

Chapter 8

Engaging and Empowering Teachers in Innovative Assessment Practice

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8.1 Introduction

As our understanding of the role of assessment in learning increases, assessment by teachers has taken on new importance in schools and indeed in education systems as a whole. External testing has created a situation, especially in England (see *Every Child Matters* (Department for Children & Schools and Families, 2004)) and the USA (see *No Child Left Behind* (US Department of Education, 2002); see [Chapter 3](#) Flaitz), in which schools are forced continuously to improve their performance and that of their students by striving for externally imposed targets and standards. The problems that arise include “. . . teaching to the test, narrowing the curriculum and focusing disproportionate resources on borderline pupils” (House of Commons, 2008, p. 93). Problems of meaning, validity and reliability have also dogged such systems with Stobart (2008), Mansell (2007) and Harlen and Deakin Crick (2003) taking particular issue with the negative impacts of testing. External testing will always be a feature of most education systems and when they are carried out and used appropriately they are perfectly acceptable. However, the Assessment Reform Group (Harlen, 2007) have clearly demonstrated in their *Assessment Systems of the Future* project, that the complementary and currently under-developed role of assessment by teachers holds out the promise of assessment being much more integrated into the classroom and learning context in the future. One of the challenges in achieving this potential is to find the best means to engage and empower the teachers involved.

Across the UK, a number of research and development projects have considered how to engage teachers more formally in assessment in schools. These projects have been initiated in response to renewed interest in the role of teachers not only in using assessment *for* learning (AfL), where the assessment is integrated into classroom teaching, but also in assessment *of* learning, where teachers make dependable assessments of students’ learning for reporting to the students or other stakeholders.

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Yet some of these initiatives have had less success than might have been expected in implementation on a wider scale despite having considerable influence on those involved in their development.

The Analysis and Review of Innovations in Assessment project (ARIA, funded by the Nuffield Foundation over an 18 month period from 2006 to 2008) set out to explore these initiatives and to glean from them the key issues for the effective promotion of assessment by teachers. To focus closely on these factors, ARIA selected 13 initiatives (listed in the Appendix) from all four countries of the UK: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. A variety of aspects relating to two key questions were explored¹. These were:

1. How can assessment by teachers be improved for formative and summative purposes? ARIA aimed to provide insights into professional development approaches that enable teachers to ensure their formative and summative assessments are effective.
2. What facilitates the dissemination of improved practice in assessment by teachers? ARIA sought to identify the factors that facilitate or hinder the successful uptake of assessment by teachers and schools, leading to improved learning and raised standards.

The research design chosen for the project was a “Consultation with Experts” study. This process involves the gathering of empirical research reports and related publications from the selected initiatives and then analyzing them to reveal their key features. These are then subjected to discussion and development by experts, to seek a convergent view on their relative importance and how improvement or progress may be advanced. The sequence is set out below:

- Published and other written materials relating to the initiatives were sourced and reviewed by the research team.
- Synoptic overviews of each initiative were developed and circulated for internal project discussion.
- The overviews were used to create working papers for discussion by over 200 experts in invitational seminars held in each of the four UK countries.
- The early seminars involved key people from the initiatives (project leaders, teachers, evaluators etc) and experts drawn from the practitioner, professional support, academic and policy making communities.
- As a result of new insights gained from each seminar, the initial working papers were further developed and new working papers on emerging themes were commenced. In parallel, an interview survey of 35 participants across the initiatives was undertaken to deepen the empirical base for the work.

¹A third key question, not reported upon here, related to how policy on assessment by teachers needs to change at system level to ensure there is a productive balance between accountability in terms of standards and the quality of student learning.

- Towards the end of the project the seminars were used to challenge and refine the emerging conclusions, informing and culminating in the project group's agreed findings and implications.

One of the main benefits of this approach to examining developments in the classroom and schools is that it can aim to establish a degree of consensus across cognate (i.e., education-related) but differently focused groups such as practitioners, policy-makers and academics. That is not to say, however, that the conclusions of this study attract the endorsement, in whole or in part, of each member of each seminar or initiative. Rather it is a synthesis developed by the project group itself. The chapter is structured in two main parts: *Review of Innovations in Assessment Initiatives across the UK* and *Insights from the Expert Seminars*.

8.2 Review of Innovations in Assessment Initiatives Across the UK

There were a number of common findings in the reviews of the various initiatives, identified through interviews with participants and through existing written reports and evaluations of the projects involved. For example, in almost all cases, the interviewees expressed their reasons for participating as being related primarily to improving students' learning. Another common observation was the beneficial effect of increased engagement by the students in the learning and assessment processes. However, the initial observations and findings were focused on three main areas: *Professional Learning*, *Dissemination* and *Sustainable Development*. These formed the basis of three working papers, which were then developed on a continuous basis as a result of discussions and expert inputs in subsequent seminars. An additional working paper, on the concept of *Innovation* in assessment, was developed to assist with discussions and, as we will discuss later, three additional dimensions, namely *Warrant*, *Impact* and *Agency*, were developed as a result of the expert seminars. The particular case of *Self-Agency*, is a crucial indicator of a successful handing over of responsibility for personal professional development to the teachers themselves.

8.2.1 Professional Learning

Accounts of attempts to bring about change in assessment invariably emphasize the role of professional development (for example, see James & Pedder, 2006). One outcome of the research led us to prefer the term *professional learning*, as it was clear in some of the initiatives that attempts to change assessment practice were prone to a superficial adoption of techniques rather than an increased understanding. In essence, the term *professional learning* implies the process of teachers developing their own understanding of the processes involved. Without this understanding,

the evidence indicated that innovative practice soon waned in the face of the more familiar, established practices.

There are many different forms that professional learning can take and, as demonstrated by all of the initiatives reviewed, there are several key issues to consider. These include the balance between what has been described as top-down and bottom-up approaches and the tension between theory-based and technique-based models. In these debates there are shades of what Sfard (1998) has called the *acquisition* versus *participation* metaphors of learning. Applied to professional learning, the distinction implies a choice between designing participative practical experiences that lead to reflection and deeper assimilation of the principles, and an acquisition approach in which the teachers are relatively passive and are simply required to adopt the practices they have been shown. In extreme cases of the latter, teachers are told what to do; with the hope, perhaps, that practice will instil understanding. The research literature offers no dependable conclusions on the debate as to which is better, and in a large majority of the cases studied in ARIA the process was considerably more organic, with the different issues and approaches being blended according to circumstance and opportunity.

The *King's Medway Oxfordshire Formative Assessment Project, KMOFAP* project (see Hodgen & Marshall, 2005; Black & Wiliam, 2006) is an example of an approach which was essentially bottom-up, reflecting a view that participation in developing new procedures or materials is a most effective way of encouraging commitment to change. The project showed how groups of teachers can learn from each other, combine ideas, achieve ownership of the emerging practices and work with researchers to be creative and experimental in a "safe" environment. With the addition of opportunities to reflect and develop understanding of principles underlying the change, this experience can be a most effective form of professional learning. But it is also very demanding of resources, time in particular, and clearly cannot be extended to large numbers of teachers in an economic fashion.

An alternative approach, in which teachers are not expected to develop techniques but are to try out ready-made approaches, was illustrated in the *Portsmouth Learning Community: Assessment for Learning Strand* project (Blanchard, Collins, & Thorp, 2003). Two teachers from each of 13 primary schools in Portsmouth attended training on such strategies as sharing learning intentions, identifying success criteria, "no-hands-up" questioning and comments-only marking. These strategies, and others such as "traffic lights", wait time and "two-stars-and-a-wish" mentioned later in the text, are sometimes termed "Assessment for Learning strategies" as they are techniques used by teachers to secure students' participation in the assessment of their own learning. Such techniques promote meaningful feedback, self and peer-assessment, and the sharing of learning outcomes, which are key dimensions of the formative use of assessment (i.e., assessment *for* learning). Following the training, the Portsmouth teachers put the strategies into practice in their classes and subsequent evaluations indicated that positive use was made of them, with classroom practice changed as intended. However, there was evidence of confusion about the purpose of some strategies, probably resulting from using the techniques without understanding the underlying principles, as we have argued

above. Teachers have to make decisions about their use of assessment and the project demonstrated that they will be uncertain about how to do it unless they have a clear understanding of the benefits and educational rationale.

The most important findings on professional learning were related to time, ownership and understanding. These are set out briefly below, illustrated by comments from participants in the initiatives.

8.2.1.1 Time

- Teachers need time to reflect and to adjust their teaching to take on board new practices. (*I went to conferences and heard about people making it happen in 6 weeks which I thought absolutely doesn't work. It took us a year and a half and even now we have to say: remember to do... remember to do...* – Teacher).

Professional development is best spread over time with opportunities for trying out ideas between sessions. (*“Absolutely crucial”* – Local authority advisor).

- Teachers find it very helpful to talk to other teachers to share experiences and planning should allow time for this form of professional learning. (*“Fantastic CPD [continuing professional development] for staff... [involves] conversations about pedagogy... focus on learning in school... sharing/visiting one another's classrooms”* – Teacher).

8.2.1.2 Ownership

- “Bottom-up” approaches are more likely than “top-down” approaches to lead to ownership and understanding of new procedures, but teachers need to be clear about the direction in which they should be trying to move and need to have feedback on their progress. (*“It's not quite as simple as somebody at the bottom having an idea and passing it all the way up. It is like opening up a debate at all levels and making time to do it properly”* – Local authority advisor).

8.2.1.3 Understanding

- Some teachers may prefer to start by following techniques for change rather than understanding reasons for change, but unless they eventually reach this understanding, techniques are likely to be followed mechanically and be easily abandoned. (*“Some people still see it as traffic lighting... So for example, you know the teacher hasn't got it if they ask you to come on a Wednesday afternoon to see their AfL lesson... whereas if the teacher says come in any time you know you are going to see the principles [in operation] at any point”* – Teacher).

As Holmes, Gardner, and Galanouli (2007) would argue, planning for successful professional learning demands a focus on teachers' values and the utility of the innovation. It also requires planned opportunities to try out the activities themselves

and sustained support during the period after any formal professional development intervention and as the process of embedding the changes proceeds.

8.2.2 Dissemination

When the aim is to reach large numbers of teachers, to make changes nationally rather than locally, the approach to professional development needs to be scaled up. The solution often adopted is one of “cascade” training (see for example, Stobart & Stoll, 2005), where those who have been trained are in turn expected to disseminate the “message” further in their schools or authorities. The Assessing Pupils’ Progress (APP) (partly reported in Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2006) and Monitoring Children’s Progress (MCP) projects for ages 11–14 and 7–11 respectively were concerned with assessment for summative purposes and were intended to change practice nationally across England. Resource materials arising from the APP were developed to help teachers make judgments in relation to their students’ levels of achievement. During the development and trialling of the materials, two teachers from each participating school attended training sessions and two summer conferences. From this relatively small coverage of the school and teacher population (around 70 schools, 140 teachers over 2 years), the cascade model was designed to disseminate the techniques to all schools through local authorities and school-based work. In such an approach there may be little opportunity to tailor experiences to enable teachers to engage within the context of their own needs. However, the worst effects of the “top-down” structure can be ameliorated by ensuring opportunities for discussion, reflection and contextualized action in the schools themselves. In this manner, the top-down policy and guidance aligns more closely with a model that aims to empower and engage both teachers and schools to take matters forward in a bottom-up development.

8.2.2.1 Transmission Model

Many of the approaches to dissemination described in the selected initiatives were based on the transmission of ideas to teachers and schools from such sources as policy-makers and academic researchers. Most commonly, practice perceived to be good was promoted by government and local authorities and then shared across the practice communities. Sophisticated models of this approach encouraged practitioners to tell their own stories of practice and to make explicit the process of change, identifying problems faced and issues addressed. For example, the Learning How to Learn project (James, Black, McCormick, Pedder, & Wiliam, 2006; Pedder, James, & MacBeath, 2005) is arguably best viewed as a collection of good learning practices. The selection of these practices was based on the potential to promote students’ autonomy in learning.

All of the initiatives that used this “shared good practice” approach reported problems with “pilot and roll out”. It became clear that a major distinction could be drawn between the pilot phases, which often successfully involved teachers in

developing the ideas and practices, and the “roll out”, where the model changed from the *engagement* of the teachers in developing new practice (the pilot teachers) to *telling* the new batches of teachers what to do. We have described this as a failure to recognize that dissemination must adopt the same professional learning approach for the last person trained as was successful for the first.

8.2.2.2 Transformation Model

This was a crucial finding but it was also recognized by planners of the most recent initiatives who based their ideas more on a process of transformation, that is, the need for professional learning and dissemination to transform practice. That said, it was also acknowledged that successful dissemination could not rely on any single strategy. In Wales, for example, schools involved in the two initiatives: the Programme for Developing Thinking and Assessment for Learning, and the Assessment Programme for Wales: Securing Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3² Teacher Assessment (DCELLS, 2008) attended dissemination conferences while a virtual discussion forum also provided a searchable database of resources and lesson plans.

In Scotland the Assessment is for Learning Programme (see for example, Condie, Livingston, & Seagraves, 2005; Hutchinson & Hayward, 2005; Hayward, 2007; see Chapter 2 James) had brought together policy-makers, academic researchers and practitioners right from its inception. The national plan was for all teachers to be involved in thinking and action on formative assessment over time rather than having one group of teachers who developed ideas for others to put into practice. Rather than simply transmitting good practice, the underlying and potentially much more effective approach, is the full engagement of teachers in transforming their own practice.

8.2.3 Sustainable Development

A strong conclusion from the work of the project was that it was inappropriate to conceive of sustaining any new assessment practice in some kind of unchanging state itself. Sustainable development of new practices is therefore a dynamic process, itself prone to updating and change. This was amply demonstrated by the experience of the Assessment for Learning project in Northern Ireland. Classroom activities, which were at one time new and useful, e.g. the “traffic lights”, wait time and “two-stars-and-a-wish” strategies (see Council for the Curriculum & Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), 2007, for a description of these), soon became drab routine for some teachers and no longer met the ever-changing needs of the classroom. In an evaluation of the initiative (CCEA, 2006), over one third of

²The national curricula of England, Wales and Northern Ireland have the same basic structure set out in “key stages” with, for example, Key Stage 3 covering the education of students in the approximate age range 11–14 years.

the 69 teachers responding to a survey felt that AfL approaches were not suitable for all students and over half displayed “some resistance” to the initiative. The evaluation indicated that communication was a problem, with many of the teachers being unaware of the potential benefits of, or reasons for, using formative assessment. The conditions for sustaining change were not in place but when the teachers were encouraged to engage with the underlying processes this AfL initiative achieved much greater success.

Change in education is both an individual and a collective process within communities as diverse as schools and nations. However, changing the assessment practice of individual teachers, or even schools, is not enough to maintain change in a whole system. For this, changes may well be needed in teacher education programmes, in policies, in criteria used in school evaluation by schools themselves and by inspectors, in funding arrangements, and so on. Where policy arrangements are not consistent, the potential for innovation to be sustained may be compromised. Successful innovation in assessment involves sustaining a climate of development where policy-makers, academic researchers, schools and teachers seek collectively to improve learning. Most importantly, it involves engaging teachers and schools in a culture of reflection and review, to ensure that change is properly planned and actioned.

The main conclusions to be drawn on sustainability from the various initiatives may be summarized as follows:

- Sustainable development in assessment is a dynamic process and must feature as part of every teacher’s approach to their practice (*“You can’t let it off the agenda if you want to keep it alive”* – Teacher).
- Teachers must be enabled to maintain good practice through continuous review and reflection. (*“Embedding it in your core purposes... re-visiting it... sharing what works regularly”* – Local authority advisor).
- Sustainable development involves sustaining ideas, practices and people. Teachers and schools must share a sense of common, worthwhile purpose (*“There is a real commitment among a core of staff that we keep the commitment to AfL really high and don’t lose that at all because I think it’s something that we’ve been proud of, that has been developed in the school”* – Teacher).
- Sustainable development involves sustaining a learning culture where policy-makers, researchers and practitioners use evidence to adapt practice – in effect, not unlike the process of formative assessment.

8.3 Insights from the Study

Analysis of the publications and reports relating to the initiatives, in combination with the expert seminar discussions, led to two major conclusions from the study. The first related to the lack of comprehensive planning (“under-designing”) of many of the initiatives and the second related to perceptions of what constituted quality assessment practice.

8.3.1 Planning for Change in Assessment Practice

The story of each initiative was predominantly one of success; innovations in practice were successfully piloted and for those that intended wider dissemination appropriate attempts to promote wider adoption were undertaken. In essence, however, analysis of the initiatives pointed to the observation that planning for the post-pilot phase in most of the initiatives was invariably ad hoc. No overall blueprint was available from the beginning for addressing all of the key dimensions that arguably form the change process. The various discussions and literature searching identified these dimensions as being those set out in Fig. 8.1:

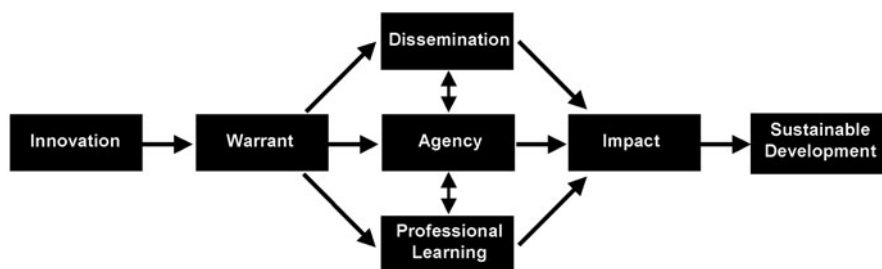


Fig. 8.1 Key dimensions of assimilating change in schools

Our analysis suggested that planning for the evaluation of *Impact* and for *Sustainable Development* was absent from all but a couple of the initiatives. Instead, as perhaps suggested by the [false] sense of linear sequencing³ in Fig. 8.1 above, these dimensions tended to be addressed towards the end of the process (if at all) rather than as part of a holistic design approach from the beginning. The conclusions reached on the issue of *Impact* argued the importance of ensuring that the effects of an innovation were systematically monitored. An innovation seeks to make a difference, so something should change. For most of those involved in the initiatives, improvement in student learning was seen in broad terms; it was about changed attitudes, better understanding and more learner autonomy. Only two initiatives provided evidence of attempts to “measure” the impact of the innovations through monitoring students’ performance in tests and examinations. Most respondents talked instead about changes to the classroom climate, different ways of teaching and improved attitudes to learning. The use of teacher perceptions was the dominant form of evidence and what emerged was a strong sense of teacher belief that the innovations in assessment, especially the formative assessment developments, had benefited both teaching and learning. A key issue here, especially for

³It must be emphasized that the dimensions of change outlined in this figure should not be considered as part of a linear sequence, though it does represent the general direction of travel. The process of changing assessment practice may begin with a specifically identified innovation and (ideally) end with the establishment of sustained practice, but the processes in between are highly inter-related and inter-dependent.

policy-makers and those engaged in school evaluation, is that improved learning might be reasonably expected to lead, at some point, to improved test or examination results. We would not wish to undermine the importance of teachers' personal observations but the consensus of those taking part in the seminars would be to pursue a more systematic collection of evidence.

There was also evidence that acceptance of the specific *Innovation* in assessment practice, and its *Warrant* from the literature and work undertaken elsewhere, was a relatively passive process. There was a general acceptance that the innovation was desirable. The validity of its potential benefits was more or less taken for granted and there was no detailed conceptualization or critical evaluation of its nature. This was not a particularly serious issue across the initiatives, and least of all in those with evidence pointing to the positive effects of AfL, but taking efficacy for granted has proven more problematic in the context of the many fads that have assailed Education in recent years. However, what can be much more problematic, as demonstrated in some of the initiatives, is an ad hoc approach to *Professional Learning* and *Dissemination*.

For the most part, the initiatives did plan for these two interrelated and major activities but this planning was generally not in place from the beginning. It was in this sense that some of the initiatives could be described as being "under-designed". It was clear from the study that the planning and design for successful and embedded changes in assessment practice must address all of the key dimensions (Fig. 8.1) from the beginning.

8.3.2 *Self-Agency of Teachers*

Another important feature of the initiatives was that the relatively traditional top-down approach, which was widely used, did not specifically seek to identify and exploit the key agents of change (*Agency*). A variety of key agents may be identified including senior school managers, peer influences and even students. However, it was clear throughout that the commitment and understanding of the teachers themselves was crucial and that the key approach to sustaining change in assessment practice was the self-agency of the teachers. As Dadds (1997, p. 34) put it "When the formal CPD [continuing professional development] course has ended, professional judgement in the classroom goes on, often without continuing support. So the learning has to be made personal for it to be used independently."

Professional learning, in which teachers act as their own agency of change, might come about through the teachers' interest being stimulated by conversations with colleagues, ideas promoted at traditional professional development courses or from reading about the potential benefits of changes in practice. Self-agency is a powerful device in fostering change because it draws on self-motivation. What appeared strongly to be the case throughout the selected initiatives was that unless teachers are committed to any particular innovation in assessment, the prospects for successful changes in practice are likely to be slim. Self-agency is therefore considered to be a powerful element in ensuring the successful development of teacher assessment

in schools. Schools and others must strive to cultivate and capture this self-agency if the changes are to be assimilated into sustainable practice.

8.3.3 Principles and Standards

The second major conclusion from the study developed from the observation that there was not a consistent view of what “good” assessment is for any particular purpose. The many voices in the initiatives and the early seminars appeared to be talking about the same issue (improvement in assessment practice) while using almost as many definitions of that issue as there were voices. Ultimately such a situation can create a melee of jargon describing different types of assessment, different uses of assessment and different perceptions of what is considered to be acceptable quality in assessment practice. Addressing this issue therefore became a second key focus for the work of the project.

Cross-cutting the components in the process of change, represented in Fig. 8.1 and discussed earlier, is the notion of quality in assessment practice. The ARIA project identified a set of principles (see Gardner, Harlen, Hayward, Stobart, & Montgomery, 2009), which attracted the endorsement of a wide variety of teachers, academics and support professionals through both the expert seminars and a series of dissemination events. They are:

- Assessment of any kind should ultimately improve learning.
- Assessment methods should enable progress in all important learning goals to be facilitated and reported.
- Assessment procedures should include explicit processes to ensure that information is valid and is as reliable as necessary for its purpose.
- Assessment should promote public understanding of learning goals relevant to students’ current and future lives.
- Assessment of learning outcomes should be treated as approximations, subject to unavoidable errors.
- Assessment should be part of a process of teaching that enables students to understand the aims of their learning and how the quality of their achievement will be judged.
- Assessment methods should promote the active engagement of students in their learning and its assessment.
- Assessment should enable and motivate students to show what they can do.
- Assessment should combine information of different kinds, including students’ self-assessments, to inform decisions about students’ learning and achievements.
- Assessment methods should meet standards that reflect a broad consensus on quality at all levels from classroom practice to national policy.

The last principle introduces a previously unidentified issue: the need to have standards by which assessment practices can be judged, just as there are standards of practice in other areas of professional and personal conduct. Note that our use of the

word “standards” differs from that commonly assumed in education, where standards are often taken to mean normative levels of achievement as measured by test scores or examination grades. Here we are using standards in relation to assessment in a more general sense, reflecting reasonable expectations about, for instance, the range of learning outcomes included in assessment, the impact of the process of assessment on students, teachers and the curriculum, and how assessment policy is formulated. The intention is that these suggested standards can be used to help

Table 8.1 Standards for classroom assessment practice

Assessment generally	Formative use of assessment	Summative use of assessment
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The assessment uses a range of methods that enable the various goals of learning and progression towards them to be addressed 2. The methods used address the skills, knowledge or understanding being assessed without restricting the breadth of the curriculum 3. Teaching provides students with opportunities to show what they can do through tasks that address the full range of goals of learning 4. Teachers use evidence from their on-going assessment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● help students’ learning; ● summarise learning in terms of reporting criteria; ● reflect upon and improve their teaching 5. Teachers develop their assessment practice through a variety of professional learning activities including reflecting upon and sharing experiences with colleagues 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers gather evidence of their students’ learning through questioning, observation, discussion and study of products relevant to the learning goals 2. Teachers involve students in discussing learning goals and the standards to be expected in their work 3. Teachers use assessment to advance students’ learning by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● adapting the pace, challenge and content of activities; ● giving feedback to students about how to improve; ● providing time for students to reflect on and assess their own work 4. Students use assessment to advance their learning by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● knowing and using the criteria for the standards of work they should be aiming for; ● giving and receiving comments from their peers on the quality of their work and how to improve it; ● reflecting on how to improve their work and taking responsibility for it 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers base their judgments of students’ learning outcomes on a range of types of activity suited to the subject matter and age of students, which might include tests or specific assessment tasks 2. Assessment of learning outcomes is based on a rich variety of tasks that enables students to show what it means to be “good” at particular work 3. Teachers take part in discussion with each other of students’ work in order to align judgments of levels or grades when these are required 4. Students are aware of the criteria by which their work over a period of time is judged 5. Students are aware of the evidence used and how judgments of their learning outcomes are made 6. Students are helped to use the results of assessment to improve their learning

various groups to identify good practice where it already exists, to show what needs to be changed where it does not, and to help to ensure that key aspects of assessment procedures are and continue to be in place.

Four sets of standards were developed and aimed at the key groups: Teachers, School Management, Inspection and Advice Services, and Policy-makers (see Gardner et al., 2009). Focusing on engaging teachers, Table 8.1 presents the proposed standards for classroom assessment practice (there is no scope in this chapter to develop the remaining three categories of standards). They are set out as general standards in the first column and separately as standards for formative and summative assessment in the other columns.

It is important to stress that these standards should be viewed as a first attempt, derived from the views of experts (including teachers), to express a consistency in perception of what counts for quality assessment practice by teachers. As such, they are presented here to be endorsed, adapted and refined, or indeed challenged, by teachers.

8.4 Concluding Remarks

The ARIA study showed that many initiatives in developing assessment by teachers, an innovation in many schools, are under-designed, that is, they do not begin by planning for the whole change process (from innovation to sustainable development). There is also considerable uncertainty about defining quality in assessment practice and the first steps towards developing a common language of quality in assessment by teachers have been proposed.

Across the four nations of the UK, the key findings included the identification of potentially successful approaches to professional learning and dissemination, for example by ensuring that teachers are empowered to play a meaningful and participative role in the developments. A balance needs to be struck between introducing theory (what ultimately needs to be known and understood) and practice (what skills and strategies need to be learned). The adoption of innovative practice is a dynamic and complex process that requires commitment from teachers and appropriate support from policy-makers, researchers and educational support professionals.

Common weaknesses in assessment initiatives were identified as not actively pursuing appropriate dimensions of teachers' self-agency as a key instrument of change, not undertaking systematic monitoring of the impact of changes made and inadequate attention to how changes in practice might be sustained into the future, for example, through developing a culture of readiness to engage dynamically with changing and new assessment practices.

Finally, the study's findings highlight the power of enabling teachers to play a role in the design and conduct of professional learning opportunities, thereby engaging them in their own professional learning rather than simply telling them what they ought to be doing.

Appendix

A List of the Main Projects Reviewed Under the Auspices of ARIA

- Assessment is for Learning (Learning and Teaching Scotland and the Scottish Government)
- Assessing Pupils' Progress (Key Stage 3) and Monitoring Children's Progress (Key Stage 2) (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority with the Primary and Secondary National Strategies)
- Assessment for Learning in the Northern Ireland Revised Curriculum (Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), Northern Ireland)
- Consulting Pupils on the Assessment of their Learning (Queen's University, Belfast)
- Programme for Developing Thinking and Assessment for Learning (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Welsh Assembly Government)
- Assessment Programme for Wales: Securing Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 Teacher Assessment (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, Welsh Assembly Government)
- Project e-Scape. Goldsmiths, University of London
- Jersey Actioning Formative Assessment (JAFA) (King's College London and the Education Department of Jersey)
- King's Oxfordshire Medway Formative Assessment Project (KMOFAP) (King's College, London, Oxfordshire LA and Medway LA)
- King's Oxfordshire Summative Assessment Project (KOSAP) (King's College, London and Oxfordshire LA)
- Learning How to Learn (University of Cambridge)
- Portsmouth Learning Community Assessment for Learning Strand (Portsmouth LA)
- Summative Teacher Assessments at the End of Key Stage 2 (Birmingham and Oxfordshire LAs)

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