

A Framework for Considering Balanced Assessment Systems: Key Characteristics

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Opening Activity

- How would you define a “comprehensive assessment system?”

Overview

- Clarifying the Problem with Assessment Systems
- Defining an Assessment System
- Criteria to Aid Evaluation
- Moving Forward

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Clarifying the Problem

What does the field mean by an “assessment system?”

- *Terminology*
- *Definitions*
- *Characteristics*

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 - “**Balanced** Assessment Systems: Redefining Excellence in Assessment” (Stiggins, 2006)
 - “The Role of Interim Assessments in a **Comprehensive** Assessment System” (Perie, Marion, & Gong, 2007)
 - “Formative Assessment and **Next-Generation** Assessment Systems” (Heritage, 2010)
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Defining Assessment Systems

- Definitions of assessment systems are unclear, often focusing on purpose or specific characteristics.
 - “. . . ‘assessment system’ is often used in reference to a state’s testing program” (Coladarci, 2002, p. 72).
 - “Today’s resurgent interest in performance tasks, coupled with new attention to the value of metacognitive learning skills, invites progress toward what I like to call a “**system of assessments**,” a comprehensive approach that draws from multiple sources in order to develop a holistic picture of student knowledge and skills in all of the areas that make a real difference for college, career, and life success” (Conley, 2014, p. 20).

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Emphasis on the Parts, not the Whole

- Authors give a lot of attention to the pieces that comprise an assessment system (formative, summative, interim) with little attention to how they interact.

Wake County Public School System (North Carolina, 2011):

“A comprehensive assessment system is comprised of three types of assessment routinely administered to all students in K-12 classrooms: **summative, benchmark, and formative** (Goren, 2010; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2008). Outside of this realm are certain assessments, such as language proficiency or other diagnostic tests, given only to selected students. These assessments are not within the scope of this paper.”

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Why this emphasis in the literature?

- One likely reason: In 2010, a federal RTT grant called for the development of “Comprehensive Assessment Systems.”
- Grant Requirements:
 - Summative Math and English Language Arts components.
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Defining an Assessment System

“A collection of assessments does not entail a system any more than a pile of bricks constitutes a house” (Coladarci, 2002).

Elemental and Holistic Perspectives

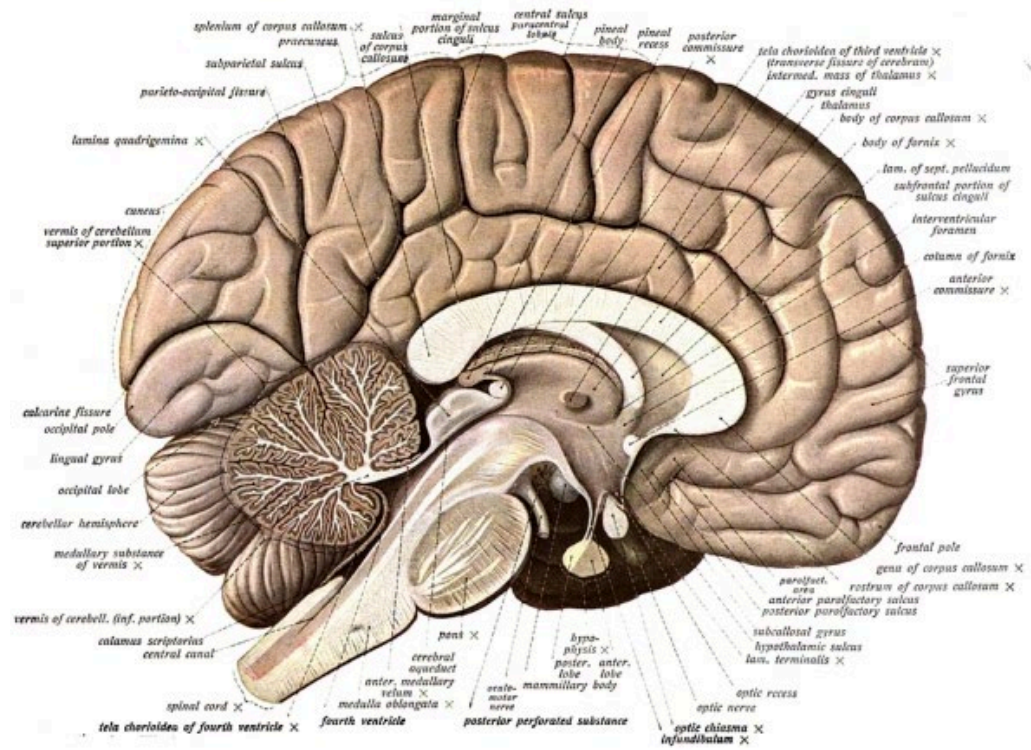
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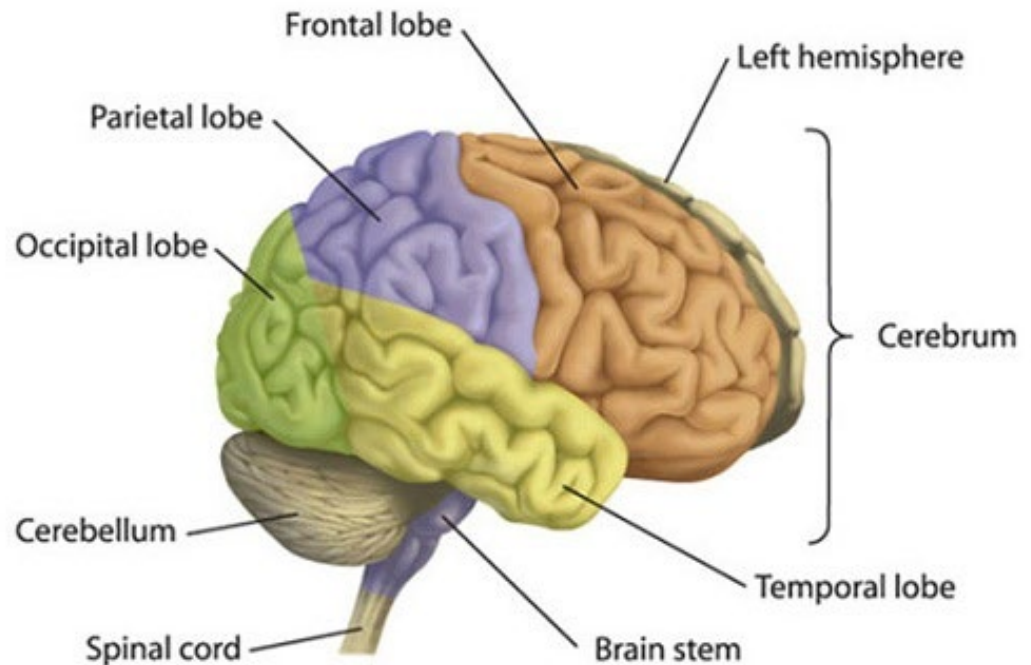
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Elements of Balanced Assessment Systems

- A balanced assessment environment should exhibit three properties (NRC, 2001):
 1. **Comprehensiveness** – “a range of measurement approaches should be used to provide a variety of evidence to support educational decision-making”
 2. **Coherence** – “the conceptual base or models of student learning underlying the various external classroom assessments within a system should be compatible”
 3. **Continuity** – “assessments should measure student progress over time”

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Microcosm and Macrocosm

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Macrocosm



A Holistic Perspective on Assessment

Microcosm: Classroom-Level Assessments



A Holistic Perspective on Assessment

Microcosm:

Classroom-Level Assessments



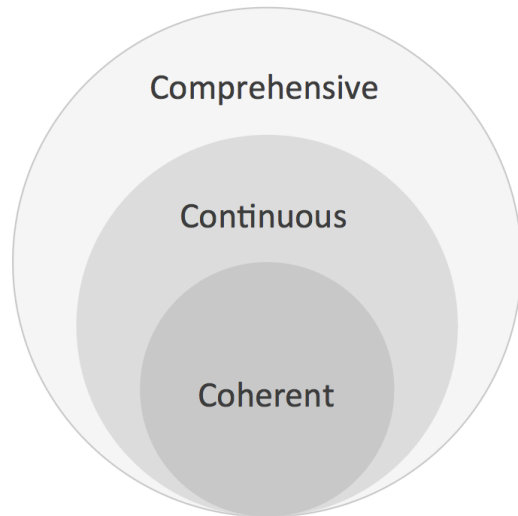
Macrocosm:

System of Assessments



Perspectives on Systems

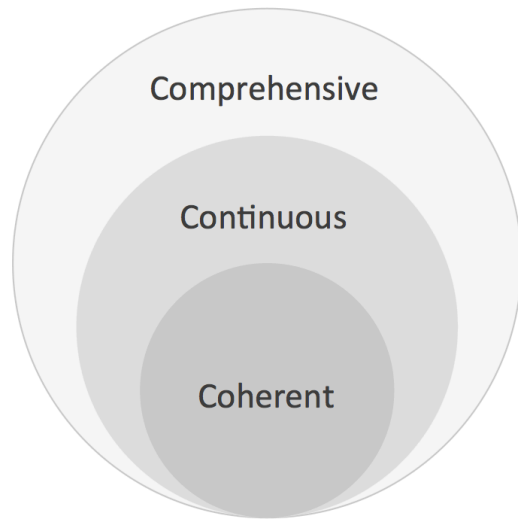
- Identify critical criteria to examine the comprehensiveness of an assessment system.



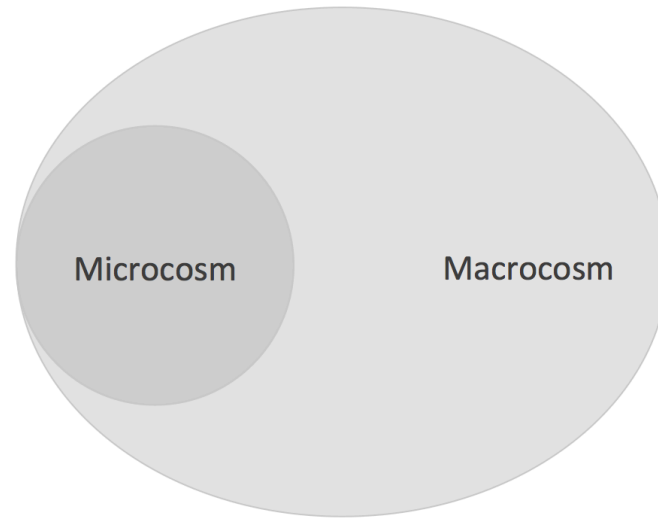
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Perspectives on Systems

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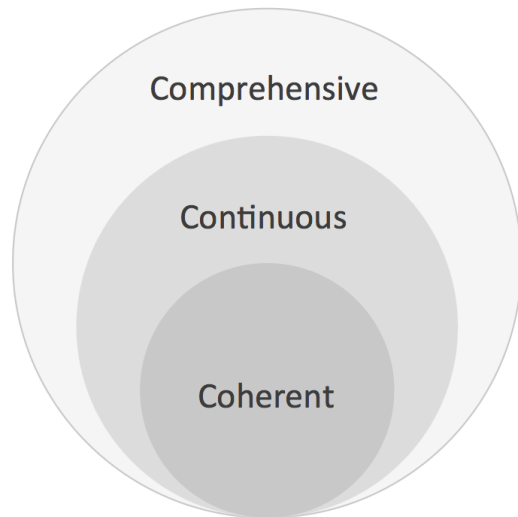
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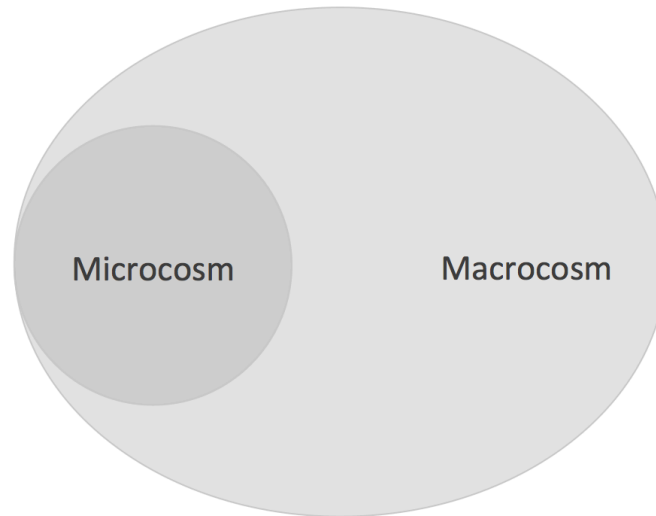
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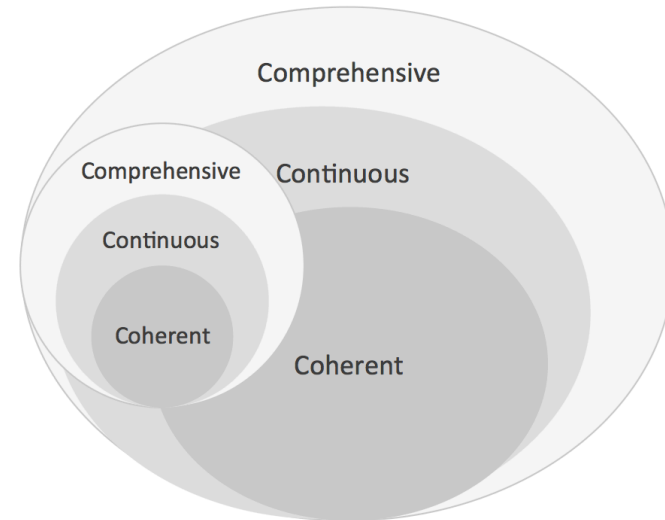
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A. Elemental Perspective



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C. Integrated Perspective

Criteria to Aid Evaluation

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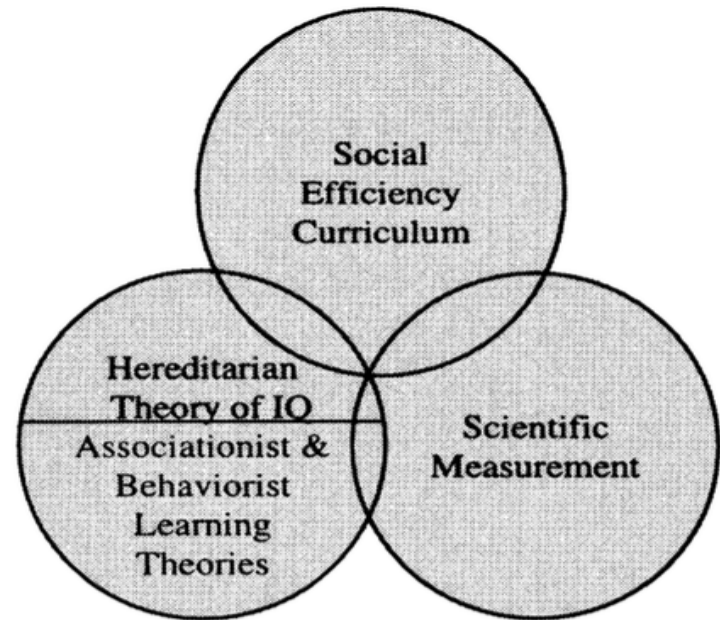
- Systemic Coherence
- Well-Defined Pathways of Information Flow
- Assessment Efficiency

Systemic Coherence (NRC, 2001)

- Vertical Coherence – conceptual base or models of student learning underlying the various external and classroom assessments within a system should be compatible
- Horizontal Coherence – alignment among curriculum, instruction, and assessment along a common set of learning goals

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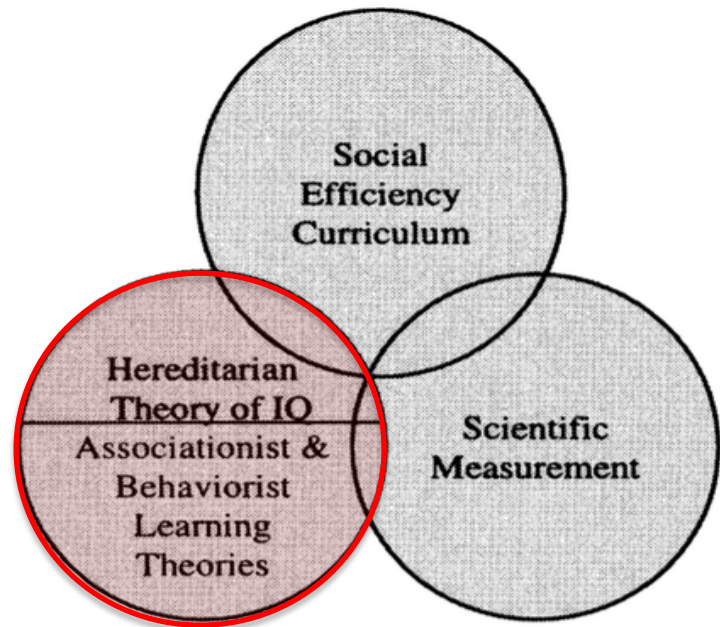
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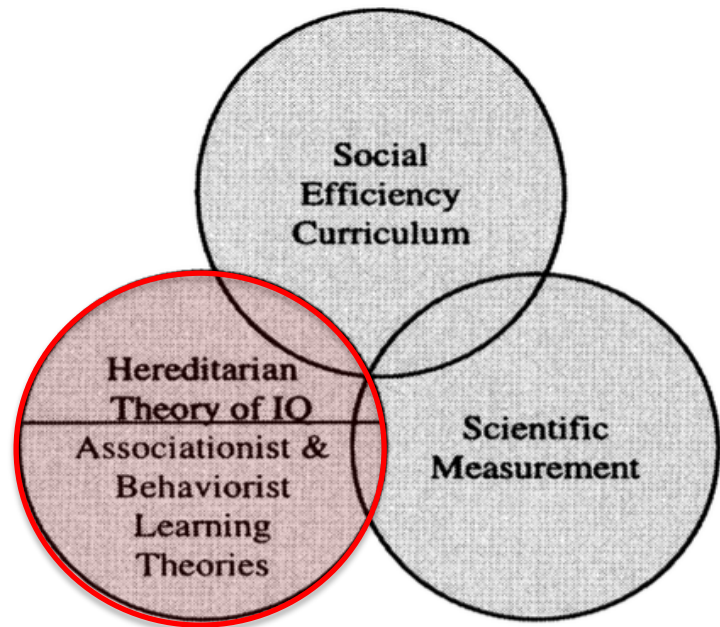
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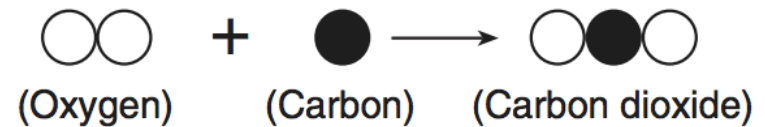
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The diagram below represents two atoms in a molecule of oxygen that combine chemically with one atom of carbon to form a carbon dioxide molecule.



(Not drawn to scale)

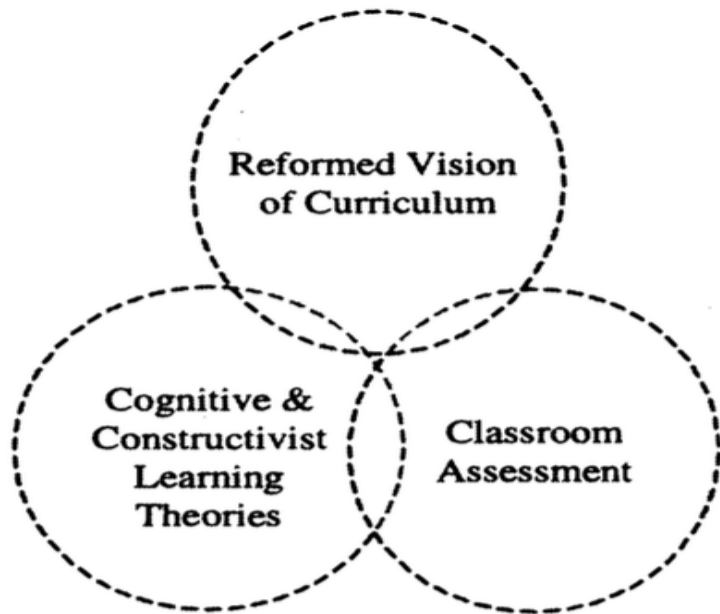
Carbon dioxide is an example of

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| (1) a mixture | (3) a solution |
| (2) an element | (4) a compound |

NYS Grade 8 Science Test (2013)

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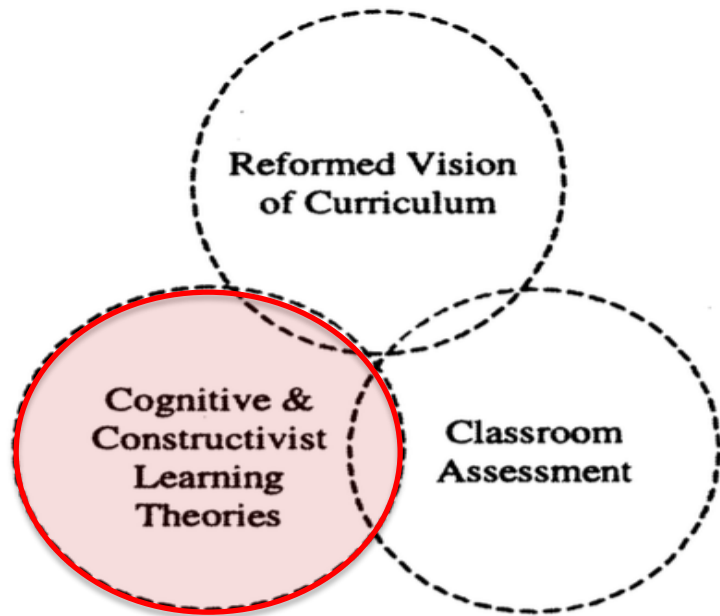
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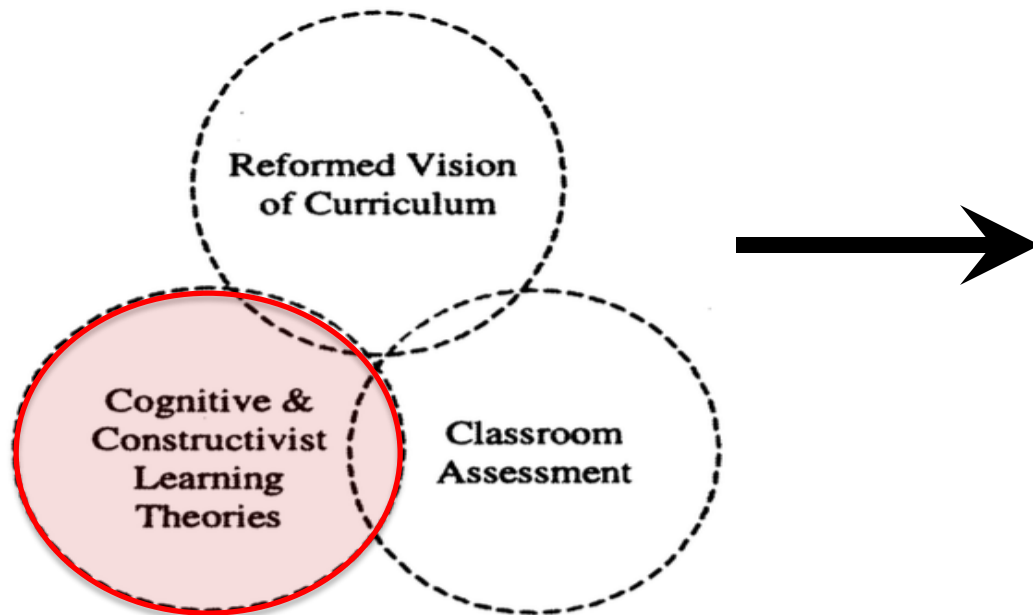
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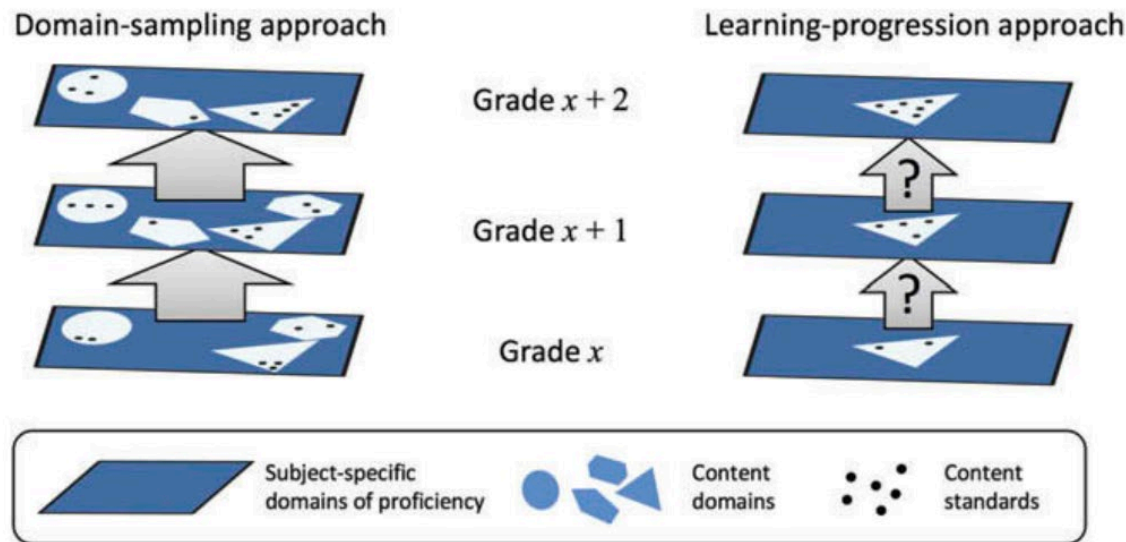
The pupil was asked if he or she had:

- any ideas as to why substances can melt or boil;
- any ideas of what an iron nail might be made of, and what might be seen if it could be magnified a huge number of times;
- what, if anything, the terms atom and molecule meant to him or her

Johnson(1998)

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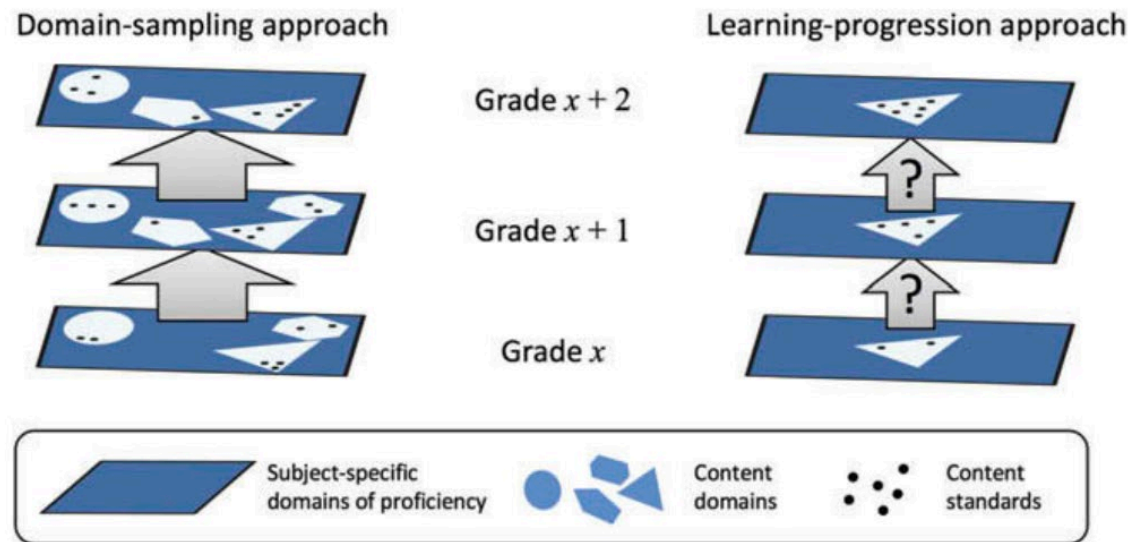


Briggs & Peck (2015)

- This model also helps address the criterion of continuity.

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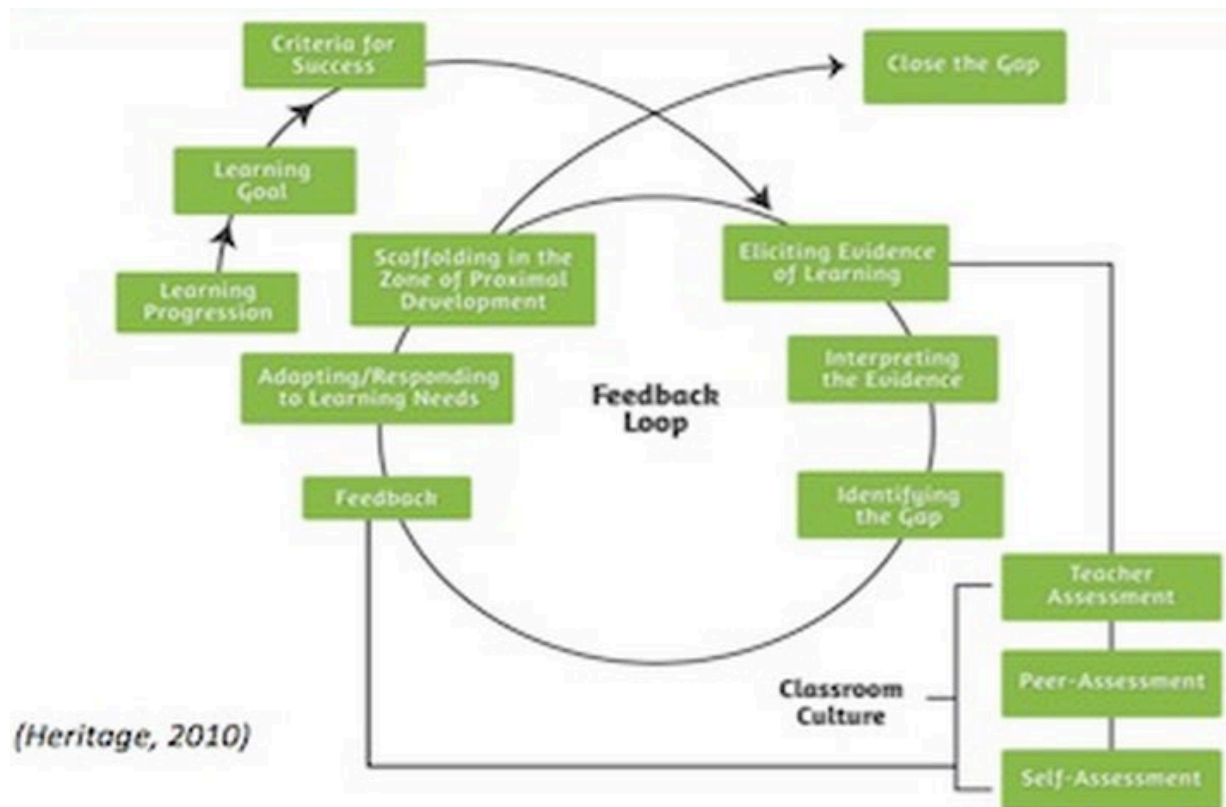
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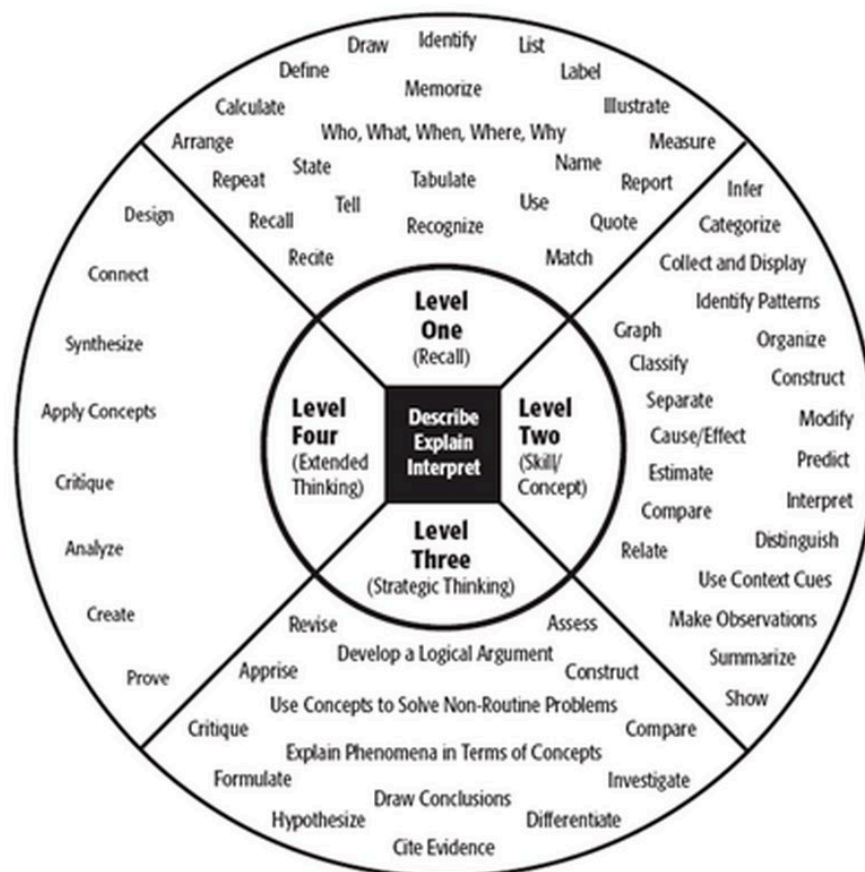


Strategies to Evaluate Coherence

- Evaluate the cognitive complexity of assessment tasks (e.g., using Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge (DOK) levels).
- Identify and evaluate the appropriateness of models of student learning that underpin macro assessment systems.
- Develop, use, or adapt observation protocols focused on evaluating horizontal coherence during micro assessment system evaluations.

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Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4a Reflecting on Teaching• 4b Maintaining Accurate Records• 4c Communicating with Families• 4d Participating in the Professional Community• 4e Growing and Developing Professionally• 4f Demonstrating Professionalism	Domain 3: Instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3a Communicating With Students• 3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques• 3c Engaging Students in Learning• 3d Using Assessment in Instruction• 3e Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

<https://danielsongroup.org/framework/>

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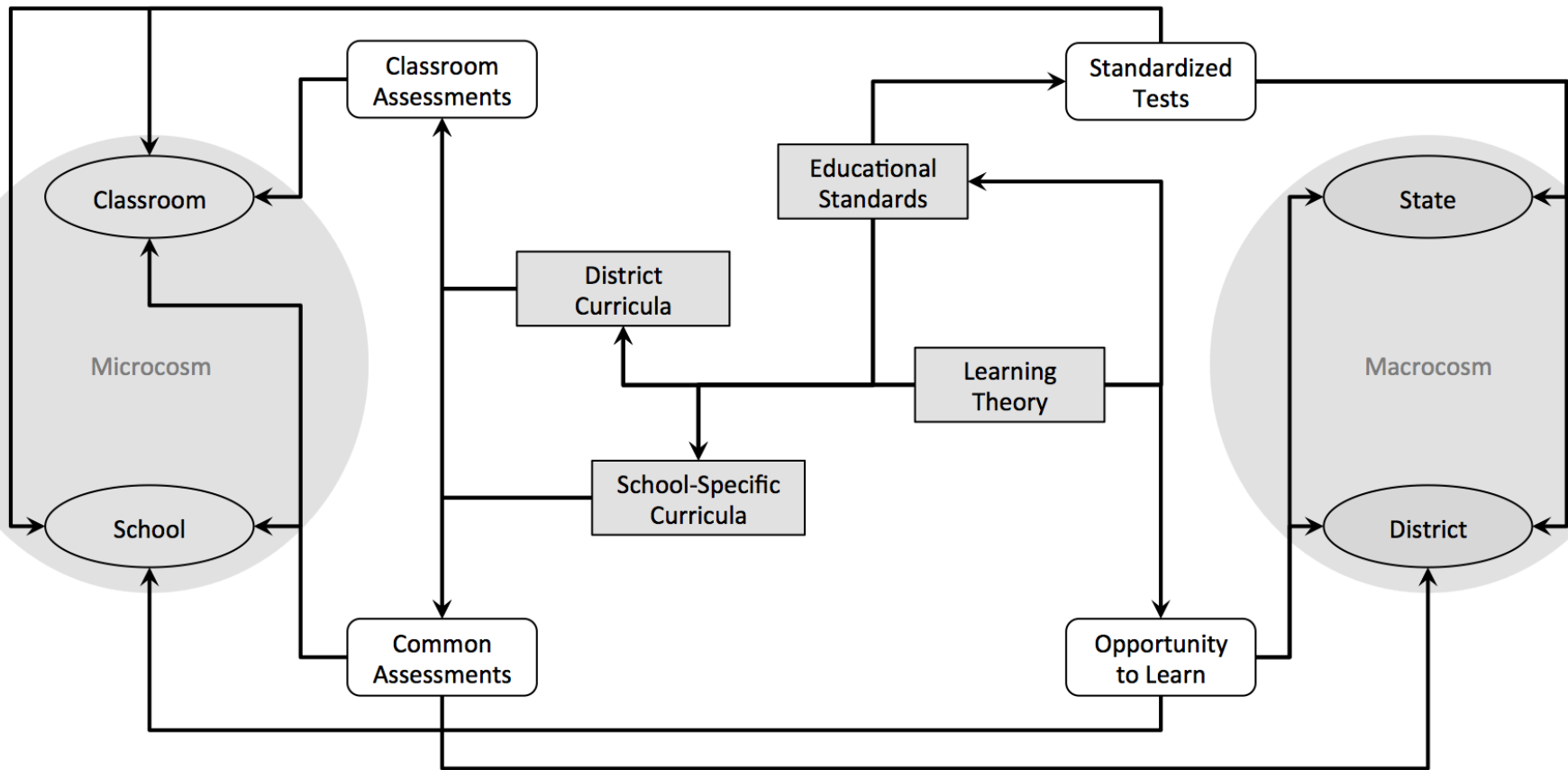
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Well-Defined Pathways of Information Flow

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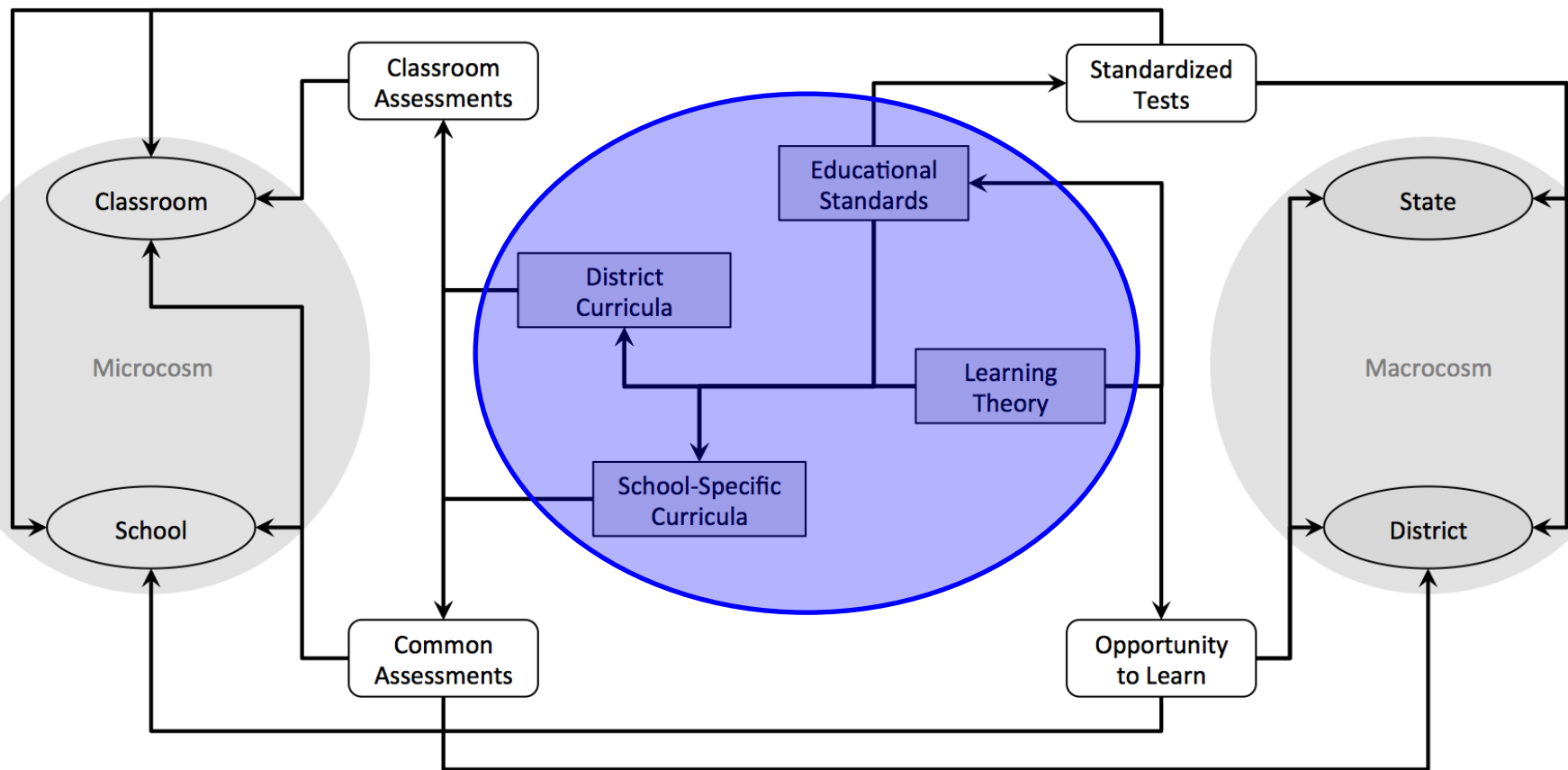
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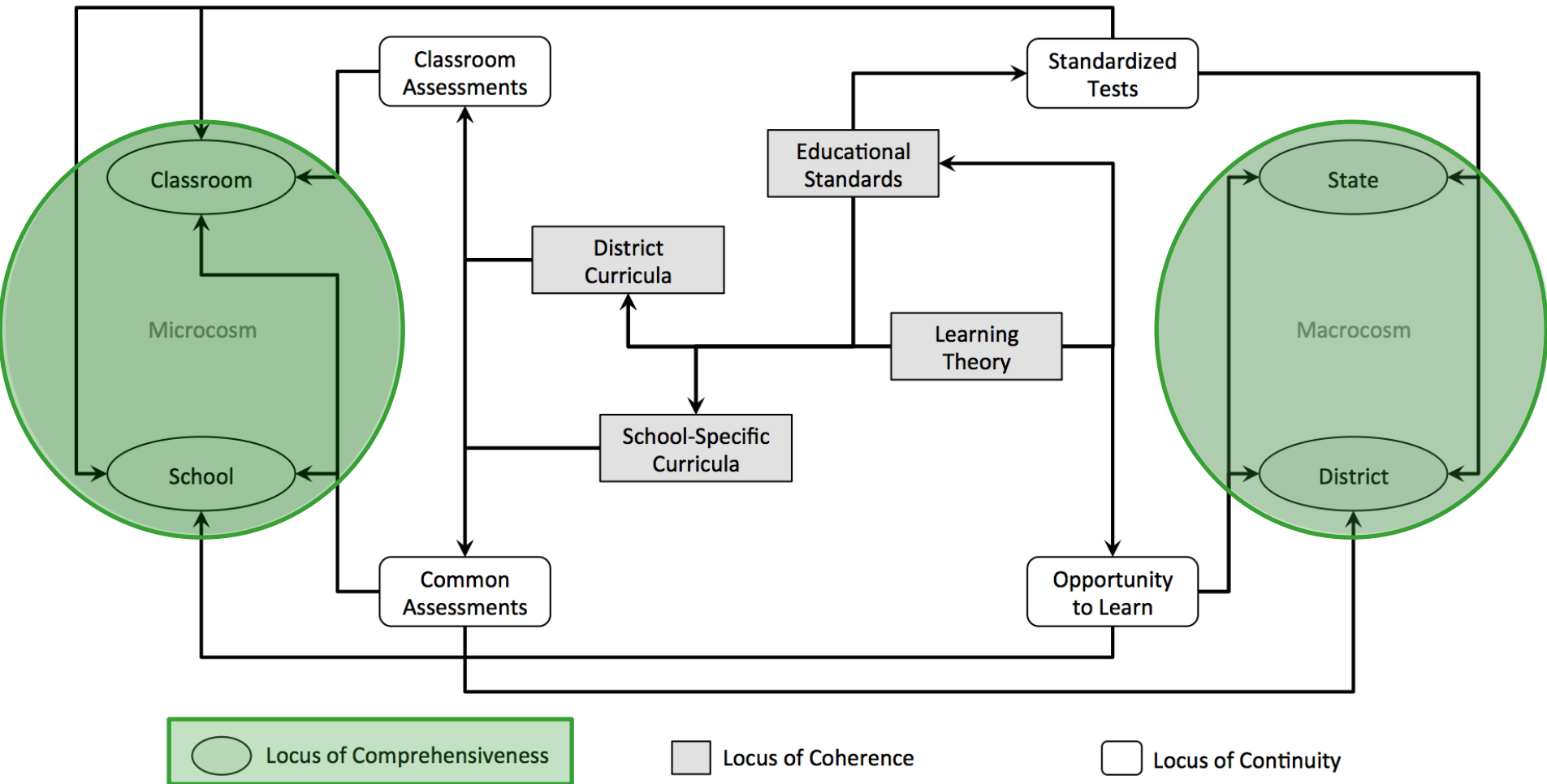
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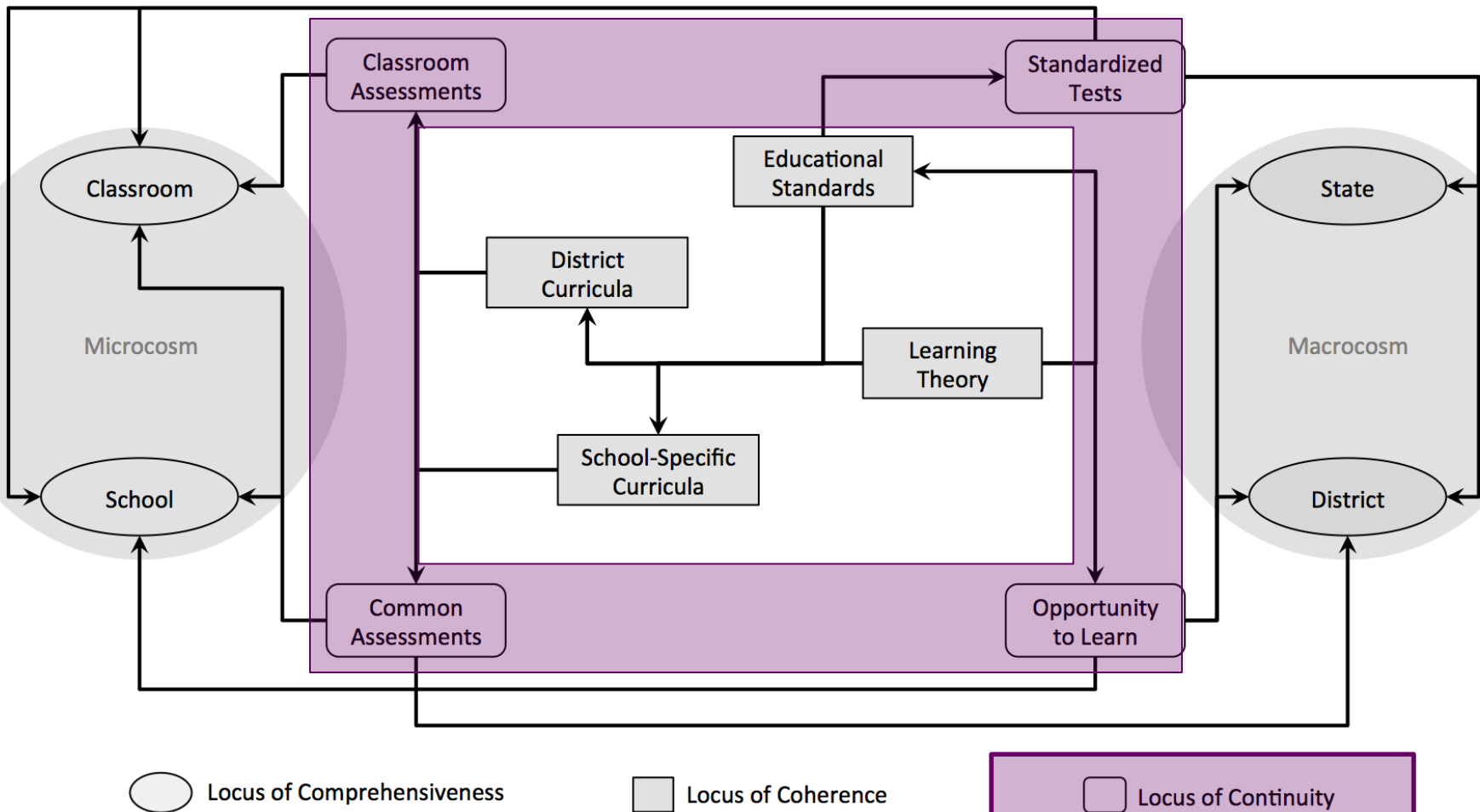
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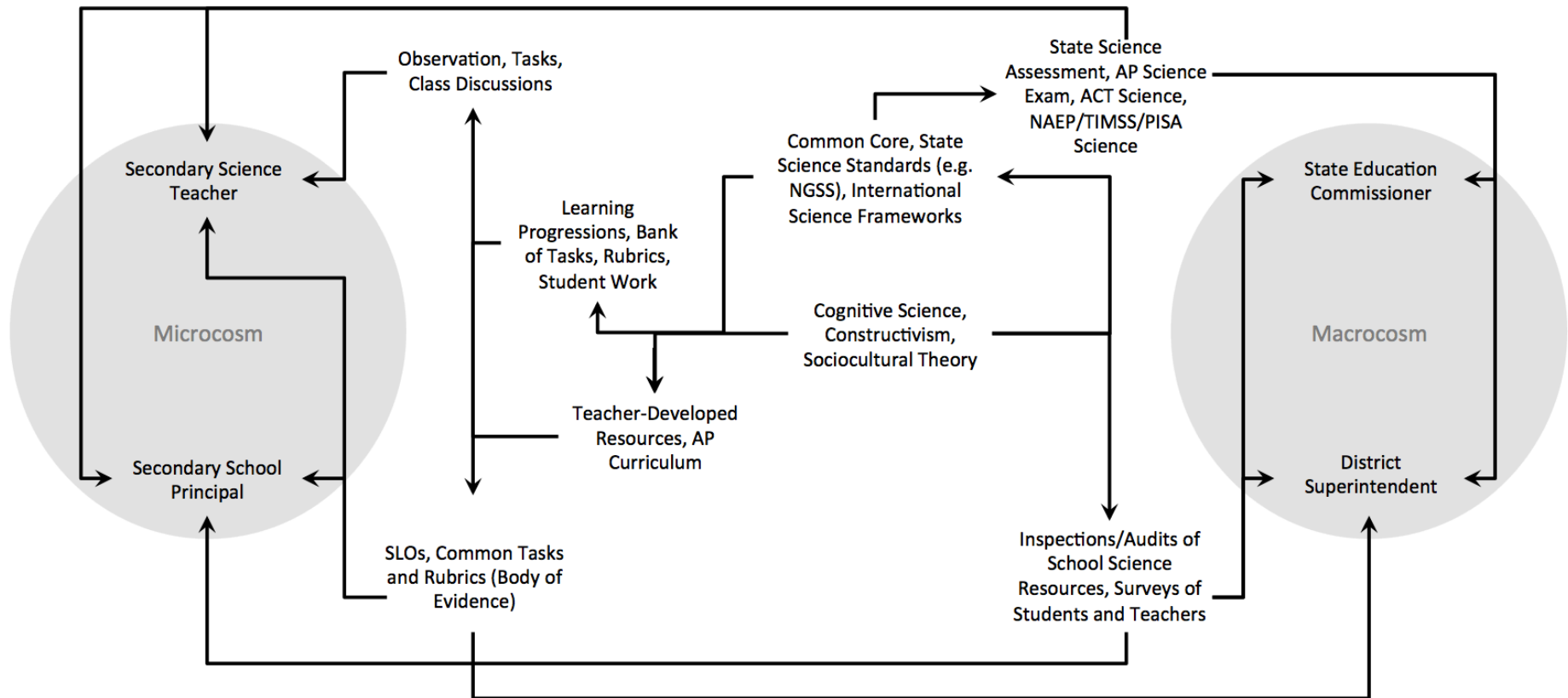
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Strategies to Evaluate Information Flow

- Identify a well-articulated theory-of-action for information flow in an assessment system.
 - Identify stakeholders in an assessment system and their needs from assessments.
 - Map how existing or new assessments meet the needs of each stakeholder, while ensuring that each assessment is being used and is valid for its intended purpose.
 - Evaluate the extent to which stakeholders' needs are being met by the existing assessment system.
- Audit each assessment for coherence using strategies described earlier.

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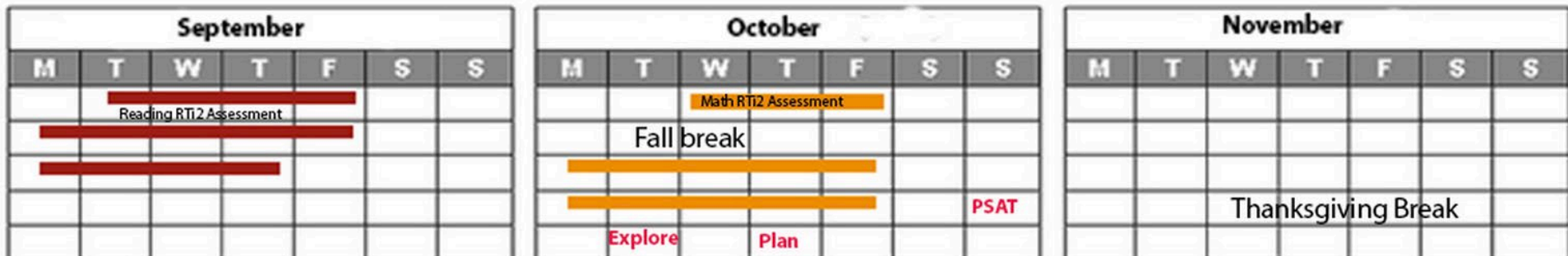
September						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
December						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
March						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S









October						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
January						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
April						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S

November						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
February						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
May						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S

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-  **Sept:** RTI2 Reading assessment
-  **October** RTi2 Math Assessment, Explore, PSAT, PLAN (pre-college board exams)
- November** Instruction aligned to test results
-  **December** End of Course Mid-Term Exams and untested subject exams, teacher-created exams.
-  **January** Double up Assessment, Mid Year Benchmark Reading and Math RTI2
-  **February** TCAP Online Writing Test, will be given staggered to all students throughout the month of February. And when children are not doing the test they are practicing writing the test formula.
-  **March** TCAP prep,
-  **April** Test Prep, test pilots and full TCAP
-  **May** Another round of Math and Reading RTi2 and then end of course exams, gateway exam for High School, AP and IB exams and regular final exams for subjects untested by mandated tests.

<https://treetn.org/call-for-testing-transparency/>

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September						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	Reading RTI2 Assessment					

October						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		Math RTI2 Assessment				
	Fall break					
	Explore	Plan			PSAT	

November							
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	
		Thanksgiving Break					

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- October** RTi2 Math Assessment, Explore, PSAT, PLAN (pre-college board exams)
- November** Instruction aligned to test results
- December** End of Course Mid-term Exams and untested subject exams, teacher-created exams.
- January** Double up Assessment, Mid Year Benchmark Reading and Math RTI2
- February** TCAP Online Writing Test, will be given staggered to all students throughout the month of February. And when children are not doing the test they are practicing writing the test formula.
- March** TCAP prep,
- April** Test Prep, test pilots and full TCAP
- May** Another round of Math and Reading RTi2 and then end of course exams, gateway exam for High School, AP and IB exams and regular final exams for subjects untested by mandated tests.

Strategies to Evaluate Assessment Efficiency

- Define the minimum amount of assessments necessary to meet the needs of all stakeholders.
- Identify and reduce assessments that are not coherent with the local curricula and that are not mandated.
- Evaluate assessment practices in conjunction with supports for assessment literacy and instruction.

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Emerging Tools:

- *Achieve's (2014) Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts*
- *CCSSO's (2015) Comprehensive Statewide Assessment Systems: A Framework for the Role of the State Education Agency in Improving Quality and Reducing Burden*

Moving Forward

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- Districts/states need to identify a clear model for how students learn and articulate a theory-of-action for an assessment system.
 - Important to first evaluate the current state of assessments in a district or state, instead of adopting a new reform or adding something new.
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- Additional work is needed regarding *how* to extract information from assessments to meet the needs of stakeholders.

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