

Toolkit Walkthrough

a practical guided-tour for new users

You can browse the Toolkit for Change Agents, like all websites, in many ways – for example, using the tabs at the top to see what may interest you.

Here we take you on a more focused search, inviting you to follow someone who faces a specific *challenge* to the progress of their work in improving mathematics education.

We take you through the beginnings of the exploration process step-by-step. S/he shares their thinking with you.

Next you may like to explore on of the *challenges* that you find in your own work; we hope you find some *strategies* and *tools* that will prove helpful.

Notation

In the 'walkthrough' below, **bold is used for the click-selections** made.

We suggest you follow these precisely, at least the first time.

Other Toolkit *labels* are shown in the text in italics.

Scenario

I am a math supervisor who is concerned that our state tests distort the teaching and learning in our classrooms. These tests, mostly multiple choice items, do not assess the students' mathematical reasoning – or only a small part of it – yet teachers naturally feel that they must have their students spend a lot of time practicing for the test.

I've heard of the *Toolkit for Change Agents*. I've got an hour or so. I'd like to see what it has to offer.

Walkthrough

I go to **www.Toolkitforchange.org** and there it is. I read the Welcome page and decide to plunge in.

I click on the **Challenges and barriers** tab at the top of the page.

I review the *Challenges and barriers* offered – many of them seem relevant to our system. I look particularly at those under *Tests and standards* – two seem directly to reflect my concern:

Our curriculum and tests are at odds

State/district tests are too narrow

I decide to explore the second one first. State tests are so important nowadays.

I click on **State/district tests are too narrow**. The *Summary* statement of the Challenge seems to fit my concern.

Looking at the blue list at the left, I decide to look at the **Strategies** offered. There are four, two obviously related. I decide to explore them in turn. *Work at policy level to broaden assessment* sounds a bit long-term and out of my hands. I'll start with:

Help teachers turn test prep into learning. This *Summary* certainly gives me something to think about – something that looks hopeful, but I'll surely need some help in

understanding and doing this. I'll *download the extended report* later, after I've seen what is offered.

Applicable tools in the 'blue menu' looks the most hopeful next step (This is a *Toolkit* after all!) There seem to be 4 on offer – two that support professional development, each with associated classroom materials. I'll explore these in turn, starting with that which looks to target my challenge most directly:

Helping Teachers Turn Test Prep Into Learning has a Summary that also links to the associated classroom tool *Turning test prep into learning* and a *Protocol* for the PD sessions. I'll **open a new browser window** for this so I can look at the two together.

In this window I **open the Toolkit again** and go straight to the **Tools** tab and find **Turning test prep into learning: classroom materials** in the *Classroom* section.

This all looks like substantial stuff. I'll browse down the blue menus at the left for each tool then, if it looks promising, look at the downloads for each tool.

Going back to the **window** for the PD tool *Helping Teachers Turn Test Prep Into Learning*, I successively and briefly look through

Purpose – that fits

Preparation and help – this will clearly be a challenge in itself, as good PD is

Benefits and adaptations – suggest that it will be worth the effort

Overcoming barriers to use – again

Costs – not a problem

Evaluative evidence – so this is new; am I prepared to help develop it?

Design and development – MARS have some good stuff; might be worthwhile

Other similar tools – here we are again

Complementary tools – that's the other pair from the *strategy's Applicable tools* page. I'll look at these later

Strategic applications – and there is the strategy again (it all links together)

I really want to see more detail on this stuff. I'll work through blue menu for the classroom tool **Turning test prep into learning: classroom materials** in the other window in the same way. The *Summary* looks interesting. The other pages are encouraging. Lets see the details. I'll click on the downloads and print them off so that I can look at them in detail before going further.

More details and sample materials gets me the pdf file of the classroom materials.

Back in the **window** for the PD tool *Helping Teachers Turn Test Prep Into Learning* again, there are **two downloads** here – oh but one is the classroom materials again (with a different file name). **Test Prep Leader Guide** is just what it says – the PD notes.

I need to print these out, read them and talk them through with a colleague or two. Enough for the moment. (There's clearly a lot here)

Oh. but I should go back to the **Strategies**, get **Help teachers turn test prep into learning again**, and print the *download More details*.

I'll come back for another session when I've absorbed all this.