

How to Make Change Work?

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Define the change;
- Clarify the urgency for this change, its benefits and strategies;
- Think about:
 - the nature of this change and its implications at micro, mezo, and macro level;
 - What contributes to successful implementation of a change such as assessment for learning in schools?
 - What have best practices taught us?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What can governments/ministries/external agencies do to support assessment for learning in schools?
- What can schools do? (*How can they do it?*)
- What can teachers do?

What Change?

- **Refocusing** from *assessment of learning* to *assessment for learning* – each has its place but the purpose is different.

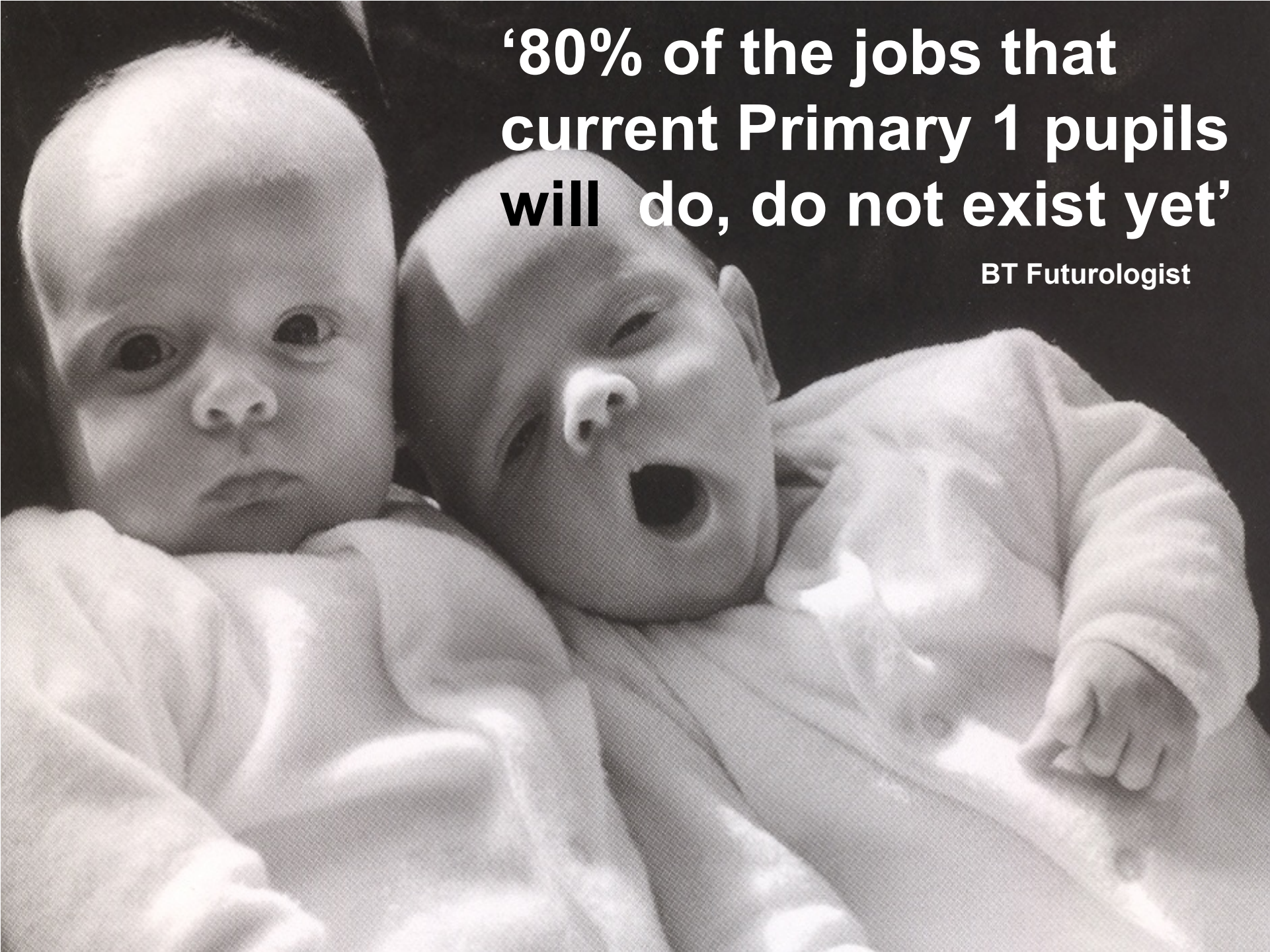
Not either/or but *achieving a better* balance between the two
(at present **assessment of learning dominates** with all the consequences for teaching, learning, quality of knowledge...)

WHY CHANGE?



Are grades really the evidence

- that real learning has happened?
- that teachers and schools are delivering?
- that we are preparing the students for their successful life and work in the global society?



**‘80% of the jobs that
current Primary 1 pupils
will do, do not exist yet’**

BT Futurologist

Research:

- **William&Black** (since 1984): *Through a **consistent** and **effective** use of assessment for learning, students learn at a double rate (achive in six months what they would otherwise in a year!);*

Research

- **Wiggins** (1998) – *formative assessment (feedback as central to true learning) provides systematic support to students and teachers to self-correct their performance. Regardless of their technical soundness, audit tests cannot do that, and are not meant to do it;*



Research

- **Fullan (2003)** – successful learning occurs when learners have *ownership* of their learning, for which they have to understand the goals they are aiming at. Proper use of assessment for learning **increases motivation & the skill to achieve success.**
- *Ignoring this change means that we are missing on an important strategy for raising standards and empowering lifelong learning in our schools.*



When Using Assessment for Learning...

What's Going on in the Classroom	Benefits for the Student	Benefits for the Teacher

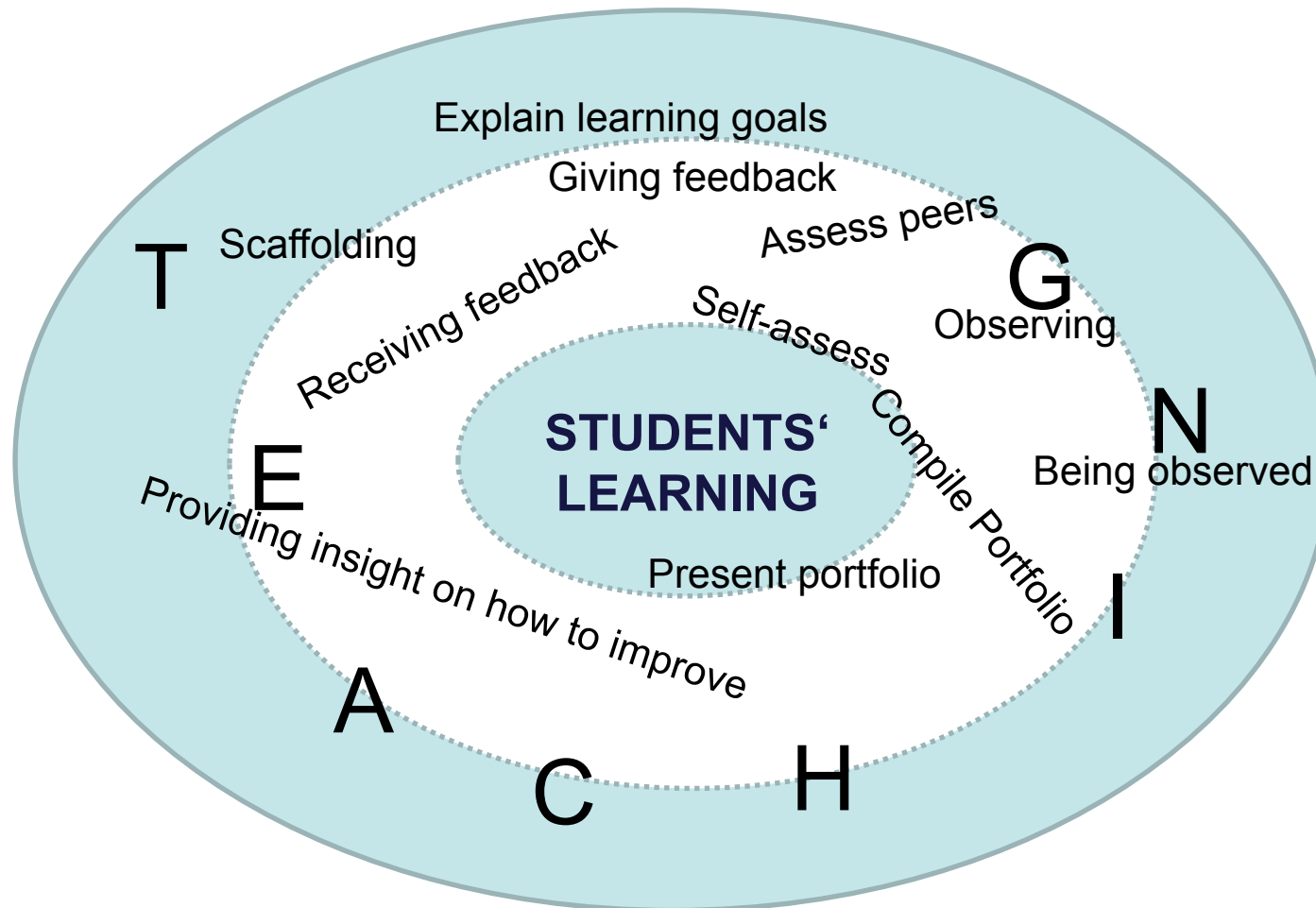


Assessment for Learning in Action

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rL54bfmZPzY&feature=related>



BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING



Basic Principles

1. Assessment **process** is seamlessly embedded in teaching and learning, (not separated from it, not a test done once, after teaching and learning is over), it is *essential part of learning*;
2. Teachers use assessment results from *various sources* (observations, portfolio, conferences with students) *to plan instruction*;
3. Instruction is planned *for the students* and not for covering the material;
4. Students *understand learning goals* from very beginning of the teaching & learning process;
5. Students work together and *critique* one another's work using carefully prepared assessment criteria;
6. Assessment results are consistently translated into *informative* (not merely judgmental) *feedback*, providing students specific insight on how to improve;
7. *All* students are required *to revise* their work, quality is not an option.

ADDED VALUE

high motivation
to achieve

strong performance gains
weak and strong students alike

faster progress

misunderstandings revealed

self-correction

involvement of students in
goal setting

ownership of learning

clarity about standards and criteria

early prevention of failure

multiple opportunities to
master complex tasks

adapting pace of learning

self-adjustment



Benefits, Added Value

- Strong *performance gains* over time for *all* students; Faster progress;
- Students possess a good deal of knowledge that hides a great deal of misunderstanding – *misunderstandings revealed*, students provided with challenges to question, deepen their understanding, and *self-correct*;
- Students learn through *self- and peer-assessment* and through receiving *feedback and guidance* on how they are doing against the criteria of exemplary performance, which supports their *self-adjustment* and *self-correction - life-long learning skills!*;
- Students are *involved* in goal setting – clarity about expectations, *standards and criteria* – essential for ability for self-correcting performance, *high motivation to achieve*;
- Students get *multiple opportunities* to master complex tasks – high expectations for every student (every student can achieve, can be successful) as opposed to ‘gotcha attitude’ of one-shot tests ...

Implications?

- ❖ **micro level** (teacher, classroom, instruction);
- ❖ **mezo level** (school, teachers and principal, students, parents);
- ❖ **macro level** (national policy, curriculum, external assessment practice and its importance, participation in international testing).

Implications

at micro, mezo, macro levels

- **Role of Teacher and Delivery of Instruction**
Direction of communication in the classroom? Who's the source of knowledge? What kind of knowledge? What skills? What does the teacher do? What do students do? In-classroom structural arrangements?
- **School Functioning** Length of class periods? school bell? Fragmentation of curriculum? Teacher collaboration vs. teacher isolation?
- **School Leadership** Division/sharing of responsibility? Role of principal?
- **National Policy** What are testing practices? Central/site-based curriculum? What's curriculum like? How is it perceived? What's considered evidence of school & teacher accountability? Where is the money poured? What is the focus of teacher education and in-service professional development?

What kind of change is REFOCUSING TOWARD ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

LOWER ORDER	HIGHER ORDER
<p>Small scale: Implemented by one teacher or a team; Affects one person or a group, not in a profound way.</p> <p>Simple: Requires new technical skill, e.g., use of new textbook; new way of recording grades;</p> <p><i>Source: BASICS Project</i></p>	<p>Large scale: Implemented at level of school/at national level; Large effect.</p> <p>Complex: Requires paradigm shift: mental models, beliefs, norms, standard operating procedures, culture; ‘de-learning’ the existent way of work and functioning.</p> <p>Requires changes in perception of role: Individual teacher autonomy replaced by collective autonomy; teacher as “know all” replaced by teacher as coach, mentor.</p> <p>Teacher focus on classroom broadened to focus on school success – my students vs. our students....</p>

PERCEPTION OF CHANGE

- How we Perceive Change depends on where we are as a school/individual;
- Perception of Change is directly related to strategies used for its implementation;

‘When the winds of change come, some build walls, others build windmills’

Ancient Chinese proverb



- Lower order change can be implemented by directly telling people what to do;
- Higher order change is a **process** that requires changing:
 - school culture
 - norms and values
 - individual and group beliefs, perceptions – mental models
 - power and responsibility distribution
 - relationships
 - routines and habits
 - standard operating procedures...

How Do We Implement Higher Order Change?

- Making teachers understand what needs to be done is not difficult;
- Changing their habits and perceptions *is!*
 - Why change something that has been successful?
 - Nobody can force me to change as long as I have good results on the “matura” exam.
 - Not covering the syllabus (content) would mean that I am not doing my job as a teacher.
 - I don't have time for formative assessment....

Implementing Change in Schools

- **Schools** are **loosely coupled systems**, consisting of autonomous entities (from individual teacher to departments to grade-level teachers...) continually searching for identity and direction (Fullan);
- School is a **complex system** characterized by *uncertainty*, *unpredictability*, and *lack of stability* (Elliot);
- Teachers are **professionals** valuing their **autonomy**;
- **Fragmented individualism** is typical in schools ...

Implications...

- Change **cannot be mandated**;
- Change is **a journey**, not a blueprint;
- **Neither** centralization nor decentralization **works**;
- Individualism and collectivism must have **equal power**;
- **Every person** is a change agent; Every person contributes the essential part, without it **the system** does not improve;
- People need **pressure** to change (*what kind of pressure for professionals?*);
- People need **support** to change.

Fullan: Change Forces, 1993



Learning from Best Practices

Successful Schools:

- A laser focus on instruction (don't forget you are doing it for the students)
- Rather than simply introducing reform and hope for the best
 - **involve** teachers, parents & students in defining the purpose (*why this change?*); **create a sense of urgency** (*why now? Why can't we wait?*);
 - Help people **visualize** what it will look like when in place (clear expectations: *what will be different, better, added value?*)
 - Provide a **safe environment** and **time** for teacher dialogue (big picture, meaning of change, pros and cons, how to **integrate change** into classroom practice instead of adding it);
 - **Respect** the resisters;
 - Develop a **climate of trust**;
 - Develop a **climate of inquiry**;

Learning from Best Practices (cont.)

Successful Schools:

- Develop a **learning community**;
- Provide **on-going, on-site professional development** according to need, and a **coach** to support implementation;
- **Share responsibility and decision making**;
- Build **broad leadership capacity**;
- **Distribute leadership** throughout the school;
- Develop **multidirectional communication** at all levels;
- Provide opportunities for **meaningful teacher interaction**;
- Foster a **collective sense of engagement**;
- **Link training to actual experience** in the classroom;
- Build **collaborative and collegial culture**;

What External Change Agents Should Know

- *Every change throws a system out of balance*: we have to expect restlessness, doubts, seeming disorder – support the system to find its own equilibrium by providing professional development according to need, feedback, critical friendship;
- Change is implemented first *by the individual* (it's a personal experience) then by the community – support changing of individual beliefs and values, encourage expression of disagreement, provide time for building common vision before expecting change of practice;
- Deep change requires changing mental models – not by force or persuasion but rather *by enabling teachers to apply action research*



What Works at the System Level

- **Combining top-down initiative** (without it, change can move in a wrong direction, people do not persist), **with bottom-up capacity building**;
- **Balancing chaos and order**: too much chaos brings us back to where we started. Too much order leads to fear, resistance and even to passive dependency;
- **Balancing pressure and support** (hold teachers/schools accountable but adapt the pace; let people decide then set clear goals; don't provide expert answers and solutions from the top, let people experiment, learn new ways, be skeptical but make sure they move forward).

Barriers...

Gap between the intent of reform and its implementation:

- Changing *the organizational structure to accomodate change* (e.g., teaching in blocks to implement assessment for learning) without attending to *school culture* and providing *professional development* is doomed to failure;
 - Teachers do not believe that anything is wrong with the way they teach and assess;
 - They learn how to use, e.g., portfolio but have no knowledge and no experience of making it part of instruction, **it becomes an addition**;
 - They do not know how to connect with students on a different level (loss of authority);
 - The principal is not interested in what teachers are doing as long as they keep high achievement results on external exams.

Barriers...(cont.)

Gap between bottom up and top down implementation

- Change is a principal's idea; teachers do not feel the ownership;
- Change has nothing to do with state/nationwide policy;
- Change is mandated by the state without involving the schools into decision making; Teachers do not trust the government's motives for change – real improvement for students or politics?
- Teachers are not sure what and why they should change;
- Teachers feel they do not have time for change;
- School's accountability is measured by the achievement on external test results; Funding is based on school's success on external tests.

Barriers...(cont.)

Gap between what leaders do and what they say

- We have “ collaborative culture“ - staff meetings: a series of lectures, announcements, warnings;
- We have “ high expectations“ – implement policies encouraging good grades for poor student performance;
- We have “ the culture of respect“ – unequal treatment of teachers, ignoring some, praising others, sending angry emails, punish mistakes;

What can an individual (teacher, principal), school, and government do?

Goal/ Key Strategy	Teacher/Principal	School	Government
<p>Goal: Implementation of assessment for learning</p> <p>Key Strategy: Plan and deliver instruction <i>for the students</i> and not for covering the material</p>			