



Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

ASCL Conference 2011

Improving schools and improving school systems

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www.ioe.ac.uk



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Imagine?

Judith Warren Little

“Imagine a school in which you taught better simply by virtue of teaching in that school – what would such a school be like?”

1: Why education matters

2: What matters most

3: Making a difference

4: Designing successful change: what

5: Designing successful change: how

5: Doing the adaptive work

Why education matters

Achievement matters

For individuals

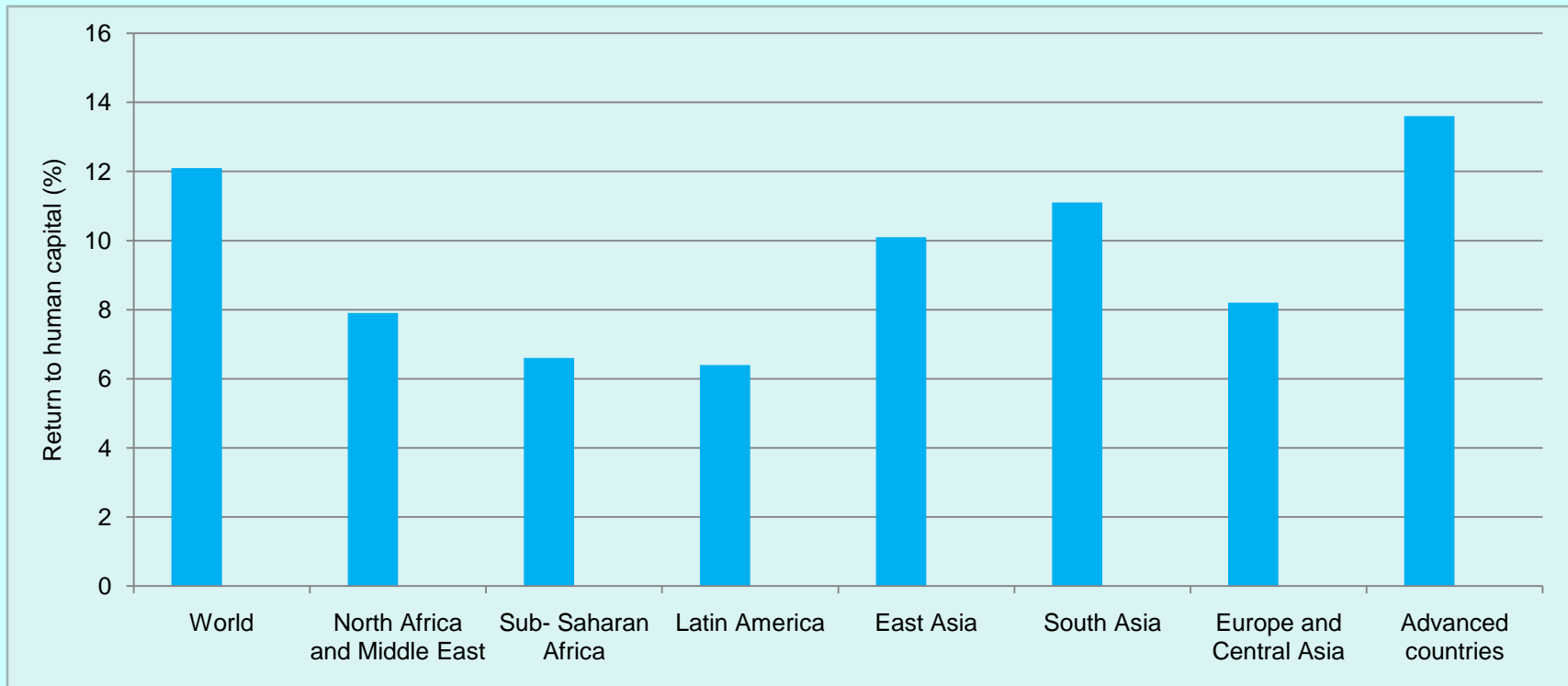
- Increased lifetime salary (13% for a degree)
- Improved health (half the number of disabled years)
- Longer life (1.7 years of life per extra year of schooling)

For society

- Lower criminal justice costs
- Lower health-care costs
- Increased economic growth

(Hanushek & Wößman, 2010)

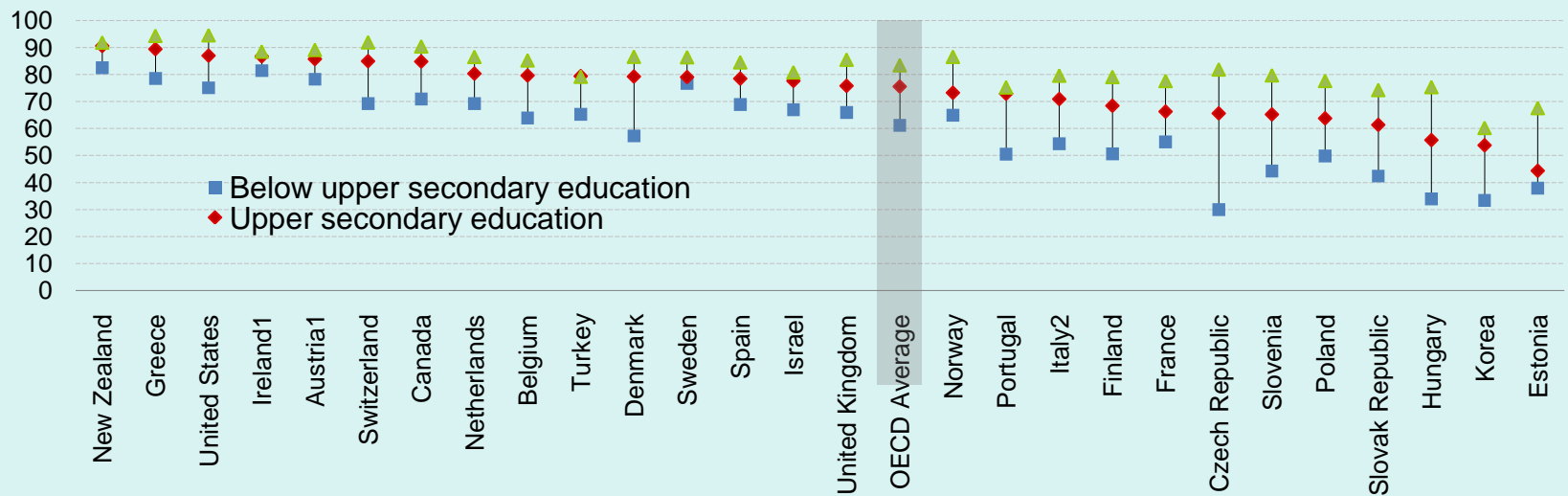
Rates of return to an additional year of schooling, by region



Barro, R., and Lee, J-W, 2010, International Comparisons of Educational Attainment, *Journal of Monetary Economics*, **32**, 3, 363-394

The impact of education on health

Percentage

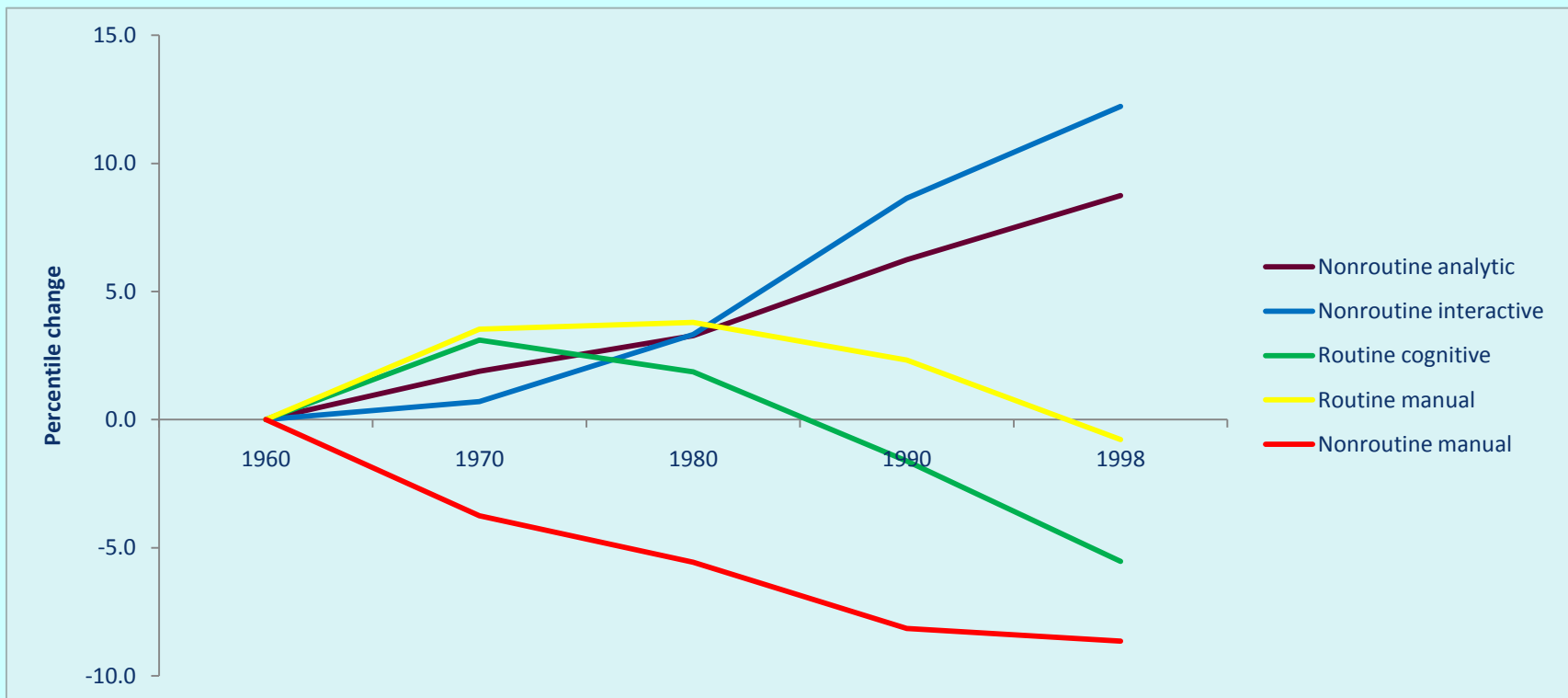


The changing labour market

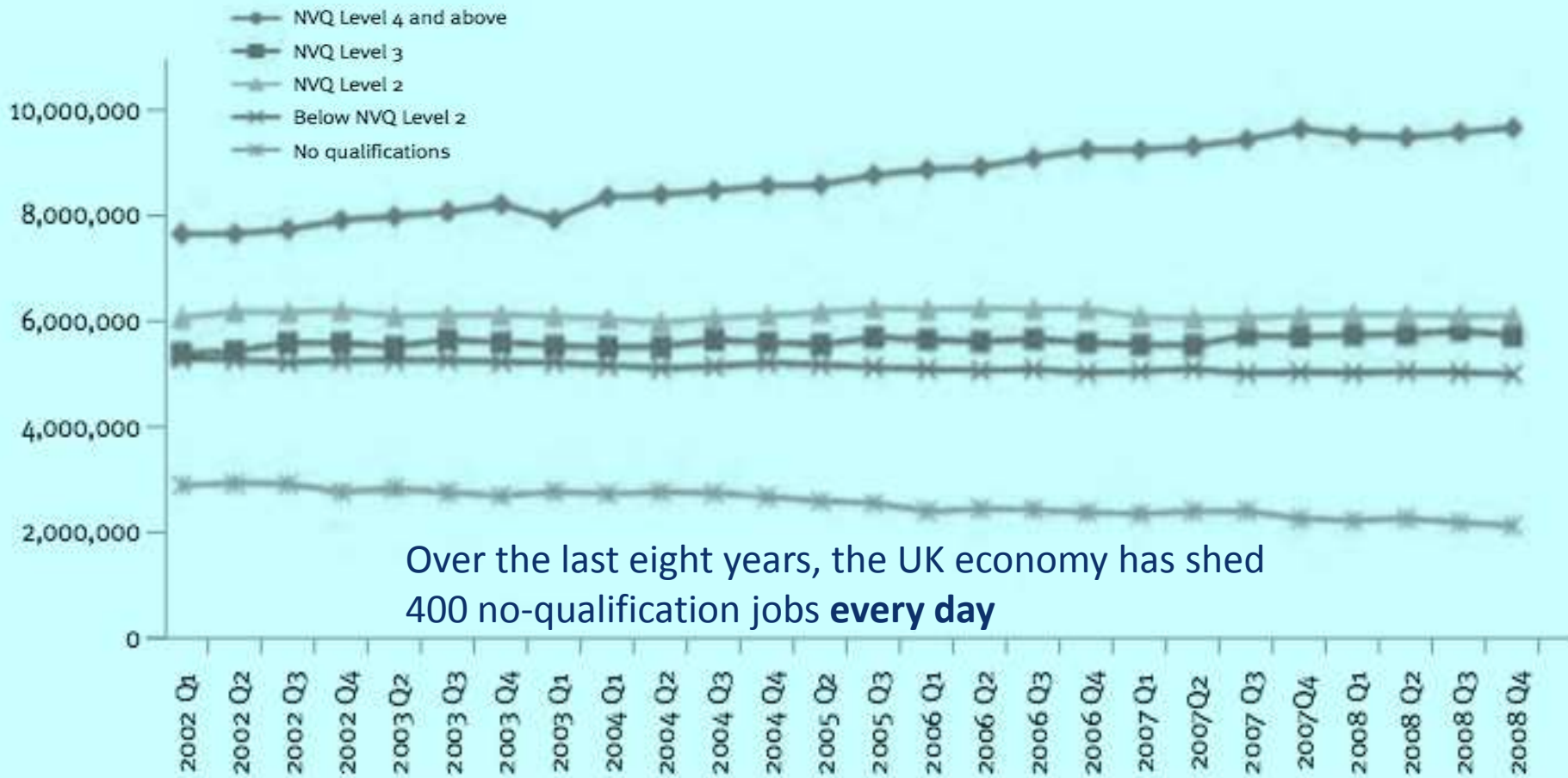
Which of the following categories of skill is disappearing from the work-place most rapidly?

1. Routine manual
2. Non-routine manual
3. Routine cognitive
4. Complex communication
5. Expert thinking/problem-solving

A changing economy: US job skill demand 1969 - 1999



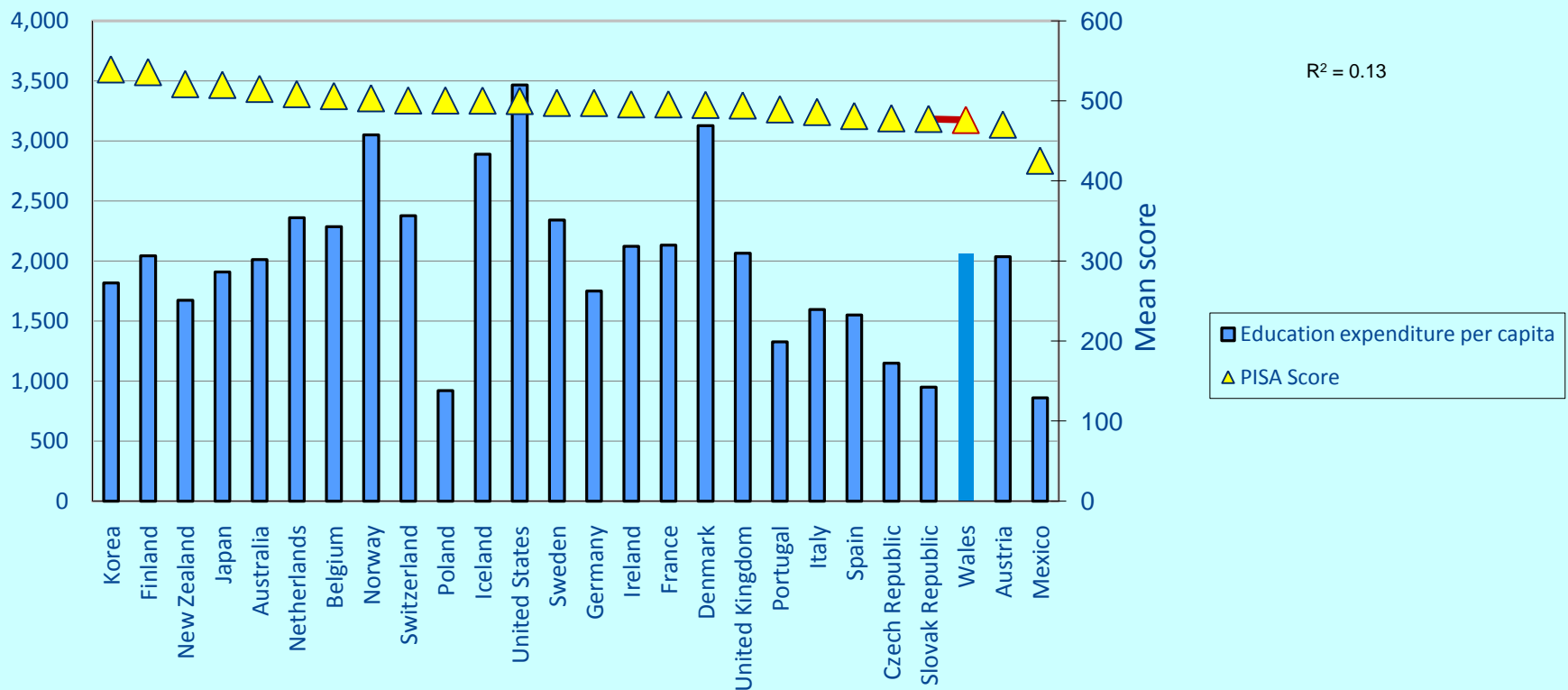
In fact low skill jobs are vanishing



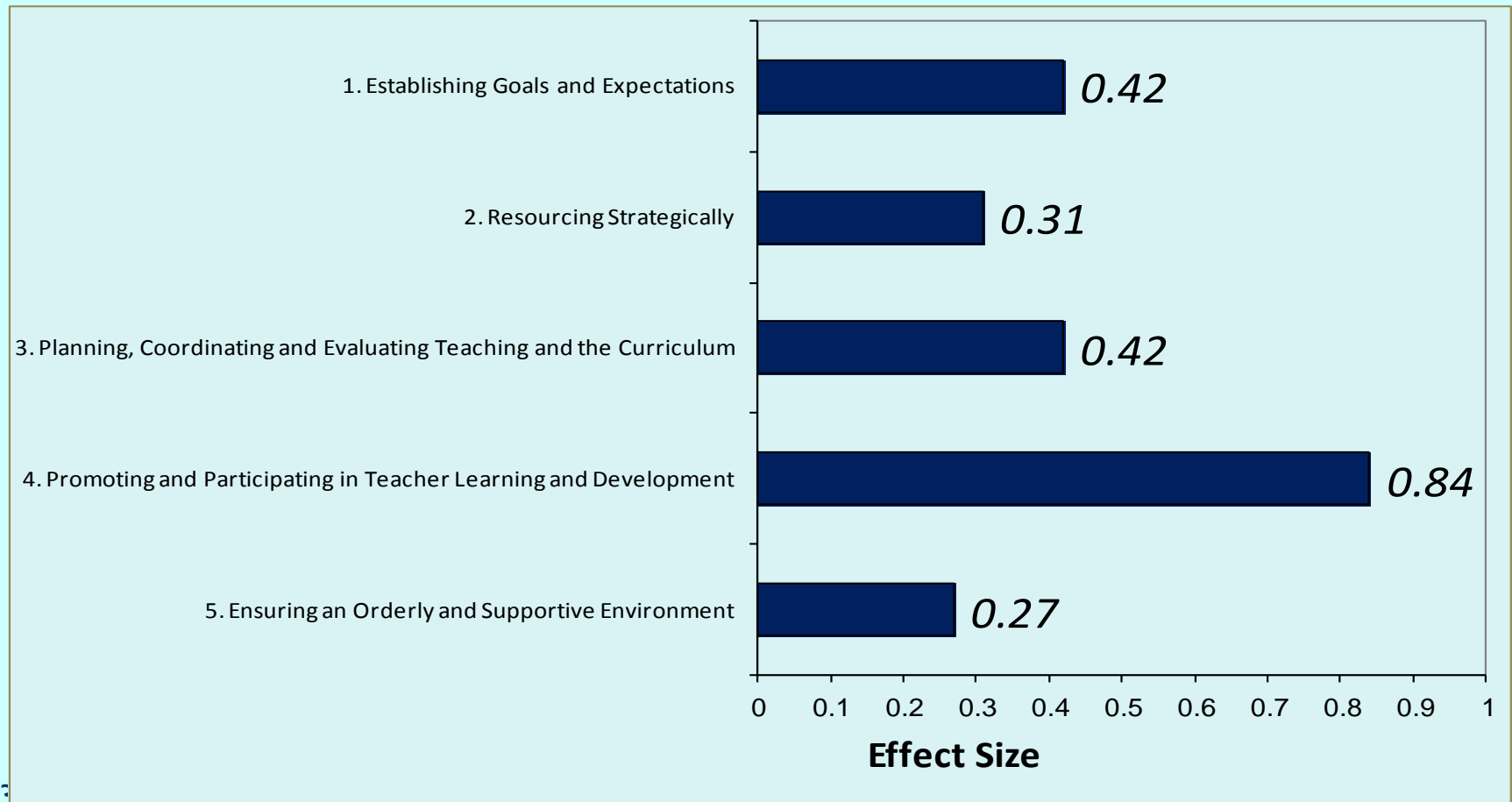
What matters most?

Resources?

Relationship between PISA performance in Reading at age 15 and education expenditure per capita (2007,2009)



Leadership (Robinson 2008)



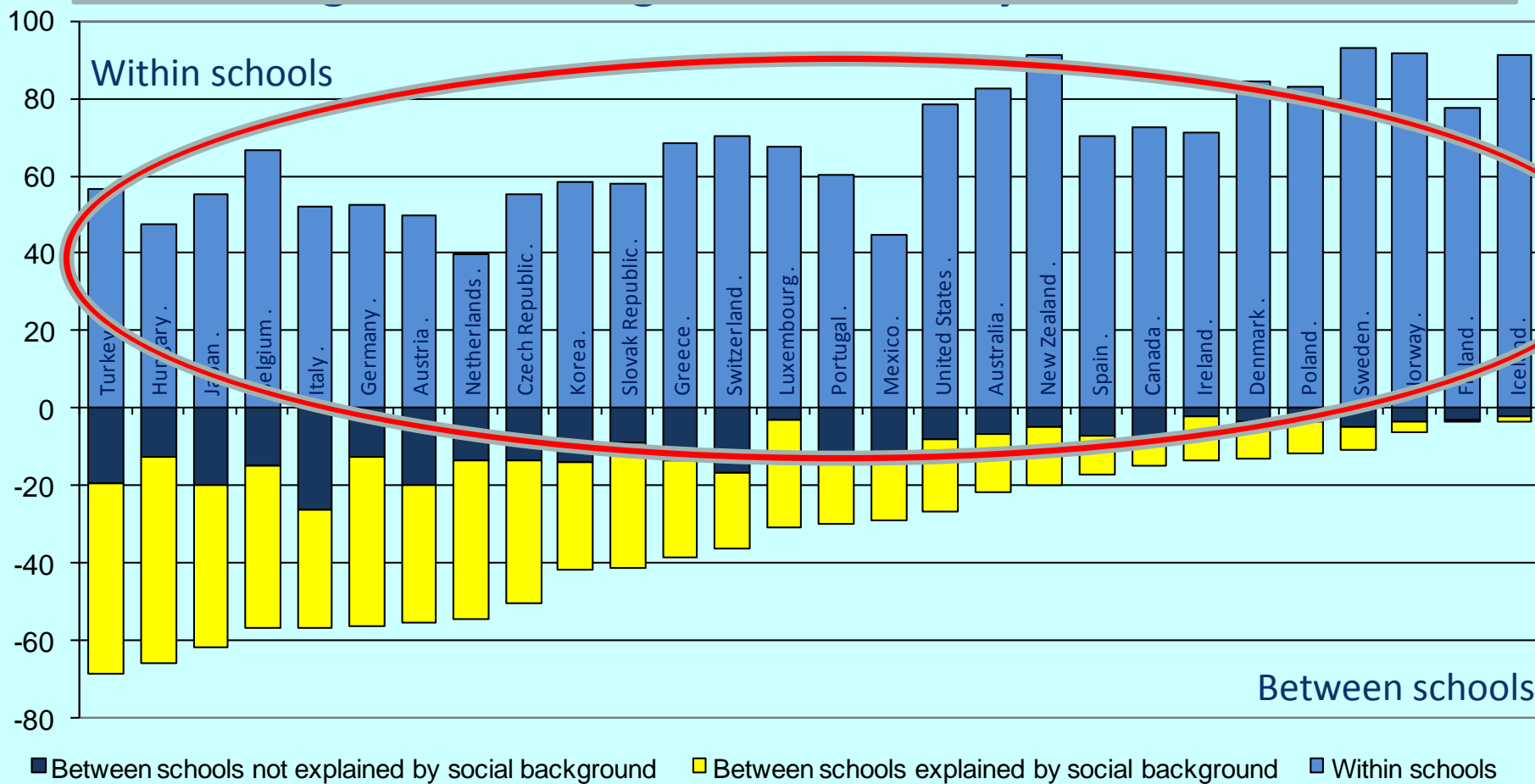
Governance (CREDO, 2011)

Charter Schools across 16 states

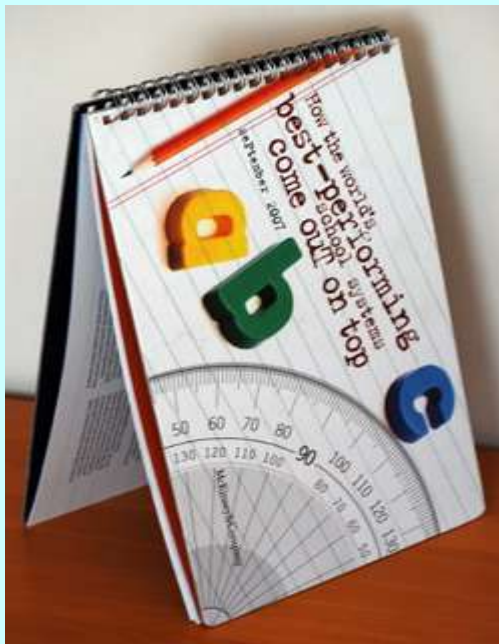
The group portrait shows wide variation in performance. The study reveals that a decent fraction of charter schools, 17 percent, provide superior education opportunities for their students.

Nearly half of the charter schools nationwide have results that are no different from the local public school options and over a third, 37 percent, deliver learning results that are significantly worse than their student would have realized had they remained in traditional public schools.

Schools and teachers



The challenge for teaching: schools and systems



The best school systems are those that have the best teachers. Countries and regions such as Finland, Singapore, South Korea, Ontario and others recruit teachers from the top echelon of graduates each year, they pay them well and they create and maintain a culture of inclusion and quality throughout teachers' careers that imbues the whole school system.

McKinsey 2008

The over-riding priority for reform?

What is the most important school-related factor in student learning? The answer is teachers

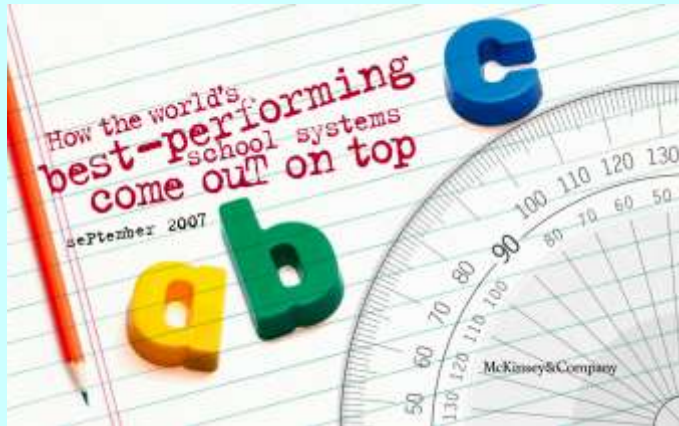
Bob Schwartz, 2010

The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers

Michael Barber, McKinseys, 2007

....these are different arguments

Shifting diagnoses....

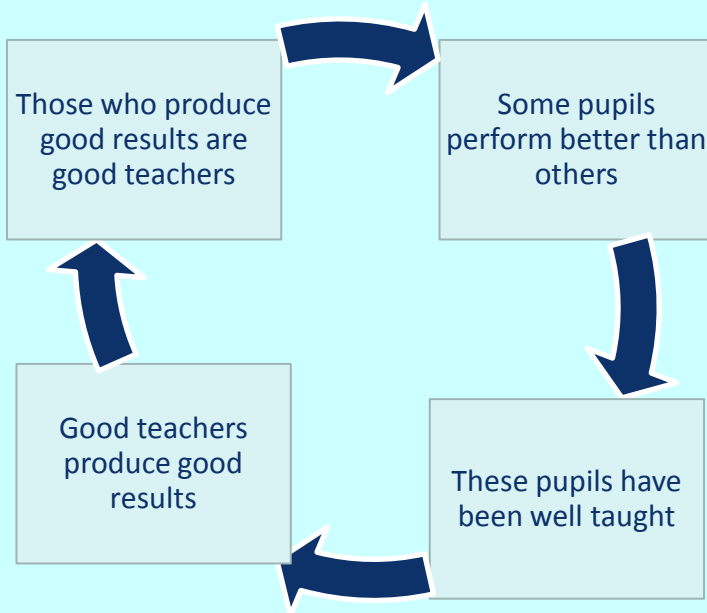


The quality of an education system
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Michael Barber, McKinseys, 2007

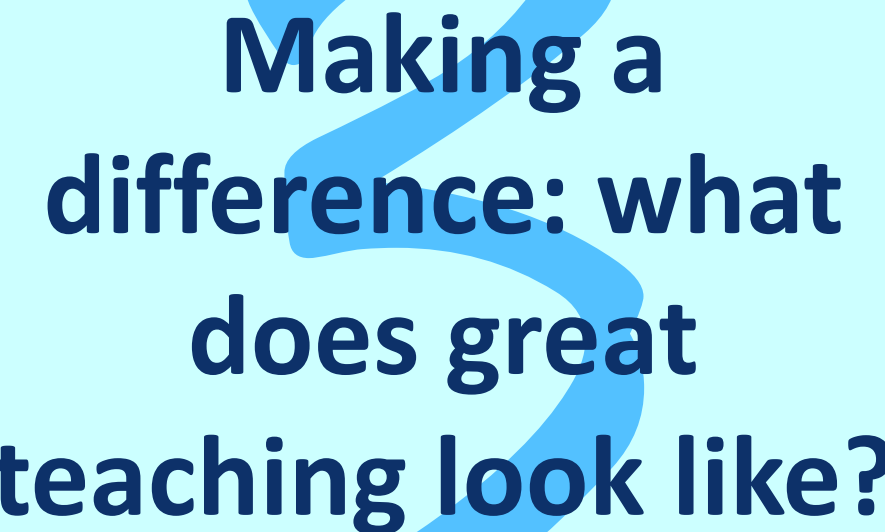
six interventions occur equally at every performance stage for all systems . . . Building the instructional skills of teachers and management skills of principals, assessing students, improving data systems, facilitating improvement through the introduction of policy documents and education laws, revising standards and curriculum, and ensuring an appropriate reward and remuneration structure for teachers and principals

The problem with the teacher quality argument



Teaching not teachers
matter

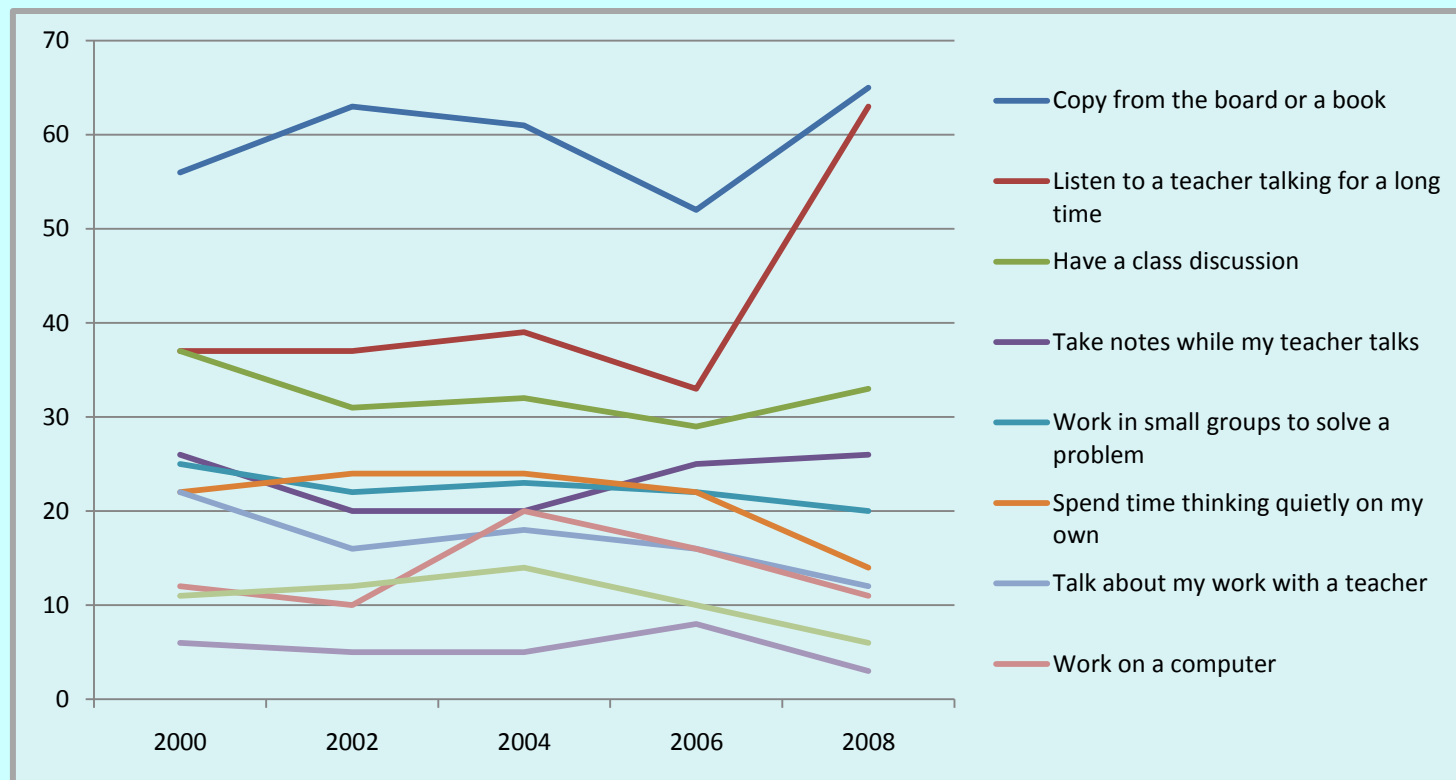
Differential effectiveness
with different groups?

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**Making a
difference: what
does great
teaching look like?**



Experiencing the classroom in the twenty-first century



Ideas about good practice change....



What is it that good teachers do?

Create high performance learning environments

(adapted from de Corte 2005 by Husbands 2011)

Learning focused

Engagement

Motivating

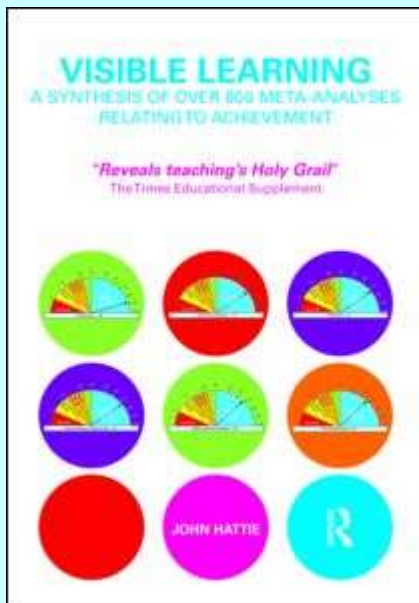
Structured

Co-operative

Problem-based

...and do this in culturally specific ways

What is it that good teachers do: visible learning?



Synthesis of 50,000 studies relating to influence on achievement

Examines effect size:

Less than 0 = reverse effects

0- 0.15 = developmental effects

0.15 – 0.40 = teacher effects

Greater than 0.40 = zone of desired effects

What is it that good teachers do: visible learning?

- Surface learning (e.g. rote remembering without understanding) could produce high effect sizes short term for low cognitive skills such as remembering. For example the use of mnemonics has an effect size of about 1.1 (There is more to learning than passing memory tests.)
- Most of the research was done in schools, though Hattie says effect sizes are remarkably stable and not much influenced by age
- Some high-effect strategies are ‘Russian Dolls’ with other strategies ‘inside’.

Rank these 12

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Summer schools2. Teaching study skills3. Questioning4. Homework5. Feedback6. Ability grouping | <ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Retention (holding back a year)8. Shifting schools9. Peer tutoring10. Advance organisers11. Team teaching12. Simulation and games |
|---|---|

The disasters

Retention (holding back a year)	-0.16
Shifting schools	-0.34

Not good enough

Summer schools	0.23
Team teaching	0.16
Ability grouping	-0.1

Average

Homework	0.30
Simulation and games	0.34
Advance organisers	0.37
Questioning	0.49

The winners

Teaching study skills	0.59
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Peer tutoring	0.55
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Effective feedback	0.72+
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What are the implications for improving teaching?

WHAT

HOW

Designing successful system change: what?

What learning feels like....

If I could learn to play the cello well, as I thought I could, I could show by my own example that we all have greater powers than we think; that whatever we want to learn or learn to do, we probably can learn; that our lives and our possibilities are not determined and fixed by what happened to us when we were little, or by what experts say we can or cannot do... there are still limits to what can be accomplished, they are farther away than we imagine

John Holt, Never Too late

What learning feels like....

I must have been – what – about nine years old and we were completing a mathematics problem. The teacher had told the class that it was a particularly difficult problem, and that we were not expected to complete it quickly. I did, and the teacher called me up to his desk. “Tell us how you did it”, and I suppose if I had been more thoughtful, or said what I said now, I would have said something like “I made an assumption about the nature of the problem and an estimate of the parameters and from that I made an approximation”, but in fact I said “I guessed”, and I was sent back, the class being told that I had not done it properly, and I decided that it was better, from then on, to keep very quiet. And I did.

Teacher, quoted by Beverley Labbett

What learning feels like....

It is teachers seeing learning through the eyes of students; and students seeing teaching as the key to their ongoing learning.

(Hattie)

What is it that good teachers do?

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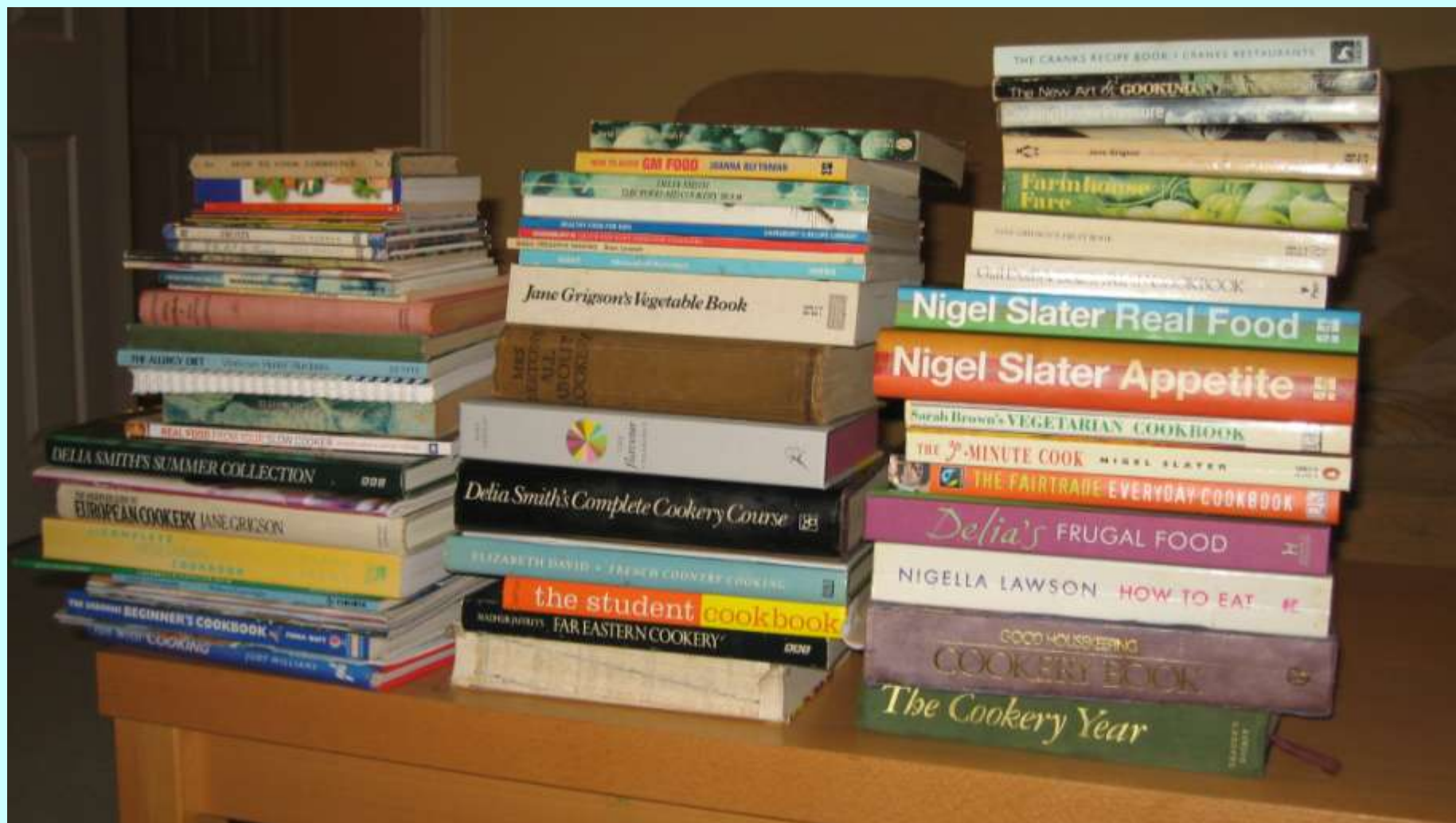
Problem-based

...and do this in culturally specific ways

Is your school a high performance learning environment? What could help make it one?

A large, light blue question mark graphic is positioned behind the main text, extending from the top of the slide down towards the bottom.

Designing successful change: how?



What shapes teaching repertoire

Hattie?

CPD?

Experience?

National regulation?

Dimensions of high performance workplaces?

High expectations of performance
which a clear understanding of
what excellence looks like

A culture of coaching, mentoring
and support throughout the
organisation

Strong links to the research base
using evidence, data and insight to
inform change

An inquiry orientation to explore
innovation and repertoire

The use of technologies as ambient
enablers of successful practices

Exceptionally strong links to
external partners

How do ideas about teaching move around your school and beyond?

By chance?

Through structures?

By design?

Through a planned
sequence?

Lessons from London Challenge

A programme of support to schools, normally provided by **schools** though with external pressure and support. School improvement partnership boards provided the external framework for schools causing concern, audited needs and brokered the resources necessary to meet them..

Impact stunning: between 2003 when and 2010 when the programme ended, secondary examination results in London improved at a faster rate and were finally higher than in the rest of England.

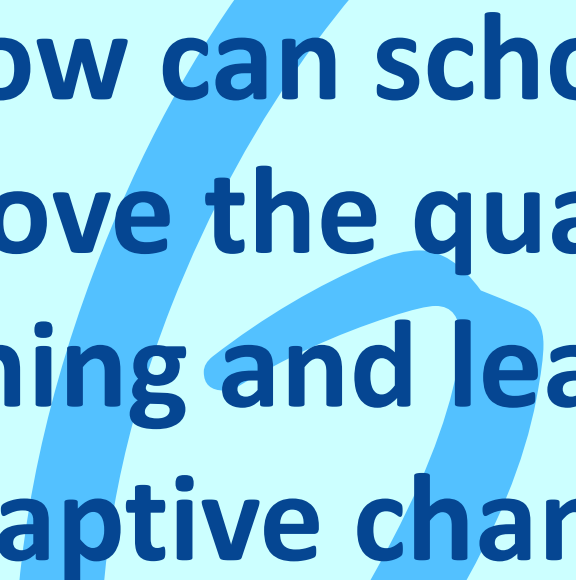
Improvement can be driven by schools themselves but only when externally supported and challenged

System improvement depends on a shared moral imperative that what matters for school leaders is not simply their own school but the needs of other schools

Imagine?

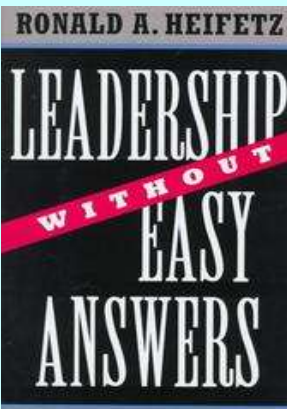
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How can schools improve the quality of teaching and learning: adaptive change?

Doing adaptive work



leaders are confronted with two types of problems: technical problems, which can be solved by expertise and good management, and "adaptive" problems, which require innovation and learning. Traditional management strategies are useful in dealing with technical problems, but in situations where beliefs and values come into play traditional solutions exacerbate the problem. By definition, adaptive challenges involve a disparity between values and circumstances. The task of the leader is to close the gap

Improving schooling....what sort of question?

Technical

Teachers should teach better
Bad teachers should be identified and removed
Teacher knowledge should be enhanced through better training
Recruit better teachers

Adaptive

The barriers to improvement involve values – the value of education, the value of different types of knowledge
There is disagreement about priorities
There is disagreement about the methods

How...

“Better is possible. It does not take genius. It takes diligence. It takes moral clarity. It takes ingenuity. And above all, it takes a willingness to try.”

Atul Gawande (2007) *Better: a surgeon's notes on performance*

Get on the balcony

A place from which to observe patterns in the wider environment as well as what is over the horizon (essential for the following principles)

Identify the adaptive challenge

A challenge for which there is no ready made technical answer
A challenge which requires that the gap between values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour be addressed

Create the holding environment

- May be a physical space in which adaptive work can be done
- The relationship or wider social space in which adaptive work can be accomplished

Cook the conflict

- Create the heat
- Sequence and pace the work
- Regulate distress

Maintain disciplined attention

- Work avoidance
- Use conflict passively
- Keep people focused

Give the work back

- Resume responsibility
- Use their knowledge
- Support their efforts

Protect the voices of leadership from below

- Ensuring everyone's voice is heard is essential for willingness to experiment and learn
- Leaders have to provide cover to staff who point to the internal contradictions of the organisation

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What does system improvement look like?

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