

# Changing Assessment Practice

Pulje 7

Oslo 13 May 2016

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# What do we know about change?

- It's hard – New Year Resolutions, changing organisations
- It's about hearts and minds, goals and the next steps
- School change is about small steps – marginal gains
- The environment needs to change if individuals want to change

# Change is difficult

Chip & Dan Heath *Switch – How to change things when change is hard* (2011)

Three surprises about change:

1. Change is difficult because the self-control needed is an exhaustible resource (we've only so much of it) for example starting a new job
2. and what looks like laziness could be exhaustion.
3. What looks like resistance is often lack of clarity – 'eat a healthier diet' – 1% milk – change purchasing behaviour

# Change is difficult – especially of organisations and their cultures

- Health service and airline approaches to safety
- Organisations that failed to change: Kodak; Motorola

How willing to change are our schools? What are the 'levers' of change?

How much do we put teachers behaviour down to 'the way they are' rather than 'the situation they're in'? (TV Supernanny; Dog trainers etc.)

[ *The Fundamental Attribution Error* (Lee Ross)]

# What makes educational change difficult?

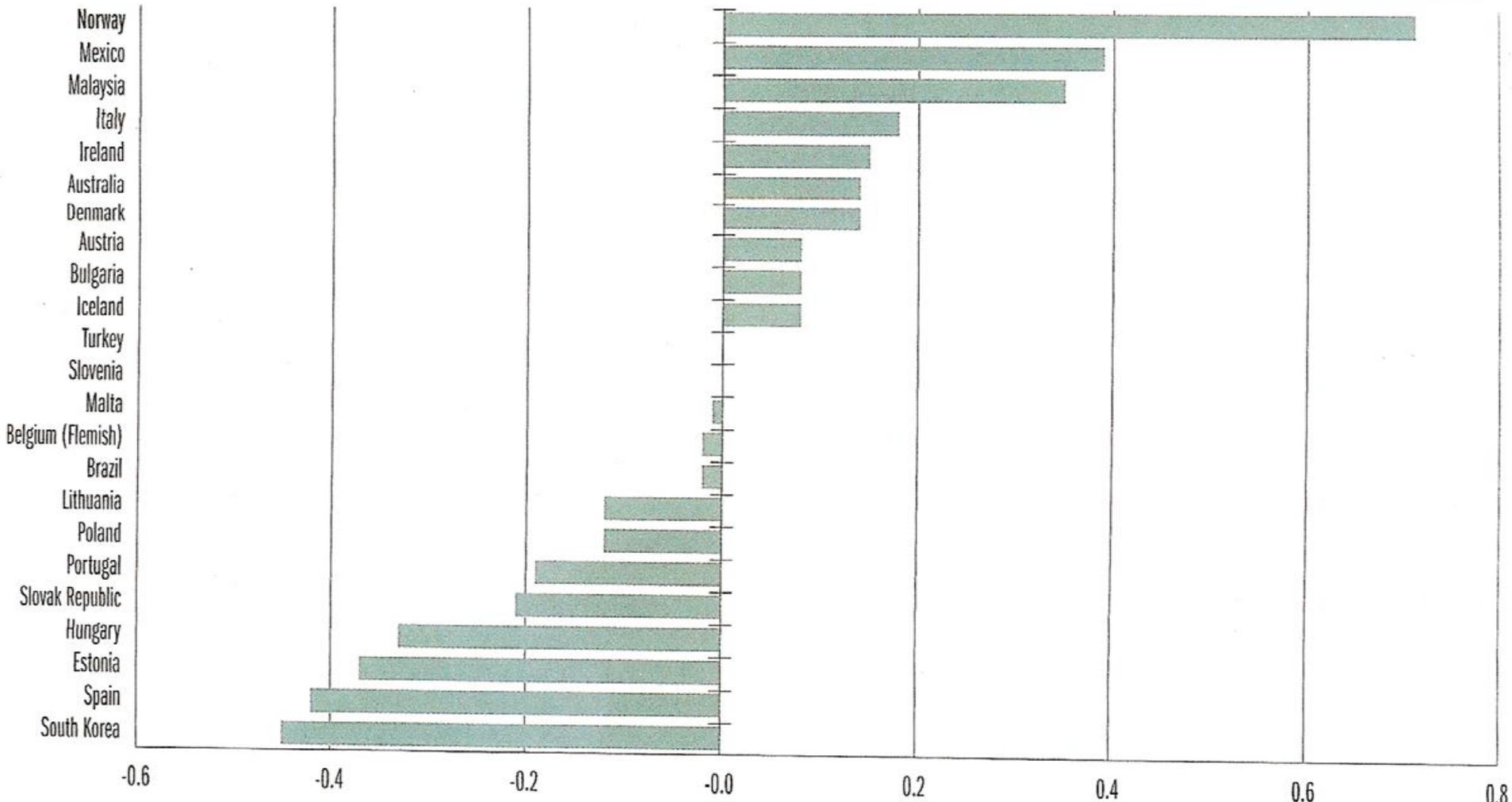
Resistance to change even when the evidence and experience warrant it, for example:

- leaving 'comfort zone' – 'satisfactory' not good enough (Ofsted Inspectorate, England)
- workload implications (union objections - Ireland)
- change being imposed (top-down policy)

School cultures (Stoll,1999)

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

Figure 6.3: Confidence in their own teaching (Self-efficacy). All 23 countries.



Source: Vibe et al. 2009

# Are teachers' views changing in Norway?

## TALIS 2013 – Teacher self-efficacy

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

# Change: It's about hearts and minds

'In highly successful change efforts people find ways to help others see the problems or solutions in ways which influence emotions, not just thought' (Kotter & Cohen)

- This is at the centre of school improvement (Fullan & Hargreaves)
- We know what we should be doing (mind) so is it more about hearts??

Do most Norwegian teachers know about AfL? Do most put it into practice on a daily basis?

Ways to motivate:

Search out the bright spots and build on them

Use 'early adopters' and enthusiasts to model

The 'see-feel-change' model rather than the 'analyse-think-change' model

# 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)

# Finding out where learners are

- *Classroom dialogue*: questions, discussions

Teachers talk 70-80% of time;

ask 200-300 questions a day, 60% recall facts, 20% procedural;

<5% group discussion or meaningful ideas;

70% of answers less than 5 secs (3 words) (Source J. Hattie 2012)

How long do teachers wait after asking a question before taking action?

*Questions* > 'thinking time' (wait time) > pair and share > no hands up.

*Traffic lights*

## Classroom practices to encourage self-regulation

### Learners as questioners

*Once you have learned to ask questions – relevant and appropriate and substantial – you have learned how to learn and no one can keep you from learning whatever it is you need to know. (Postman and Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*)*

‘What questions did you ask in school today?’ (Einstein’s mother)

Why do our pupils ask so few thoughtful questions?

Why do they ask fewer as they get older?

# Quality questioning

- **Using good question stems:**  
'why does...?'; 'what if...?'; 'how would you...?';  
'could you explain...?'
- **Poker face** - the teacher's body language does not signal to the student what the teacher wants to hear (keeps the focus on the task)
- **Basketball not ping-pong**
- **Statements instead of questions**
- **Avoids:** asking too many questions at once; answering it yourself; only asking the best students; ignoring answers; failing to build on answers

# Ways of encouraging question asking

- Written questions
  - Question box / 'Hold on miss I've got a question' board/ Exit questions
- Role play – interview the expert
- Don't know the answer – please research
- Groups write test questions for others in class at end of a topic

# 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 practise, 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.’

# Change: Smooth the path

- Get leaders to 'buy into' the changes
- Offer group support and professional development
  - Regular meetings – honest discussion (success and failure)
  - Provide information
  - Give specific choices
  - Build on good practice
  - Develop group accountability

# Change: Realistic goals

- Develop a clear goal – the *Destination Postcard*
- ‘*Shrink the change*’ – achievable next steps – avoid ‘decision paralysis’

‘When you achieve a little each day, eventually big things occur’ (John Wooden)

‘Marginal gains’ (Sky Cycling Team; 5 minute room rescue; AA - One day at a time)

Seeing progress (look for small positive progress)

# A destination postcard?

## John Hattie's *Visible Learning*

### Transparent goals

- the more transparent the teacher makes the learning goals, then the more likely the student is to engage in the work needed to meet the goal.

### Success criteria

- the more the student is aware of the criteria of success, then the more the student can see the specific actions that are needed to attain these criteria

### Rapid formative feedback

- the more there is feedback about progress from prior to desired outcomes the more positive attributes to learning are developed

# Another Destination Postcard

## Keeping our students active learners

- Learning as active, meaning making process
- Have in-depth discussions
- Negotiate success criteria
- Practise self- and peer- assessment
- Encourage self-regulation

# 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)

# Teacher Learning Communities: A proposed meeting schedule

- Frequency: about once a month?
- Introduction (5 mins)-agendas circulated
- Starter activity (5 mins) –to help ‘tune in’
- Feedback (25 mins) –report back on what each teacher tried out & how it went
- New learning about AfL(20 mins) -speaker/book study/video
- Personal action planning (15 mins)
- Summary of learning (5 mins)–met learning intentions?

(Dylan Wiliam)

# The AfL school

1. Focuses on learning with understanding
2. High expectations from leaders and teachers
3. High cognitive demand in classroom
4. Risk taking – classrooms that are ‘safe to take learning risks’
5. Classroom assessment that encourages deep learning:
  - Good diagnostics & active dialogue
  - Clear learning goals/success criteria
  - Expert feedback - task based, informative, challenging
  - Self and peer assessment – self-regulated learners