Changing Assessment Practice

Pulje 6

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What makes educational change difficult?

1. Current practices are deeply rooted in the culture, for example:
   
   – Marking practices
   – ‘Maths is difficult’ (but not in other countries)
   – Learning = ‘teachers talk and learners listen’
   – ‘Teachers learn most of what they know about teaching before their 18\(^{th}\) birthdays’ (D.Wiliam)
   
   ....and there is limited reflection on them (time and pressure)
Gold stars fail to make grade, say academics

By David Charter, education correspondent

TWO OUT OF TEN
For educationalists who want the world to be a different place

Gold star on the wane
Pupils would do better assessing their own work, report claims

Marking is bad for you

Don't mark homework
It upsets dunces says top education expert
Teaching is a cultural activity

‘Teachers learn to teach by growing up in a particular culture, by watching the methods their teachers used when they were students. The methods most teachers use are inherited from earlier generations of instructors, not invented when they reach the classroom’.

‘Most policy efforts to improve classroom teaching focus on teachers rather than teaching, attending mostly to who is in the classroom instead of what to do when they get there’

(Stigler & Hiebert *The Teaching Gap*)
What makes educational change difficult?

2. Resistance to change even when the evidence and experience warrant it, for example:
   - leaving ‘comfort zone’ – ‘satisfactory’ not good enough (Ofsted Inspectorate, England)
   - workload implications (union objections - Ireland)
   - change being imposed (top-down policy)

3. School cultures (Stoll, 1999)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low improvement</th>
<th>High improvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High attainment</td>
<td>Cruising</td>
<td>Moving</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sinking</td>
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What makes educational change difficult?

2. Resistance to change even when the evidence and experience warrant it, for example:
   - leaving 'comfort zone' (Norway: fewer professional development days; highest rating of self-efficacy) – TALIS
   - workload implications (union objections)
   - change being imposed (top-down policy)

3. School cultures (Stoll, 1999)

Low improvement | High improvement
---|---
Low attainment | Cruising
| Moving
| Sinking
| Improving

Source: Vibe et al. 2009
Are teachers’ views changing in Norway?
TALIS 2013 – Teacher self-efficacy

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<tr>
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<th>Norway %</th>
<th>TALIS average</th>
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<tr>
<td>Get students to believe they can do well in school work</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>85.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help my students value learning</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>80.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craft good questions for my students</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>87.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivate students who show low interest in school work</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>70.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help students think critically</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>80.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use a variety of assessment strategies</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>81.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide an alternative explanation when students are confused</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>92.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement alternative instructional strategies in my classroom</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>77.4</td>
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Focus on teaching

What does it mean to focus on teaching? It means first of all, becoming aware of the cultural routines that govern classroom life, questioning the assumptions that underlie these routines over time. It means recognising that the details of what teachers do – the particular questions teachers ask, the kinds of tasks they assign students, the explanations they provide – are the things that matter for student learning’

(Stigler & Hiebert)
What makes educational change difficult?

4. **Implementation problems (under-design)**

   Convincing warrant? (will it work for me?) – AfL in strong position

   Effective model of dissemination? ‘Cascade’; Pilot & roll-out; action research;

   Agency – conscript or volunteer?

   Understanding: ‘spirit’ vs ‘letter’

   Time to practice, reflect, adjust and share
TALIS 2013 Views on teacher professional development

‘Teachers, school leaders and policy makers should prioritise professional development activities that take place in school settings and that are sustained, collaborative, and focused on problems of practice’

‘Countries that wish to improve the effectiveness of professional development provided to teachers should increase the amount and variation of school embedded offerings such as mentoring and coaching, creating networks of teachers who learn together, and supporting collaborative research and instructional problem solving by teachers.’

OECD Teaching in Focus 10 (2015)
A problem-based approach to professional development in assessment (K. Ecclestone)

1. What’s going well in the present situation and what do we think will go well in the future?
2. What is not going well? What developments do we wish to bring about?
3. What might get in the way of these developments?
4. What obstacles can we do something about?
5. Think of one or more practical problems to address (‘How can we...?’)
6. List some strategies you might use and select one to test in practice
7. How will you evaluate the success of the strategy?
What we know about successful implementation of Assessment for Learning

Content

1. There is a sound understanding of the principles of AfL
2. There is clarity about AfL classroom practices

Processes

1. Give choice on what to develop
2. Encourage teachers to modify AfL to suit their classrooms
3. Take small steps – teacher change is slow
4. Provide support
5. Develop a sense of accountability

(Dylan Wiliam)
What is the role of leaders in assessment?

The FIVIS project has shown how school leaders play a crucial role in the development of the school’s assessment culture....A leader’s role in the work will contribute either to inhibiting or promoting development.

For the sake of the individual teacher’s development, the school management must facilitate professional development at the school level, thereby establishing communities of practice that work with assessment.

FIVIS Report (2014)