

## **Promoting and sustaining change**

**The Highland Council  
Learning and Teaching Reflection Framework**



Section A: Unit 2

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## **Session 1**

### **Rationale for change**

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### **Ubiquitous change?**

- 'Rampant and remorseless' changes (Hargreaves 1994)
- 'An overdose of education reform pollution' (Macedo 1994)
- An 'epidemic' of reform (Levin 1998)



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### **Innovation without change**



- Teaching is a 'technology which appears especially resilient to change' (Spillane, 1999)
- Past records for curriculum initiatives show extraordinarily modest levels of pedagogical implementation (Swann and Brown, 1997)
- 'So many innovations last no longer than warm breath on a cold window' (Cuban, 1998)
- 'Hurricane winds sweep across the sea tossing up twenty foot waves; a fathom below the surface turbulent waters swirl while on the ocean floor there is unruffled calm' (Cuban, 1984)



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### **'Stability factors'**

- Teachers' practices are influenced by the organisational structures of schools
- Deeply engrained visions of schooling - the 'grammar of schooling' (Tyack and Cuban 1995)
- Survival strategies reward risk avoidance
- The powerful socialisation of teachers through own schooling:
  - 'Teaching is the only profession I know in which professional socialisation begins at the age of five' (Eisner 1996)

***Reform rarely addresses these issues***

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### **Teacher mediation of change**

- Teachers filter 'change through their own values, which are in turn influenced by gender, social class, previous experience in the classroom, professional training and other historical and biographical factors' (Osborn *et al* 1997)
- e.g. 5-14 met in terms of paperwork, but many teachers found to continue with existing practice (Swann and Brown 1997)

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### **Evaluating successful change**

- Change often judged successful if:
  - **Effective** – but what does this mean?
  - **Popular** – or is this populism?
  - **Faithful** – fidelity to original aims, even if misguided.

All these are problematic  
(Cuban 1998)

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### **A different set of criteria?**

- **Adaptiveness**
- **Longevity**
- **Embeddedness** (Cuban 1998/Priestley 2005)

These allow for positive use of creative mediation – could easily be applied to the schools that have been successful with AifL

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### **4 key principles**

- **Participation**
- **Dialogue**
- **Engagement**
- **Thinking**



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### Activity one - PMI

Do a PMI on the notion of introducing a particular innovation to your school/dept.

- Plus
- Minus
- Interesting

Then consider:

- To what extent does existing practice accommodate the 4 principles?
- Where it has been introduced, has it enhanced these?

*Choose a spokesperson; be prepared to give feedback*

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## Session 2

**Successful change**

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### A matter of priorities?

- Teaching to exams
- Overcrowded curriculum
- Accountability
- QA
- Lack of time / money / resources
- The 'grammar of schooling' (Tyack and Cuban 1994)



- Needs of learners
- Research on learning
- Education for life

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**The practicality ethic – a different way of looking at things** (Doyle and Ponder 1977)

• **Instrumental reasons**

- Too hard
- Too much time
- Poor resources

• **Costs**

- Results
- Career



• **Congruence with values**

- Engaging and motivating kids
- Enabling critical thinking
- Enjoyable teaching
- Tackle instrumentality
- Costs become benefits

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**Promoting sustainable change**

Several dimensions:

- **Central impetus** – constructive and coherent policy, good resourcing
- **Leadership** – support from EA and school managers
- **Distributed leadership** – non-promoted practitioners as leaders
- **Autonomy** – professional trust, a genuine shift in power to those at the chalk face, school-based decision-making.

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**Promoting sustainable change**

- **Collaboration** – space and time for generative dialogue, peer observation of teaching, other professionals
- **Professional enquiry** – systematic intervention and recording of results, start small/think big
- **Research** - as a cognitive resource, rather than a dogma
- **Teacher learning** – professional development, peer and management support, developing capacity
- **Time** – long time scale for reform, time for professional dialogue

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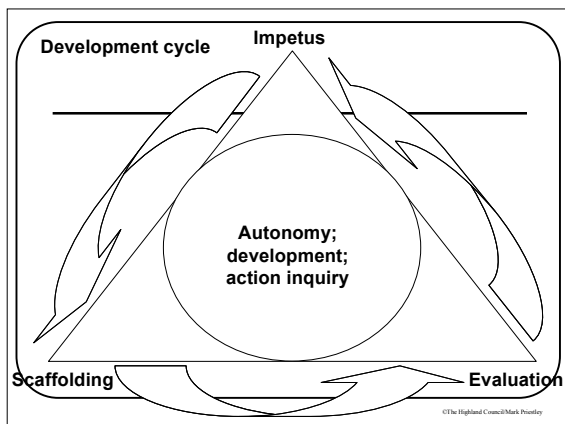
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**In short...**

- Building will and capacity to reform rather than imposing it
- Organic rather than mechanical view of reform – tend and grow from the inside, mixture of top down and bottom up approaches
- Acceptance that results may be surprising



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**Activity two – paper carousel**

- Discuss
  - *What are the barriers to change in your school/dept?*
  - *What strategies and solutions are there to encourage and sustain change in your school/dept?*
- Summarise conclusions and circulate them to other groups.
- Look at other groups' conclusions
  - *How are they similar/different to yours?*
  - *What can you take from them?*

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