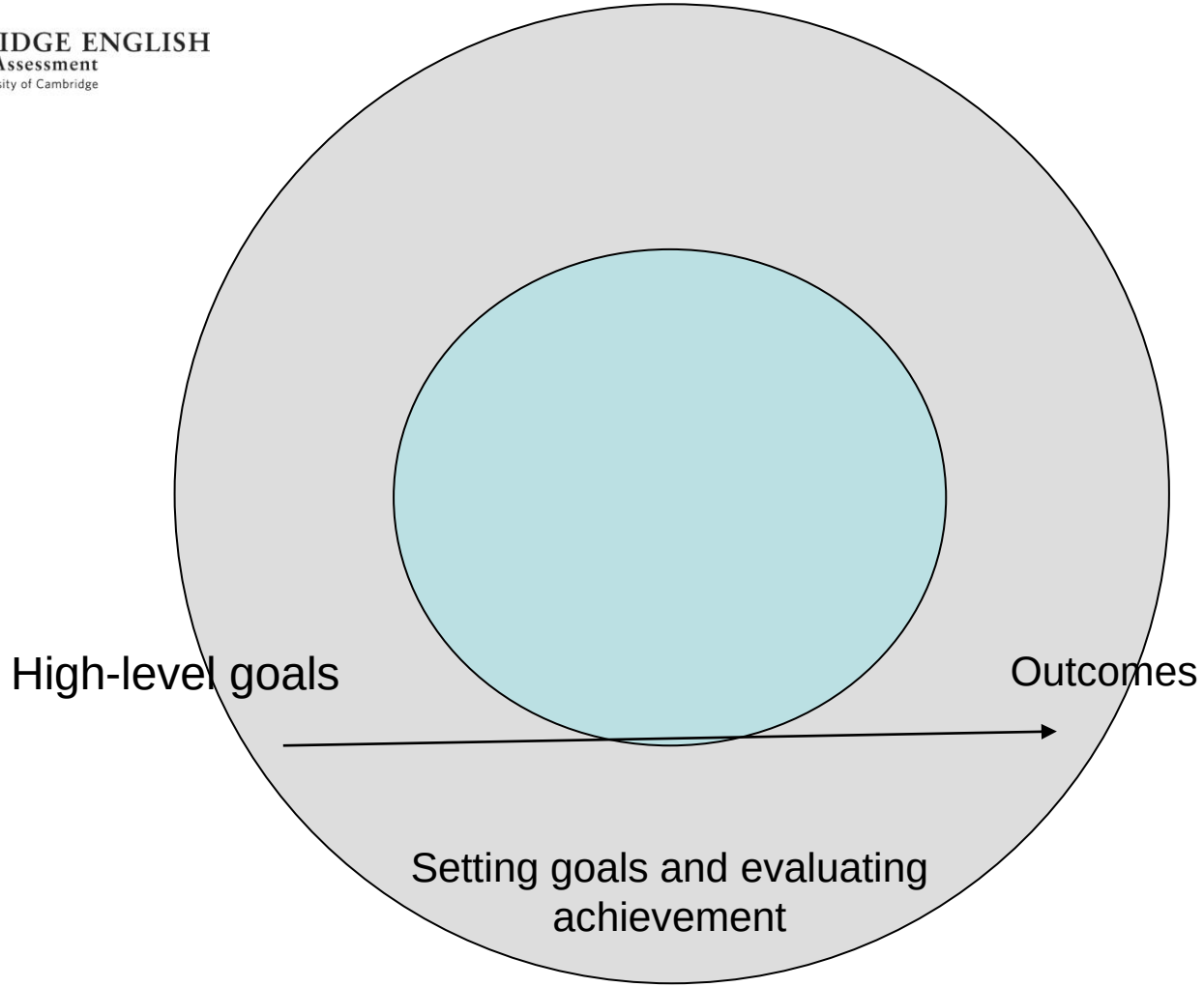
High-level goals
Outcomes
Setting goals and evaluating achievement

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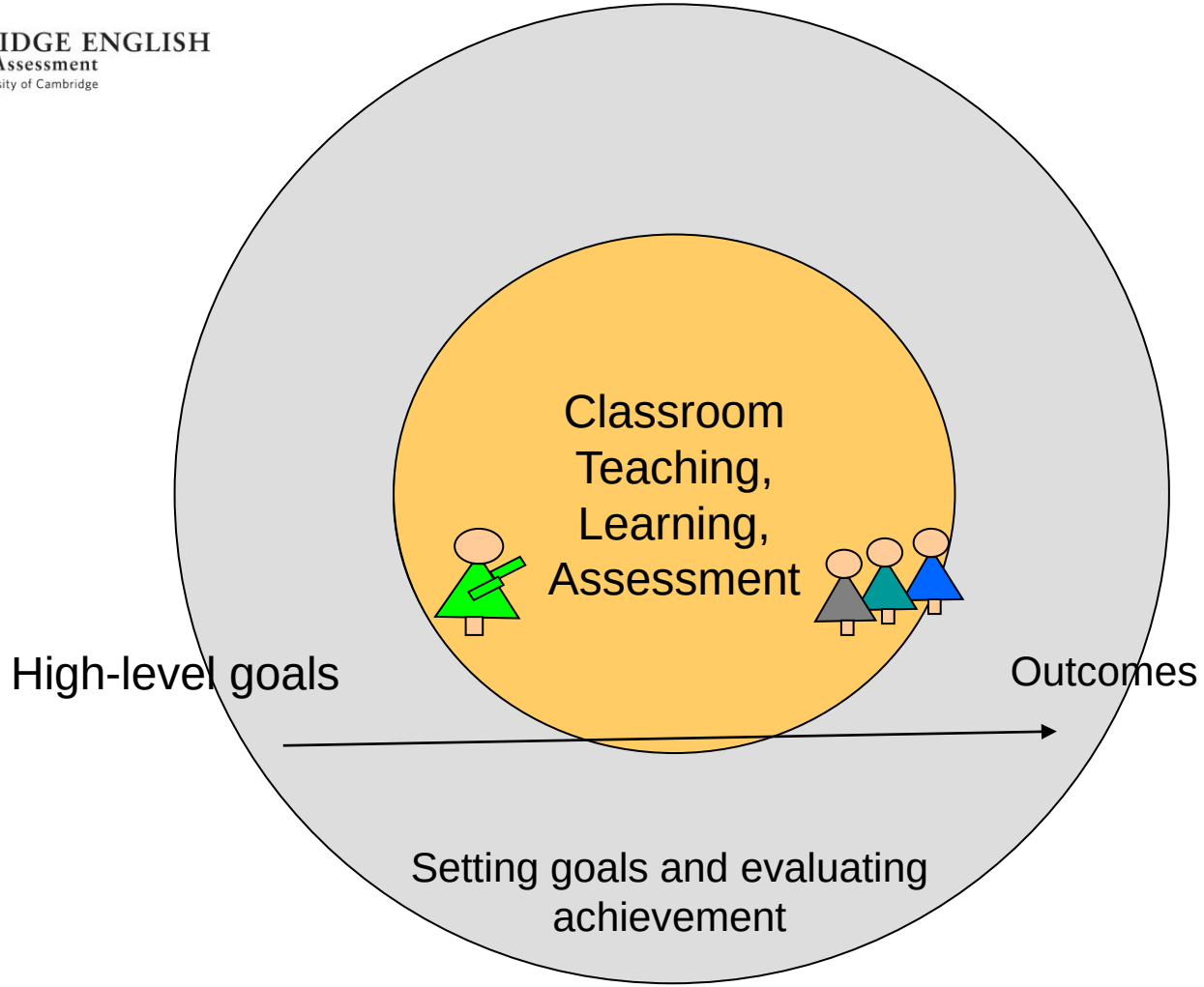
Classroom
Teaching,
Learning,
Assessment
High-level goals
Outcomes
Setting goals and evaluating
achievement

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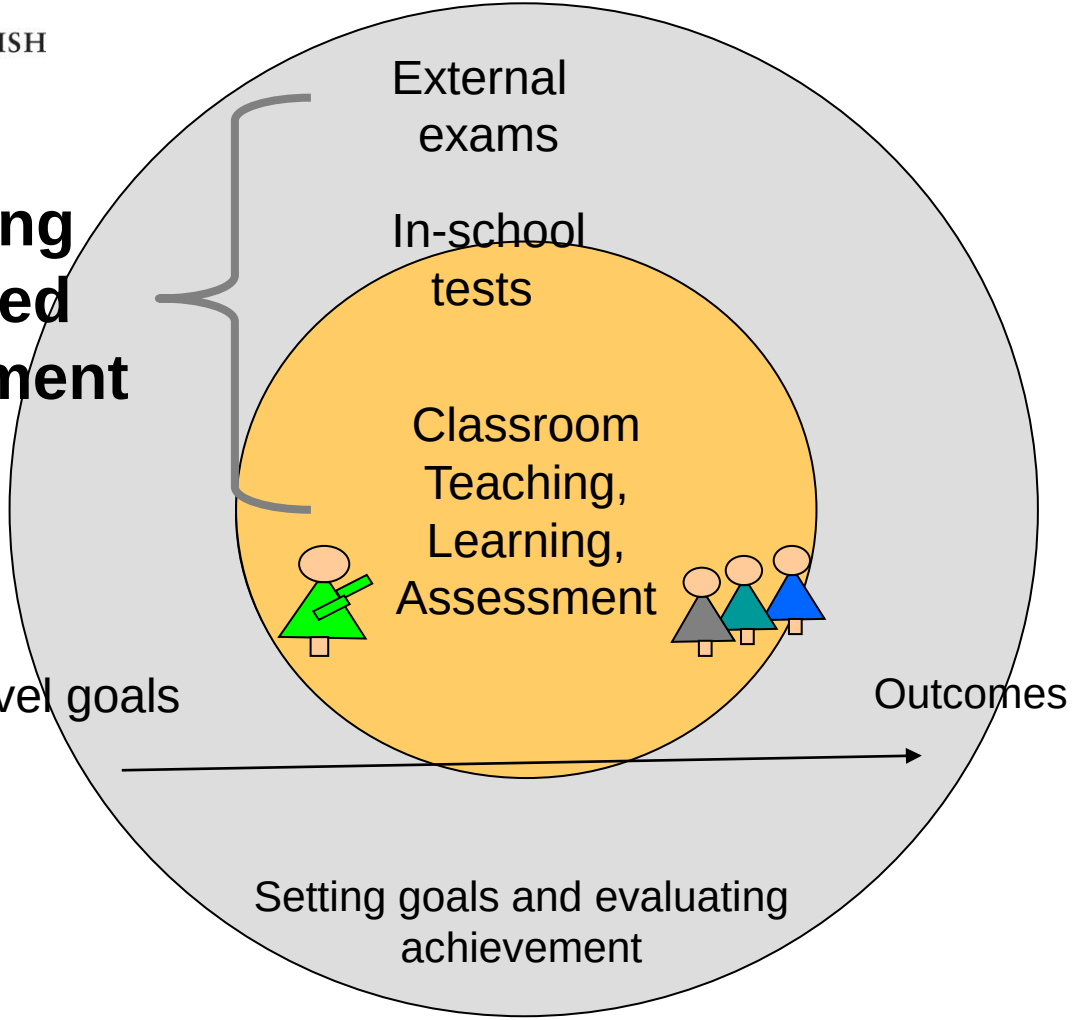
Learning Oriented Assessment



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Cambridge perspective

An international examinations provider with an educational mission

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Cambridge perspective

An international examinations provider with an educational mission

- A range of English exams to meet different educational needs - “fitness for purpose”

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Cambridge perspective

An international examinations provider with an educational mission

- A range of English exams to meet different educational needs - “fitness for purpose”
- Increasingly, educational projects at national / institutional level

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Cambridge perspective

An international examinations provider with an educational mission

- A range of English exams to meet different educational needs - “fitness for purpose”
- Increasingly, educational projects at national / institutional level
- A research focus on educational impact in specific contexts

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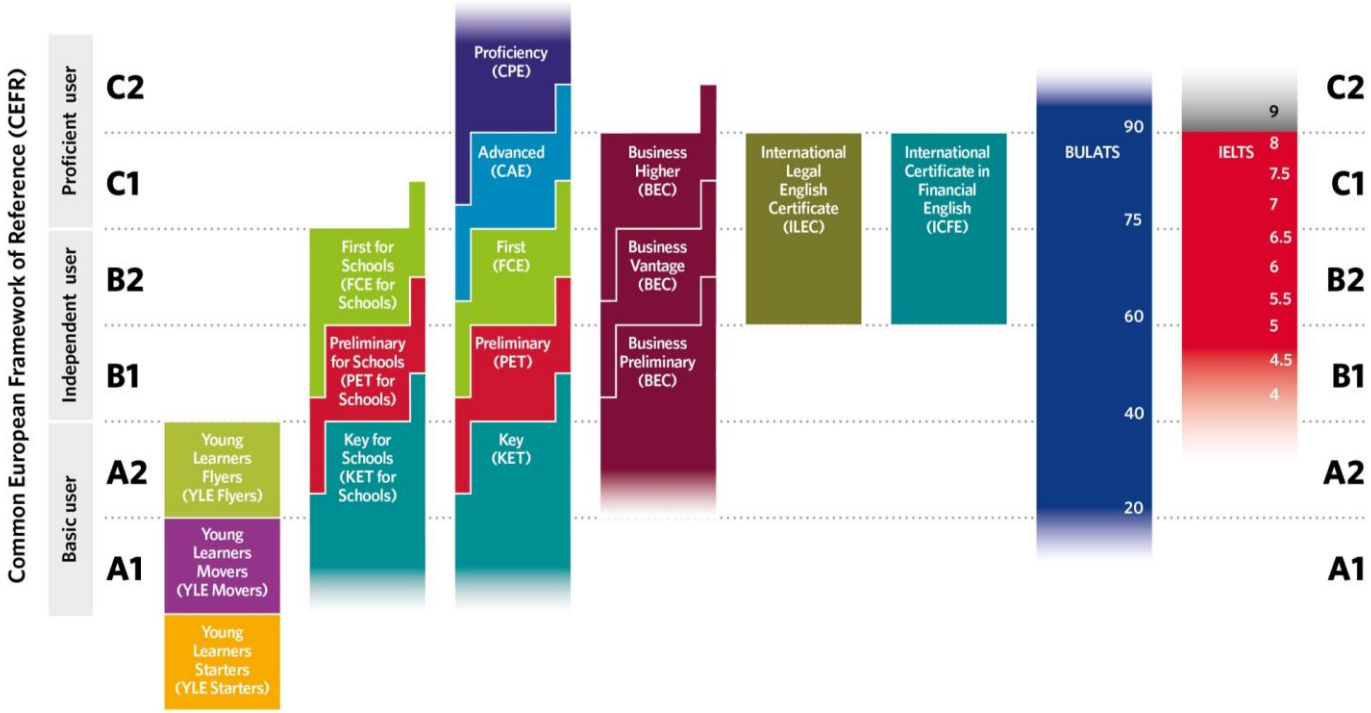
The Cambridge/CEFR levels: a structure for organizing learning



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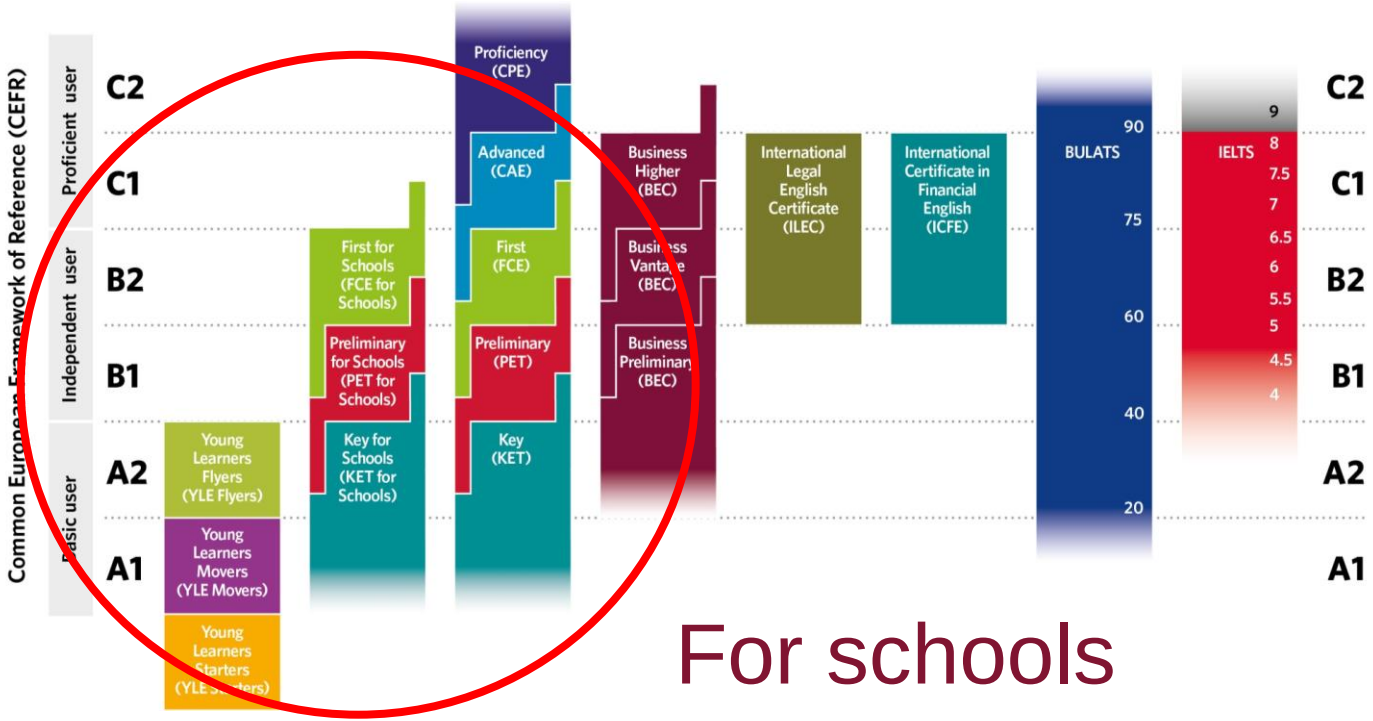

For schools

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Assessment and learning: a changing relationship

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Assessment and learning: a changing relationship

The traditional relationship: exams are external, summative.

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Assessment and learning: a changing relationship

The traditional relationship: exams are external, summative.

But new forms of engagement with learning are being sought.

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Forces for change

From within assessment

- standard test theory incompatible with current cognitive and educational psychology

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Forces for change

From within assessment

- standard test theory incompatible with current cognitive and educational psychology

From within teaching

- Assessment for Learning (Assessment Reform Group)
- Classroom-based assessment

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Forces for change

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Technological

- learning and testing as commodities to be “delivered” through information technology.

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Technological

- learning and testing as commodities to be “delivered” through information technology.

Ideological forces

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Cambridge English's approach to assessment

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Cambridge English's approach to assessment

Language as communication

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Language as communication

Can do approach – the CEFR (a learning ladder)

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Cambridge English's approach to assessment

Language as communication

Can do approach – the CEFR (a learning ladder)

Explicit constructs of language ability

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Cambridge English's approach to assessment

Language as communication

Can do approach – the CEFR (a learning ladder)

Explicit constructs of language ability

Strong measurement approach

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Cambridge English's approach to assessment

Language as communication

Can do approach – the CEFR (a learning ladder)

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Strong measurement approach

Strive for positive impact

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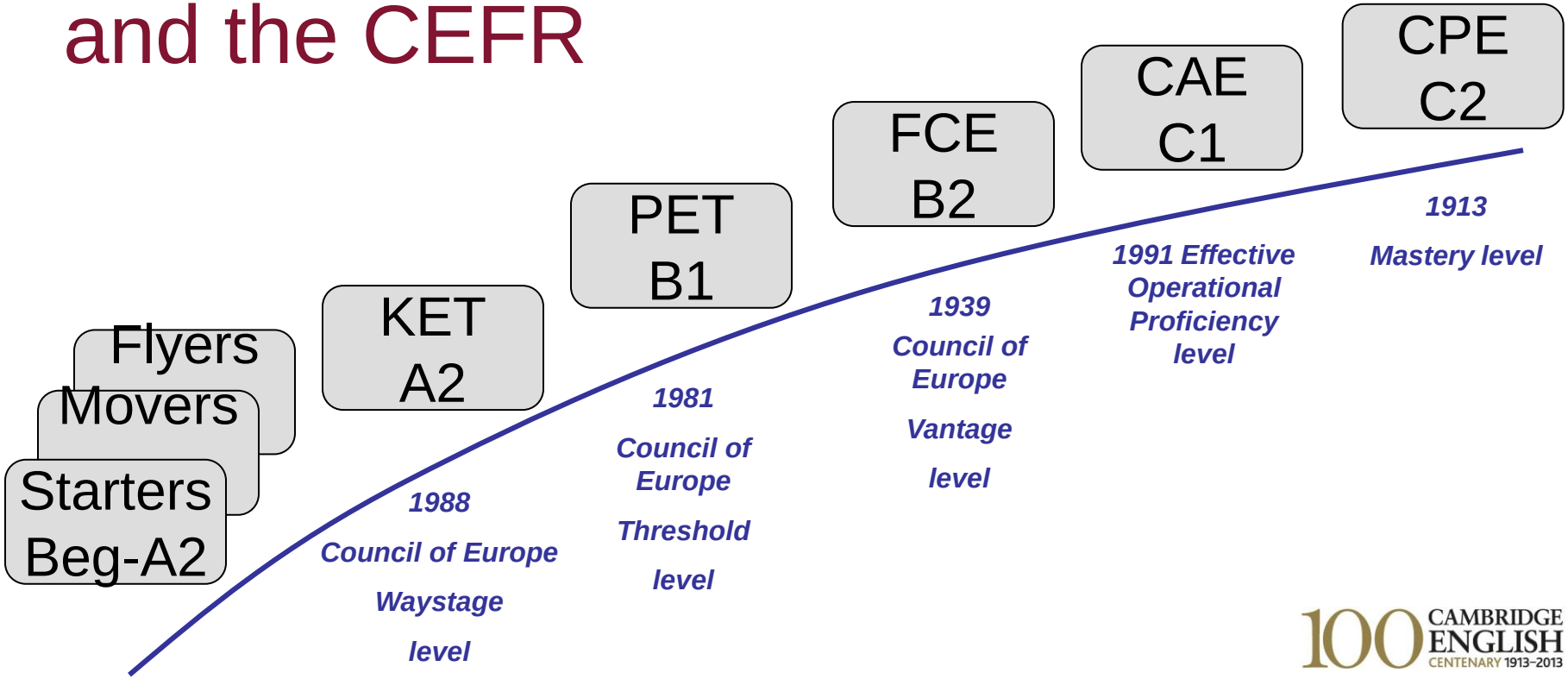
The Cambridge English learning ladder and the CEFR



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A socio-cognitive model of language learning

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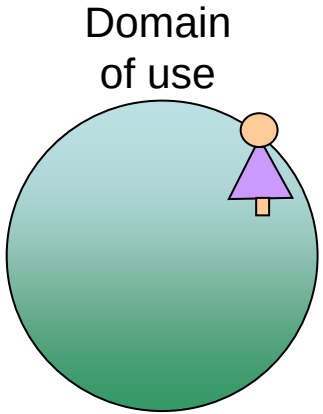
A socio-cognitive model of language learning



CEFR, 2001 p9

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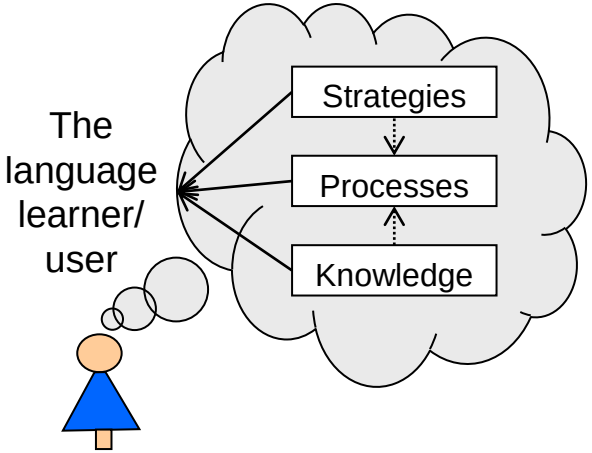

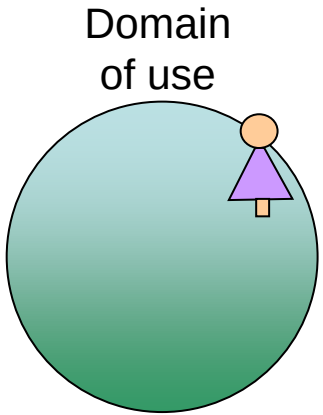

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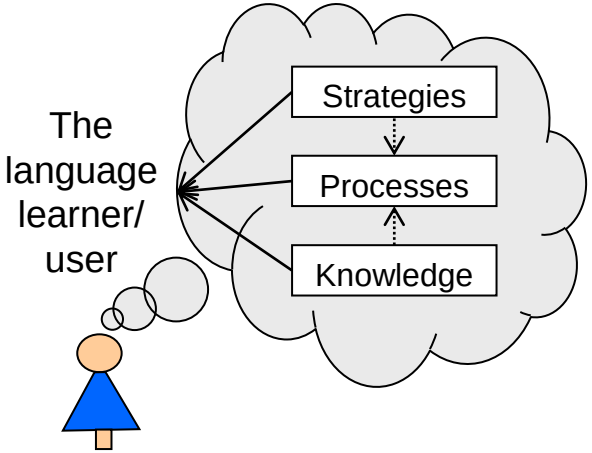

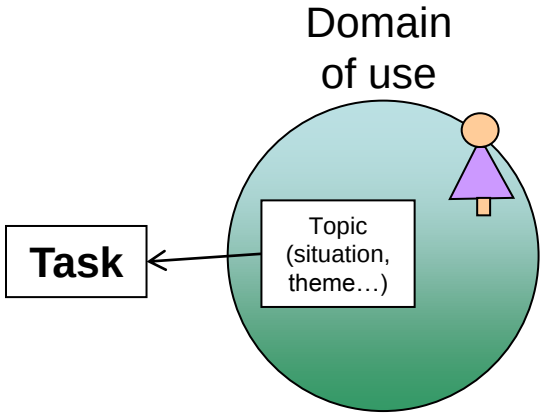

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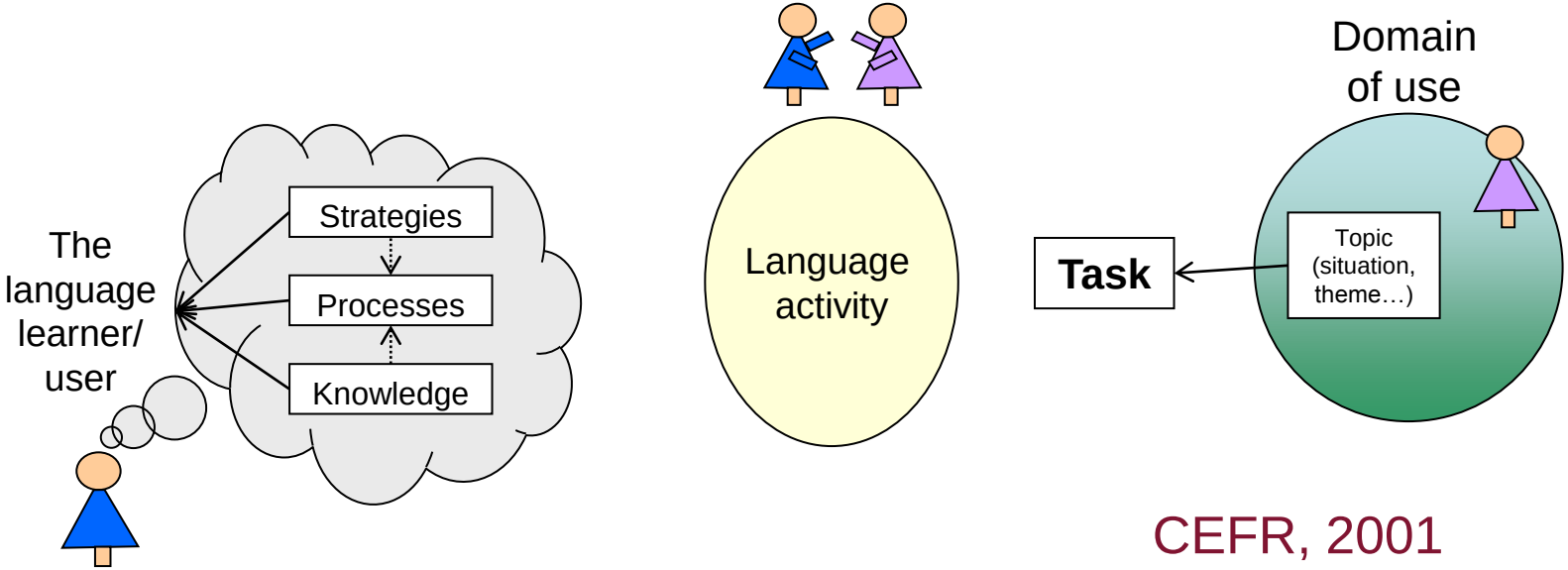

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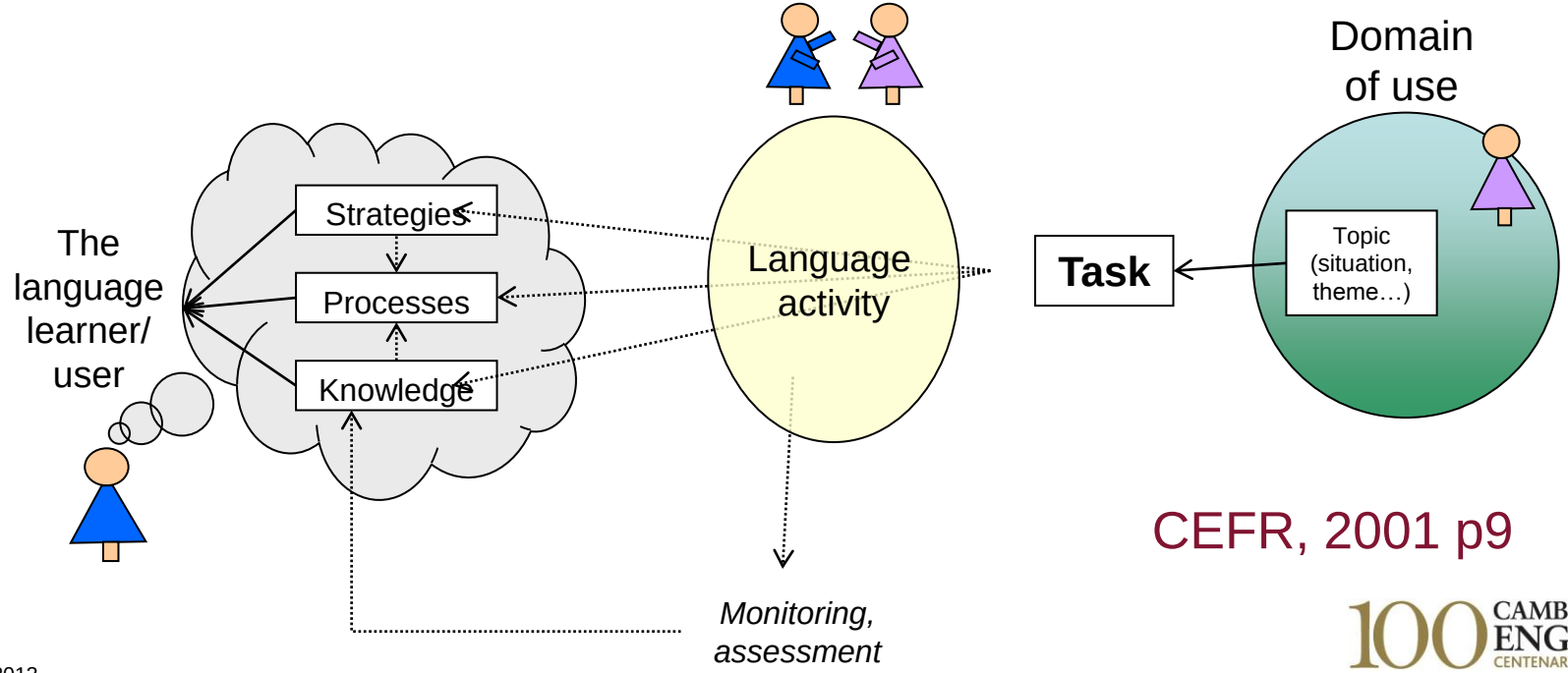

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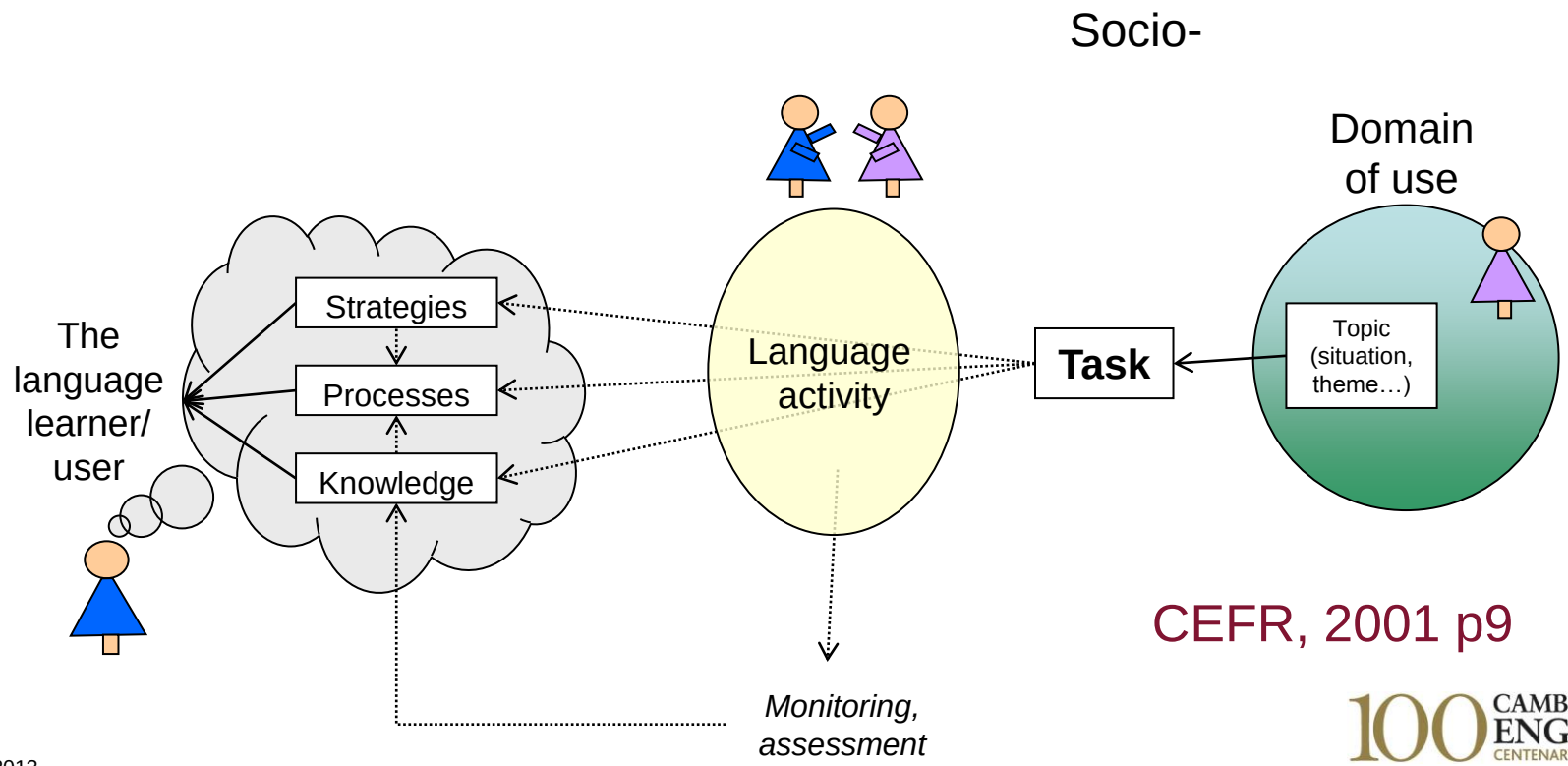

CEFR, 2001 p9

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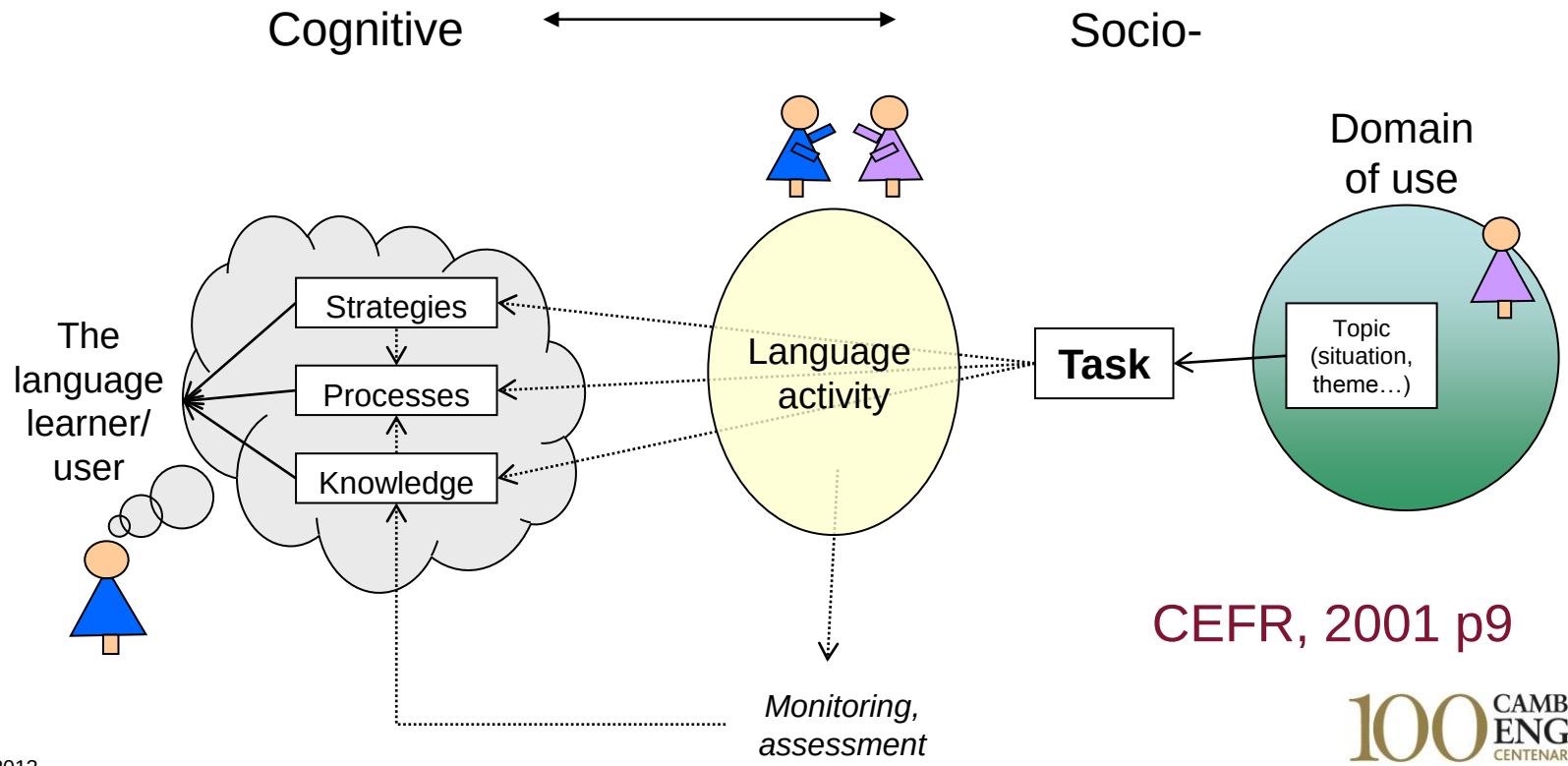

CEFR, 2001 p9

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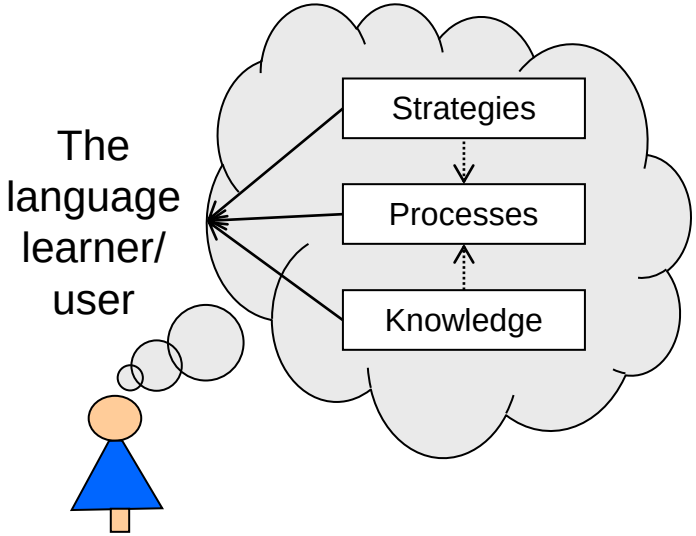
A model for reading (after Weir 2005)



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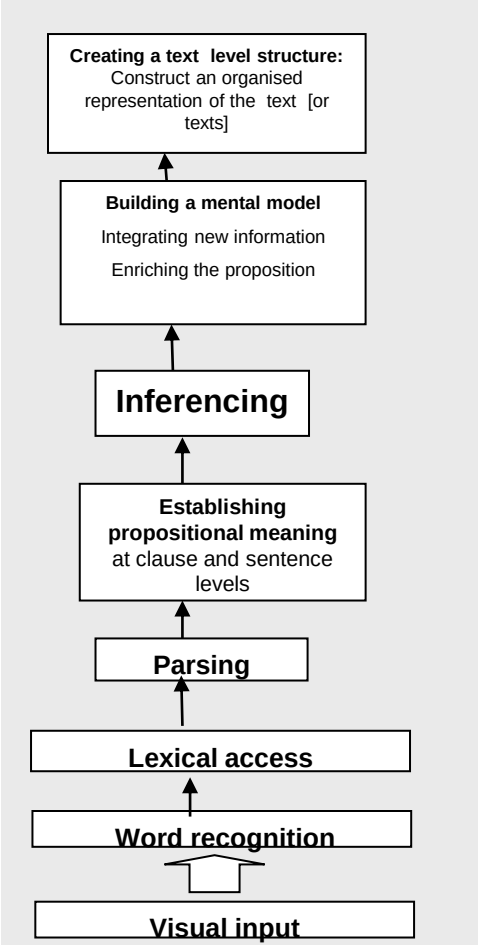

Central processing core

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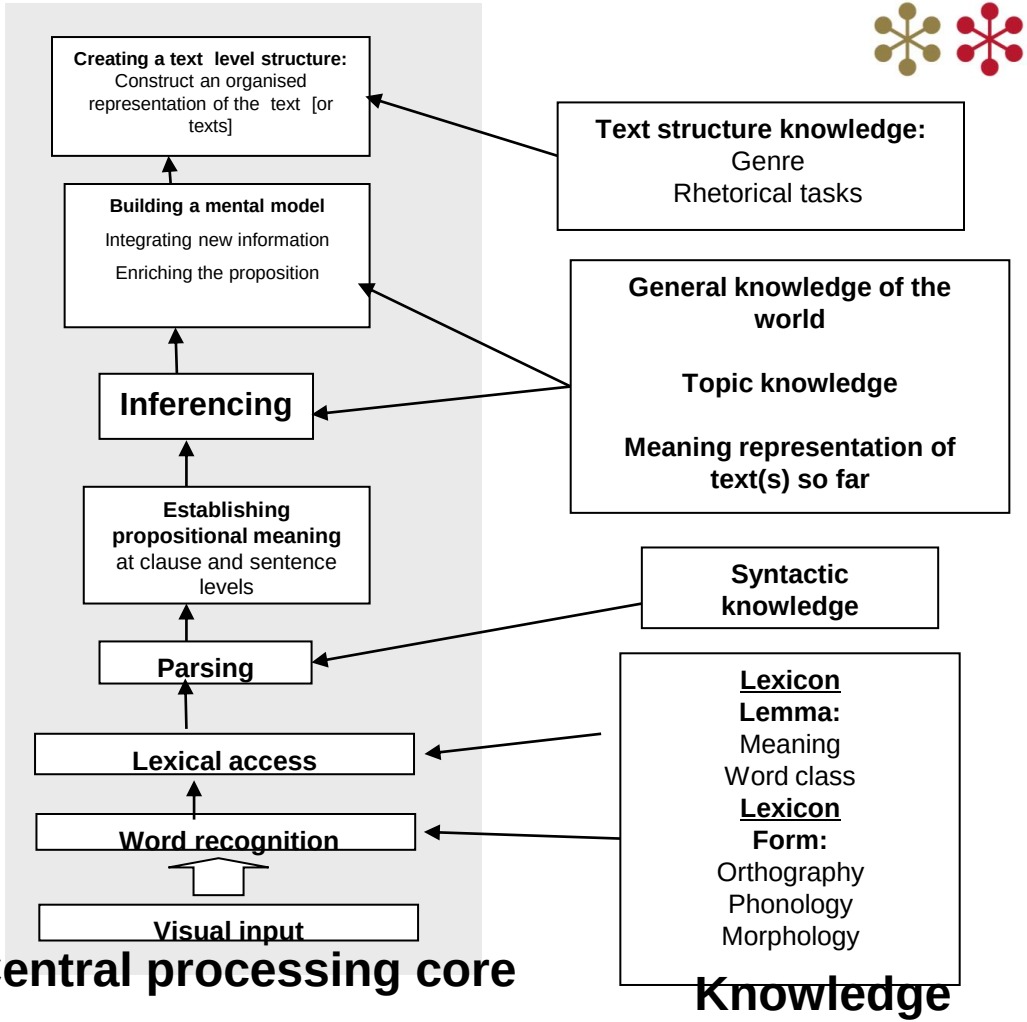
A model for reading (after Weir 2005)



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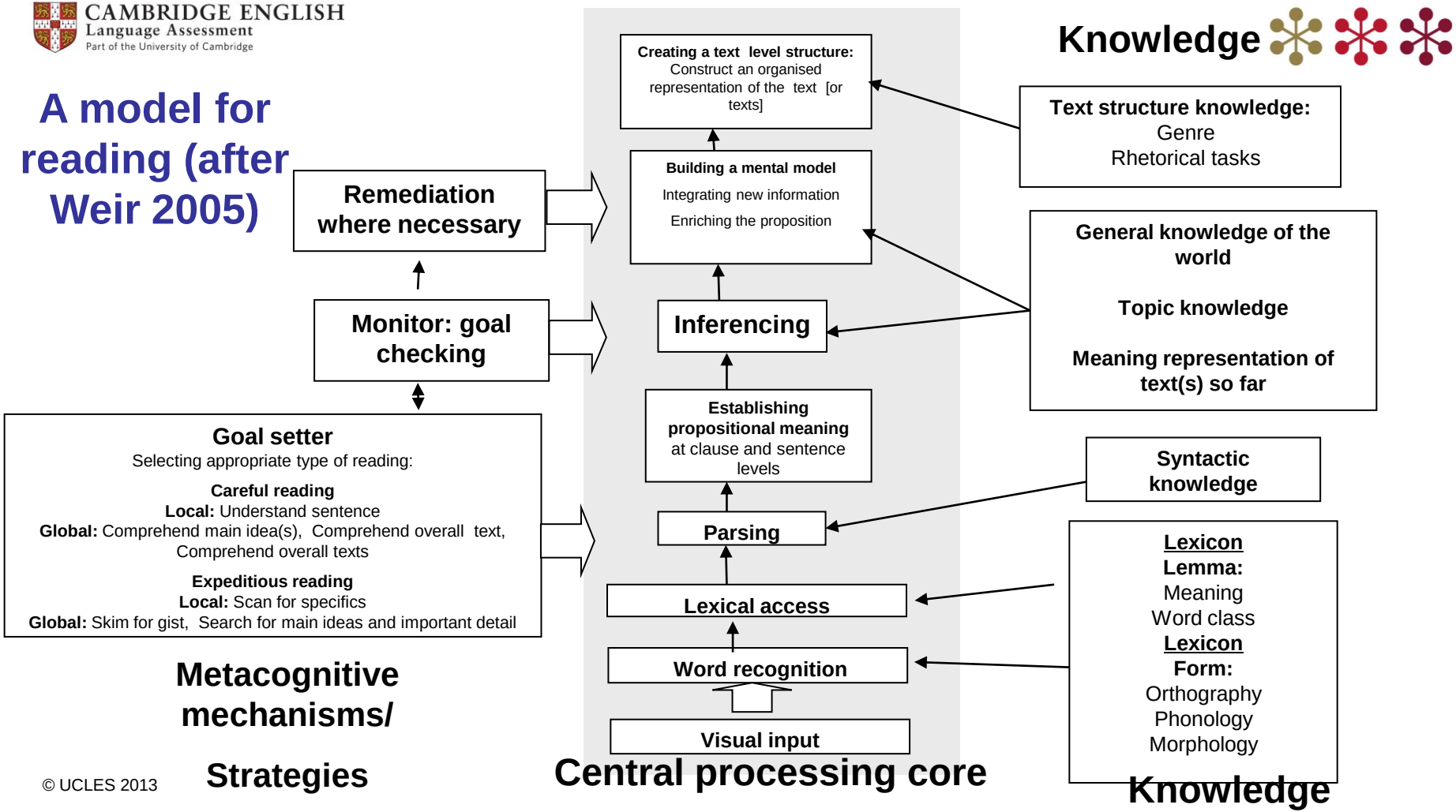

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Studies in Language Testing

Vol 30 Examining Speaking

- Edited by Lynda Taylor (2011)

Vol 29 Examining Reading

- Khalifa and Weir (2009)

Vol 26 Examining Writing

- Shaw and Weir (2009)

Vol 35 *Examining Listening*

- Geranpayeh & Taylor (eds) (2013

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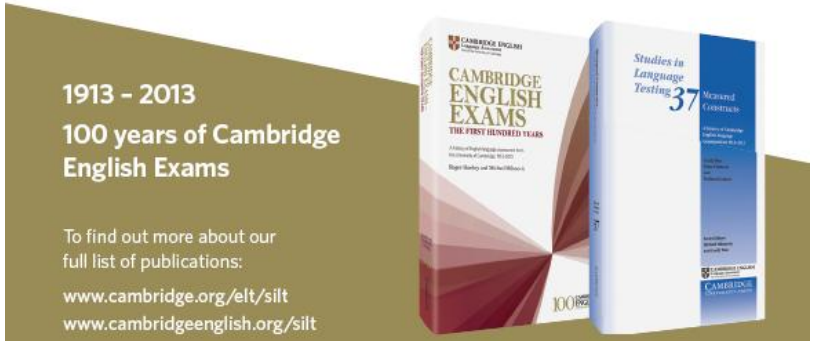
Studies in Language Testing

Examining English – the complete set



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Setting professional standards for English language learning worldwide

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Search

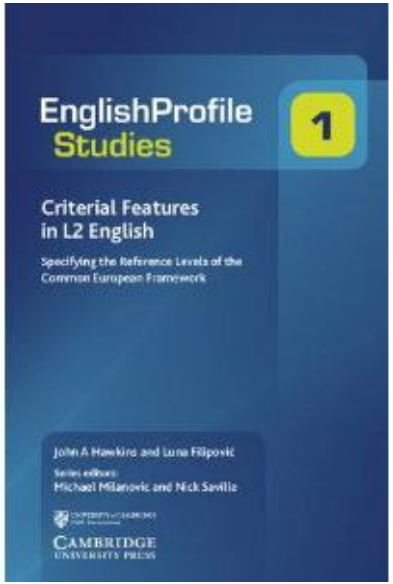
Welcome to English Profile

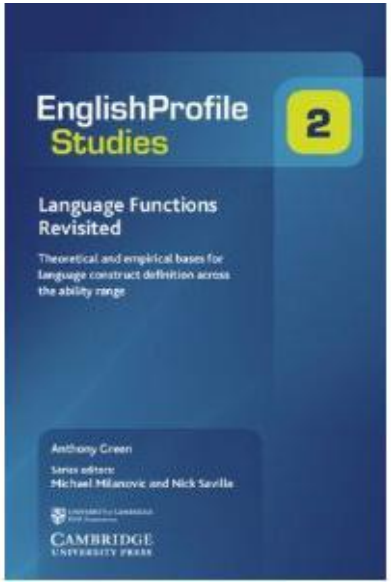
A collaborative programme designed to enhance the learning, teaching and assessment of English worldwide.

The aim of English Profile is to create a 'profile' or set of Reference Level Descriptions for English linked to the Common European Framework (CEF). These will provide detailed information about the language that learners can be expected to demonstrate at each level, offering a clear benchmark for progress that will inform curricula development as well as the development of courses and test material to support learners, teachers and other professionals involved in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

This site is part of the collaborative process. It gives the background to the project and the partners involved, and provides a forum for the latest research. It also gives you the chance to take part. By becoming an English Profile Network Partner, you can play a crucial role in English Profile research. You can also register on this website to receive regular email updates relating to the programme, including information on resources, news and events. We hope you'll join us.

First two volumes in EP studies series





Hawkins & Filipovic (2012). *Criterial Features in L2 English*.

Green (2012). *Language Functions Revisited*.

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Measurement: Item response theory, item-banking

Measurement scale

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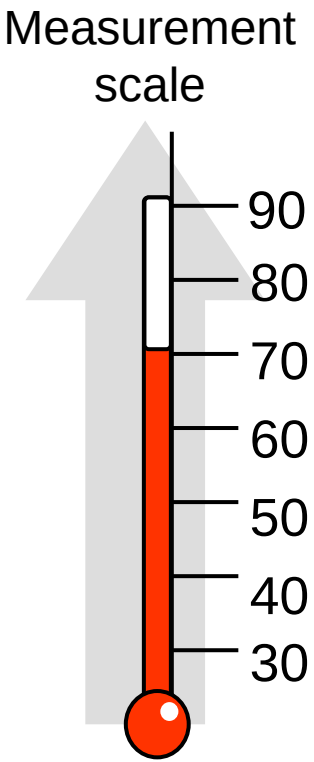
Measurement: Item response theory, item-banking



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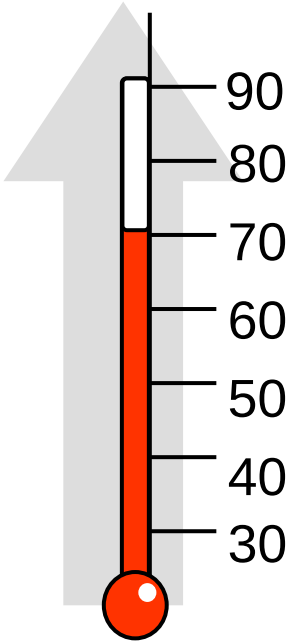
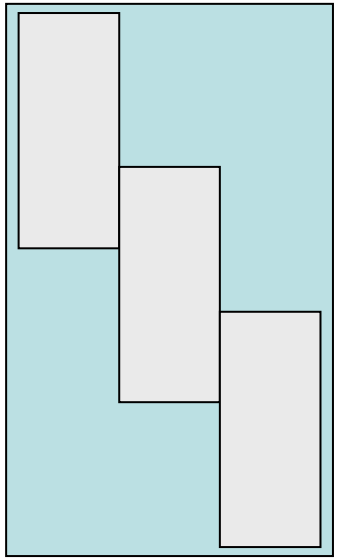
Measurement: Item response theory, item-banking

Measurement scale





Item bank links all levels

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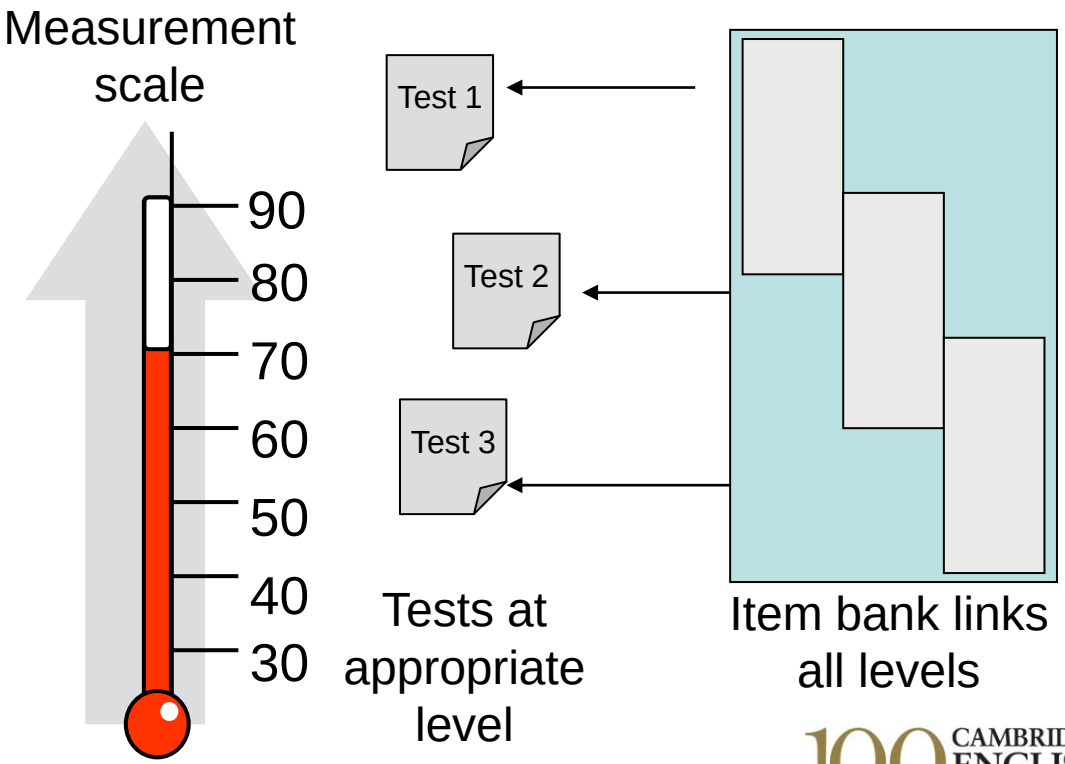
Measurement: Item response theory, item-banking



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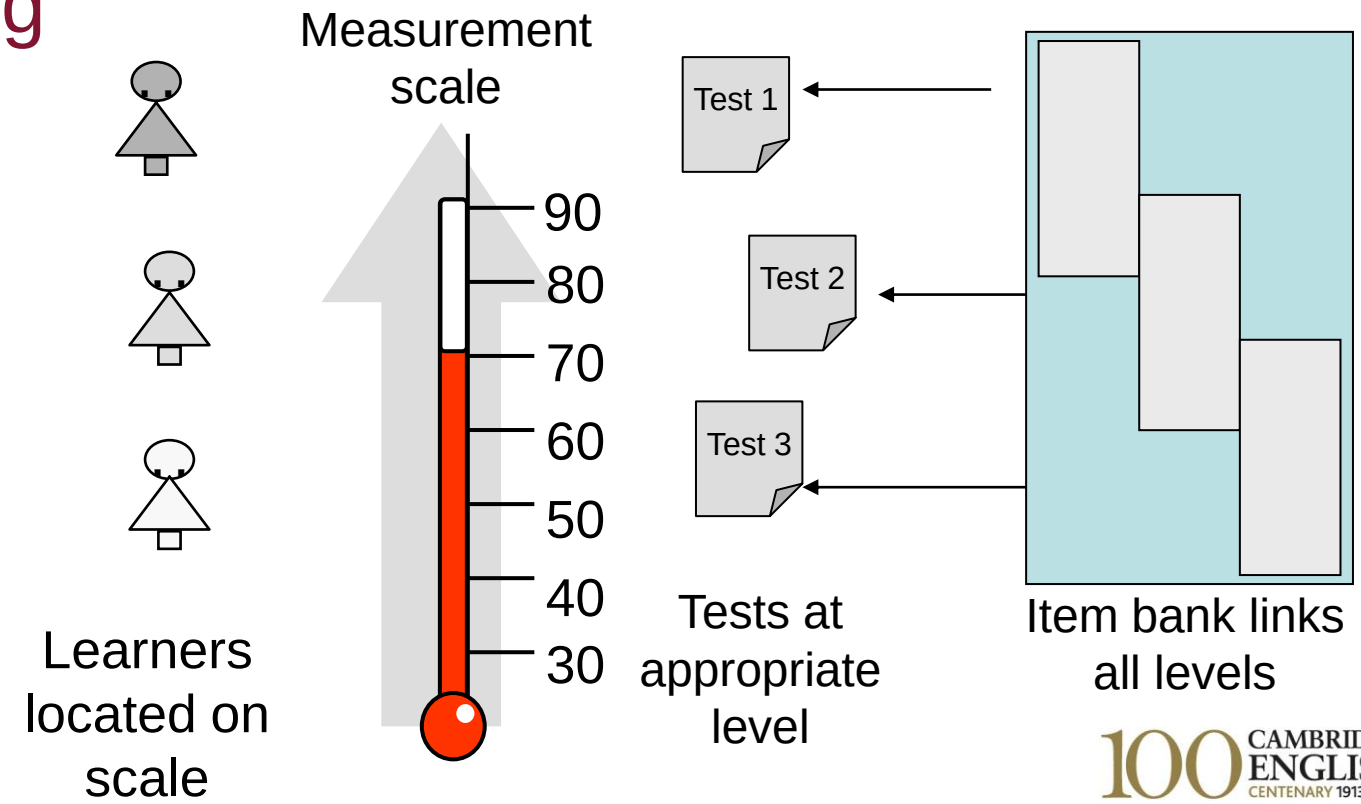

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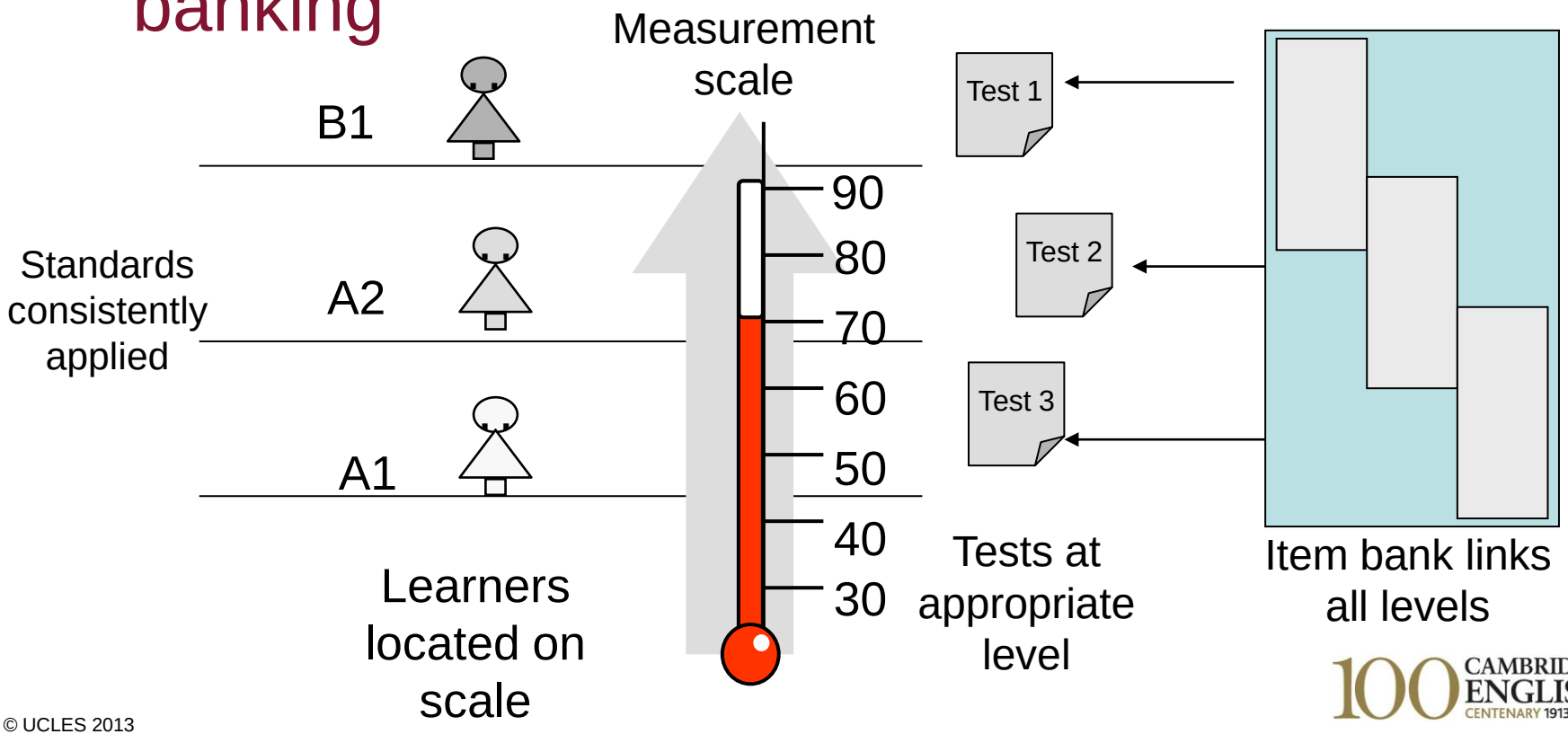
Measurement: Item response theory, item-banking



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A complementary relationship with teaching: Quantitative and qualitative dimensions

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A complementary relationship with teaching: Quantitative and qualitative dimensions

Quantitative (measurement) dimension

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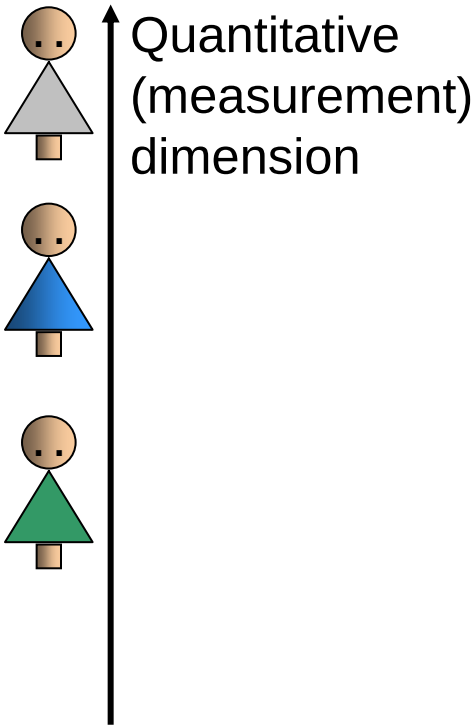
A complementary relationship with teaching: Quantitative and qualitative dimensions



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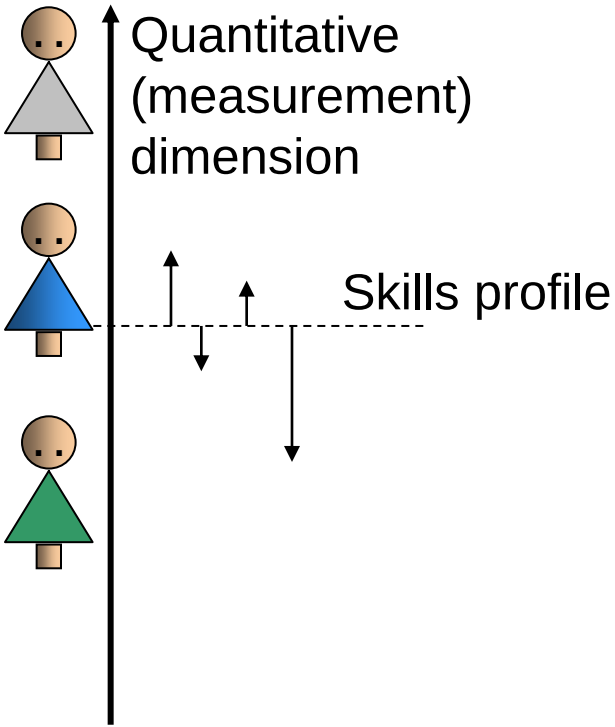
A complementary relationship with teaching: Quantitative and qualitative dimensions



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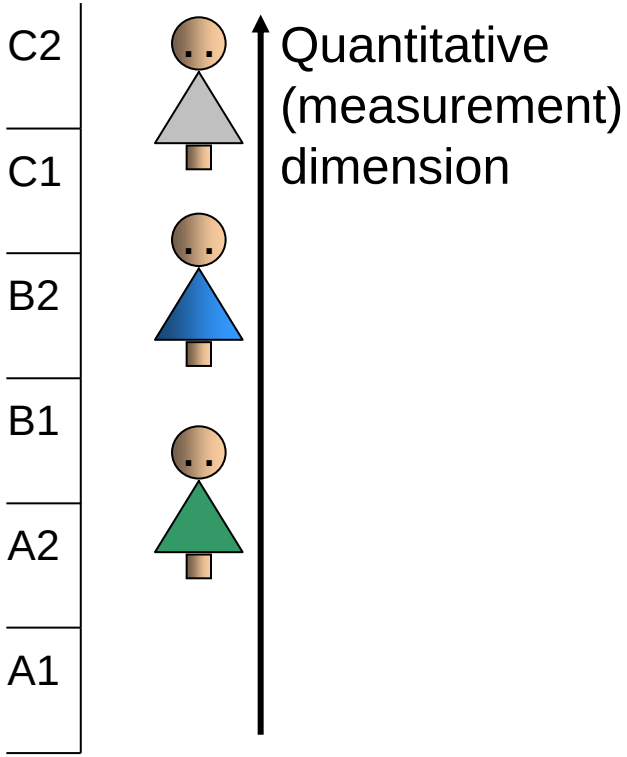

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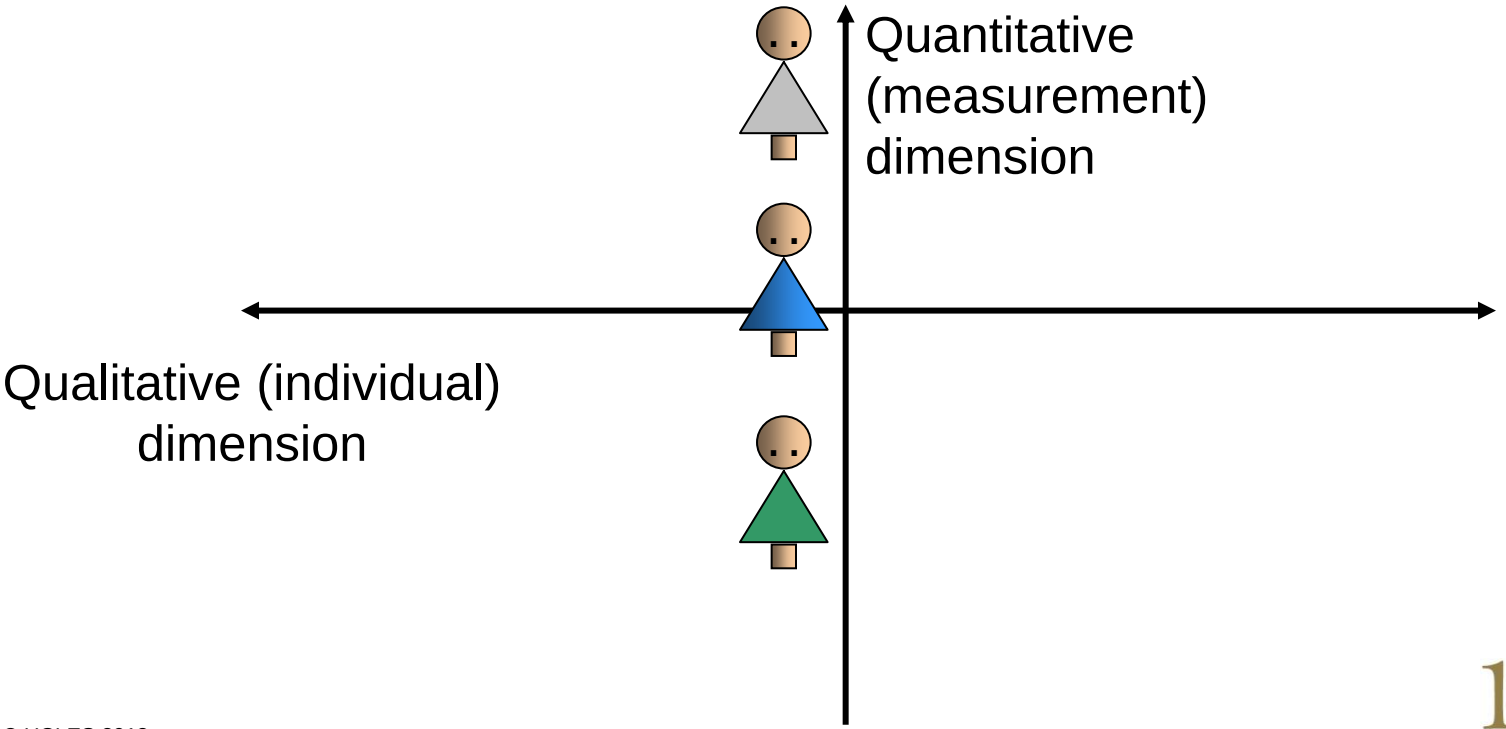
A complementary relationship with teaching: Quantitative and qualitative dimensions



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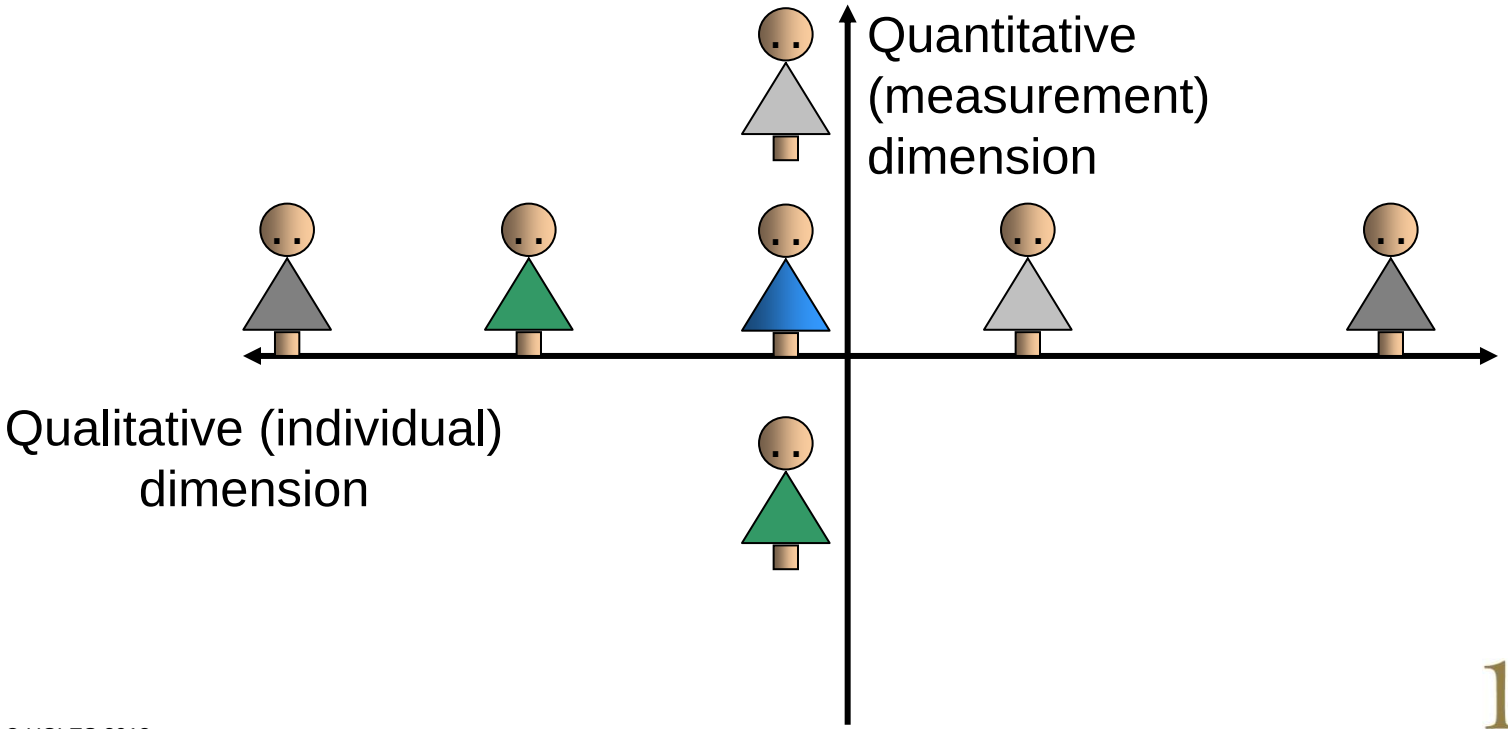
A complementary relationship with teaching: Quantitative and qualitative dimensions



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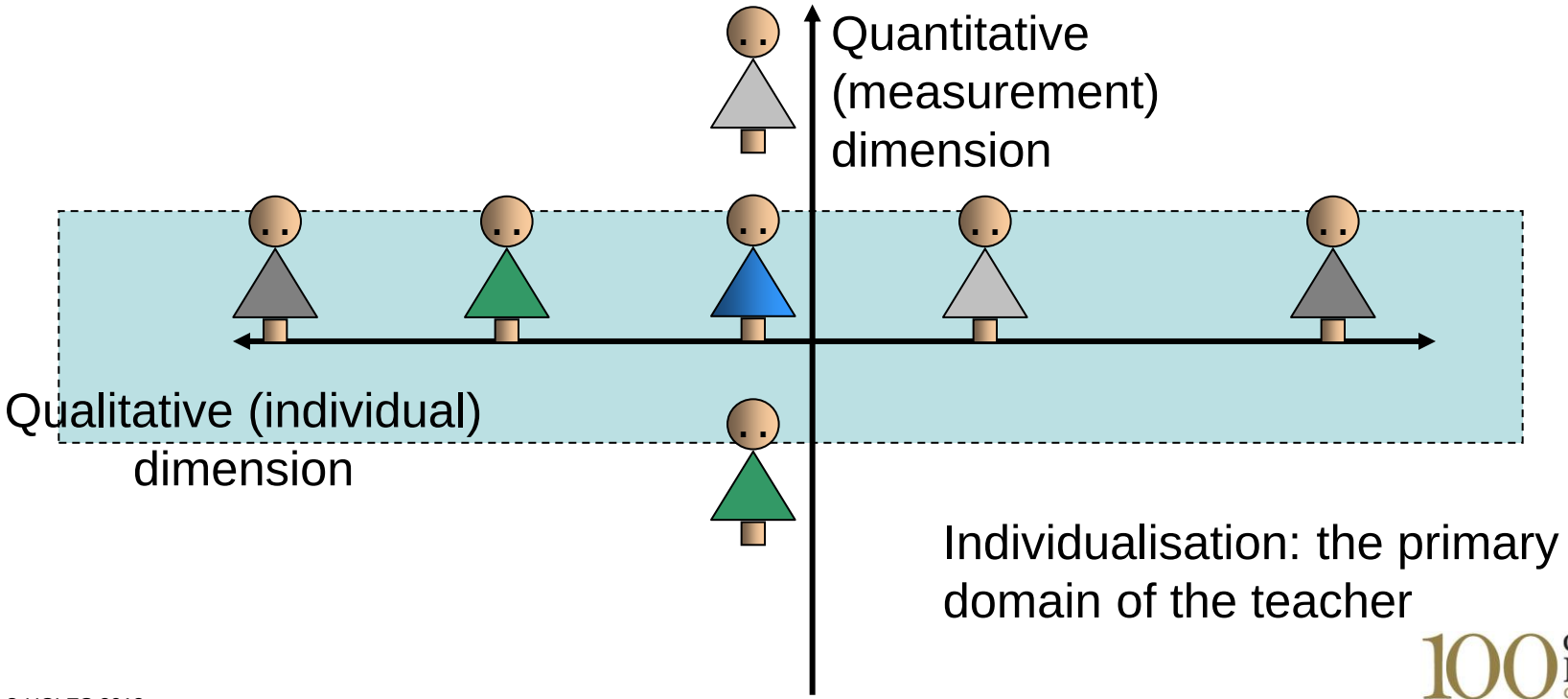
A complementary relationship with teaching: Quantitative and qualitative dimensions



Individualisation: the primary domain of the teacher

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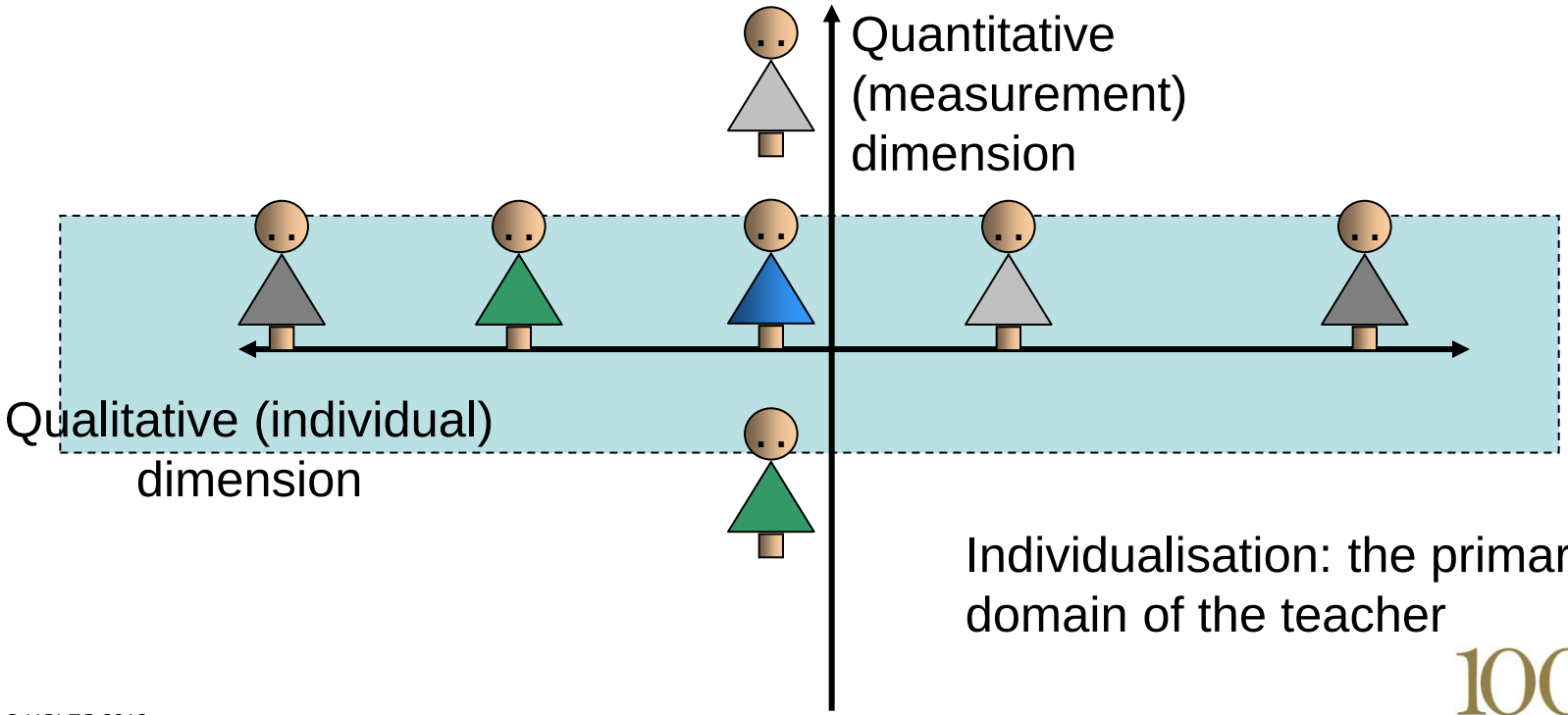
A complementary relationship with teaching: Quantitative and qualitative dimensions



Individualisation: the primary domain of the teacher

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Positive impact

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Positive impact

Positive “impact by design”

- Implies planned modifications to classroom practice

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Positive impact

Positive “impact by design”

- Implies planned modifications to classroom practice

LOA: a theory of action for achieving positive impact by design

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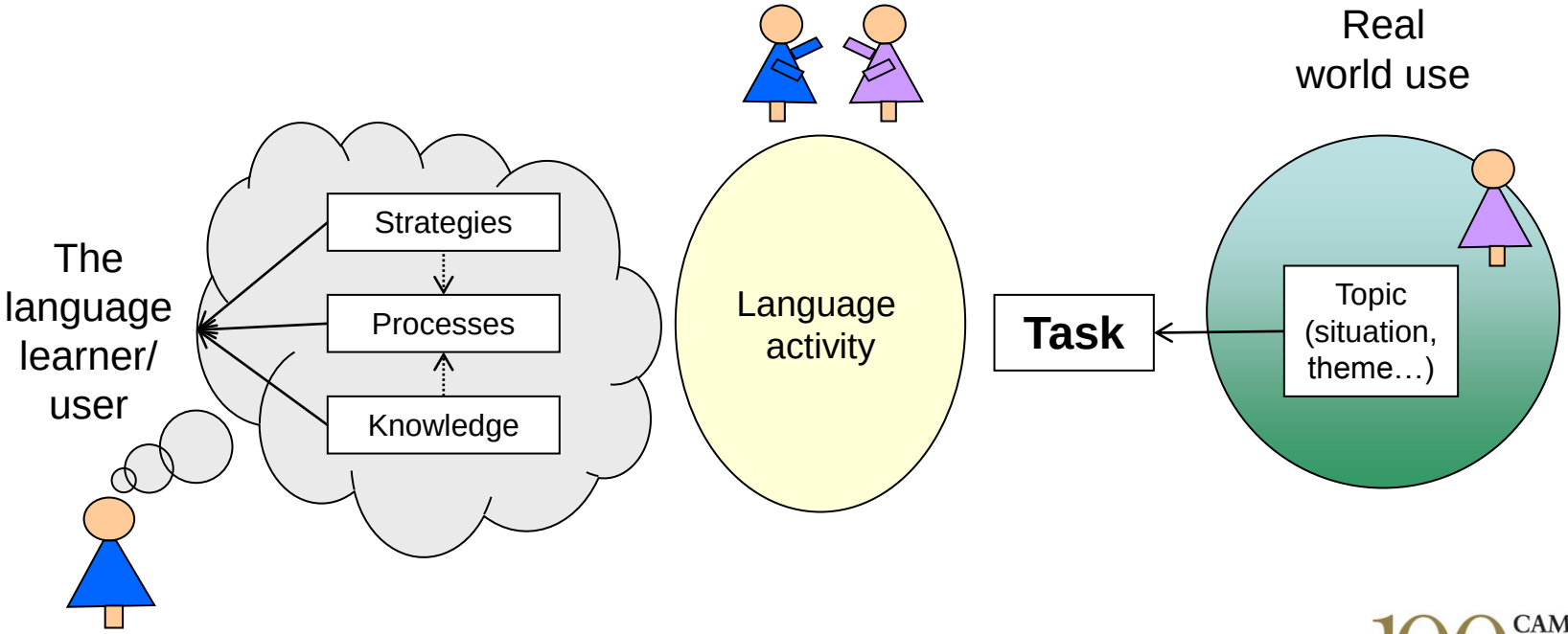
Tasks at the centre



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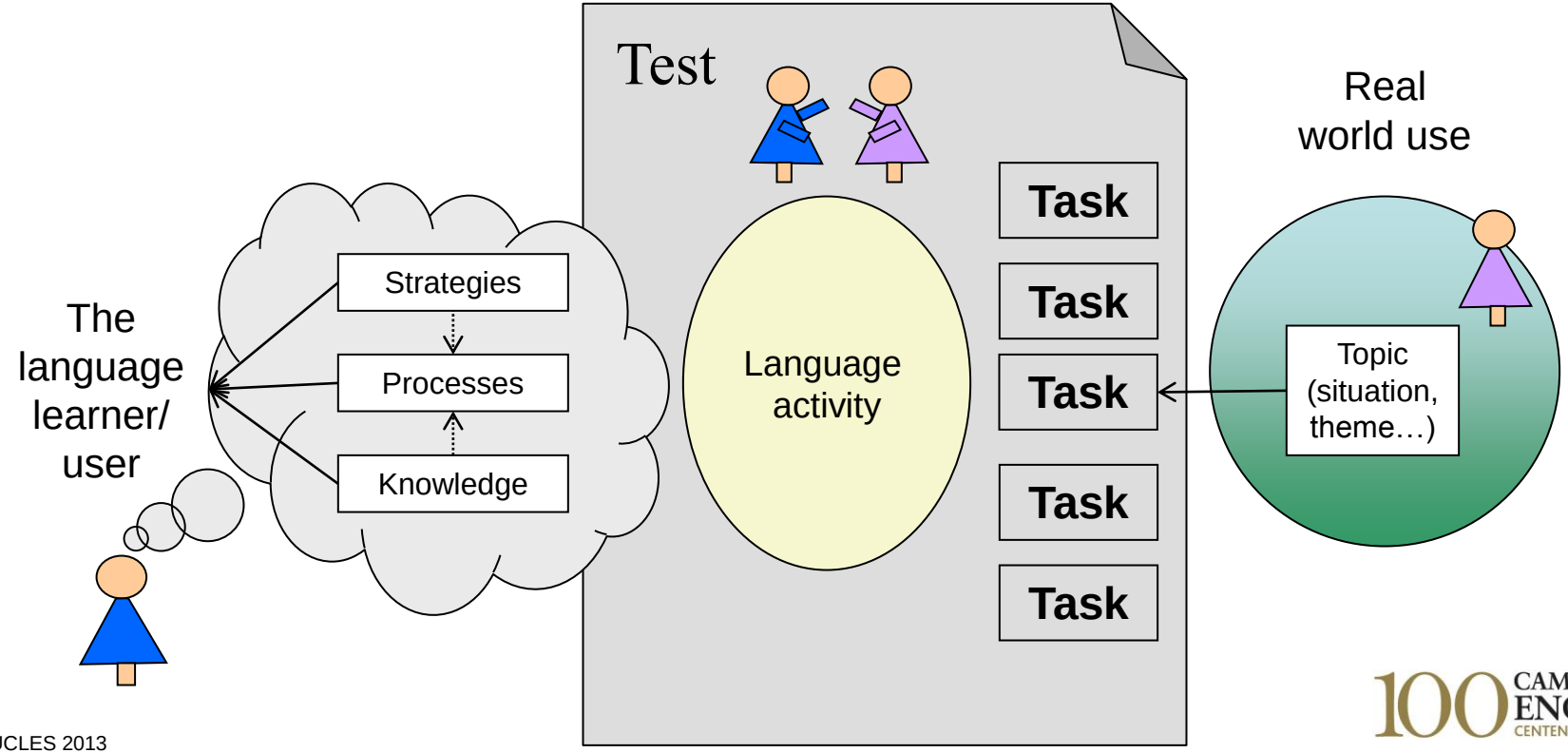
Tasks at the centre



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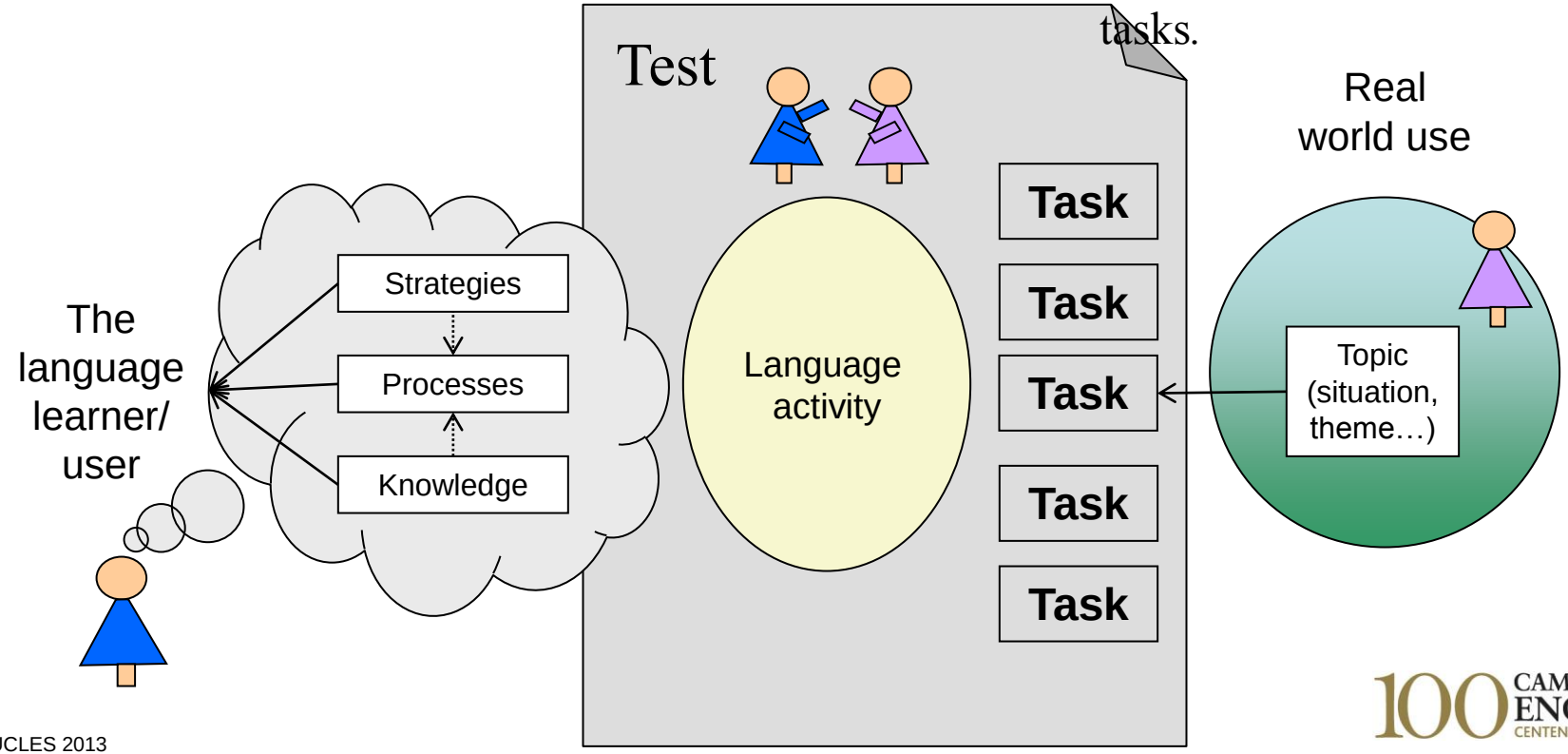
Tasks at the centre

Test tasks and learning tasks reflect real-world tasks.



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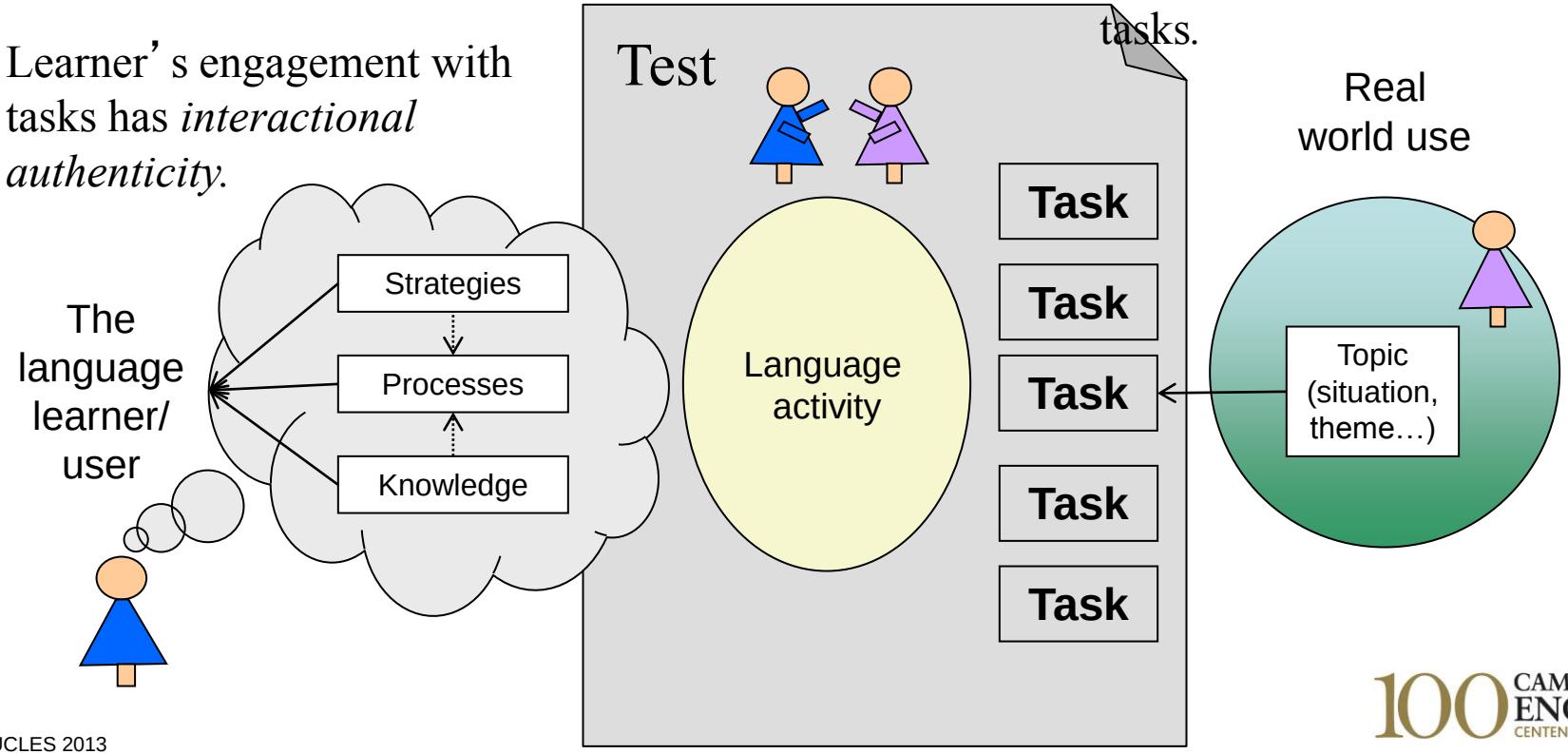
Tasks at the centre

Test tasks and learning tasks reflect real-world tasks.

Learner's engagement with tasks has *interactional authenticity.*



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Tasks at the centre

Test tasks and learning tasks reflect real-world tasks.

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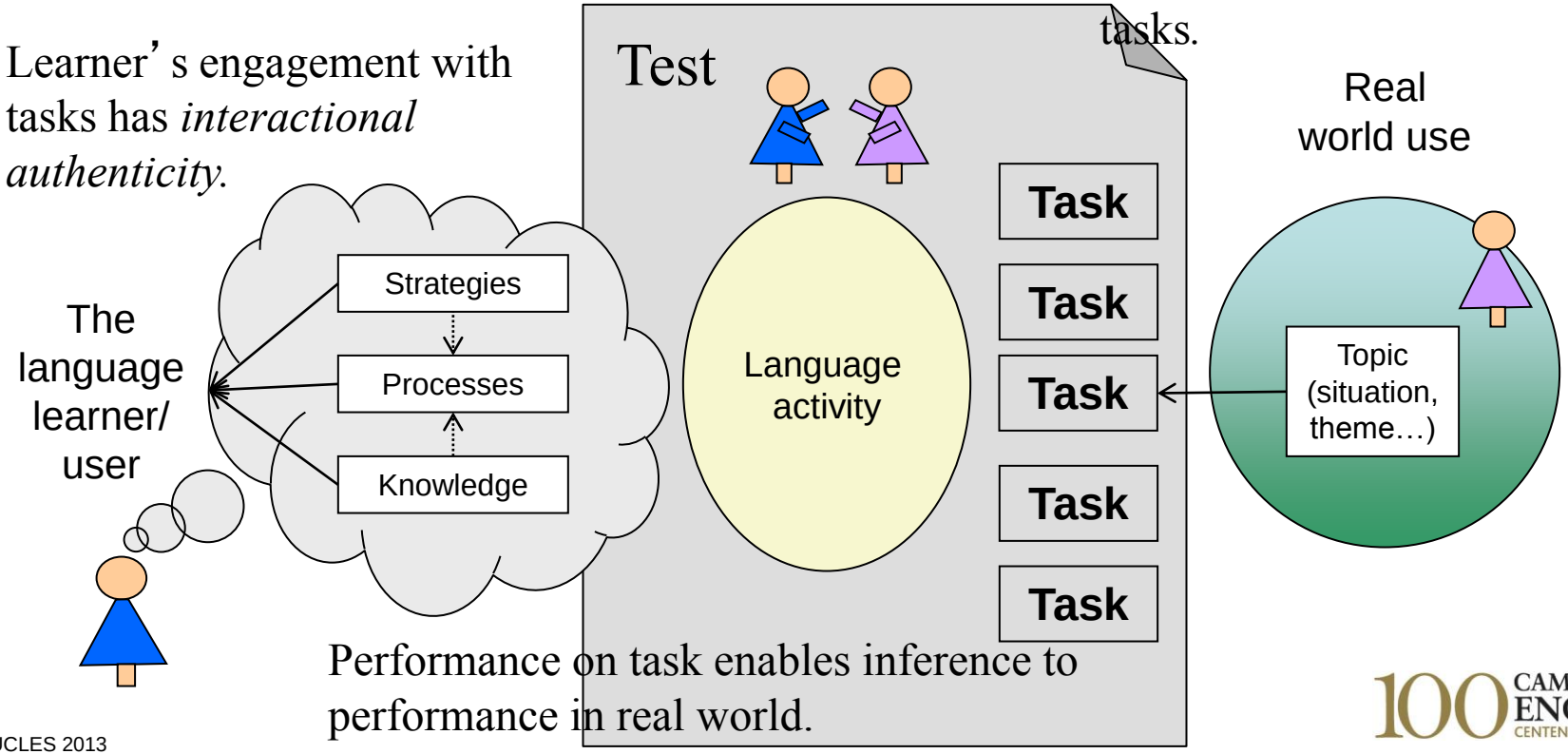

Performance on task enables inference to performance in real world.

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Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)

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Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)

Learning objectives
(high-level, detailed)

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Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

LOA syllabus

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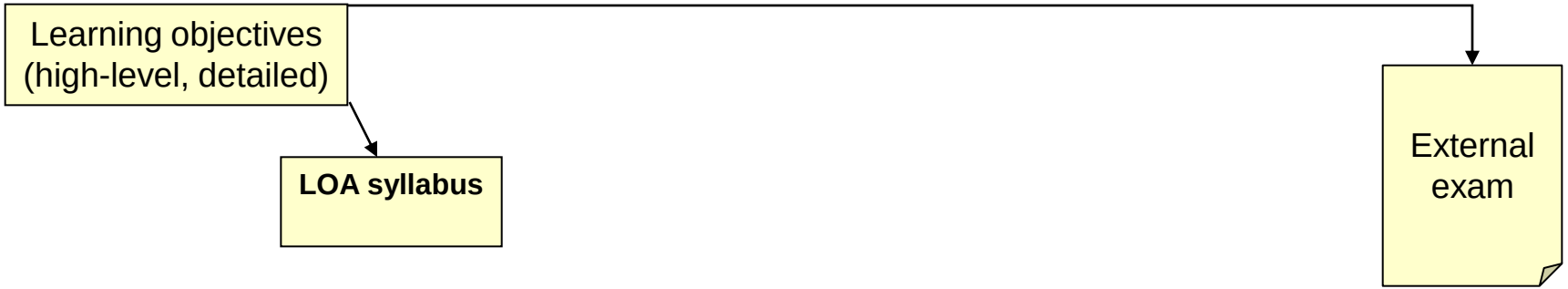
Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)



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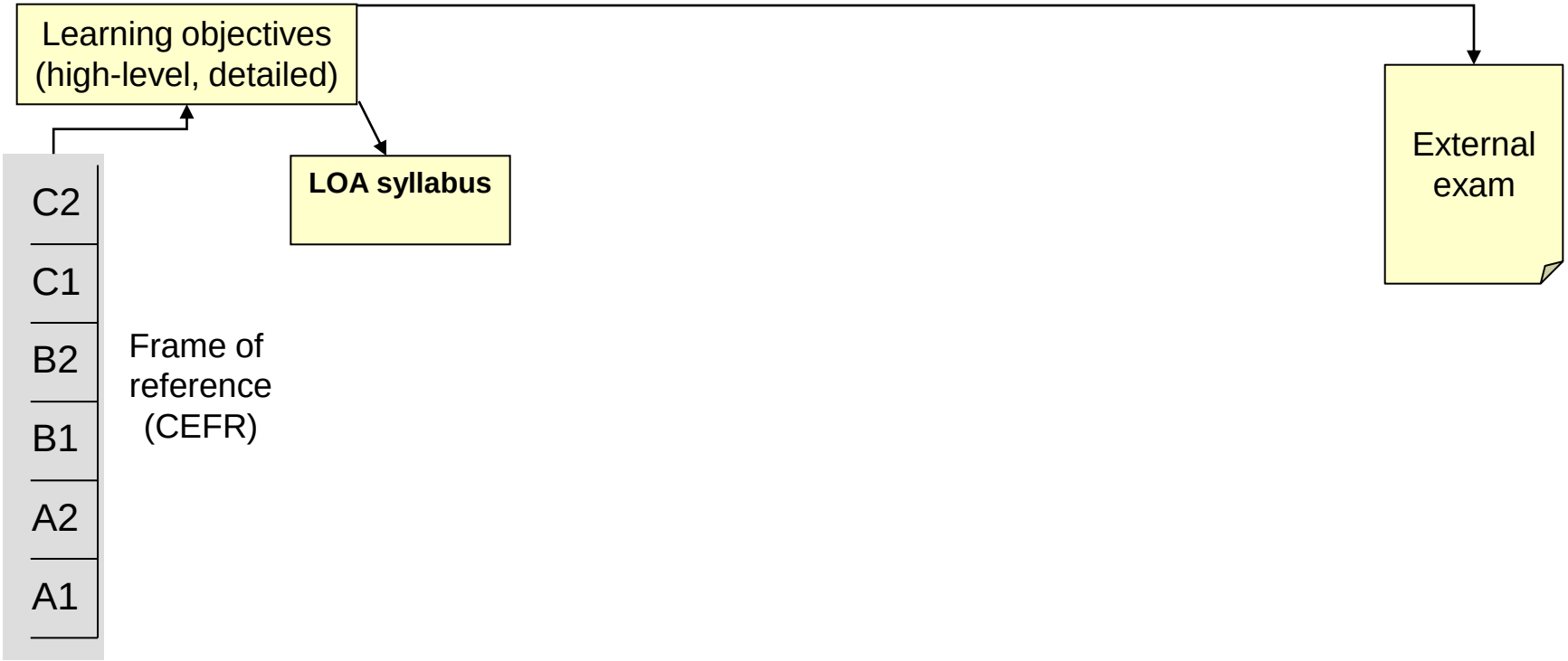
Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)



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Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

Micro level (materials, classroom practice)

External exam

LOA syllabus

C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1

Frame of reference (CEFR)

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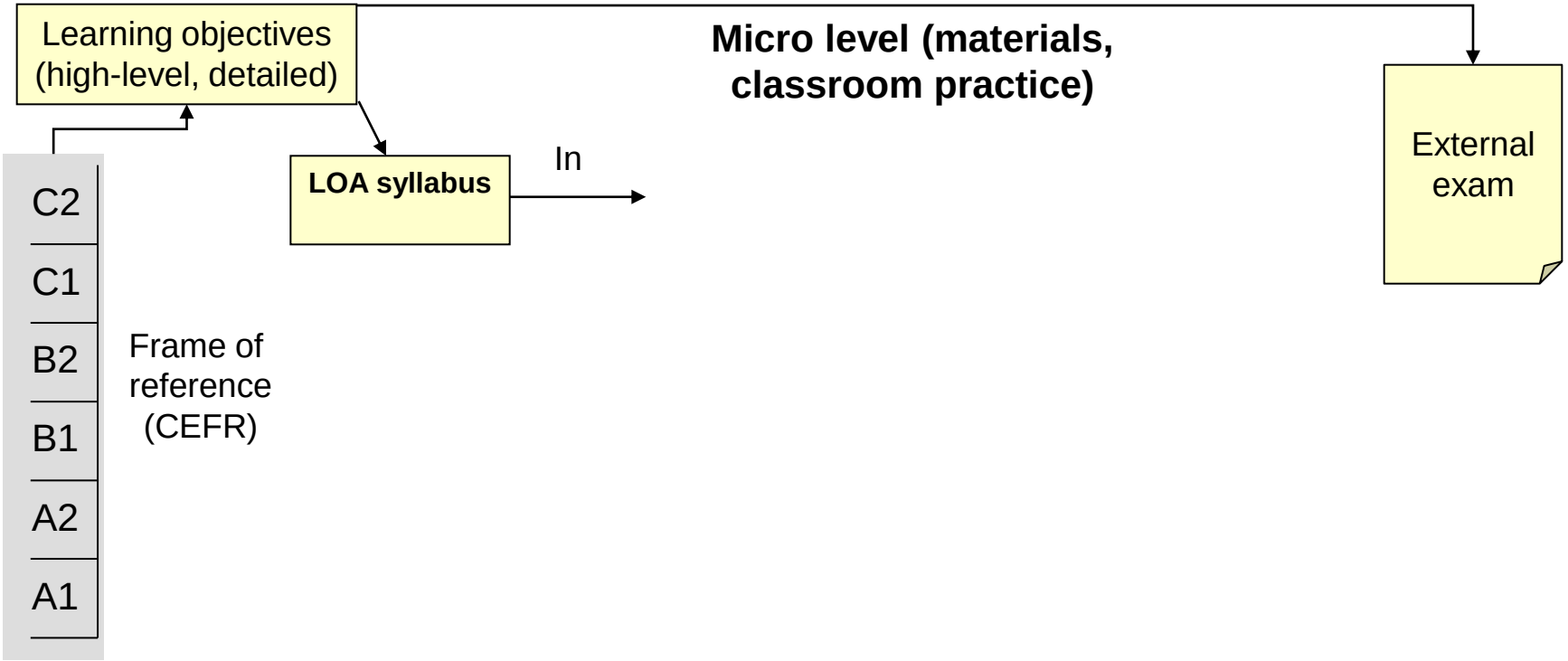
Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)



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Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

Micro level (materials, classroom practice)

External exam

LOA syllabus

In

Check prior knowledge

C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1

Frame of reference (CEFR)

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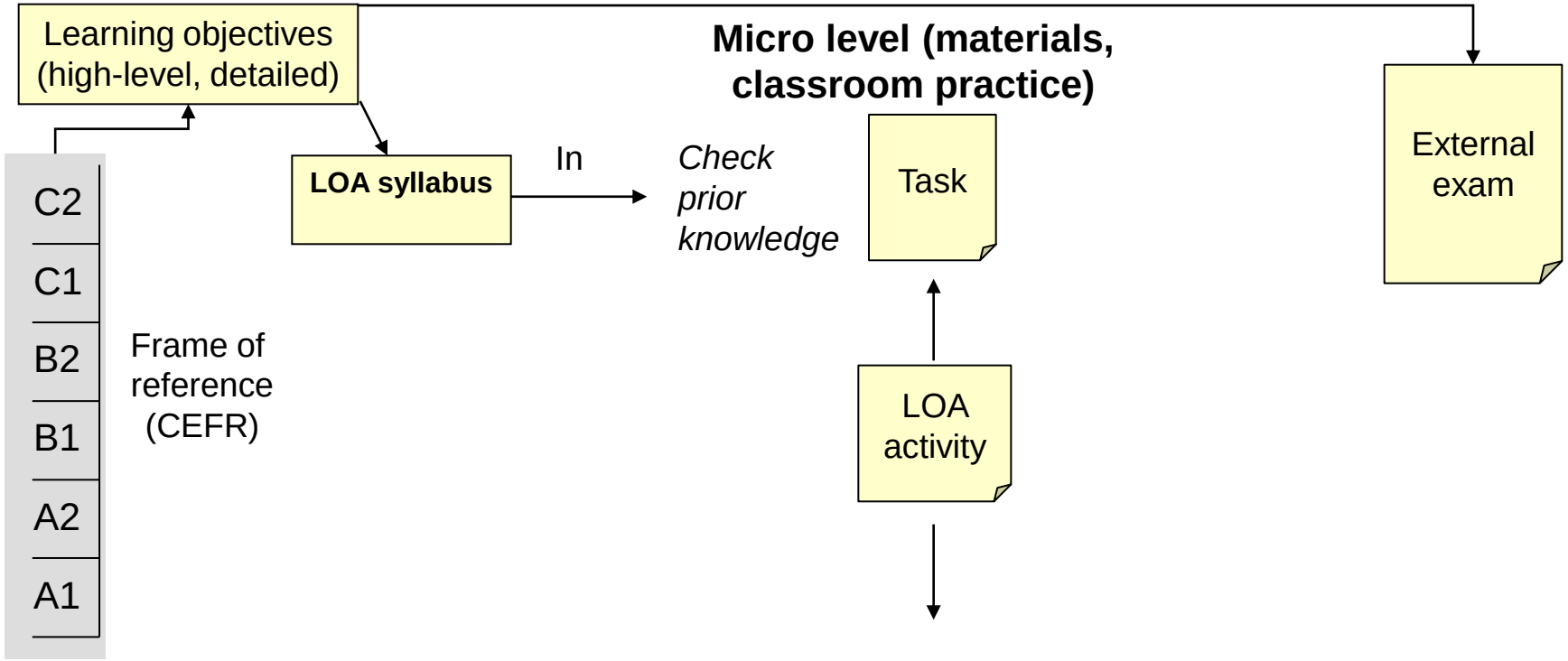
Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)



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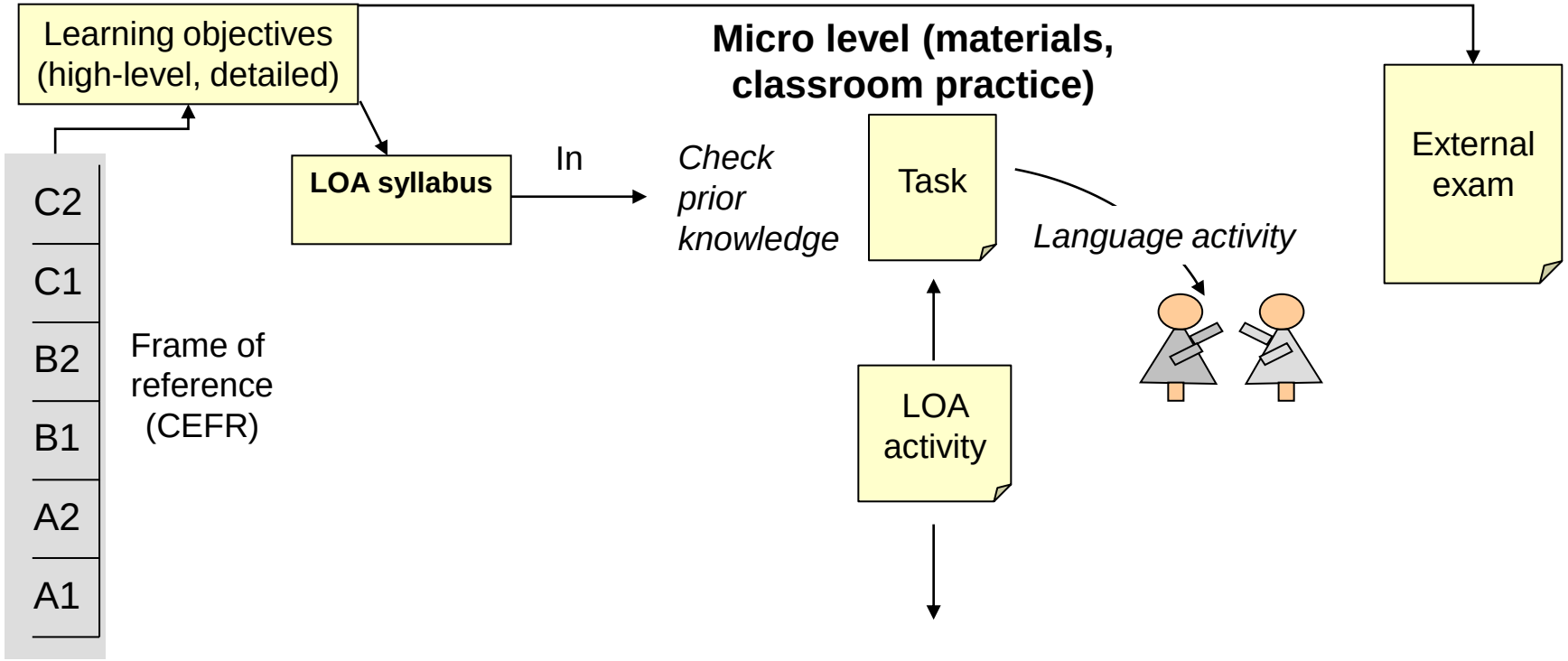
Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)



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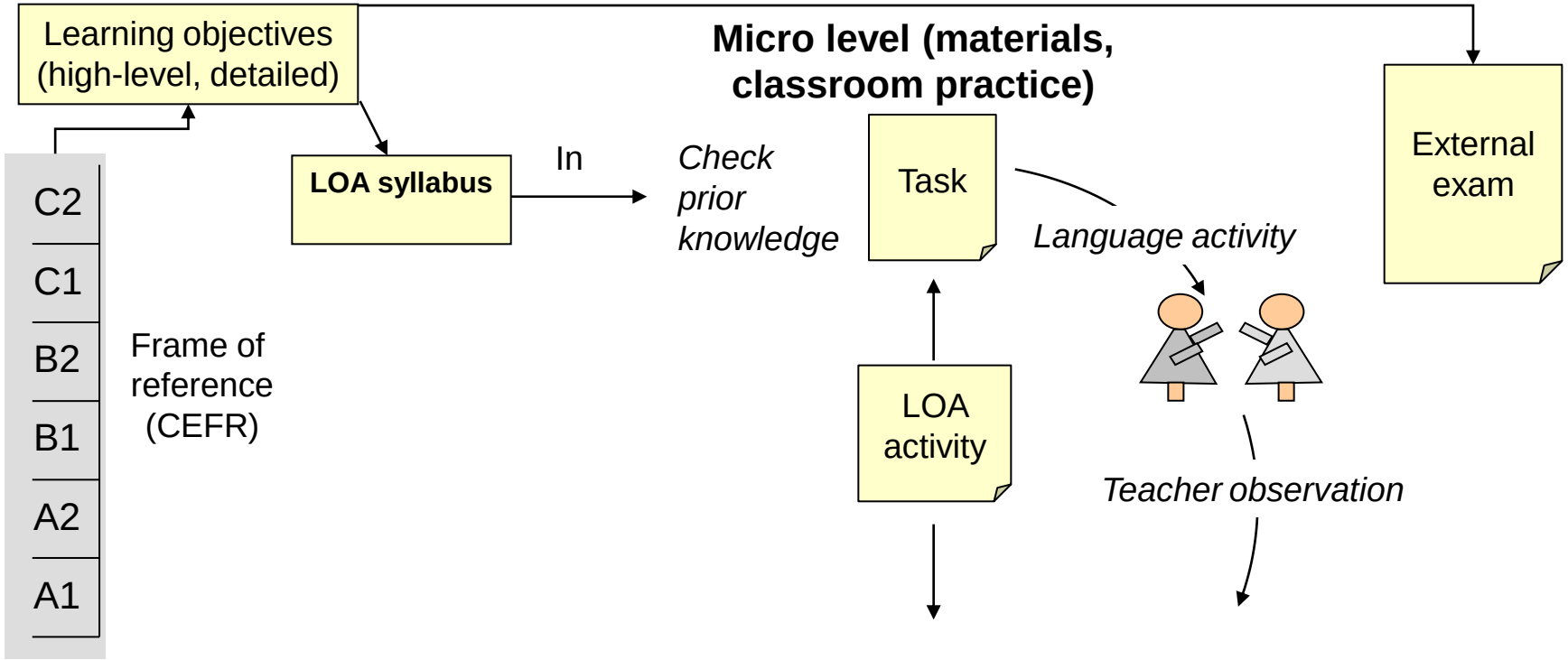

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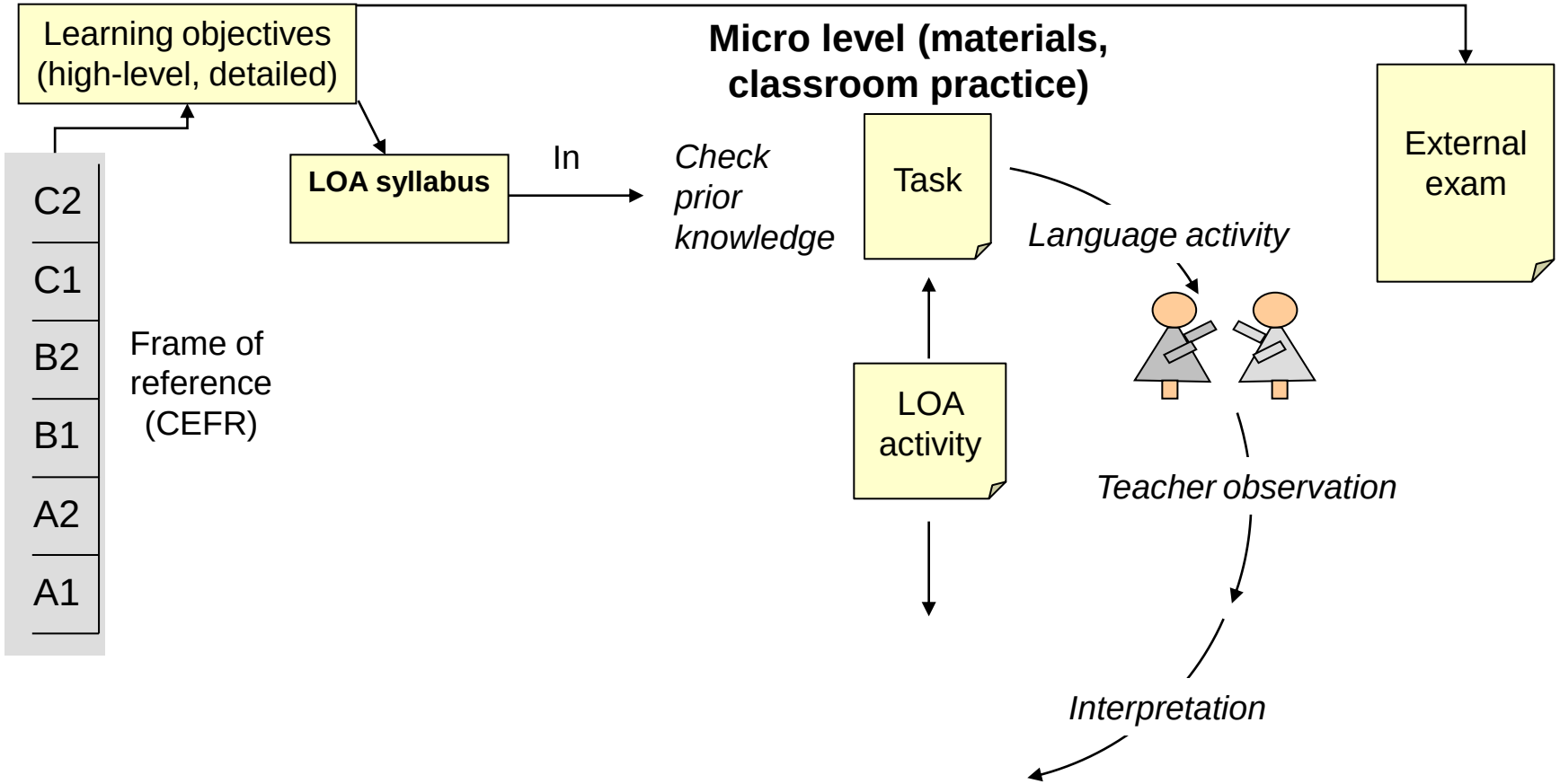

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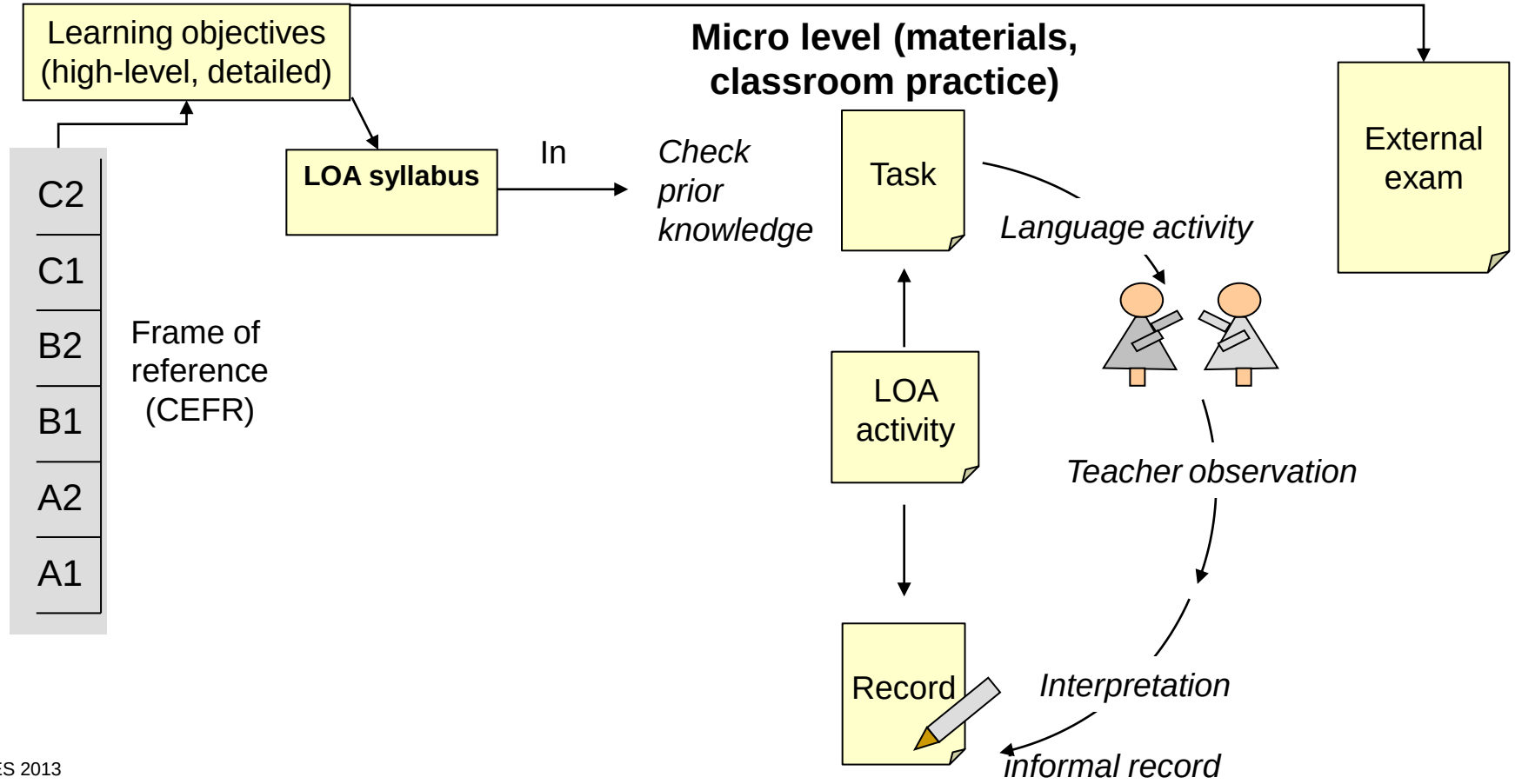

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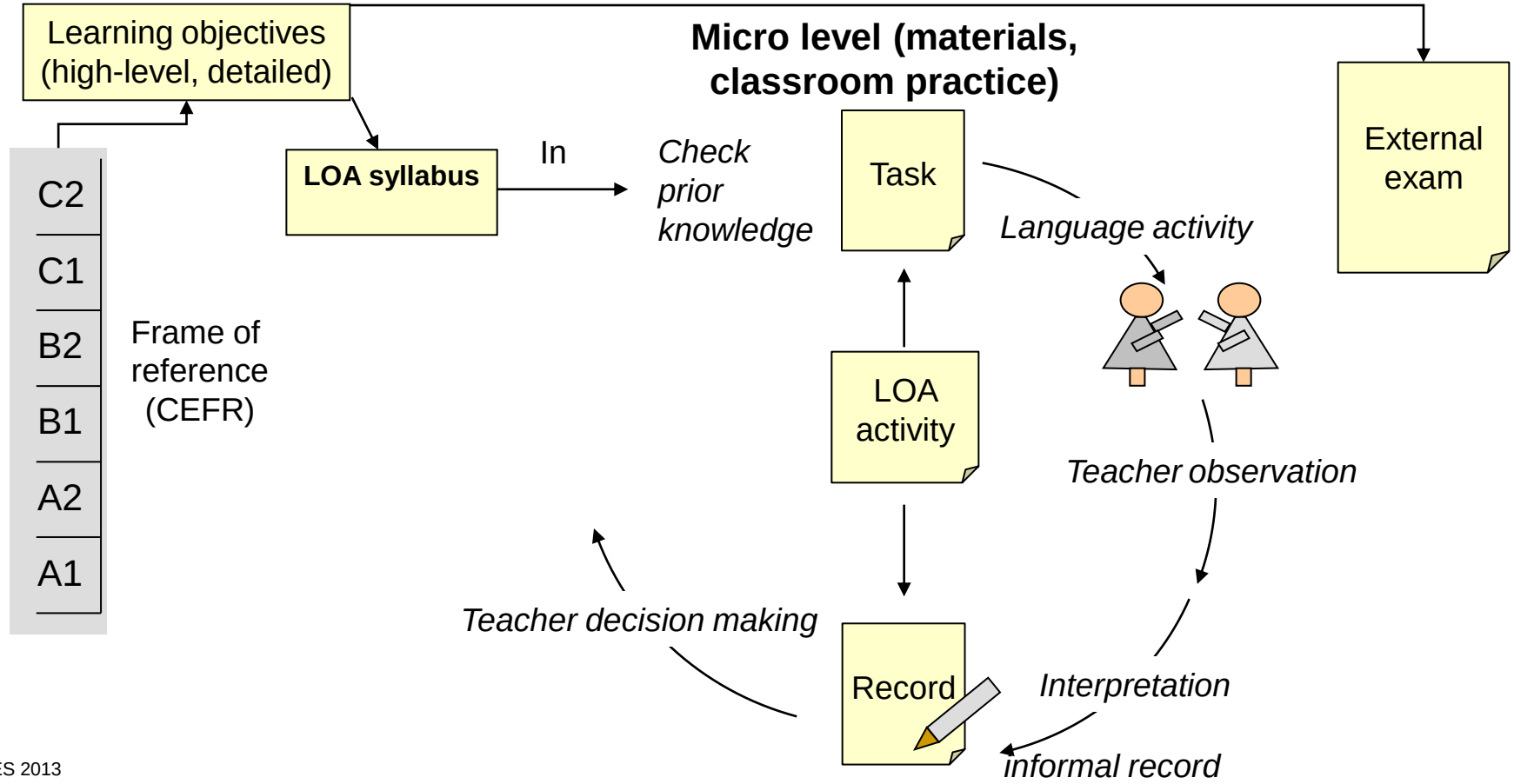

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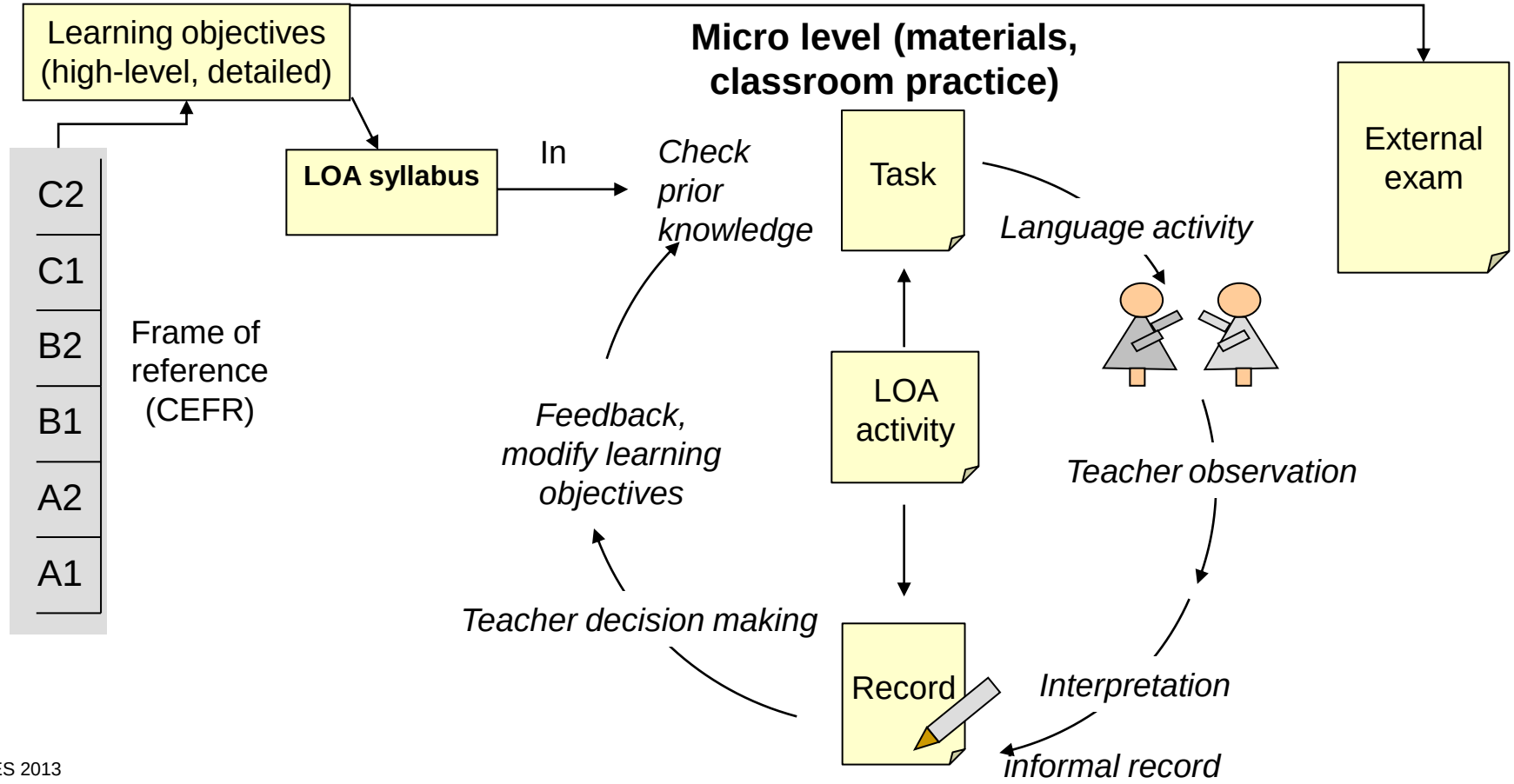

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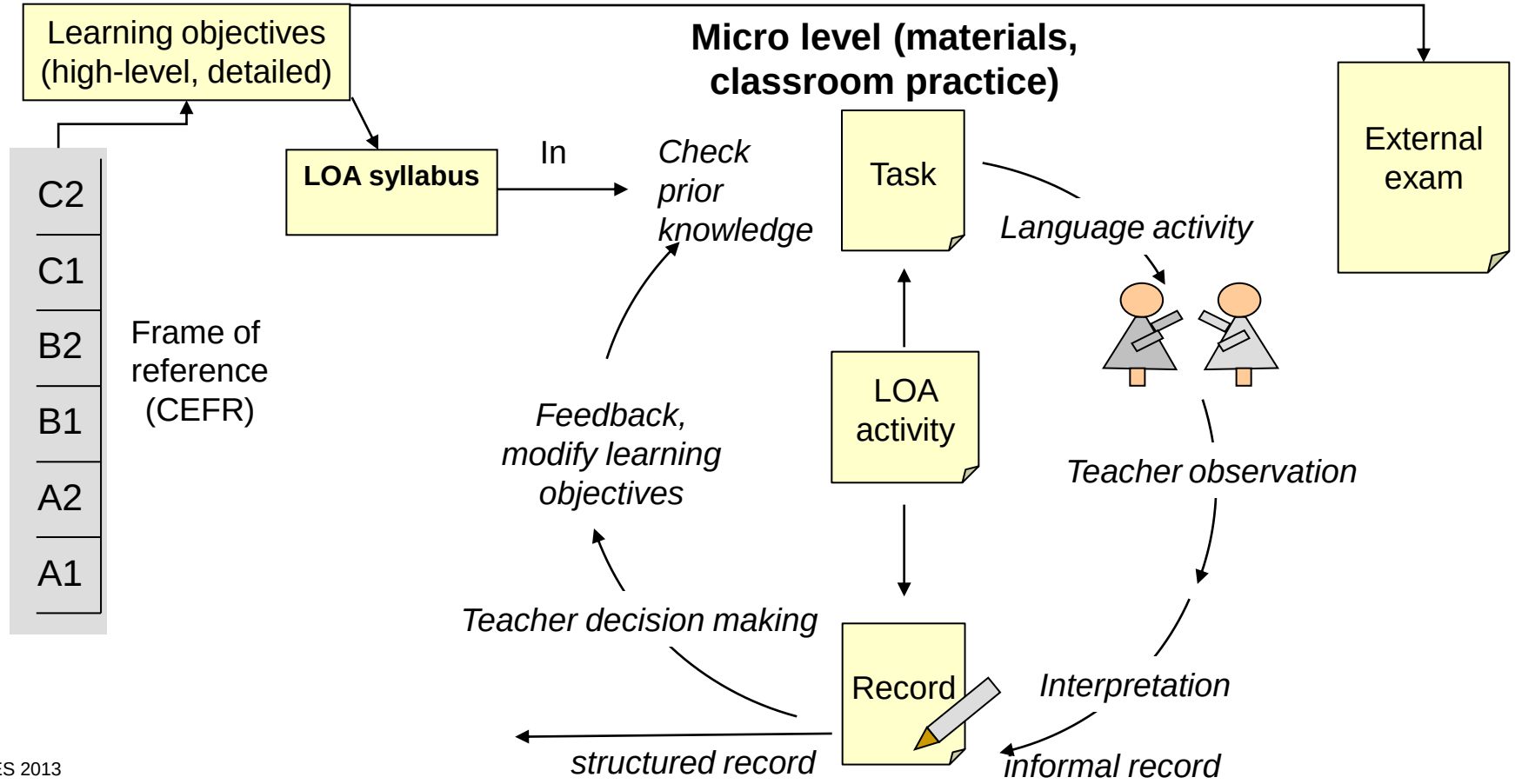

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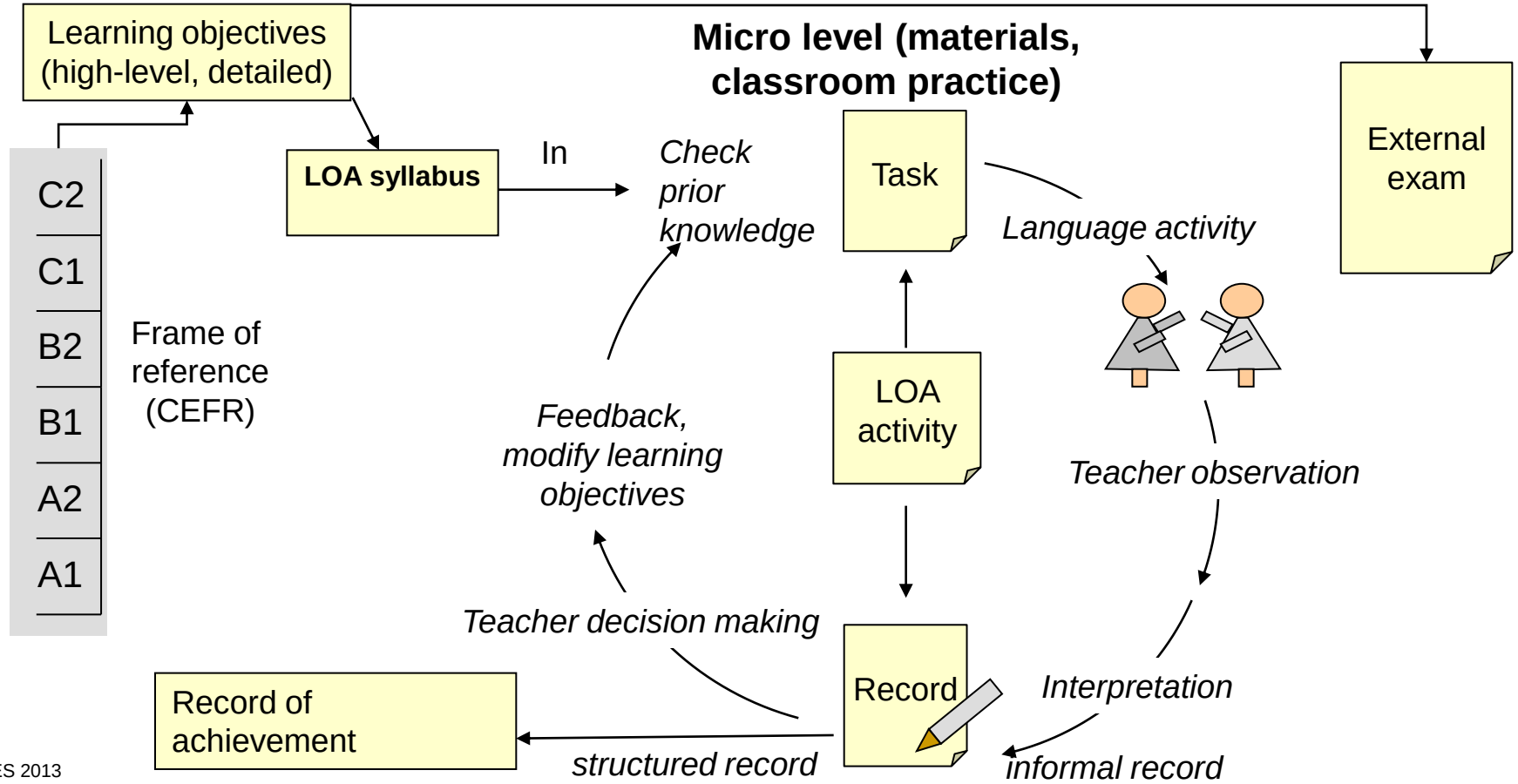

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Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

Micro level (materials, classroom practice)

External exam

C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1

Frame of reference (CEFR)

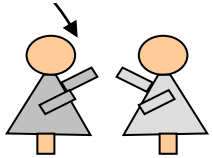
LOA syllabus

In

Check prior knowledge

Task

Language activity



LOA activity

Teacher observation

Feedback, modify learning objectives

Teacher decision making

Record

Interpretation

structured record

informal record

Interpretation

Record of achievement

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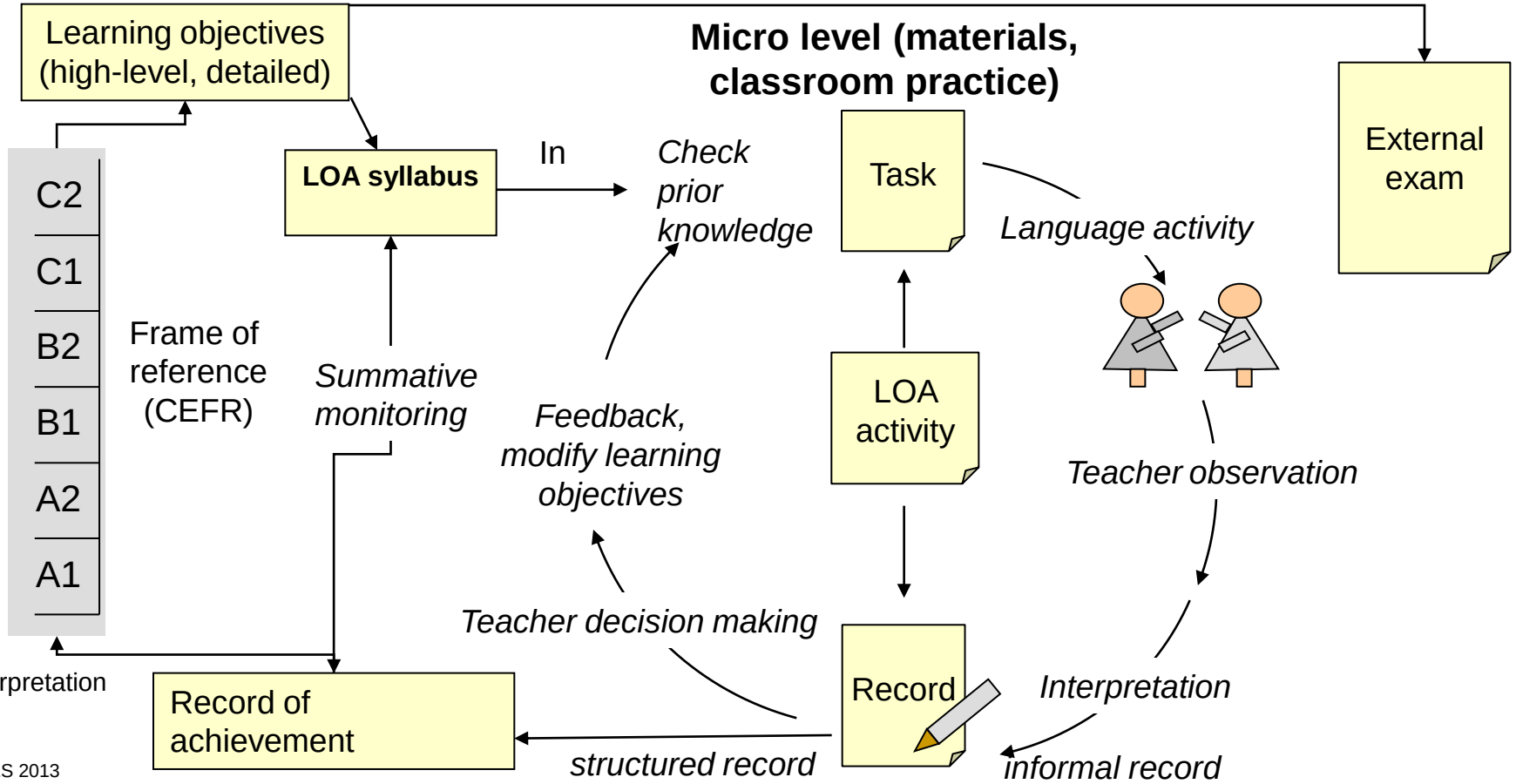
Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)



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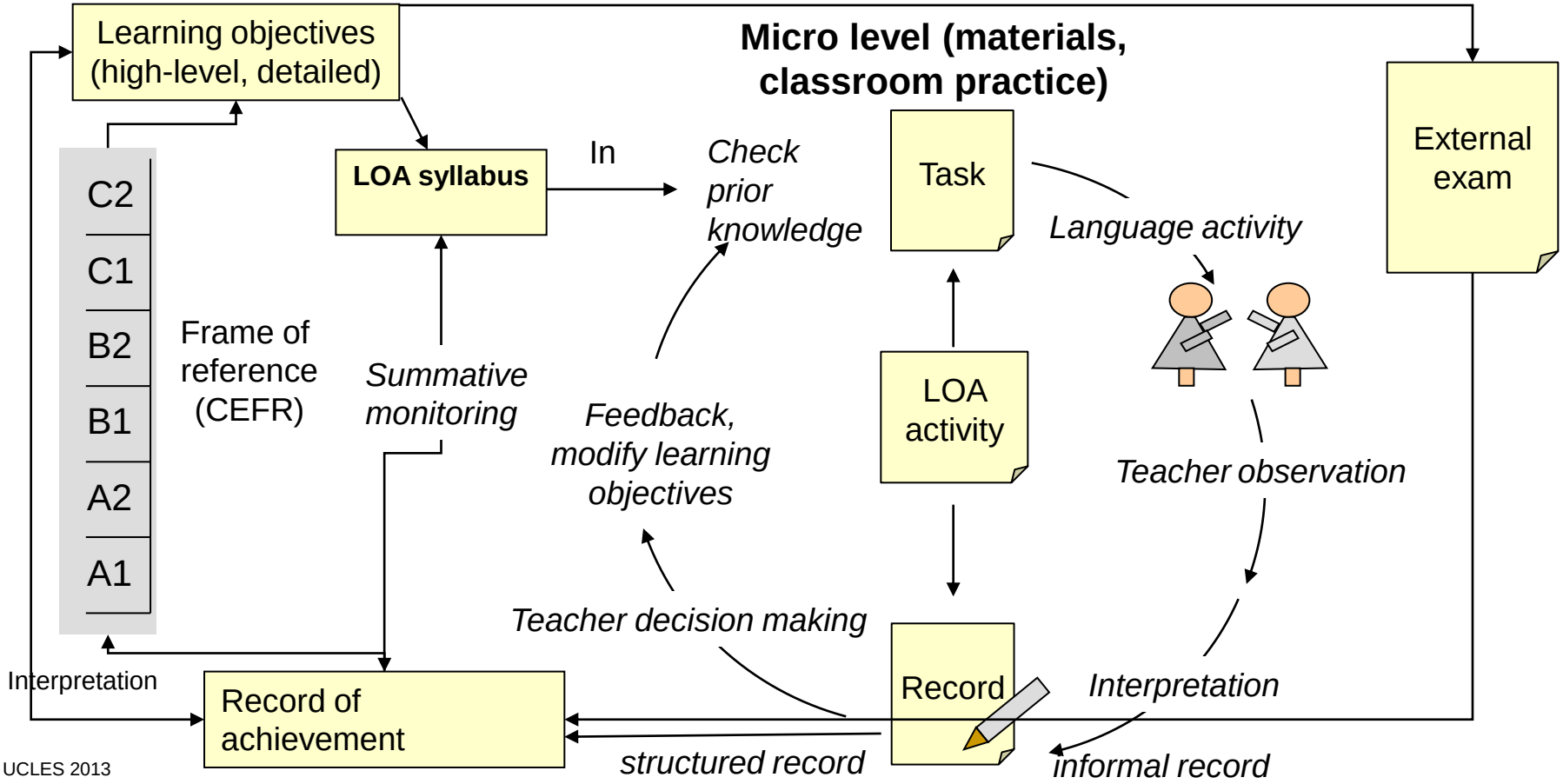
Macro level (setting and monitoring targets)



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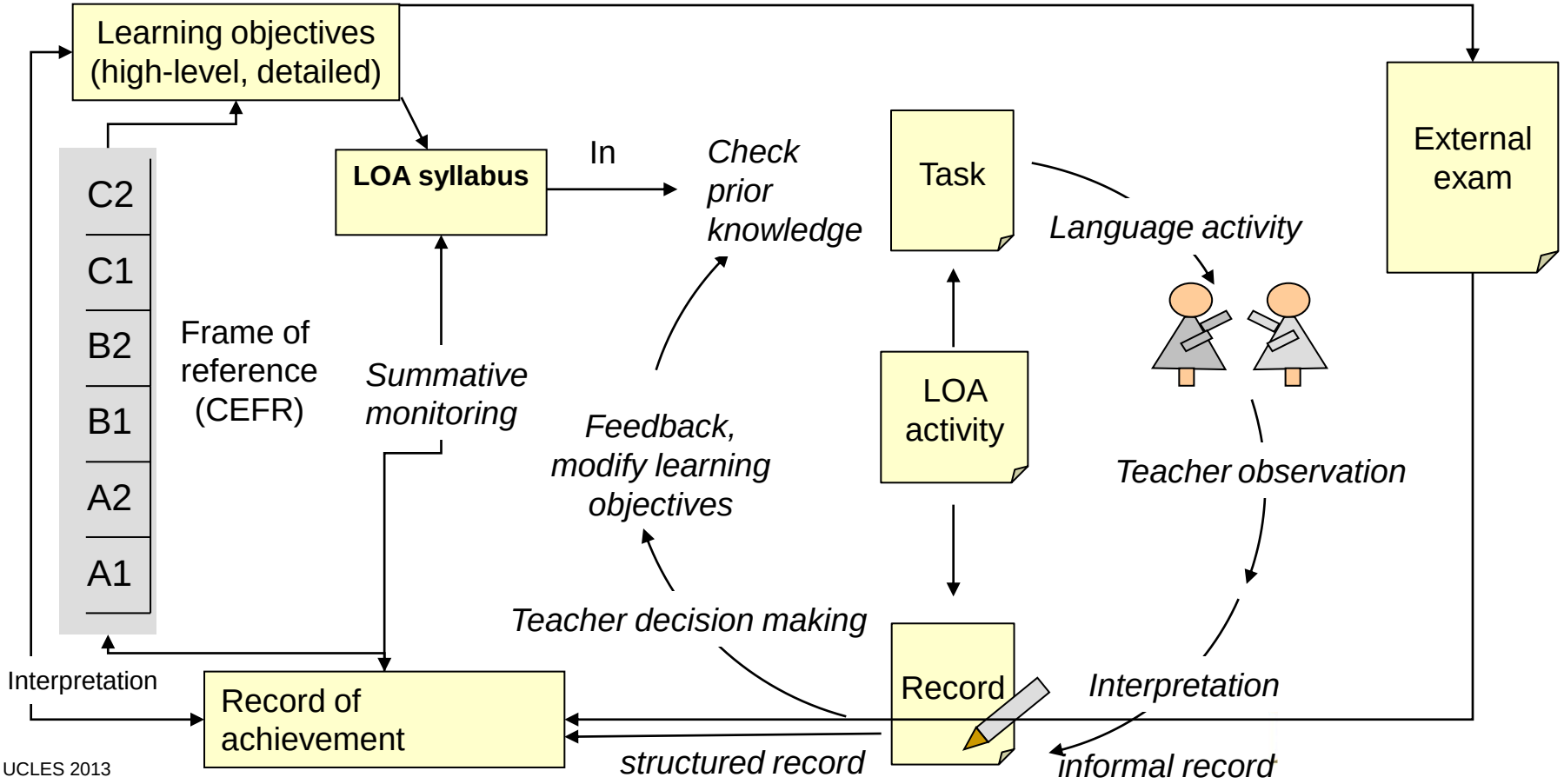
Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)
External exam
LOA syllabus
In
Check prior knowledge
Task
Language activity
C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1
Frame of reference (CEFR)
Summative monitoring
Feedback, modify learning objectives
LOA activity
Teacher observation
Teacher decision making
Record
Interpretation
Interpretation
Record of achievement
structured record
informal record

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Presentation, adaptivity, creation of meaningful context

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

External exam

C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1

Frame of reference (CEFR)

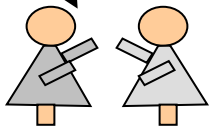
LOA syllabus

In

Check prior knowledge

Task

Language activity



LOA activity

Summative monitoring

Feedback, modify learning objectives

Teacher observation

Teacher decision making

Interpretation

Record of achievement

Record

Interpretation

structured record

informal record

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Presentation, adaptivity, creation of meaningful context

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

External exam

C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1

Frame of reference (CEFR)

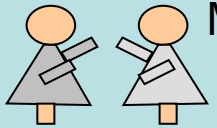
LOA syllabus

In

Check prior knowledge

Task

Language activity



Mediation of interaction

Summative monitoring

Feedback, modify learning objectives

LOA activity

Teacher observation

Teacher decision making

Interpretation

Record of achievement

Record

Interpretation

structured record

informal record

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Presentation, adaptivity, creation of meaningful context

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

External exam

C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1

Frame of reference (CEFR)

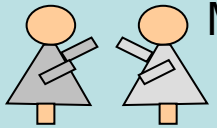
LOA syllabus

In

Check prior knowledge

Task

Language activity



Mediation of interaction

Summative monitoring

Feedback, modify learning objectives

LOA activity

Teacher observation

Capture outcomes, complex, transient interactions

Teacher decision making

Interpretation

Record of achievement

Record

Interpretation

structured record

informal record

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Presentation, adaptivity, creation of meaningful context

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

External exam

C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1

Frame of reference (CEFR)

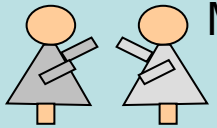
LOA syllabus

In

Check prior knowledge

Task

Language activity



Mediation of interaction

Summative monitoring

Feedback, modify learning objectives

LOA activity

Teacher observation

Capture outcomes, complex, transient interactions

Teacher decision making

Interpretation

Record of achievement

Record

Summarise, record, interpret (statistical ability estimation)

structured record

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Presentation, adaptivity, creation of meaningful context

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

External exam

C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1

Frame of reference (CEFR)

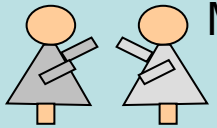
LOA syllabus

In

Check prior knowledge

Task

Language activity



Mediation of interaction

Summative monitoring

Feedback, modify learning objectives

LOA activity

Teacher observation

Capture outcomes, complex, transient interactions

Interpretation

Record of achievement

Relate to global framework, capture individual profiles – the student model

Record

Summarise, record, interpret (statistical ability estimation)

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Presentation, adaptivity, creation of meaningful context

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

External exam

C2
C1
B2
B1
A2
A1

Frame of reference (CEFR)

LOA syllabus

In

Check prior knowledge

Task

Language activity

Mediation of interaction

Empower students, enable reflection, autonomy

LOA activity

Teacher observation

modify learning objectives

Capture outcomes, complex, transient interactions

Relate to global framework, capture individual profiles – the student model

Record

Summarise, record, interpret (statistical ability estimation)

Interpretation

Record of achievement

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Language Assessment
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Presentation, adaptivity, creation of meaningful context

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

External exam

C2

A1

LOA syllabus

In

Check prior knowledge

Task

Language activity

Language theory building, description

Empower students, enable reflection, autonomy

LOA activity

Mediation of interaction

Teacher observation

objectives

Capture outcomes, complex, transient interactions

Interpretation

Record of achievement

Relate to global framework, capture individual profiles – the student model

Record

Summarise, record, interpret (statistical ability estimation)

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Presentation, adaptivity, creation of meaningful context

Learning objectives (high-level, detailed)

External exam

C2

A1

LOA syllabus

In

Check prior knowledge

Task

Language activity

Language theory building, description

Empower students, enable reflection, autonomy

LOA activity

Mediation of interaction

Teacher observation

objectives

Capture outcomes, complex, transient interactions

Interpretation

Record of achievement

Relate to global framework, capture individual profiles – the student model

Record

Summarise, record, interpret (statistical ability estimation)

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A systemic view of assessment

Assessment can have a powerful positive or negative impact on educational outcomes.

The learning outcomes which are assessed must align with learning objectives.

Objectives should focus on communicative language ability: we learn to communicate, and we learn by communicating.

Strong alignment of classroom and assessment activities (tasks) ensures coherence throughout the system.

A key issue the collection of complex evidence: of learning and for learning.

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On gathering evidence

Information is important, we need to find practical ways of generating it.

It cannot be an administrative burden on the teacher.

IT-mediated activities can readily generate data from which evidence can be extracted.

An unlimited range of collaborative or individual learning activities.

IT can make the construction and use of information a shared enterprise in which students play a major role.

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Thank you!

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