

Formative and summative assessment in harmony

CPRT conference on “Primary Education:
what it is and what it might be”

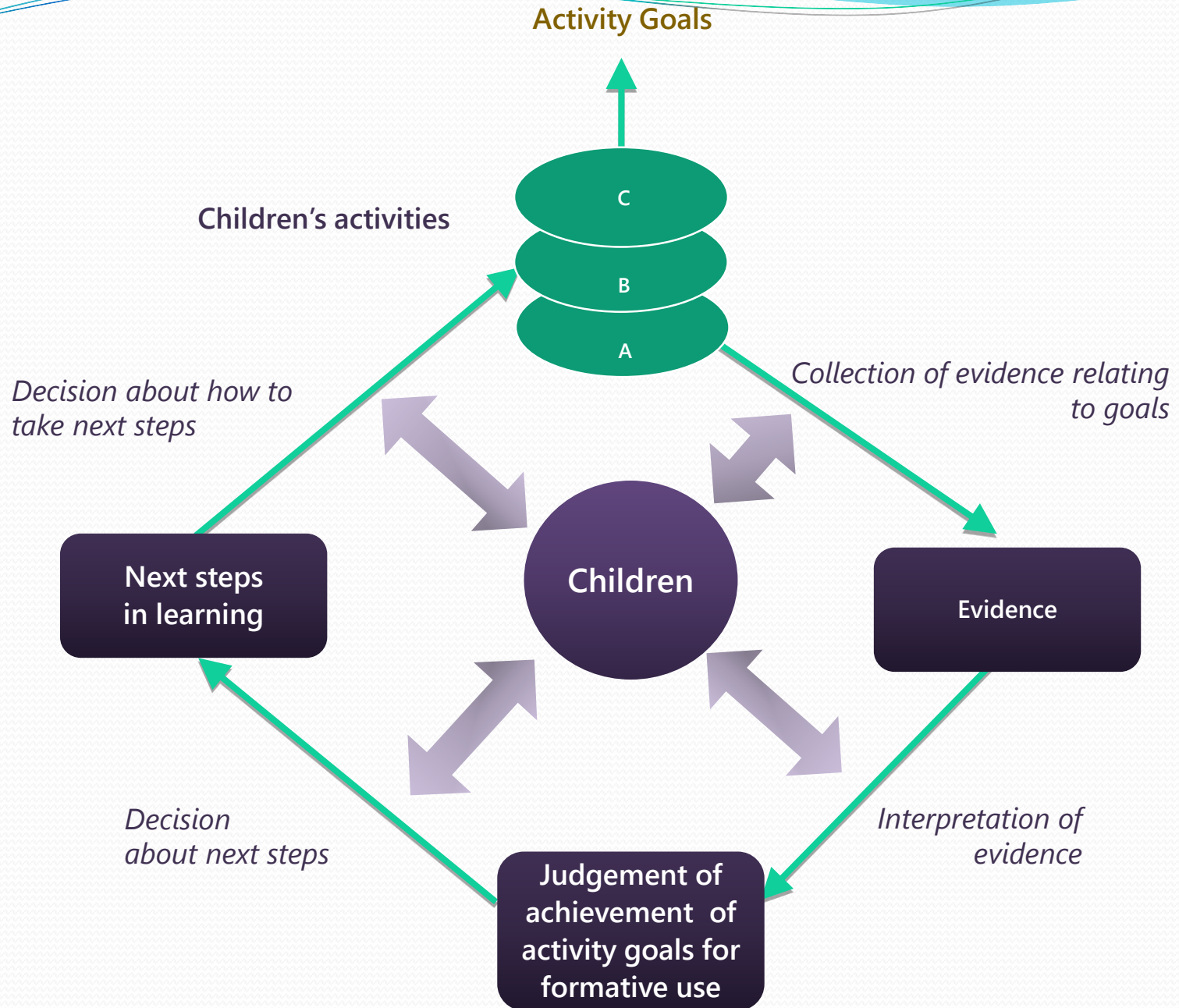
London, Nov 18 2016

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Assessment purposes

- Formative (to help learning)
- Summative (to summarise, report and record learning achieved at a certain time).
- Both are needed but:
 - only summative assessment is statutorily required
 - some uses of summative assessment lead to neglect of formative assessment
- So we need to consider how both can work in harmony.

Model of formative assessment



Why is it important?

- Empirical evidence: review of research by Black and Wiliam (1998) found that
 - Implementing formative assessment can raise pupil achievement and the effect is larger than for any other intervention
 - Lower-achieving pupils gain most so the gap between higher and lower achieving pupils is decreased
- Theoretical evidence: accords with constructivist views of learning (cognitive and socio-cultural)

Theories of learning

- Behaviourism (“Learning is being taught”)
- Cognitive constructivism (“Learning is individual sense-making”)
- Socio-cultural constructivism (“Learning is building knowledge as part of doing things with others.”)

Implications of social constructivist view of learning

- Children will be:
 - working in groups,
 - exploring and manipulating physical materials,
 - building on their prior experiences and ideas
 - raising questions
 - communicating their ideas
 - listening to the ideas of others
 - reasoning
 - arguing from evidence
 - etc.

Summative assessment

- Generating, collecting, interpreting and reporting evidence of learning at a particular time
- Relates to achievement of medium-term goals (end of year or stage)
- Used for a range of purposes (reporting, certifying achievement, school and teacher evaluation, etc)
- Uses evidence obtained by:
 - administering tests or examinations
 - summarising observations and records kept over time
 - creating a portfolio of work
 - embedding special tasks in regular activities
 - computer-based tasks
 - some combination of these.

Problems with tests

- Chosen approach because thought to be 'fair' but fairness is not treating pupils in exactly the same way
- Only a sample of the range of ideas, skills and content set out in the curriculum
- Involve language skills, particularly reading and writing
- Certain uses of results encourage 'teaching to the test'
- Often used as a guide to what to teach, limiting the experienced curriculum
- The process of testing conflicts with the view of learning.

Using tests

- Does this:

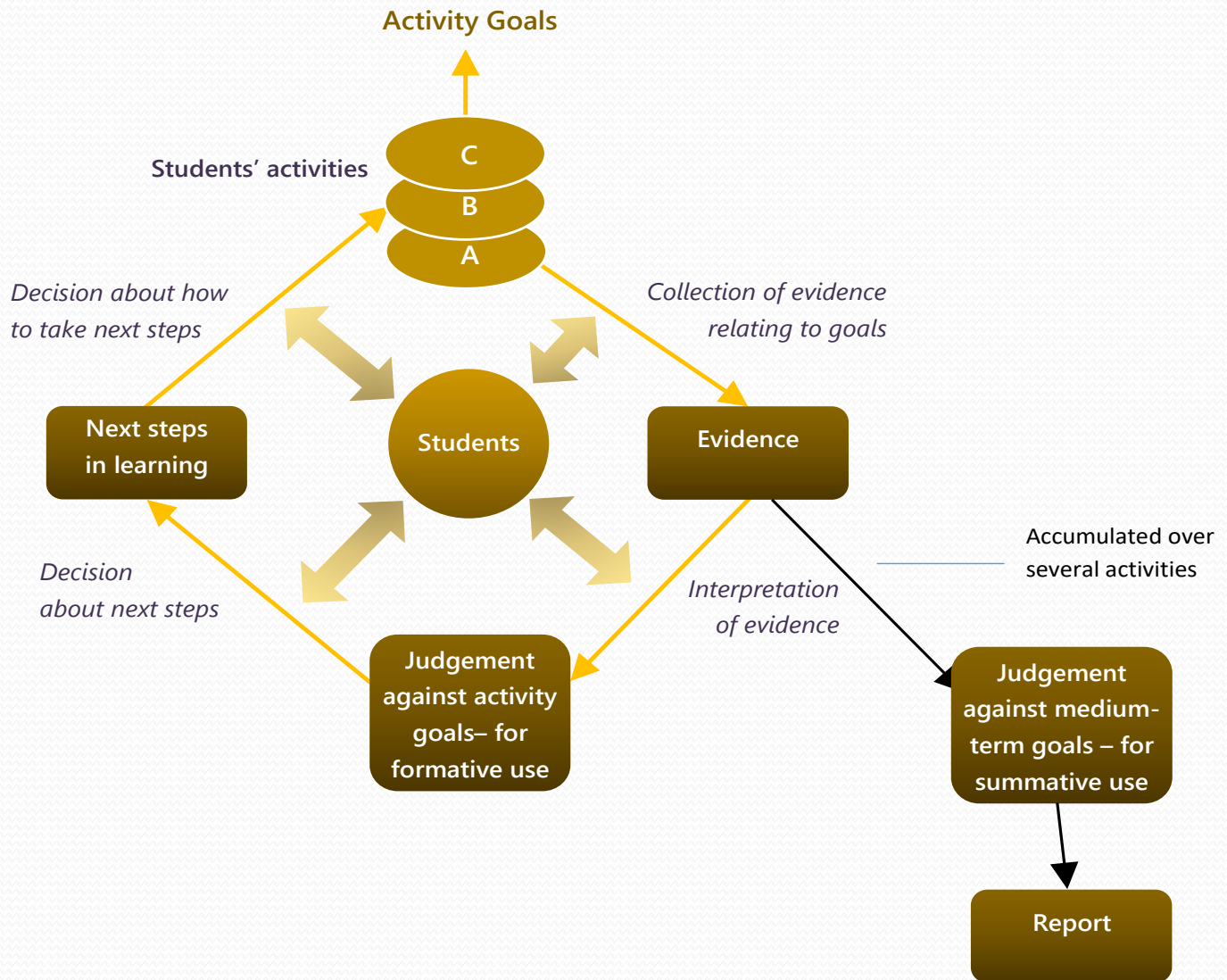


give a valid assessment of learning like this:



Alternative to tests

- For valid assessment pupils need to be involved in using the skills and ideas that are being assessed
- Activities that provide opportunities for learning also provide opportunities for collecting evidence of progress in learning
- When formative assessment is being practised evidence is being collected about pupils' ideas and skills across the full range of learning goals
- This **evidence** can be accumulated over time and brought together for summative reporting.



Using the 'latest and best' evidence

- Portfolio or computer file of evidence accumulated over the period for reporting
- Earlier pieces replaced by later ones (that is, the 'latest and best')
- Involving pupils in the selection (formative assessment)
- Evidence scanned against medium-term goals
- In this way:
 - Summative assessment can cover the **full range** of learning goals
 - Assessment is consistent with the curriculum – what is taught leads what is assessed, not *vice versa*.

Moving step by step...

- “As a first move in this direction, the system currently used for seven year olds should be adopted at the end of KS2; teacher assessment based on a range of evidence, including but not determined by a formal test.” (*David Reedy CPRT Blog 21 October 2016*)
- Use frameworks already developed eg
- CLPE Reading and Writing scales; TAPS (Teacher Assessment in Primary science)