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# Standardised Tests in School Systems

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Gad S Lim







VS



“equal educational opportunity”

give to each an education that is as good as that provided for everyone else

give an education that is uniquely suited and best for each individual and at the same time



meaning

# Opinion Poll

the state should give to each child an education that is as good as that provided for everyone else

as a parent, given the opportunity, you would choose the best teacher for your child



level of aggregation





implementation



vs



Policy

high level • common good • on the whole

# Policy

policy



paradox

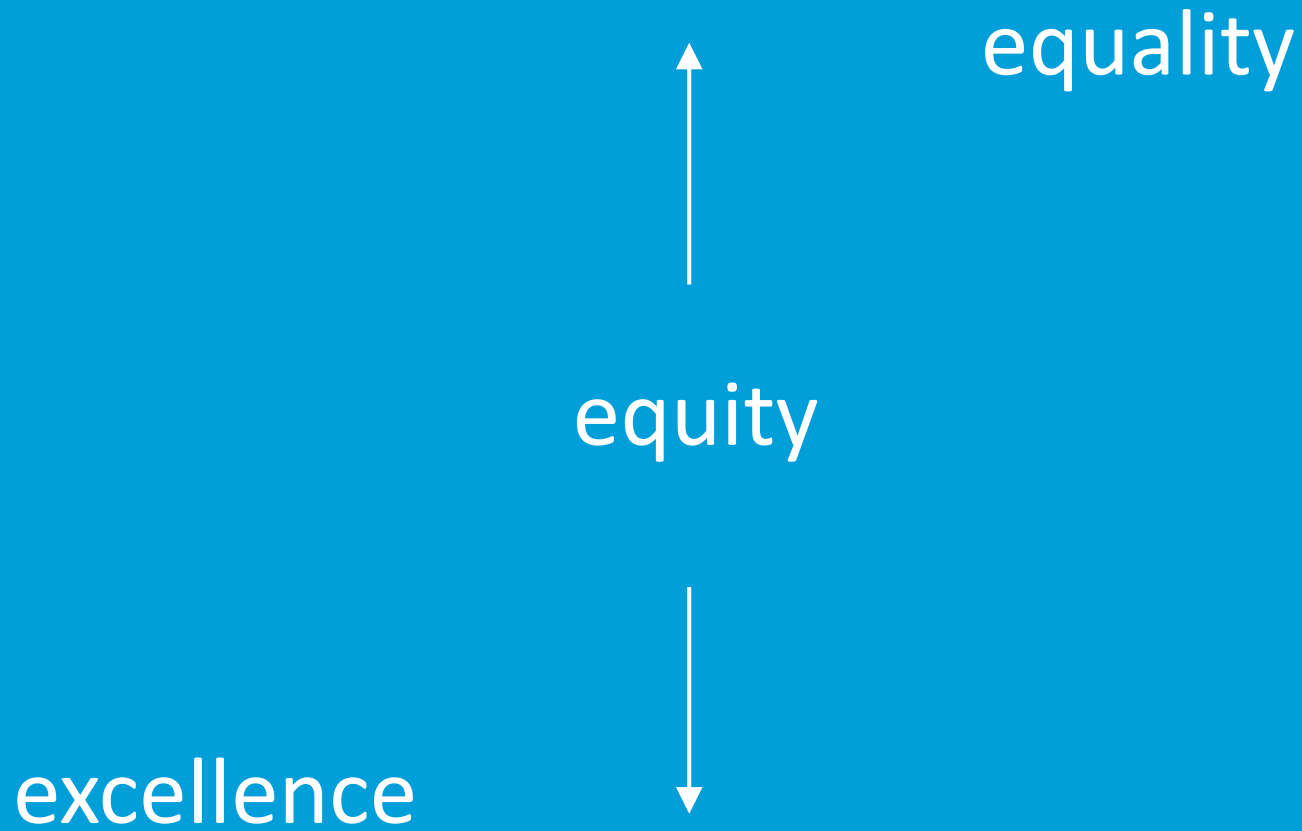
excellence

equity

equality



“Policies in pursuit of educational excellence are more likely to produce gains in equity than policies in pursuit of equality are likely to produce excellence.”



# With that in mind...

- small effort to achieve gains at high levels of aggregation
- large effort to achieve gains at low levels of aggregation



With that in mind...

maximise specific benefit

minimise specific injustice



# Assessment



# Excellence

# Assessment Practices

- find obscure information to make test hard
  - nobody did readings, so give a quiz
  - extra points for going to game
  - extra questions bonus points
    - test most people will pass
    - test most people will fail



Question:

After a day at school, which of the statements below are you more likely to think of?

- Today what I taught was...
- Today what my student learned was...

# Today what I taught was...

Prepared  
Lesson



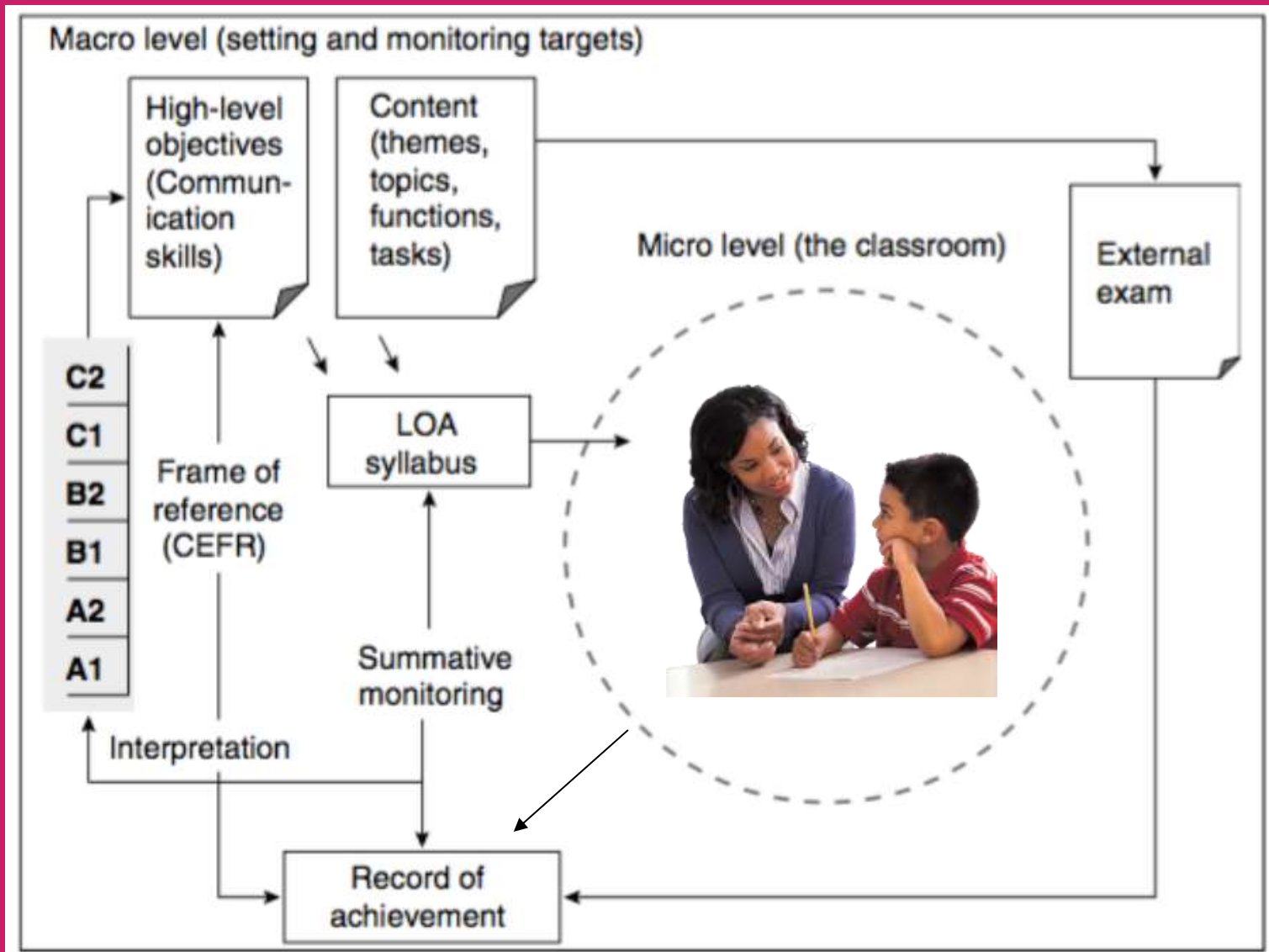
**Today what my student learned was...**



Proficient user	C2
	C1
Independent user	B2
	B1
Basic user	A2
	A1
	Below A1









National



Regional



District

School

Classroom

Student

*Higher Levels  
of Aggregation*



National



Regional



District

School

Classroom

Student

*Higher Levels  
of Aggregation*



*sampling*

↑ National

↑ Regional

↑ District

↓ School

↓ Classroom

↓ Student

*maximise benefit*



*95% proficient*

# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Credible. Compelling. Complete.

WEATHER  
**Rain likely**  
High: 90, Low: 72  
60% chance of rain

Thursday: Some storms, 91/72  
Friday: Some storms, 89/72  
Saturday: Some storms, 91/71

Details on the back of Metro

### Today's news

#### Long-term plan for debt needed, president says

President Barack Obama says he'll summon leaders of both parties Thursday to work on an agreement to raise the nation's borrowing limit. He urges them to include tax increases and avoid a short-term deal to merely "kick the can down the road." **A3**

#### Gov. Nathan Deal promised during his campaign to reduce landfill waste by promoting new waste-reduction methods.

— Has he carried it out? **B1**

#### NATION & WORLD U.S. detained terror suspect for months

The Somali linked to Islamic militant groups was interrogated for months on a Navy ship. Now he's to get a civilian trial in New York. **A6**

► **197 feared drowned:** They were African migrants on a ship to Saudi Arabia. **A6**

► **Phone-hacking furor:** A British tabloid's agent allegedly broke into a kidnapped girl's cellphone, interfering with the police search. She was killed. **A6**

#### BUSINESS New owner plans changes at Arby's

A new version of its Angus sandwich, a possible sweet potato snack and a re-launched Market Fresh sandwich lineup are in the works. **A9**

► **Factory orders rise:** The jump in demand for airplanes, cars and oil drilling equipment may mean the supply disruptions from the Japanese earthquake are over. **A9**

### School cheating scandal What the state concluded

# Unethical behavior across every level

#### Key findings in state's investigation



**Superintendent Beverly Hall**  
"Failed in her leadership."



**Kathy Augustine**, deputy superintendent, made false statements.



**Millicent Few**, human resources director, ordered destruction of documents.



**Veliter Mazzyk**, general counsel, manipulated internal inquiry.



**Tamara Cotman**, area superintendent, lied about "go to hell" memo.



**Michael Pitts**, area superintendent, "aided and abetted" cheating.



**Sharon Davis-Williams**, area superintendent, punished whistle-blower.

Fulton, DeKalb, Douglas DAs will determine whether to prosecute.

By Heather Vogel  
hvogel@ajc.com

Across Atlanta Public Schools, staff worked feverishly in secret to transform testing failures into successes.

Teachers and principals erased and corrected mistakes on students' answer sheets.

Area superintendents silenced whistle-blowers and rewarded subordinates who met academic goals by any means possible.

Superintendent Beverly Hall and her top aides ignored, buried, destroyed or altered complaints about misconduct, claimed ignorance of wrongdoing and accused naysayers of failing to believe in poor children's ability to learn.

For years — as long as a decade — this was how the Atlanta school districts strove to win.

“Thousands of school children were harmed by widespread cheating in the Atlanta Public School System (APS). In 30 schools, educators confessed to cheating. ... [We] uncovered organized and systemic misconduct within the district as far back as 2001. Superintendent Beverly Hall and her senior staff knew, or should have known, that cheating and other offenses were occurring. Many of the accolades, and much of the praise, received by APS over the last decade were ill-gotten.”

from the overview of the state's report

State report depicts Parks Middle as example of problems in district.

By Alan Judd  
ajudd@ajc.com

Christopher Waller worked miracles.

Or so Beverly Hall seemed willing to believe.

As principal of Atlanta's Parks Middle School, Waller wowed his bosses with the most dramatic of school transformations. Before Waller took charge, 1 percent of Parks' eighth graders exceeded expectations on the state's curriculum test. In Waller's first year, 46 percent reached that level.

As superintendent of the Atlanta Public Schools, Hall needed results that validated the reform narrative she had crafted. She not only accepted Waller's achievements without skepticism, she held them up as a model for others. Five years later, still wondering the how and

↑ National

↑ Regional

↑ District

↓ School

↓ Classroom

↓ Student

*minimise injustice*

~~*maximise benefit*~~



*95% proficient*

↑ National

↑ Regional

↑ District

↓ School

↓ Classroom

↓ Student

*Learning*

≠



↑  
*accountability;  
sanctions*







- always focus on learning
- assess at appropriate level of aggregation
- act to minimise injustice

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**Thank you!**

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