STAIRS

Stakeholders together adapting ideas to readjust local systems to promote inclusive education

CHANGE MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

Levels of change

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1. Levels of change in education

According to Fullan (2007), in the last three decades, several confused attempts have been made to reform the education system. This author describes that many problems in educational change occur due to difficulties in planning and coordinating. Also, he describes factors affecting implementation process of educational change, being one of them „what teachers do and think" (Fullan, 2007, p.129).

However, in a globalised world, the classroom, or the locus where teachers teach and students learn is a microcosmos in the centre of numerous larger but concentric cosmos, within which numerous factors influence and constrain educational change. So, there is a long way down to go, along which countless actors and influential factors come together to prevent or make change in education possible. Therefore, when we envisage change in education, we have to consider the various encircled levels of cosmos: the international level, where global aims for educational policies are defined; the national or the system's level, where those aims are adopted; the school or organisational level, where the change is planned and taken to the ground; and, finally, the classroom, where the change is consequently practiced, following Bronfenbrenner (1979) view regarding human ecological development.

1.1. Change in education at the national level

When an educational policy is defined at the national level, it aims at changing the educational system, which is a social system. Achieving that change depends on the values and beliefs of the members of that society, which will guide the change (Hall & Hord, 2015). Inclusion can be pursued either for humanistic reasons (inspired by UNESCO recommendations) or economic reasons (inspired by OECD recommendations). Although they are not mutually exclusive, they can, in fact, be chosen as alternative, for reasons of a contextual nature of the countries that adopt them, that is, reconstructed according to the traditions, values and objectives assumed within national societies.

In the third part of his book, The New Meaning of Educational Change, Fullan (2007) addresses change in education at the regional and national level. The author defines the role of government during change is to push accountability, give incentives in the form of pressure and support and foster capacity building. On the way towards educational change, it is not enough to hire good people in the profession, but also give opportunities for capacity building for those who are already in the field. Large scale improvement of the schools is possible when teachers are recruited, rewarded, and retained. Besides the professional development of the teachers, there are needs to enhance the professional learning of them as well. This professional learning is all about their development of habits for learning.

According to Hall and Hord (2915), the firt principle of change in education is that „change is learning". To make things better (improved) in any setting, as the school, and in the classroom, change is introduced, and learning makes it possible to make the change. Each change initiative represents a new opportunity to learn. Each change initiative has its own cycle. Over time, we experience a series of change cycles: change-improvement- learning + change-improvement-learning + and so on. Even when there is little improvement, there still is learning from the experience.

When people do the right work in existing conditions, the change is sure to come. Large scale change comes when teachers, principals, administrators, and the state think about improvement out of their boxes. **The goal of change is the success of the whole system rather than any individual**. This new edition (2007) of Michael Fullan's book was released because of an updated idea about cognitive science which says that learning is meaning-making, and when people do not find meaning in anything, they resist change. In the end, Fullan concludes the book with the sentence "Meaning is motivation; motivation is energy; energy is engagement; engagement is life." (p. 303) which depicts how much he

values a sense of ownership by different stakeholders in educational change. Fullan wrote that a whole school reform was failed in the United States because people did not show interest in "No Child Left Behind" movement because of not seeing meaning in it.

Despite Fullan recognises that „the ultimate goal of change is the success of the whole system", he criticises the „system theory" approach to promote change in education, advocating that what is needed „is a new paradigm more in tune with the realities of systems and their dynamic complexity." (Hall & Hord, 2015, p. 223). That is also advocated by Viennet and Pont (2017).

Though the „system theory" envisages to fix the system by giving attention to all parts of the system simultaneously, i.e., „thinking systemically" (see Tool 1) means to consider the entailment of people, processes, and things. The components or subsystems are inextricably linked. Support or pressure on one part exerts pressure on others (Viennet & Pont, 2017; Tool 4). None functions in isolation of the others. So, all subsystems must be considered in the planning and implementation of new practices. „In addition to the components, working systemically requires that all organisation levels of the system—state, district, school, and classroom—be given attention. These levels can be thought of as concentric circles, each providing expectations and demands that influence student achievement." (Hall & Hord, 2015, p. 216)

In line with that, Viennet and Pont (2017) draw our attention to the need for a policy to be intelligently designed, which they call „smart policy design", i.e.,

> a policy that is well justified, offers a logical and feasible solution to the policy problem, will determine to a great extent whether it can be implemented and how. For instance, if a new curriculum requires the use of high technology equipment which schools cannot afford, the policy may fail to be implemented unless some budget is available at the national or local level. (Viennet & Pont, 2017, p.6)

This dimension of the implementation of educational policies is complemented by two others: including stakeholders engagement and conducive context, whose importance has already been considered by the STAIRS members in the design and production of the NAPs.

Afterwards, as change takes place inside social systems, the act of communication must be addressed (see Tool 2). A new idea circulates throughout a social system by people talking to people, according to the diffusion perspective. On the other hand, change is also everyone making an adoption decision. „Potential adopters work their way through a decision-making process. In the end they either adopt the new idea or continue with their traditional practice." (Hall & Hord, 2015, p. 233)

Communication about the innovation occurs along the established lines, or channels, of communication (see Tool 2). In a social system the distances may be large, and therefore the spread of information across the system will not be even. And the type and layout of the lines of communication can enhance or inhibit the transmittal of information. Where there are more people, there will be more and earlier adoptions since there is greater likelihood of adopters exchanging information about the innovation and perhaps seeing it in use.

Therefore, when the STAIRS national team members from learning countries present policy/best practices recommendations for inclusive education to governments or municipalities, they should suggest the application of Tool 1, so that authorities be acquainted with a methodology to introduce change in a system. Then, check the feasibility of the envisaged policy implementation by applying Tool 4 and plan to communicate it considering Tool 2.

1.2.   Change in education at the school level

According to Hall and Hord (2015), „the school is the primary organisational unit for change". The key organisational unit for making change successful is the school. The school's staff and its leaders will make or break any change effort, regardless of whether the change is initiated from the inside or outside. However, the school is not an island. The school can and must do a lot for itself, but it also must move in concert with and be supported by the other components of the system. Schools need outside support. Change is a complex, dynamic, and resource-consuming endeavour. No single organisation is likely to have all the expertise and resources needed to succeed in change. Change processes are easier and chances of sustained success are increased as the school staff understands more about how to use external resources. Change becomes easier as those external to the school recognise the importance of their roles in facilitating change success in each school. That's why it's so important to gain stakeholder buy-in (cf. Tool 2, „All professionals/Stakeholders template").

Everyone—teachers and principals in the school—must consider and understand how a school learns and advances as a change process unfolds. The change occurs if the members of an organisation develop process skills, the organisation will be more successful in its core work. To perform tasks in most organisations, teamwork is required. According to Hall and Hord (2015), one trend in the definition of "organisational development" (OD) across the decades has been the shift from focusing on teams to addressing the whole organisation (European Commission, 2015). In recent years, the general practice is to apply OD approaches to all parts and to facilitate more long-term products, such as the development of strategic plans (Tool 5).

Thus, there are a set of processes complying larger strategies that groups use to solve a particular problem, develop long-range plans, and accomplish other major tasks; for example, most schools develop School Improvement Plans, i.e., Strategic Plans. Along the process, individuals will be assigned to a committee with the assignment to develop the plan (Project Plan work team). The strategies that can be used in accomplishing these major missions: "problem solving", "action research" and "strategic planning".

Following several authors, namely Fullan (2007), we believe that transformative actions do not result from the following of norms, techniques, and paths by the agents in the contexts requiring transformation, but from the action of people convinced that the performance of their role will make a difference in their lives and in the lives of others, namely students, co-workers, and other partners. **People's convictions / beliefs are decisive in transforming actions**. Furthermore, people's convictions / beliefs are prior, because they underlie the realisation of good ideas and the implementation of good practices. They determine adherence and investment in implementing these ideas / practices. Mostly in a context in which educational policies for inclusion are defined in a top-down process. They will have a very limited result, perhaps even a surreptitious boycott by agents in the context, if the implementers do not recognise the way in which these policies provide the resources to solve the problems they recognise to exist, first, and want to solve next therefore our suggestion of Tool 1, "Applying Soft Systems Methodology". To prepare the public to adhere and empathise with the ideas of change, it will be necessary to survey the convictions / beliefs, using Tool 3, the "Empathy Map".

According to Hall and Hord (2015) principles of change, "organisations adopt change, individuals implement change", i.e., successful change starts and ends at the individual level. There is an individual aspect to organisational change. Once "empathy maps" are completed, their analysis will be carried out to assess the extent to which these professionals will be permeable or resistant to the change in question. Education professionals often argue that they cannot do more than they do, adequate policies and / or resources are not yet available. We believe that working on this stage of the change process may result in the design of a more successful strategic plan (Tool 5).

While moving to a "problem based / critical thinking" approach, the actors in the context should begin by identifying the inclusion problems they face and which of them demands to be solved as a priority

and then being aligned to the STAIRS members recommendations. Several steps to the problem-solving process have been identified, as the one in the next figure. Note that problem solving is represented as a cycle; usually, solving one problem leads to new problems, so the steps may need to be repeated.
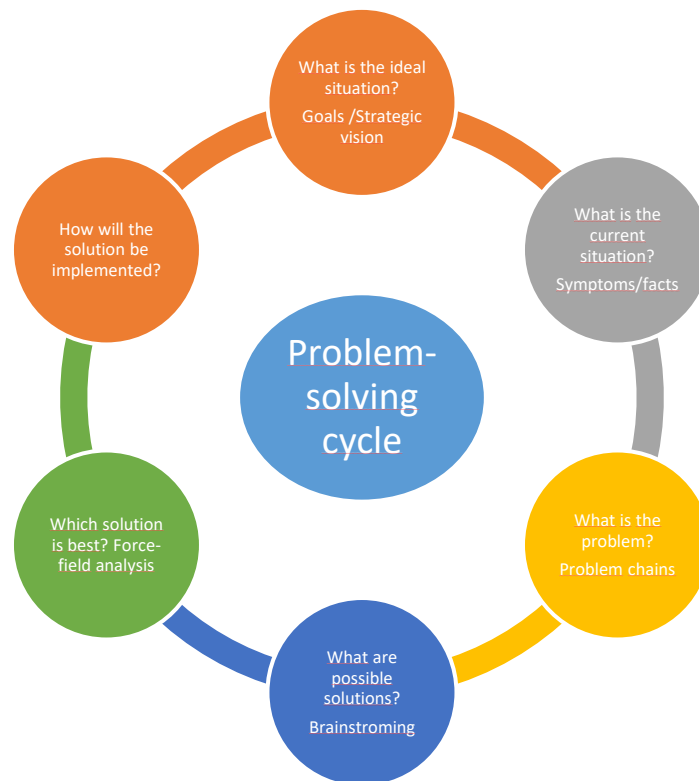

Figure 1. Problem-solving cycle, drawn by the author based on Hall and Hord (2015)

Thus, to implement a change at the school level, a "strategic plan" or "project plan" must be drawn up and a work team designated to draw it, manage its implementation, and assess it. Although this CMT is based on the principle that a "project plan" is different from a "change plan", Tool 5 is provided, with suggestions for the elaboration of a "project plan".

Organisation change could be more successful when various processes were internalised as the regular way of working. Over time, the processes for organisation change have become more complex and the view of the organisation more holistic. Core strategies continue to include addressing climate/culture, strategic planning, and process consultation. Questionnaires can be used to measure the values and norms organisation members hold about such constructs as autonomy or inclusion, reward orientation, the amount of communication, and feelings about colleagues and their students. That's why we suggest using the "empathy map" (Tool 3) from the beginning of the change process design. An organisation culture is a social construction. The type of culture and its shape are the result of individual and interactive interpretation and construction of meaning weather is a "family-school", a "school as a professional organisation" or a "living-apart-together school" (Staessens, 1993, cit. in Hall and Hord, 2015, p. 271), which will impact differently on people's behaviour.

1.3.   Change in education at the classroom level

There is a strong consensus that high performance in education systems is dependent on the quality of teaching. Barber put it simply: 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers' (Barber & Mourshed, 2007, p. 13) and his report for McKinsey concluded that 'the best school systems are those that have the best teachers' (ibid,7).

> School systems need to ensure that their curricula are relevant and contain enough flexibility to accommodate different learners and different social and economic needs. They need to ensure that school buildings are in good condition... All these things are important and ultimately impact academic performance. However, none is nearly as important as the quality of teaching. (Whelan, 2009, p. 35, cit. in Husbands & Pearce, 2012, p. 2)

Starting from this consensus but questioning the circular argument: good teachers are those who produce good outcomes, so that those pupils with good outcomes must have been taught by good teachers. Husbands and Pearce (2012) carried out a research literature allowing them to point out nine strong claims about the characteristics of highly successful pedagogies.

1. Effective pedagogies give serious consideration to pupil voice.
2. Effective pedagogies depend on behaviour (what teachers do), knowledge and understanding (what teachers know) and beliefs (why teachers act as they do).
3. Effective pedagogies involve clear thinking about longer term learning outcomes as well as short-term goals.
4. Effective pedagogies build on pupils' prior learning and experience.
5. Effective pedagogies involve scaffolding pupil learning.
6. Effective pedagogies involve a range of techniques, including whole-class and structured group work, guided learning, and individual activity.
7. Effective pedagogies focus on developing higher order thinking and metacognition and make good use of dialogue and questioning in order to do so.
8. Effective pedagogies embed assessment for learning.
9. Effective pedagogies are inclusive and take the diverse needs of a range of learners, as well as matters of student equity, into account. The research underpinning the claims is outlined below. (Husbands & Pearce, 2012, p. 3)

We believe that these nine points will be able to guide action research in any context that intends to improve the pedagogical practices of any classroom.

Rowe, Wilkin & Wilson (2012) also published their findings of a literature review conducted as part of the NFER Research Programme. It is part of reviews that collectively consider creating change in schools through workforce development, in line with Hord and Hall (2015) first principle "change is learning". The focus of their review was to establish the key features of „good teaching". The report explores what the best available research tells us about what „good teaching" looks like, if there are any contradictions and if there are any gaps in the literature.

The authors have identified some key aspects and elaborated, which they designated by a map of the conditions for effective teaching, namely Teaching environment, Teaching approaches, Teacher characteristics, included in a circle that surrounds the student / learner, in the centre. The image conveys the idea that the student is immersed in a context whose experience conditions his/her learning.
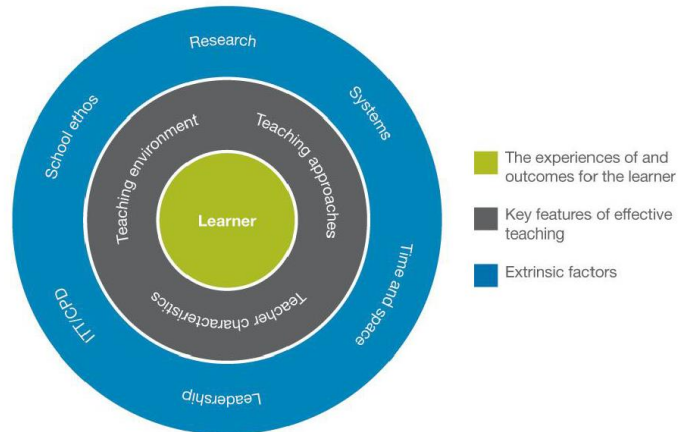
Figure 2: Map of the conditions for effective teaching, adapted from Rowe, Wilkin & Wilson (2012, p. 4)

Based on the key aspects, they have also identified the characteristics of each of them, as the table below reveals.

Table 1. The key features of effective teaching (Rowe, Wilkin & Wilson, 2012, p. 5)

Teaching environment	Teaching approaches	Teacher characteristics
- Calm, well-disciplined, orderly - Safe/secure - An ethos of aspiration and achievement for all - Positive emotional climate - Purposeful, stimulating - Bright, attractive and informative displays - Clean, tidy and well-organised - New or re-designed buildings/spaces - Lower class size	- Interactive (e.g. working and learning together – social constructivism) - Use of teacher-pupil dialogue, questioning - Monitoring pupil progress (including the use of feedback) - Pupil assessment (including Assessment for Learning – AfL) - Pupil agency and voice (active engagement in their learning) - Enquiry-based - Effective planning and organisation - Scaffolding learning - Building on the prior experience and learning of pupils (a constructivist theory of learning) - Personalisation, responding to individual needs - Home-school learning, knowledge exchange - Use of new technology/ICT - Collaborative practice - Good use of teaching assistants (TAs) - Creative use of visits/visiting experts	- Good subject knowledge - Self-efficacy/belief - High expectations - Motivational - Provides challenge - Innovative/proactive - Calm - Caring - Sensitive - Gives praise - Uses humour as a tool - Engenders trust and mutual respect - Flexible (where appropriate) - Builds positive relationships with pupils (relationships for learning) - Self-reflection

To bring change to the classroom, action research is a useful strategy for engaging teams in learning more about their work. This strategy begins with an individual or team identifying a question or problem about their practice for which they would like to understand more. It could be teachers

wondering if a certain instructional approach is serving learners or administrators questioning the effectiveness of a particular schedule. In action research, a team of implementers is established and asked to study the problem. Often, an outside expert or researcher will be available as a technical resource. However, this person is not there to make decisions for the team. An important beginning task is coming to a consensus on the question to be studied. The next step is to identify the type of data that will be collected to answer the question. The team then collects data (in their own setting/classroom), analyses the data, and shares the findings with colleagues. The purpose is to examine current practice by collecting data and then having a team work on the problem. Once the skills of teamwork and data analysis are applied, the findings are then used to increase effectiveness (Hall & Hord, 2015). Upscaling those findings to the level of school and/or beyond demands to apply the tools 2,3, 5-10.