

Making Room for Impact by Arran Hamilton, John Hattie, Dylan Wiliam (2024)



Summary for Teachers by Helen Reynolds <https://itsalearningcurve.education/>

Content	Questions/Thoughts
Introduction: History: innovation usually = adding 'new' things. Better to replace (less effective with more evidenced), spend time/money more wisely (on things that do the same for less cost), re-engineer (streamline the overengineered), reduce/restrict (what you still have to do), remove (to get our lives back). Book = kit of tools, detailed + rigorous framework for all levels, summary for teachers.	• Work expands to fill the time available... in education fills more than even that time • Reduce/subtract/de-implement so you can create/add/implement
Part 1. The Big Picture: Chapter 1: Why We Need To De-Implement (D-I) (and Why It's Hard): Arguments: 1. Teacher workload/ Stress/Well-being: activities (teaching, prep, PD, admin, projects) fill official time + overtime (about 50ish hours per week, little data, varies a lot) 2. Inputs vs Outcomes: if inputs reduced (shared resources/more free time for reflection/formative assessment) + same outcome (learning/scores/grades) = good. Reason to D-I: wellbeing → better teacher, more money to invest wisely. Why it's HARD: We're (Probably) Cognitively Primed to Add: Seems hardwired, loss aversion bias (we fear loss more than like gain) No Such Thing As "Unlearning": Can't delete info from human brain ('forever phenomenon') D-I is Highly Context Specific: kind learning environment (LE) = what you learn can be transferred/used, wicked LE (like education) = what you learn is WRONG in a different LE. D-I Processes: No 'Oven-ready' Solutions/ Lots of Options (you have to work out what works for you)/Can Increase Workload In The Short Term (will be startup cost of time and effort)/D-I Can Happen 'Naturally' (things are removed at early stage of adoption of new initiative by necessity)/Work Expands to Fill The Time (beware of this when you D-I!) Chapter 2: Room for Impact: The Helicopter Overview: Research identifies 4 critical stages: Discover (get permission, identify what needs to change to be MORE effective (using research), work out why it's there)/Decide (Select high-level D-I strategy (DIS) to use, make action plan, make map + evaluation plan)/ De-Implement (execute plan + collect data)/Re-Decide: review data + decide next steps, step it up + expand. Things to consider: 1. DISs: Remove/Reduce/Re-Engineer/Replace (with something more effective) 2. It does not need to be linear: needs to be thought through/can be changed. Start as an individual/involve colleagues/expand. Many benefits to working in teams.	• Teacher workload is often cited as reason for leaving profession • Too many variables to make 'off the shelf' choice (at the moment) • More effective methods save time but take time to implement • We <i>have</i> to learn to let go/adapt • 'Nothing works everywhere, everything works somewhere'. Dylan Wiliam • Local attitudes may not help e.g. we've always done it this way • Resist the temptation to fill freed time • Need to identify reasons for what you already have (that has to go) • 'Replace' is hard because the new can get subsumed rather than eject the old • Power in collaborative inquiry, start small and grow. • Notice how change happens around you • D-I happens (sometimes) when new systems are introduced/
Part 2. Discover Stage: Chapter 3: Permit (1.1): We are social, have shame (fear of letting others down) vs guilt (fear of letting yourself down), need permission (from yourself or others) for D-I (all this can make it hard, but results are worth it). Chapter 4: Prospect (1.2): Collect data from possible D-I areas e.g. time/motion study (log what you do every hour for a week or longer). Use data/research to identify possible areas for D-I. Start with extensive list, make shortlist (be HONEST about what's compulsory), hone down. Use HEAT: Harm: will it negatively affect students/learning? Ease: how much work required? Acceptability: will it be ok with everyone? Time saved: how much time will I gain? Could score options for clarity. Balance with benefits – same time, better outcomes. Chapter 5: Postulate (1.3): Clearly identify the area you plan to D-I (DIA). Then identify: 1. reasons why the DIA happens/is sustained (e.g. habit/inertia, lack of thought), Chesterton's Fence (don't take it down till you know why it was put up) 2. possible barriers e.g. beliefs about own resources vs. purchased resources ignoring time it takes to create them = opportunity cost.	• Ok to give yourself permission for D-I → more effective strategies • Be aware of factors working against you • Make sure you're clear via data how you're spending your time • Be honest about what you HAVE to do, and what you CHOOSE to do • Use HEAT for more objective decisions • Could D-I one big thing/several small things – use data wisely • Be ready to challenge your beliefs based on <i>facts</i> • Consider your time as a cost

Part 3. Decide Stage: Chapter 6: Propose (2.1): Identify which 4R DISs will work best: Remove/ Reduce/ Re-engineer/Replace = room for more effective strategies. For each: weigh pros/cons, consider evidence for pros/cons, evaluate evidence (peer-reviewed/based on research), use a score card/try to be objective, remember the Fence. Chapter 7: Prepare (2.2): Make step-by-step plan including timings/resources. Stress test it to find pitfalls/issues (don't fall for 'it seemed like a good idea at the time') by doing: 1. a 'pre-mortem' to identify problems BEFORE doing it 2. a variant analysis to work out other possible options 3. a side-effects analysis to identify the potential impacts of the DIS (focus: what's better/worse?) 4R Issues: 1. Reduce: watch for creeping back (like cigarettes) 2. Re-engineer: watch it's not more work than Replacing/Reducing 3. Replace: hard as removing AND adding, easy to slip back. Keep focus on getting more/same for less. Chapter 8: Picture (2.3): Be clear about 1. what success looks like for a. students b. you. 2. how you will monitor it (i.e. know you are succeeding, questions you'll use) 3. what measurements indicate success (e.g hours gained/scores improved) 4. the targets for those measurements (numbers) 5. 'kill' parameters (what would make you stop immediately). Have a cycle: monitor (check you're doing it each week), evaluate (every 6 weeks look at numbers).	• Don't just work on inklings/hunches • Seek out research-based evidence – sometimes good to START HERE • Learn how to read research • Fishbone diagrams useful for evaluating • Remember 'No (battle) plan survives contact with the enemy', prep/iterate • 'Reduce' = LEAST recommended DIS. • 'Replace' second hardest due to creep back to old habits • Checking to see you are doing as you intended = MOST IMPORTANT • Being quantitative helps objectivity
Part 4. De-Implement Stage: Chapter 9: Proceed (3.1): Get stuck in, monitor and collect data! Easier to do the first, don't forget the second. This is where the magic happens, but changing habits is hard and takes time.	• Remember work now will pay off later • Beware of all the things that pull you back to old ways.
Part 5. Re-Decide Stage: Chapter 10: aPpraise (4.1): Look at your monitoring data – did you do what you said you'd do? Look at your evaluative data – did it produce the effects you wanted it to? Changes can be: small thing → small difference, small → big, big → big. Now decide what next: Continue/stop/iterate (add more small/small or small/big, or make small changes to existing DIS). Chapter 11: Propel (4.2): Things to remember: 1. Acknowledge your successes 2. Nothing lasts forever (you will need to sustain effort to prevent inevitable decay or creep due to time/money pressures). 3. Nothing is impossible (it's hard to do nothing – beware your time being filled back up!) 4. Culture (school culture may work against you/bring colleagues along/talk to people) 5. Yin and Yang (create/add/implement vs. reduce/subtract/de-implement) – need the latter first.	• Transparency around data will help, no point in rose-tinted glasses • Tweaking by shuttling between Proceed/aPpraise good • Don't miss out aPpraise step (even if it's going well!) • Notice your wins! • Share ideas with others to help school culture to adjust • Model your DIS for others • Resist the urge to add ad nauseum
Part 6: Finito: We are cognitively primed for addition, so you need to be on your guard. There's no package you can take of the shelf for D-I – use this book! Remember the possible benefits: 1. As an end in itself (your/your students well-being) 2. Positive organic washback (time to reflect, be a better teacher) 3. Explicitly reinvest your time/energy into highest impact activities... and know what they are! De-implement with rigor, sustaining focus on better or same (learning for students) for less (time/energy/money) for you.	• Not all the things we do in classrooms are equally effective • Spend less/no time on least effective activities, more on more effective • Read the research, know the difference!