

**Leading change at the middle:
Stories of higher education
middle leaders 'success'.**

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ABSTRACT

This project aimed to identify and explain the contextual factors associated with successful middle change leadership as a way of determining the value that such initiatives have to enable change to take place in a less confrontational and abstracted manner and whether such evidence could be leveraged to assist in improved and sustained success in similar settings. To achieve this the study explored the role of the educational middle manager as 'change leader' in successful organisational change and the role of the middle leaders relationships with their superiors, peers and subordinates. It has also examined the core capabilities and attributes of associated with creating an organisational climate conducive to successful change and those policies and practices employed to minimise the potential negative impact of change.

The research employed two qualitative techniques. The first was a Delphi-style panel of middle leaders to identify and rank the sets of 'attributes' they perceived to be most associated with 'successful' change leadership. The second employed a success case method of semi-structured interview to explore in depth the core capabilities employed by 'successful' middle leaders in organisational change.

The findings suggest inter-personal and intra-personal communications essential to leading and managing change which are seen as complementary change leadership activities. By developing strong operational and relational skills with particular focus on the ability to listen, observe, identify, and report; to form relationships and inspire trust; and to manifest a high degree of behavioural flexibility, middle leaders are better able to minimise the potential negative impact of change.

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I wish, first and foremost, to thank my research supervisor, Associate Professor Eileen Piggot-Irvine, without whom I would still be writing the literature review. Her insight and gentle persuasion helped me to shape and form the work into something that is both readable and, one hopes, informative. I value her experience and enthusiasm.

To the people who made time to participate in the focus group or interviews, I am grateful for your deep knowledge, generosity and honesty. I admire your personal stories and aspire to emulate your success in my own work.

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Iti noa ana, he pito mata

Me te mihi nui m ō ō manaakitanga

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

'There is nothing permanent except change' and 'nothing endures except change' are phrases attributed to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus (c.535 - 475 BC). In recent times these have become the prophetic catch cry for modern organisations and those who work in them. Organisations which are under tremendous pressure to pursue change in order to survive in an environment of increasing change and turbulence (Weber & Weber, 2001).

A RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

The history of educational reform and innovation is replete with good ideas or policies that fail to get implemented (French, 2001) or that are successful in one situation but not in another (Fullan, 2007). Much has been written about 'failed' change initiatives and 'failed' management approaches (Wallace, 2003), however little research focuses primarily on 'success' as a way of setting an agenda for future change (Brinkerhoff, 2003).

This study has collected data which explores the role of the educational middle manager as 'change leader' in successful organisational change and contextualised the role of the middle leader in organisational change by examining the relationships and dealings with their superiors, their peers and their subordinates. It has also examined the core capabilities and attributes of middle leaders in creating an organisational culture and climate conducive to successful organisational change and the policies and practices employed by them to minimise the potential negative impact of change.

As a middle manager in a large tertiary institution which has undergone substantial and ongoing organisational change in the past few years, I am interested in the role that the middle leader plays and the core job characteristics that may be important in creating an organisational culture and climate conducive to successful change. Specific issues of my interest revolve around how middle leaders in academic settings might make a significant

contribution to radical organisational change. Huy (2001) suggests that they achieve this by “being far better than most senior management at leveraging the informal networks” (p. 73), as well as staying attuned to employee’s moods and emotional needs whilst managing the tension between continuity and change. Successful middle leaders establish clear goals for the change effort including launching communication and training efforts, and promoting opportunities for employee participation (Caldwell, 2003).

To place the role of the middle leader in context, in regard to their role in organisational change, it is important to consider the relationships and dealings between the middle leader with their superiors, their peers and their subordinates. There is much agreement that middle managers need to be, synchronistically, masters and slaves and serve both the tops, middle and bottoms (Joseph & Winston, 2005). Middle leaders engaging in change are concerned with reconciling both top-level perspectives with lower level implementation issues. King, Fowler, and Zeithaml (2001) describe this as the middle manager acting as the “synapses within a firm’s brain” (p. 95). This understanding of the role has been widely expressed as the middle leader working with senior management to create a ‘sense of shared organisational identity’ in which the middle leader fosters the linkages that are required for intensive knowledge transfer (Kanter, 1982).

There is evidence from the literature that academic middle leaders see themselves as representing core academic values rather than representing core organisational values (Gleeson & Shain, 2003; Lapp & Carr, 2006; Mintzberg, 1975). Maintaining this identity is significant for academic middle managers (Briggs, 2004) and they see themselves as being at the forefront of change in key areas such as learning and teaching and in the advancement of core pedagogical and academic, as well as organisational, goals (Hancock & Hellawell, 2003). The academic middle leader possesses a stock of knowledge of a substantive area of expertise or knowledge (Hannay & Ross, 1999). This approach to the assimilation of expertise and management capability can be a powerful approach to management in professional organisations (Naylor, Gkolia & Brundrett, 2006), although this capability often seems to occur through

personal predisposition rather than through processes of management development (Grint, 2003). Therefore, given the middle leaders deep understandings of the networks within the professional organisation, and through the requirement on the role to act as colleague during times of trouble and as people who are seen to learn with their colleagues in times of change (Huy & Mintzberg, 2003), a core question is whether a developed middle leadership, framed in the context of evidence of 'success', would enable change to take place in a less confrontational and abstracted manner.

Setting

Traditional models of academic leadership are generally characterised by personal academic achievement; such as authorship of scholarly works, research publication, conference presentation, and responsibility for the academic development of others, such as research student supervision (Rowley, 1997). Notions of the university as a protected space for unhurried scholarly contemplation, with images of ivory towers where time moves at a leisurely pace have long since been rendered obsolete (Anderson, 2006). The global context of the late 1970s and 1980s saw intense downward pressure on all forms of expenditure, including higher education funding (Weber & Weber, 2001). In light of the severe cutbacks in the private sector and the new global economy (Dixon, Kouzmin & Korac-Kakabadse, 1998), expenditures and program performance in the public sector have been placed under increased scrutiny by the general public to ensure more effective utilisation of available funds (Appelbaum & Patton, 2002). As such, while private sector companies must satisfy stockholders, public sector organisations are held accountable to the general public. As a response to this altered economic environment and the shifts in broader political, social, and economic trends (Duncan, 1995), universities and polytechnics in New Zealand have experienced widespread, sustained, and transformative change over the last two decades (Curzon-Hobson, 2004; Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006). My own experience of organisational change has been located within my place of employment where substantial and sustained change at 'whole organisation' as well as 'departmental level' re-organisation has taken place, often simultaneously, over a number of years.

As higher educational institutions have changed management systems from collegial leadership to more management-like steering structures, middle leaders are required to handle both external and internal changes in their organisation's work processes, financial systems, networking, management and leadership, and complex goal structures (Rasmussen, 2002). Middle leaders, in such an environment, often find themselves isolated in the middle of the conflict between accountability and educational autonomy. This new managerialism, while clearly requiring greater central steering capacity to 'strengthen the institution at the top', does not always balance the need for a strengthened approach in the middle at the level of the operating units (departments and schools) comprising expanded discretion and more entrepreneurialism (Meyer, 2002). Middle leaders now must deal with issues of strategy, development, culture and personnel within a structural framework defined by top management and constrained by organisational change (Eisenbach, Watson & Rajnandini, 1999). It would seem that those carrying out roles 'in the middle' often find themselves subject to much more complex pressures and conflicts in this managerialist environment of higher education than the more traditional collegial middle management role (Simkins, 2005).

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The aim of this research project was to identify and explain the contextual factors of successful middle leadership change initiatives as a way of helping to determine the value that success focussed initiatives are capable of producing, and whether they could be leveraged to a wider constituency to assist in improved and sustained success in similar settings. Much has been written about 'failed' change initiatives and 'failed' management approaches, however little research focuses primarily on 'success' as a way of setting an agenda for future change.

This study actively engaged participants who had been identified as successful middle leaders of change to share meanings and discuss actions that they had employed and that enabled them to succeed when engaged in change action. This success focussed approach intentionally sought the very best that a

change action had produced, so that the resulting 'lived experiences' of the participants could be explored to provide a basis for an understanding of how these people think and act in the world (Danzig, 1997). They have constructed their personal accounts of practice based on reflection (Forster et al., 1999) and it is hoped that these personal accounts might lead to deeper understandings of how expertise is gained in the real world through linking the study of leadership to professional practice (Hancock & Hellawell, 2003). Reflecting on these personal accounts of practice, in turn, might lead to a greater understanding of professional motives and workplace practices (Hannabuss, 2000). In this study, I set out to explore the research issues in a 'real-life' context and in a New Zealand setting. The following objectives framed the context for this study:

- To describe and critique the role that higher education middle leaders play in leading successful organisational change;
- To examine a middle perspective of successful change leadership; and
- To explain the characteristics of successful change leadership.

Key research questions were associated with these objectives and were used throughout to guide the structure of the study and the reader through the review of the literature, and the reporting on the findings. These are:

- What are the core capabilities and attributes associated with successful change leadership?
- How do successful educational middle change leaders reconcile their position in the middle and their organisational relationships as a subordinate, an equal and as a superior?
- In what ways do educational middle leaders act as 'change leaders'?
- What practices do successful middle leaders employ to minimise the potential negative impact of change?

The study examined middle leadership 'success' in leading change as a way of providing a middle-up/beside/down perspective of success. It is hoped that these perspectives might then be used in the development of management training for future organisational change, particularly those aspects concerning communication and participation that are tailored to meet the unique needs of management and staff within specific organisational cultures and contexts and in particular, a New Zealand tertiary setting. The results might be used to design

actions that will enable middle leaders to succeed more often when engaged in change action.

OUTLINE OF THIS STUDY

Chapter one has presented the rationale for this study and outlined the aims, objectives and research questions which frame the shape of this thesis.

Chapter two presents a detailed summary of the relevant literature. It addresses three research themes which are drawn from the aims and objectives described above. These themes, when combined, make up the major focus of this work. Part one begins with an overview of leadership theory which charts the developing theoretical road towards a definition of the educational leader and manager. Part two examines the context of educational leadership and the organisational cultures of higher education, and part three discusses organisational change and contextualises the role of the middle educational leader in 'successful' change.

Chapter three provides a rationale and justification for choosing a qualitative methodology for data collection and analysis for this study. It describes the methodology and methods employed for the focus group and semi-structured interviews, including the success case method (SCM) that identified stories of 'success', and assisted in locating the participants for in depth study. Data management procedures and details the analytical procedures are also explained. The chapter concludes by identifying and addressing sampling challenges and ethical issues and discussing the possible limitations of the study.

Chapter four details the findings gathered from the focus group and seven semi-structured interviews, as described in the chapter three, and is divided into three parts that are linked to the key research questions as noted above. Part one presents the findings of the focus group inquiry into the attributes associated with successful change leadership. Part two describes the perspective of all the participants in the study (focus group and interview

participants) on being in the middle and a middle-up/beside/down perspective of educational middle leaders engaging in change. Part three documents the personal stories gained from the semi-structured interviews of the role that educational middle leaders play in successful organisational change.

Chapter five discusses the findings of chapter four using the key research questions to frame the shape of the discussion. The first part examines the findings of the focus group's selection of the core capabilities and attributes of middle leaders in creating an organisational culture and climate conducive to successful organisational change. The second part explores the perception of the focus group and semi-structured interview participants of role of the educational middle leader and their organisational relationships and dealings with their superiors, peers and subordinates. The third part considers the findings of the interviews as they relate to the role of the educational middle manager as 'change leader' in successful organisational change and contextualises the role of the middle leader in organisational change by examining the policies and practices that they employ to minimise the potential negative impact of change.

Chapter six concludes this study with a brief review of the project and the main research findings highlighted. Recommendations and suggestions for further inquiry are made.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE BACKGROUND

Good leaders make people feel that they're at the very heart of things, not at the periphery. Everyone feels that he or she makes a difference to the success of the organization. When that happens people feel centred and that gives their work meaning. (Warren Bennis)

OVERVIEW

When considering the literature review for this study I believe that the story needs to be told in a sequence that builds from the general, to the specific. This study seeks to examine successful middle leadership of organisational change in a higher education setting. Therefore this chapter will address three major literature themes which, when combined, make up the major focus of this work. Part one begins with an overview of leadership theory the developing theoretical road towards a definition of the educational leader and manager. Part two examines the context of educational leadership and the organisational cultures of higher education, and part three discusses organisational change and contextualises the role of the middle educational leader in 'successful' change.

LEADERSHIP

I begin with a conundrum presented by Senge (1999b), when trying to clearly define leadership, as he points out that in the business world today the word leader has become a synonym for the top manager (Chief Executive Officer, Chief Executive, President). He elaborates two problems with this view, firstly that it implies that those who are not in a top management position are not leaders (though they might aspire to 'become' leaders, they cannot 'get there' until they reach a senior management position of authority); and secondly that if leadership is simply a position in the hierarchy, then there is no real definition of leadership as "a person is either an executive or not" (p. 15). However Senge (1999b) does express a personal view of leadership which he suggests comes closer to most people's actual experience of leadership as being "the capacity

of a human community to shape its future”, and specifically “to sustain the significant processes of change required to do so” (p. 16).

The literature reveals that there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are those who have attempted to define the concept. Traditional leadership scholars developed theories that were concerned with the peripheries of leadership, such as traits, personality characteristics, and whether leaders are born or made (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006). Early work seemed to be more interested in the components of leadership and what leaders need to know to be influential rather than focussing on understanding the essential nature of what leadership is (Horner, 1997). To some, leadership implies taking the organisation, or some part of it, in a new direction (Goodstein & Burke, 1991), solving problems and being creative (Bennis & Thomas, 2002), and building organisational structures and improving quality (Yukl, 1999). To others leadership is seen as the ability to influence people toward the achievement of common goals (Owens, 1973), and the process whereby leaders and followers relate to one another to achieve a purpose (Lambert, 1995).

One must therefore use the various conceptions of leadership as a source of different perspectives on a complex, multifaceted phenomenon (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). It is not the intent, in this thesis, to provide an overview of the entire field of leadership, but rather to cover the essentials of the field as it relates to the topic of this study into successful middle leadership of change. Table 1 briefly describes the main theories of leadership which have evolved over time. For a more extensive review of the field of leadership in general the reader is referred to the works of Gill (2006), Northouse (1997) and Chemers (1997).

Table 1: An overview of leadership theories

Theory	Description
Great Man Theories	Were content theories, focusing on 'what' an effective leader is, rather than on 'how' to effectively lead (Northouse, 1997).
Trait Theories	Attempted to identify specific personal characteristics, which contribute to a person's ability to assume and function in positions of successful leadership. This early work identified traits such as drive, the desire to lead, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, intelligence, and job-relevant knowledge (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991).
Behavioural (style) theories	Examine leaders' patterns of activity, managerial roles, and categories of behaviour – that is, by considering what it is that leaders actually do (Gill, 2006). The most important contribution of behavioural theory is the development of a classification of leadership styles that provides a leader with an analytical tool with which to consciously build successful leadership (Owens, 1973).
Contingency (situational) theories	Emphasise the importance of situational factors, such as the nature of the task performed by a group or the nature of the external environment to understand effective leadership (Northouse, 1997). Leadership styles were either relationship or task oriented and that the right style needed to be matched with the right situation taking into consideration leader-member relations, task structure and position power (Fiedler, 1978).
Cognitive theories	Suggest leadership is a social attribution that permits people to make sense of an equivocal, fluid, and complex world and are closely related to symbolic approaches in that they emphasise leadership as arising from the social cognition of organisations and ask the question 'does leadership reside in the leader, or does leadership emanate from the social system in which leaders and followers interact?' (Lord & Emrich, 2000).
Cultural and symbolic theories	Examine the influence of leaders in maintaining or reinterpreting the system of shared beliefs and values that give meaning to organisational life (Bensimon, Neumann & Birnbaum, 1989). Cultural and symbolic views of leadership suggest that organisational participants come, over time through their interactions, to develop and to re-create shared meanings that influence their perceptions and their activities (Elkin & Inkson, 2000).

Servant leadership theories	Encourages collaboration, trust, foresight, listening, and the ethical use of power and empowerment (Russell, 2001). Servant leadership can also be seen as a form of cultural and moral leadership (Joseph & Winston, 2005) as servant leaders must first and foremost meet the needs of others as they value human equality and seek to enhance the personal development and professional contributions of all organisational members (Northouse, 1997).
Dispersed and participative theories	Suggest that the ideal leadership style is one that takes the input of others into account. These leaders encourage participation and contributions from group members and help group members feel more relevant and committed to the decision-making process. The key to this is a distinction between the notions of 'leader' and 'leadership'. The importance of social relations in the leadership contract, the need for a leader to be accepted by their followers and a realisation that no one individual is the ideal leader in all circumstances has given rise to approaches such as 'informal', 'emergent' or 'dispersed' leadership (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano & Dennison, 2003).

Management (and leadership) in the middle

During feudalism, middle managers were the king's comptrollers (appointed to examine and verify accounts) and protectors (Lapp & Carr, 2006). In terms of class structure, they fell into the workspace between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' but to survive, ultimately their loyalties needed to be with the 'haves' and at the expense of the 'have nots' (Kanter, 1979). The traditional view of the middle management job as simply listening to, understanding and interpreting the strategic plans of senior management and then seeing that these plans are communicated to, and implemented by, the rank and file, is becoming obsolescent if not obsolete (Hancock & Hellawell, 2003). For Carr and Hancock (2006), today's middle management resonates with Aristotle's notion of the 'intermediaries' between 'contraries' of master and slave, "the more one desires to be master, the more one desires not to be slave" (attributed to Aristotle, circa 344-322).

The main concerns of the middle manager are frequently the management of the tension between long-term and short-term organisational purposes, the linking of dispersed knowledge and best practices across the organisation, and the development of individuals in embedding the processes of change and renewal into the organisation (Kanter, 1979). Middle managers need to be, synchronistically, masters and slaves and serve both the tops and bottoms (Russell, 2001) while enacting the complex roles of 'living' as a subordinate, an equal and as a superior (Huy, 2001) and having the ability to shift quickly and frequently from one to another. King, Fowler, and Zeithaml (2001) describe this as the middle manager acting as the "synapses within a firm's brain" (p. 95) where the middle manager works with senior management to create a sense of shared organisational identity by fostering the linkages that are required for intensive knowledge transfer (Lok & Crawford, 1999).

A dysfunctional discourse

During the 1990s a discourse, which was middle management averse, began to develop. At one level the argument ran that just because they were committed to organisational values, middle managers were also likely to be conservative in organisational matters (Carroll & Lester, 2008). At a deeper level the potential for such matters as the prevention of ideas from lower levels being transmitted to the senior echelons of the organisation (Kanter, 1979), the possibility of senior management being 'protected' from bad news (Bartolomé & Laurent, 1986), and a low level of aspiration for the self and the organisation (Gleeson & Knights, 2008) had also been observed. Middle managers have also been presented as self-interested agents of control setting out to divisionalise their organisation by using their power to concentrate power in their own units (Mintzberg, 1975).

Clegg and McAuley (2005) provide a concise visual model (Figure 2.1) of the four dominant discourses in the development of the middle manager and the transition of the perception of middle management as it has swung almost full circle.

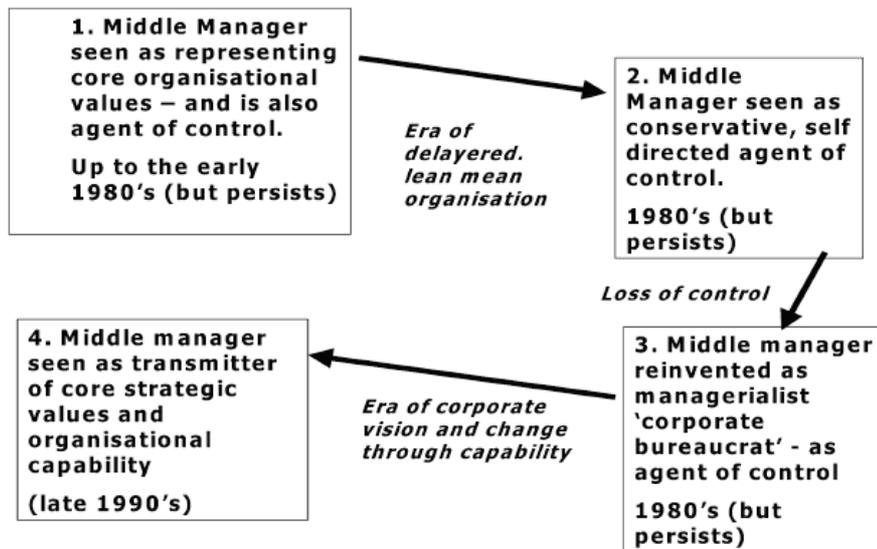


Figure 1: The four periods of management Source: Clegg & McAuley (2005).

The leadership / management discourse

While the terms ‘manager’ and ‘leader’ are often used interchangeably, many commentators suggest that they refer to different functions and have their own sets of characteristics (Kanter, 1989), while some go so far as to suggest that they are mutually exclusive and diametric opposites (Bennis, 1999). A manager is appointed by an organisation and is given formal authority to direct the activity of others in fulfilling organisation goals while a leader is appointed formally by an organisation or may emerge informally as ‘the people’s choice’ and is a person who influences others because they willingly do what he or she requests (Kotter, 1996). A leader can be a manager, but a manager is not necessarily a leader (Zaleznik, 2004). If a manager is able to influence people to achieve company goals, without using his or her formal authority to do so, then the manager is demonstrating leadership (Bennis & Nanus, 2005).

Gronn (2003a) points to the vast leadership ‘industry’ in which governments, corporations, academics, and school systems have a huge material vested interest, suggesting that the discourse of ‘leadership’ has become ubiquitous. He poses an interesting question: “what changes, if anything, when commentators begin to privilege words such as ‘leader’, ‘leading’ and ‘leadership’ as discursive modes of representing reality, instead of previously

favoured terminology such as ‘manager’ and ‘management’?” (p. 269). As a result of the contemporary mythology surrounding leadership a distinction has been made which “claims a great divide between management/managers and leadership/leaders – between bureaucrats and people of true grit capable of offering strong ideas and a sense of direction with which people choose to comply” (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003, p. 1436).

Other approaches depart from the above tradition by posing the relationship between management and leadership, not in terms of position, skills or tasks but as mindset, intentionality and context. Heifetz and Laurie (2001) draw a distinction between technical work (known problems that can be solved through known solutions) and adaptive work (unknown or uncertain problems that require a process to create new solutions). The first lies in the province of management and the second in that of leadership. While to a certain extent the context and nature of the ‘problem’ may determine whether an issue is technical and requires management, or is adaptive and requires leadership, it is the choices and capacity of organisational actors to hold uncertainty and foster learning that ultimately determines whether a management or leadership response is applied.

This work suggests that management and leadership need to be considered as distinctive strategies, mindsets and responses that organisational actors need to be prepared to exercise when any moment or interaction presents. While neither is an explicitly identity orientated approach to the management/leadership question, both move us nearer to seeing the relationship between management and leadership as a complex intersection of self, social and contextual constructions (Carroll & Lester, 2008). Despite their different functions and attributes, leadership and management are not antithetical, but complementary and both sets of skills are required with each set of qualities existing in a mutually reinforcing relation with the other (Ahn, Adamson & Dornbusch, 2004).

Leadership and the organisation

Rudman's (1999) description of organisations as entities which provide a framework for employment in collective work is interesting in that it is centred on the role that people play in the dynamic of the organisation. He locates leadership as participating, through management, in turning organisations into "live, operating, dynamic beings – in which people add their skills and knowledge" (p. 116). There is a growing recognition that organisations are increasing their reliance on harnessing employee skills and knowledge to achieve success (Schein, 1992) and that if this requires the nurturing and encouraging of employees to use their initiative then it also requires leadership which is aimed at helping develop employees and instil a sense of commitment and engagement (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1992).

Ogawa and Scribner (2002) link the conceptualisation of leadership to the conceptualisation of organisation by suggesting that a key element of organisations is social structure which manifests itself as the regularised patterns of action and interaction that shape the behaviours and relationships of organisational participants. Structure and leadership are related in three ways, the first being that structure can inhibit and even replace leadership because the organisations' members grow committed to existing patterns of action and interaction, which can have the effect of blunting efforts to change arrangements with which they have grown comfortable (Meek, 1988). Second, that organisational structures can effect leadership by determining the access to resources that leaders can ply to exert influence over others (Yukl, 1999). Third, that leadership is a form of social influence (Schein, 1992) that effects an organisation's structure and therefore constructs, changes, interpolates and uses structure, including formal (bureaucratic) elements and informal (cultural) elements (Owens, 2004). Organisations are therefore recognised as socially created systems that rely on interactions and communications that occur in response to peoples' individual and shared expectations (Gunter & Ribbins, 2002). In addition to the roles of leaders, the roles of followers are also highlighted as essential to organisational success with learning organisation

tenets suggesting that involvement of, and feedback from, followers within the organisation are critical for organisational success (Goleman, 2000).

Although different authors use a variety of terms in describing leadership throughout an organisation, most authors, and their corresponding theories, tend not to focus on the hierarchical leader in the organisation (Lok & Crawford, 1999), but rather describe it more in terms of relationships (Lewis, 1994).

THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Notions of the university as a protected space for unhurried scholarly contemplation with images of ivory towers where time moves at a leisurely pace have long since been rendered obsolete (Anderson, 2006). The global context of the late 1970s and 1980s saw intense downward pressure on higher education funding (Weber & Weber, 2001). New Zealand higher educational institutions (universities and polytechnics), as in other western democracies, have fared similarly (Rasmussen, 2002). In light of the severe cutbacks in the private sector and the new global economy, expenditure and program performance in higher education has been placed under increased scrutiny by the general public to ensure more effective utilisation of available funds (Appelbaum & Patton, 2002). As a response to this altered economic environment and the shifts in broader political, social, and economic trends, universities and polytechnics in New Zealand have experienced widespread, sustained, and transformative change over the last two decades (Curzon-Hobson, 2004).

The managerialist discourse

The rise of managerialism in educational systems has seen an increased emphasis on cost-effectiveness (Pratt & Poole, 1999). While traditionally many of the core functions of higher education have been considered to be in the control of the individual, with institutional governance characterised by collegiality (Jaeger & Pekruhl, 1998), recent evidence points to widespread systems restructuring through the adoption of new forms of governance and managerialism (Huy, 2001). Badley (1998) describes a managerial shift away

from the values of collegiality – “individual academic freedom, the privacy of the teaching/learning process, soft scholarship rather than hard research, institutional autonomy, and the (mainly) gentlemanly pursuit of college governance” towards those of a contrasting ideology featuring “greater efficiency and bureaucratic control” (p. 67).

Since the mid-1980s the public sector in New Zealand has undergone radical reform of its management and organisation (Duncan, 1995). The changes aimed to improve efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of all parts of the public sector, including the university and polytechnic sectors. During this same period, there was also a change in emphasis in accounting regulation: information for decision making declined in importance as the objective of reporting whilst information to demonstrate accountability increased in importance (Coy & Pratt, 1998). The new managerialism clearly requires greater central steering capacity, strengthening the institution at the top, however this must be balanced by expanded discretion and more entrepreneurialism at the level of the operating units: departments and schools (Meyer, 2002). This raises issues about the viability of traditional collegial higher education governance methods that have been the default method of administration in universities for centuries (Gunn, 1995).

Samier (2002) draws principally on Max Weber’s discussion of moral and ethical dilemmas of leadership when examining the normative implications of the shift to more managerial models of practice in educational organisations. She considers the conflict between accountability and educational autonomy as a version of Weber’s distinction between an ethic of responsibility and an ethic of commitment. Higher educational institutions experience political accountability, in that they are accountable for the best use of public funds, and they have market accountability, because they are answerable to their customers, partners and stakeholders. Higher educational institutions also have a professional accountability for maintaining the highest possible standards of teaching and learning, and they have a cultural accountability to foster new insights, knowledge and understanding. These last two factors may be

observed in the oppositional culture to managerialism – professionalism – which is based upon a “student-centred pedagogic culture” (Briggs, 2004, p. 587).

Professionalism

The small body of literature on the management of higher education was dominated in the late 1990s by a debate over the concepts of managerialism and professionalism (Briggs, 2004). Professionalism could be defined as the espousal of a set of values or codes, which are consciously ‘professed’ and are monitored through individual reflection and/or through organisational systems (Toma, Dubrow & Hartley, 2005b). In simple terms, the individual must be able to relate their role to certain commonly-held purposes and value-systems, to engage with those purposes and values, and be able to gauge whether they are acting professionally or not (Clark, 1991). A professional manager must know what the role entails, have the knowledge to enable it to be carried out, and earn respect from others through the way in which it is performed (Maister, 1997).

Staff in higher educational organisations have traditionally been given considerable autonomy as they have been viewed as professionals who can be relied on to deliver the performance needed because of their personal interest in and commitment to their subject (Jackson, 1999) and are recognised as being different from other employees in that they have their own form of authority, culture and ethical codes (Tierney, 1991). Brunetto and Farr-Wharton (2004) refer to the Anglo-American model when describing professionals as those who are eligible to belong to professional associations that “work with higher educational institutions and the government to control the number of employees gaining the skills and accreditation into the profession” (p. 586). McKenna and Maister (2002) suggest that as a result of this, professional employees place more importance on their professional authority than formal hierarchical authority, hence, professional employees may be able to reject/ignore new policies (perhaps relating to the implementation of managerialism) supported by hierarchical authority when the policies challenge traditional long-held professional values, beliefs and practices.

However, there is evidence that the impact of managerialism in the late 1980s and 1990s has somewhat curtailed the autonomy of professional employees by employing managerial strategies such as converting professionals into managers – thereby placing the responsibility for management tasks firmly in their domain (Briggs, 2004). In turn, middle and senior professionals are now expected to use their professional status to ensure that junior professionals embrace the required organisational changes necessary for professional managers to achieve managerialist efficiency indicators (Meyer, 2002).

Educational leadership and management

Researchers in educational management and leadership have borrowed liberally from scholars who became identified with theories of scientific management, human relations, transformational leadership, and organisational learning during the 20th century (Heck & Hallinger, 2005) and the educational management literature may be considered to be a rather specialised subset of the ‘mainline’ management literature that contains the bulk of new leadership studies (Pounder, 2001). Some have gone so far as to declare that educational leadership is a unique form of organisational leadership which is not found in commercial organisations (Bensimon, Neumann & Birnbaum, 1991).

According to Ogawa and Bossert (1995), educational leadership has been recognised as an activity that can ‘bubble up’ in various places within institutions and no longer is only focused on formal leadership roles. Discussions of leadership throughout the organisation (Meek, 1988), team leadership (Kogler-Hill, 1997), servant leadership (Joseph & Winston, 2005), dispersed leadership (Bolden et al., 2003), and the role of cultural and moral leadership (Greenfield, 2004), have replaced the traditional discussions of the ‘great man’ or ‘hero’ leader (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006), as noted in the discussion in the first part of this Chapter. In addition to these traits a subset of ‘behavioural principles’ have been described as being influential in the development of education leadership theory which include – Traditional/autocratic; Behavioural/transactional; Contingency/situational; Instruction leadership/communities of leaders/constructivist leading (Walker & Lambert, 1995). These principles represent a progression of thinking about

leadership for education, from its roots in non-educational settings to those from which it has derived its theories – sociology and psychology as well as business and industry (Bush, 2002). Also borrowing from general leadership theory, a range of attributes or ‘dimensions’ have been developed for educational leaders which are based around function/structure, political/role, human/the individual, and culture (Gunter & Ribbins, 2002; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Cheng (2002) adds educational as a further dimension stating that:

Educational leadership provides direction and expert advice on developments of learning, teaching and curriculum, emphasises relevance to education in management, diagnoses educational problems and encourages professional development and teaching improvement. (p. 56)

This is supported by Weber (1987) when he describes educational leaders as professionals who use both research and practical innovations, whilst co-operating with other professionals – teachers and staff – to further student learning. It is this relationship between education leadership and teaching and learning that forms a unique framework in which leadership must function for education (Hodgkinson, 1991). In addition to being diligent and mindful sense-makers, educational leaders must also be persistent in the development of adaptive confidence in themselves and other members of the professional learning community: and ever moving individual efficacy towards collective efficacy (Walker, 2006).

New conceptions of educational leadership look at leadership as a process in which leaders are not seen as individuals in charge of followers, but more as members of a community of practice (Horner, 1997). Multidimensional leadership is likely to be the result of a team effort (Walker, 1994) or of participation at differing levels, rather than the capacity of a single individual. Similarly, leadership has been conceptualised as a web in which there is structure but also an ever-evolving shape (Clegg & McAuley, 2005). The leader at the centre of the web works on building consensus and valuing the parts of the web building on relationships (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006). Fullen (2000b) looks to the future and contends that educational leaders will have to become agents of cultural change, persons attuned to the big picture, and sophisticated

conceptual thinkers. For him there are five essential components that characterise leaders in a knowledge society: moral purpose; an understanding of the change process; the ability to improve relationships; knowledge creation and sharing; and coherence making.

Dispersed and participative leadership

These theories fit well within the frame of educational management and leadership as they suggest that the ideal leadership style is one which takes the input of others into account. Leaders encourage participation and contributions from group members and help group members to feel more relevant and committed to the decision-making process. The key to this is a distinction between the notions of 'leader' and 'leadership'. The importance of social relations in the leadership contract, the need for a leader to be accepted by their followers and a realisation that no one individual is the ideal leader in all circumstances has given rise to leadership approaches such as 'informal', 'emergent' or 'dispersed' (Bolden et al., 2003). Heifetz (2001) suggested that these approaches dissociate leadership from formal organisational power roles by distinguishing between the exercise of 'leadership' and the exercise of 'authority'. If leadership is regarded as a process of sense-making and direction-giving within a group and the leader is identified on the basis of his/her relationship with others who are behaving as followers, then it is possible to conceive of the leader as emergent rather than predefined. Their role can therefore only be understood through examining the relationships within the group, rather than by focussing on his/her personal characteristics or traits (Gronn, 2000). Kogler-Hill (1997) describes a more holistic, or participative, style of team leadership where teamwork is based on the development of the strengths and the allowable weaknesses of all of the various players. She suggests that this permits, problem solving, decision-making and innovation to flourish with heightened teamwork and work performance.

Leadership in higher education

The majority of discussion around educational leadership is confined to the leadership of schools in the compulsory rather than the tertiary sector. While there are many parallels, and while it may be possible to translate between the

sectors, there are significant differences in organisational structures and cultures which may effect the focus of leadership. As this study is specifically focussing on the tertiary sector, it is therefore important to examine the unique nature of leadership in higher education

Educational leadership in higher education has been described as taking effective action to shape the character and direction of a higher educational institution by engaging in shared governance, abiding by administrative norms, and communicating effectively with constituents (Fullan, 2000a). Other definitions describe multidimensional and multilayered dimensions, where leadership is shaped by a wide range of structural and cultural factors (Bennett, 2003), each of which set educational leadership apart as a unique form of organisational leadership, which is not found in commercial organisations (Bensimon et al., 1991).

From a post-modern perspective, leadership in higher education is a collective activity among organisational members, a social relationship that focuses on the quality of leading (Rost & Barker, 2000). There are differing perspectives of leadership, each dependent on the position within the organisation from which leadership is viewed. From an institutional perspective, leadership puts the institution rather than individual programmatic interests first, and when viewed from the professional perspective, leaders give attention to academic activities such as teaching, scholarship and service (Bensimon et al., 1991).

Higher education organisations have been described as collegial institutions in which consensus is critical to organisational decision-making and success (Brundrett, 1998). Members interact as equals, with a minimum of status difference, thereby allowing for a greater collective voice and involvement where power tends to be informal, utilising networks of influence (Hellawell & Hancock, 2003). This creates a unique condition for the educational leader to negotiate within an interdependent system that is loosely coupled and which contains multiple power and authority structures where strict lines of decision-making are uncommon (Weick, 1991). This widely held understanding of the unique characteristics of educational organisations has led some commentators

to question what (if anything) actually holds an educational organisation together (Duryea, 1991) and yet others to suggested that higher education is simply organised anarchy (Birnbaum, 2000).

The organisational culture of higher education

It is widely recognised that organisational culture has a significant effect on organisational performance (Lewis, 1994) yet there is no consensus of opinion on what culture is. This is a problem that often occurs when a term is borrowed from another discipline, as 'culture' has been from anthropology. Some authors see culture as intangible shared meanings and basic assumptions (Meek, 1988). Others see it in tangible forms (Lok & Crawford, 1999), and still others as a mixture of observable forms and non-observable meanings and assumptions (Schein, 1992). Studies have defined organisational culture as a world view, a frame of reference, or a set of assumptions about what sorts of things make up the world, how they act, how they hang together, and how they may be known (Meek, 1988). The culture is a symbolic resource which is enacted by organisational members as a reality that defines what to do and what not to do (Harrison, 1972). Simsek and Louis (1994) propose that this world view is composed of three interrelated components:

- (1) A way of looking at the world which creates an image of the subject matter about the world's phenomena and constructs a system of beliefs;
- (2) A way of doing things that provides the methods and instruments needed to apply fundamental beliefs to internal and external realities; and
- (3) An interaction among human agents to support both the belief system and the normative behaviour, including social networks that support the adoption and practice of a particular paradigm. (p. 673)

One widely agreed definition of organisational culture, and the one that is used for the purposes of this study, is that it is the feelings, beliefs, values and basic assumptions held by members of an organisation, either collectively or individually, as they relate to work activities (Gunn, 1995; Lewis, 1994; Owens, 2004; Stevenson, 2001).

Higher education cultures have been characterised in terms of both faculty professional values (collegium) and administrative values (bureaucratic); a

clashing of different value sets (political); and ambiguity and unclear structures (anarchical) existing (Tierney, 1991). They have also been noted for the complex and contrasting beliefs system that guide and shape their culture and structures (Clark, 1991). Some values and beliefs tend to be shared across institutions, such as the importance of research, integrity in research, freedom to teach what is considered appropriate, the significance of shared governance and academic freedom, the belief in access to higher education, the value in specialisation, and undoubtedly many more distinctive values that are unique to each specific organisational identity (Toma, Dubrow & Hartley, 2005a).

One unique characteristic of higher educational organisations is that the two main employment groups tend to have differing values systems (Dill, 1991). Administrative power is based on hierarchy and values bureaucratic norms and structure, power and influence, rationality, and control and coordination of activities (Etzioni, 1991). In contrast, professional authority is based on knowledge and the values system emphasises collegiality, dialogue, shared power, autonomy, and peer review (Whetten & Cameron, 1991). Faculty can also have divided loyalty between disciplinary societies, professional fields, and other external groups in which they participate (Toma et al., 2005a). An obvious, but often overlooked, feature is that employee turnover is minimal, as faculty tend to stay in their job for their entire careers because of the tenure system. There are few other organisations with this type of employee stability. In addition, even part-time faculty and contract faculty, noted as a rising percentage in some institutional structures, also tend to stay at institutions for a long period of time (Clark, 1991).

Higher education organisations rely on referent and expert power rather than coercive, reward, or legitimate power. Referent power results from the willingness to be influenced by another because of one's identification with them, while expert power is reflected when one allows oneself to be influenced because the other person apparently has some special knowledge (Bennett, 2003). Faculty are more likely to be influenced by referent power through members of their community whom they trust, colleagues who share values with them, or appeals to principles such as ethics, rather than salary increases or

administrative sanctions (Harvey, Novicevic, Zikic & Ready, 2007). Likewise, autonomous faculty are unlikely to be influenced by other means of administrative influence and power, such as control or strategy where power is partially masked or secret, because in a collegial setting, it is socially unacceptable to exert power (Sinclair, 2007). This is a unique organisational condition which sets the organisational culture of educational institutions apart (Owens, 2004).

Cultural leadership

Cultural leadership approaches have their foundations in the fields of sociology and politics rather than the traditional management literature and draw on concepts such as organisational culture and climate to highlight the contextual nature of leadership. They embody a more collective concept, and argue for a move away from the analysis and development of individual leader qualities toward an identification of what constitutes an effective (or more appropriate) leadership process within an organisation (Bennis, 1999; Day, 2000; Senge, 1999a; Yukl, Gordon & Taber, 2002).

Cultural leadership has been variously defined as being a culturally dependant variable that frames the leader's role in the culture in which the leader and the organisation exists (Barth, 2007a). Sergiovanni (2001) describes the organisational culture context of educational organisations as "loosely connected, messy, and generally non-linear" and as "organised anarchies" (p. 40). Dimmock and Walker (2002) point to the importance of the 'constructed reality' of the culture of an educational setting as being the 'meaning' behind the organisation. This therefore should become a primary consideration for leaders to identify, build and maintain as an organisational constructed reality from which they can create meaning for their leadership and therefore contribute to the enhancement of the organisation (Walker & Lambert, 1995). Educational leaders need to know 'how' and understand 'what' the organisational culture is and use their ability to modify that culture to meet the needs of the organisation as it progresses (Barth, 2007a).

A further development of cultural leadership is the concept of it being a form of moral leadership (Codd, 1989). Sergiovanni (1992) takes a cultural approach when suggesting a replacement of the traditional hierarchical structure, which entails removing leaders and followers to a place of equal status away from the apex and reserving that place for ideas, values, and commitments. Educational leadership is described by its nature and focus, as a moral activity as it is the relationships among people that are at the very centre of the work for administrators, teachers and students alike (Starratt, 1996). Greenfield (2004) describes the attributes of moral leadership as “critical, transformative, visionary, educative, empowering, liberating, personally ethical, organisationally ethical, and responsible” (p. 180).

Organisational culture has a significant effect on organisational performance (Lewis, 1994) and can be described as the sense of being, the feelings, beliefs, values and basic assumptions held by members of the organisation, either collectively or individually, as they relate to work activities (Schein, 1992). Organisational culture can also be seen as the way that language is used, in the way that power is distributed and decisions are made, and particularly in the symbols, stories, myths, and legends that infuse specific organisations with meaning (Deal & Peterson, 2007). Rossow & Warner (2000) define the effect of this organisational culture on leaders as “a culturally dependant variable that frames the leader’s role in the culture in which the leader and the organisation exists” (p. 11).

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

The term organisational change, covers a wide range of interventions, from low level iterative changes through to fundamental reorientation in the ways that organisations operate (Osterman, 2000). Often known by its pseudonym ‘restructuring’, organisational change is being undertaken in an increasing number of education systems throughout the world (Allix & Gronn, 2005). Organisational change was once regarded as something of an aberration, a departure from the more usual static position of the organisation. However, change is now regarded as a natural response to environmental and internal

conditions (Fullan, 2007). Change is also consistent within open systems in which learning occurs and where learning relates to change by seeking equilibrium or adaptation resulting from experience (Collins, 1996). The work of Mintzberg (1997) and Senge (1992) reflect the need for organisations to adopt forms which permit continuing adjustment and learning to take place. For these reasons it appears that a normal part of organisational life includes the capacity to change as reflecting the need to embrace flexibility in less certain environments (Nelson, 2003).

Organisations are defined by their paradigms, that is, the prevalent view of reality shared by members of the organisation. Structure, strategy, culture, leadership and individual role accomplishments are defined by this prevailing world view and therefore radical change may be construed as a discontinuous shift in this socially constructed reality (Simsek & Louis, 1994). These turbulent environments of uncertainty, tension and conflict created by organisational change can generate problems, dilemmas and challenges for those involved (Hyland, Sloan & Barnett, 1998). Leaders find themselves at the centre of complex sets of relationships between participants of change with divergent as well as convergent interests in environments of uncertainty, tension and conflict (Hancock & Hellawell, 2003). Schein (1992) cautions that change should not be imposed on people as they need to be involved in “diagnosing what is going on, figuring out what to do, and actually doing it themselves” (p. 392). By this it is assumed that organisations are communities of people with differences of opinion and values, and conflicts of priorities and goals (Harrison, 1972), unless the organisational culture imbues them with a strong sense of mission, coherent purpose, objective and cooperative norms (Lok & Crawford, 1999).

Sullivan (2004) invokes concepts of evolutionary theory and chaos theory when he imagines what occurs during certain phases of change. He describes organisations as “highly complex networks comprising of many individuals, each with their own intelligence, each effecting particular stimuli and responses within the network, which ultimately effect the direction of evolution of the entire organisation” (p. 53). Organisational systems of this complexity are non-linear and unpredictable and the structures and processes that govern behaviour are

founded on successful adaptations to past events as they are imbedded into the fabric of its existence and influence its current state of evolutionary development (Collins, 1996). This complex organisational system is like a living learning organisation where the memory of every individual member has given rise to an emergent consciousness that biases certain directions of change (Roth & Senge, 1996).

Carr (2000) promotes the use of critical theory as a means to understanding where organisational change is possible through an approach that offers guides to human action which are “emancipatory, enlightened, multidimensional”, and which avoid the reduction of knowledge to “linear, quantitative-empirical perspectives” (p. 216). He suggests that a critically aware leader recognises the tensions and strains that arise from the contradictions, oppositions and negations that occur as part of change and which involve the interplay between the people and the organisational structure. Codd (1989) adds that critical theory is also reflective in that it can open the doors to new possibilities by exploring unexamined assumptions and compare them with the resonance of lived experience.

The educational middle leader of change

The academic as educational middle leader may be seen as analogous to the concept of the master craftsman (Jaeger & Pekruhl, 1998). They operate in environments in which teamwork is valued, as ‘motivator, moderator, or coach’ (Clegg & McAuley, 2005). There has been widespread growth throughout higher education of an academic middle management cadre, and a morphing of what were administrators, techno-structure experts and professionals into managers (Jaeger & Pekruhl, 1998). This approach to the assimilation of expertise and management capability can be a powerful approach to management in professional organisations (Huy, 2001), although the capability often seems to occur through personal predisposition rather than through processes of management development (Dimmock, 1999). Professional and managerial work, while having certain common elements, do call for different sets of skills which forces one to question to what extent are the managers within the new managerial regimes prepared for their roles of managers?

(Gunn, 1995). Within education the development of the self-managing educational institution has led managers to rush to training courses on strategic and human resource management in order to ensure survival in the new educational marketplace. The business culture has come to education with a vengeance and entrepreneurial processes are being promoted as the solution to managing open-ended change (Gunter, 1995).

Educational middle leaders see themselves as representing core academic values rather than representing core organisational values (French, 2001). They see themselves as being at the forefront of change in key areas such as teaching and learning and in the advancement of core pedagogical and academic, as well as organisational goals (Gunter, 1995). Maintaining this identity enables organisational change to take place in a less confrontational and abstracted manner through the middle leaders deep understandings of the networks within the professional organisation, through the requirement on the role to act as colleague during times of trouble and as people who are seen to learn with their colleagues in times of change (Huy, 2001). In this way the educational middle leader can be seen as representing forms of collegiality rather than those of managerialist control (Wallace, 2003).

Underpinning this discourse is the middle leaders concern with the management of the tension between long-term and short-term organisational purposes, the linking of dispersed knowledge and best practices across the organisation, as well as the development of individuals in embedding processes of change and renewal into the organisation (Clegg & McAuley, 2005). To deal with this situation the middle leader must be good at creating feasible alternative options, and good at helping people reason through the options, gently bringing to their attention considerations they may not have taken into account (McKenna & Maister, 2002). Educational middle leaders should therefore be regarded as a strategic assets through recognition of their link with organisational core capability and competitive advantage (Hannay & Ross, 1999) as well as their crucial role in developing and maintaining the firm's core competencies (Kanter, 1982). Sayles (1993) explains this in terms of managerial intervention often being needed where "middle leaders become the

players who must ‘massage’ the parts and continuously ‘rejiggle’ and reconfigure the interfaces to resolve the contradictions and inconsistencies that exist in a large system” (p. 9). In his opinion without their initiatives the real work of the organisation will never be performed effectively.

For organisational transformation to be achieved and for the organisation to survive and eventually prosper from the change, certain fundamentals need to be retained. Goodstein and Burke (1991) suggest that for people to be able to deal with enormous and complex change (seeming chaos) they need to have something to hold on to that is stable. Change is a cognitive activity in the sense that it places an emphasis on how organisational actors – whether leaders or followers – anticipate, make sense of and react to change (Lord & Emrich, 2000).

In the post-industrial era change is girded by values such as:

Collaboration, common good, global concern, diversity and pluralism in structures and participation, client orientation, civic virtues, freedom of expression in all organisations, critical dialogue, qualitative language and methodologies, substantive justice, and consensus-oriented policy-making processes. (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006, p. 7)

Walker (2006) suggests that educational leaders need to be constantly and coherently thinking about the future, the ends, the greater good, the best interests, and larger purposes of each activity taking place in the learning community. This can be achieved by educational organisations creating rather than simply responding to the environment. Therefore what they offer to current and potential customers must not be about meeting customer needs but about shaping them (Fullan, 2007). According to Gunter (1995), educational leaders must be interventionist within the environment by seeing how small changes can have a considerable impact over time as “creative strategies emerge from instability in a seemingly unintended, uncoordinated manner” (p. 15).

However as educational organisations adapt management systems from collegial leadership to more management-like steering structures, middle leaders have been required to handle both external and internal changes in their organisation’s work processes, financial systems, networking, management and leadership, and complex goal structures (Eisenbach et al.,

1999). Therefore they must be able to handle issues of strategy, development, culture and personnel within a structural framework defined by top management and constrained by organisational change (Hancock & Hellowell, 2003) and often without all of the facts from above. French (2001) indicates that the notion of 'negative capability' may provide guidance here as it encompasses the capacity to live with and to tolerate ambiguity and paradox – to remain content with half knowledge. He suggests that a leader needs to find how to engage in a non-defensive way with change, resisting the impulse merely to react to the pressures inherent in risk-taking, while embracing “the capacity to integrate emotional and mental states rather than dissociating oneself from aspects of emotional experience or attempting to cut oneself off from such experience altogether” (p. 482).

The educational middle leader possession of a stock of knowledge of a substantive area of expertise or knowledge (Gleeson & Knights, 2008) can be a powerful approach to change management in professional organisations (Clegg & McAuley, 2005). Because they are in the middle of it all, they have a unique up, sideways and down perspective of the needs and process of successful organisational change (Kanter, 1982). Therefore, given these factors and the requirement on the role to act as colleague during times of trouble and as people who are seen to learn with their colleagues in times of change (Huy, 2001), there is general agreement that educational middle management is more than capable of enabling change to take place in a less confrontational and abstracted manner (Grint, 2003; Ramsden, 1998).

Successful methods for change

The idea of 'successful' leadership is both a highly contextualised and relational construct and needs to be examined with reference to the multiple perspectives of leadership and organisational change contexts. The literature consistently acknowledges the important role of the follower/employee role in organisational change action as well as the relationships, values, moral purpose and social cultural aspects of organisations and the effects that change can have on them. Therefore the analysis of models of 'people-centred' change leadership (Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001) which are achievement oriented and involve the

management of tensions and dilemmas in the tasks and processes associated with the change action may provide a basis on which to examine 'success'.

The history of educational reform and innovation is replete with good ideas or policies that fail to get implemented (Hancock & Hellowell, 2003) or that were successful in one situation but not in another (Fullan, Cuttress & Kilcher, 2005). Much has been written about 'failed' change initiatives and 'failed' management approaches (Barth, 2007b; Huy, 2001; Kanter, 1979; Maurer, 2003; Zaleznik, 1990), however little research focuses primarily on 'success' as a way of setting an agenda for future change (Brinkerhoff, 2005). As is apparent when seeking definitions of leadership, there are also an ever-changing series of recommendations to leaders and managers on how best to implement successful change. Broadly these can be characterised as ranging from 'unilateral' to 'shared' methods.

Unilateral methods are prescriptive, control and authority based techniques, which modify objective or formal aspects of the workplace (Waldersee & Griffiths, 2004). They tend to be top down, procedural, focused on resource allocation and follow formal authority lines, however because objective and formal aspects of the organisation can be modified using these methods, the prior support of the workforce is not necessary. It is believed that social, relationship, attitude and behavioural changes will be pulled along, over time, by the irreversible structural-technical changes (Hallinger, 2003) and unilaterally changing the workplace, attitudes and behaviour will adjust accordingly (Beer, Eisenstat & Spector, 1990).

In contrast, shared methods are participative, consultative techniques that directly target the values, attitudes and skills of organisational members (Senge, 2008). These methods typically include participation and teams to build employee support and ownership for the change which ultimately translates into a commitment and motivation to make the change work (Waldersee & Eagleson, 2002). Herrin (2005) offers that it has long been considered simplistic to attempt unilateral change without considering support of employees first.

Duck (1993) describes the intensely personal nature of organisational change in terms that change requires each individual to think, feel, or do something different. If organisations want their workers to contribute with their heads and hearts then they have to accept that emotions form part of a new leadership style, which admits that change is therefore fundamentally about feelings (Bartkus, 1997). Old leadership paradigms suggested that at work people were only permitted to feel emotions that were easily controllable, emotions that could be categorised as 'positive' (Gill, 2006). However, new leadership paradigms contend that managing people is about managing feelings and the issue is not whether or not people have 'negative' emotions; it is how they deal with them (Dulewicz, Young & Dulewicz, 2005). The most successful change programs connect with their people most directly through values (Fullan, 2000), which ultimately are about beliefs and feelings.

Change models

Process-oriented change models, addressed changing organisations' cultural and human systems, and used techniques grounded in theories from the behavioural sciences (Siegal et al., 1996). They have distinct differences from the strategic planning models that are frequently the primary focus of many organisations' change efforts, and which tended to focus on organisational objectives and the policies and plans to achieve them (Beer et al., 1990). Effective and successful organisational change, more often than not, will incorporate and manage a number of change model perspectives concurrently (Kanter, 1979).

A three stage model of change was first described by Kurt Lewin in the 1940's as 'freezing – movement – refreezing' (Goodstein & Burke, 1991). The original theory has been re-visioned in contemporary terms by Schein (1992) with the first stage of 'unfreezing' being a process of creating motivation and readiness for change in three phases –

- (1) Disconfirmation, when members of the organisation experience a need for change which, in turn, motivates them to embrace change;
- (2) Induction of guilt or anxiety involving the establishment of a perceived gap between what is not currently working well and a desired future state; and

- (3) Creation of psychological safety, providing an environment in which people feel safe enough to experience disconfirmation and induction.

The second stage of 'changing' (or cognitive restructuring), is the process of helping people to see things differently (another viewpoint) and react differently in the future; and the third stage, 'refreezing', integrates the change process through taking the new, changed way of doing things and fitting it comfortably into one's total self-concept, while integrating the new behaviour in interactions with organisational players (Schein, 2006).

A similar process model framework provided by Beckhard and Harris (1977) suggested that large-scale, complex, organisational change could be conceptualised as movement from a 'present' state to a 'future' state with the most important phase being the in-between one that was labelled as the 'transition' state. Organisational change is conceptualised as a matter of (1) assessing the current organisational situation (present state); (2) determining the desired future (future state); and (3) planning ways to reach that desired future and implementing the plans (transition state). Bridges (1986) considered the impact on the individual members of the organisation when he described another similar three-part transition process that focused on the psychological adjustment that individual members of an organisation made during change were they had to:

Let go of the old situation and of the old identity that went with it; go through the 'neutral zone' between their old reality and a new reality, which may still be very unclear; and make a new beginning, that is much more than the relatively simple 'new start' required in a change. (p. 25)

Traditional theories of change maintained that changes in attitudes led to changes in individual behaviour, and that changes in individual behaviour, repeated by many people, resulted in organisational change (Lewis, 1994). Kotter (2007) argues that change only sticks when it becomes 'the way we do things around here', when it "seeps into the bloodstream" of the corporate body (p. 103). His contribution is an eight step process for transforming organisations which now provides a familiar vocabulary for the change process –

- (1) Establishing a sense of urgency;
- (2) Forming a powerful guiding coalition;
- (3) Creating a vision;
- (4) Communicating the vision;
- (5) Empowering others to act on the vision;
- (6) Planning for and creating short-term wins;
- (7) Consolidating improvements and producing still more change; and
- (8) Institutionalising new approaches. (Kotter, 2007, p. 99)

However this 'top-down' direction setting for change interprets the change process in a backward way according to Beer, Eisenstat and Spector (1990). They proposed a six step 'critical path' for change, which approaches the problem from the bottom up:

- (1) Mobilise commitment to change through joint diagnosis of business problems;
- (2) Develop a shared vision of how to organise and manage for competitiveness;
- (3) Foster consensus for the new vision, competence to enact it, and cohesion to move it along;
- (4) Spread revitalisation to all departments without pushing it from the top;
- (5) Institutionalise revitalisation through formal policies, systems, and structures; and
- (6) Monitor and adjust strategies in response to problems in the revitalisation process. (p. 161)

This critical path was designed to develop a self-reinforcing cycle of commitment, coordination, and competence. Beer et al. (1990) point out that individual behaviour is powerfully shaped by the organisational roles that people play and suggest the most effective way to change behaviour is to put people into a "new organisational context, which imposes new roles, responsibilities, and relationships on them" to create a situation that, in a sense, "forces new attitudes and behaviours" (p. 159) on them. Argyris (2004) goes further by insisting that changes must occur to the 'causes' of behaviour and attitudes. He argues that only by "ensuring changes in defensive reasoning and the theories-in-use that produce skilled unawareness and skilled incompetence and the resulting organisational defensive routines" (p. 399) can lasting success be achieved.

Huy and Mintzberg (2003) advocate that the focus on 'dramatic' change, which is imposed and driven from the top, should be tempered by the realisation that

effective change often emerges inadvertently (organic change) or develops in a more orderly fashion (systematic change). They describe the three change modes as having overlapping qualities, yet different leadership and follower focuses:

Dramatic change has to be balanced by order and engagement throughout the organisation and is driven from the top by the leader;

Systematic change is slower, less ambitious; more focused, more orderly and more carefully constructed and sequenced than dramatic change and requires leadership. It is often promoted by staff groups and consultants who handle the planning and organisational development; and

Organic change is not systematically organised when it begins or dramatically consequential in its intentions, and it does not depend on managerial authority or specialised change agents and often proceeds as a challenge to that authority. It is supported by leadership. (Huy & Mintzberg, 2003, p. 80)

Their view is that neither dramatic nor systematic nor organic change works well in isolation. Regardless of the plethora of methods proposed to ensure that change is successful there is general agreement that real change is not something that can be simply imposed (King et al., 2001), and that the best chance for change action to be truly effective is where it is achieved through a partnership between those who lead (Heller, 2000) and those who manage and who are close to the everyday practical work (Schein, 1992). The role of the leader as change agent needs to be understood on the basis of the processes of organisational change. Gunter (1995) warns that leaders of change should not use history to determine the future, nor should they “yield to the idealism of visioning and let some picture of a desired future determine what is done today” (p. 14). Therefore change leaders should look at what is happening now and learn to recognise the choices from which the future will unfold (Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006).

Attributes, capabilities, perceptions and practices

Organisations, like individuals, have different potentials for success and successful change requires the alignment of an organisation’s internal architecture, individual actions, and collective goals in order to achieve optimal results (Ahn et al., 2004). It is acknowledged that one of the missing ingredients

in most failed change cases is the appreciation and use of change knowledge (Beer et al., 1990; French, 2001; Wallace, 2003). Change knowledge is the understanding and insight about the process of change and the key drivers that make for successful change in practice (Allix & Gronn, 2005). Whilst the presence of change knowledge may not guarantee success, it is agreed that its absence, more often than not, leads to failure (Fullan, 2003).

To begin this examination it is valuable to revisit with Fullan (2005) who expands on his five essential characteristics of change leaders by offering eight key drivers that he believes creates successful effective and lasting change in educational situations:

- (1) Engaging people's moral purposes;
- (2) Building capacity;
- (3) Understanding the change process;
- (4) Developing cultures for learning;
- (5) Developing cultures of evaluation;
- (6) Focusing on leadership for change;
- (7) Fostering coherence making; and
- (8) Cultivating tri-level development.

These drivers, embodied as 'change knowledge' by Fullan, have been seen as consisting of a number of distinctive 'attributes' which are broadly conceived as a mix of skills, knowledge, capabilities, competencies and personal characteristics that are perceived to be of considerable importance to leaders of change in performing their role. Recent empirical studies undertaken by Caldwell (2003) selected and ranked key attributes of successful change leaders and managers as follows :

Leaders – (Score out of 100)		Managers - Score out of 100)	
Inspiring vision	92	Empowering others	88
Entrepreneurship	87	Team building	82
Integrity and honesty	76	Learning from others	79
Learning from others	72	Adaptability and flexibility	69
Openness to new ideas	66	Openness to new ideas	64
Risk-taking	56	Managing resistance	58
Adaptability and flexibility	49	Conflict resolution	53
Creativity	42	Networking	52
Experimentation	38	Knowledge of the business	37
Using power	29	Problem solving	29

This data showed a number of areas of shared characteristic, or similar, but the most interesting result was the perceived shift in managerial roles towards the ability to empower employees, encourage team work and manage their self-development through learning (Gronn, 1997b). Providing genuine opportunities for employee involvement in transforming their own work environment can be a powerful medium in which to develop in employees a sense of challenge and ongoing commitment to change (Bartkus, 1997). It is therefore useful to actively seek out and give to people in all areas and levels of the organisation responsibility for carrying through change (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998).

Employees' perceptions of the degree to which their organisation has the flexibility to achieve change and the degree to which they can, or are willing to, participate in decision making about the changes, are both important factors in achieving successful change (French, 2001). The role of people in achieving successful change is recognised as central to educational change frameworks however evidence shows that people are both an essential factor and, at times, may be the biggest obstacles. To navigate through this conundrum change leaders concentrate on effectively managing the people side of organisational change (Morgan, 2005b). Perceptions of change from the peoples' perspective can be divided in two main focus domains, one being recognition and the other being communication (Bennis, 1997a). Change leadership success relies on the leader's ability to lead transformative processes that acknowledge, honour and cater for this. Their communication skills, their use of language, their abilities to strengthen important relationships and their abilities to set out the basic principles holding the organisation together are some of the routes to change leadership success (Kotter, 2007).

Benson and Dresdow (2003) discuss a decision making process, which is structured around discovery (exploring multiple perspectives and engaging in idea generation) and collaboration (awareness that others can help to develop joint creativity rather than individual creativity). This combination produces a 'think-first' approach that in their opinion increases the chance of success based on a strategy of leveraging diverse insight and talent while garnering

ownership of the decision making process and outcomes. Decision makers are required to:

- Have a good sense of self-awareness;
- Are cognisant of the role of learning in the decision making process;
- Look at issues systemically;
- Understand the role of emotions in the decision making process; and
- Be able to effectively use conversation to uncover and manage the complex nature of decisions. (p. 1003)

These components are then used as a model that can help change leaders to be more effective by focussing on expanding the search for ideas and exploring multiple alternatives whilst also encouraging the collaboration and engagement (Benson & Dresdow, 2003) of those affected by the decision making process and its outcomes.

There is, however, no single cure for all when changing and growing an organisation (Karp, 2005) and leaders need to accept chaos and emergent principles as a way of leading (Wallace, 2003), as well as the fact that order emerges out of chaos (Simsek & Louis, 1994). Therefore the question to be asked is how does the leader move the change action from crisis to control? This is not so much a focus on the methods of implementation, which tend to be normative and usually prescribe managerial actions needed to effect change, as an attempt to understand the problems and related issues in uprooting from one organisational arrangement to another (Thompson & Harrison, 2000). The interest lies rather in issues related to the 'personal' dynamics of change leadership – the way that that leaders go about leading change - which represents a major shift in emphasis away from the actual content or substance of change itself (Bridges, 1986). How they make decisions about change, recognise change and plan for it, and communicate with everyone involved throughout the process is the lens through which successful change management may best be viewed.

For change leaders to engage in purposive action they need to exhibit transformational leadership behaviours that direct people towards constructive effort and that provide others with a more integrated understanding of what is to be achieved (Barber & Warn, 2005). They have to be flexible in making the

most of the opportunities that emerge while working with what is there and is already working (Callan, 1998). Change is always messy and those 'in control' are inclined to prefer the 'blueprint' vision to the 'emerging' reality (Kanter, 1979). There may be hot spots that are problematic for all the wrong reasons, however this does not mean that the people involved are any more incompetent than anyone who is learning something new (Dervitsiotis, 1998). It does mean that the change leaders must stay involved when the going gets tough so that they can also spot early signs of success and use the natural energy of the organisation to create change - even if these signs of success are embedded in the old culture (Evans, 2007). The people doing the changing will always be more motivated by their own ideas than by the change leaders', even if, they are the same ideas. So the best change leaders get the ideas of those doing the changing incorporated into the change itself (Hyland et al., 1998).

Achieving sustained organisational change is a long-range task. The process of change does not stop when the most visible parts of a change program have been completed. Organisations and the leaders of change wishing to achieve sustained change will be well served by developing a culture of ongoing learning – one which values openness in thinking and which tolerates and encourages an appropriate degree of risk taking and the making of mistakes (Lakomski, 2001).

In order to present a summary of those strategies and approaches most associated with leading successful change, a template has been created (Table 2) which details change practices, leaders' actions and employee perceptions of change gathered from a wide range of commentators. The template presents these practices, actions and perceptions aligned and framed by the phases of the change process.

Table 2: Summary of change themes, leader's actions and employees perceptions

Phases of change	Themes and practices	Actions to be taken by leaders	Perceptions of employees
<p>Assessment</p> <p>Assess the current organisational situation (present state) (Beckhard & Harris, 1977)</p>	<p>The organisations' potential is assessed. The whole organisation is engaged through a learning effort to recognise its potential, and jointly envision goals for change to match it (Bruhn, 2004)</p>	<p>Ready yourself for the leadership of change by examining your principles and moral authority as you set the highest professional goals (Hodgkinson, 1991)</p> <p>Live by your principles and you will be given credibility in relation to the change agenda (Katzenbach, 1996)</p>	<p>Change leadership is an enabling act and the leaders' moral authority is equally important, if not even more important, than their formal authority (McDonald & Nijhof, 1999)</p>
<p>Unfreezing</p> <p>Challenge the status quo, create motivation and a 'readiness for change' (Harrison, 1972; Kane, 2005; Kotter, 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Schein, 2006)</p>	<p>Disconfirmation – Members of the organisation experience a need for change which, in turn, motivates them to embrace change (Schein, 2006)</p>	<p>Accept that change is a process and that to move from crisis to control, everyone must be engaged in the journey of change (Cork, 2005)</p> <p>Assess potential risks before stirring up a sense of urgency in order to generate the motivation to propel change forward (Barth, 2007b)</p> <p>Create involvement among a range of participants at different levels of the organisation to build commitment (Brunetto & Farr-Wharton, 2004; Kane, 2005; Schein, 1997)</p>	<p>Change is a gain or a loss from the status quo and when change results in a potential loss, employees are more likely to resist (Weber & Weber, 2001)</p>

Phases of change	Themes and practices	Actions to be taken by leaders	Perceptions of employees
	Induction (guilt or anxiety) - The establishment of a perceived gap between what is not currently working well and a desired future state (Schein, 2006)	Bring together a wide coalition of change ambassadors to guide the change process (Oakland & Tanner, 2007). Focus on the 'extreme' groups (supporters and opponents). The ones who will profit from the new order will warmly support the initiative while the ones who may lose will fight and resist the changes (Lok & Crawford, 1999)	Great importance is attached to consistency and people will go to great lengths to preserve the status quo (Beeby & Simpson, 1998)
Determine the future state Let go of the old situation and of the old identity that went with it (Bridges, 1986)	Psychological safety – An environment in which people feel safe enough to experience disconfirmation and induction (Schein, 2006)	Enable others to act: by energising, empowering, building teams, providing tangible support with appropriate resources, and putting in place the appropriate systems, timelines and structures (Goleman, 2000; Kaplan & Norton, 2005b; Karp, 2006; Lakomski, 2001; Schein, 1997)	Change can be considered to be a violation of employees psychological contract with their employer and any real or perceived violation of that implied contract can lead to withdrawal or active resistance (Goldstein, 1988)
	A shared vision for change is created which is clear and able to be easily communicated (Senge, 2008)	Inspire a shared vision and personally communicate the future direction with clear and honest answers to the what, why, and how questions. (Beer et al., 1990; Hamel & Prahalad, 1989; Mintzberg, 1994)	Perceptions of fairness in decisions regarding a change influence trust in leadership and participation in the implementation of change increases trust (Bartkus, 1997)

Phases of change	Themes and practices	Actions to be taken by leaders	Perceptions of employees
		<p>Communicate the reasons for change; what is happening, why and how it is happening, what has been achieved and what is still to be done (Kaplan & Norton, 2005a)</p> <p>Plan ways to reach that desired future and implement those plans (Beckhard & Harris, 1977)</p> <p>Move forward step by step (skipping steps creates only the 'illusion of speed') as moving too quickly, making a hurried mistake or failing to carefully implement changes in any of the phases can have a devastating impact, slowing momentum and negating hard-won gains (Kotter, 2007)</p>	
<p>Change (movement / transition)</p> <p>Go through the 'neutral zone' between the old reality and a new reality (Bridges, 1986)</p>	<p>Once the vision has been articulated and the direction for the change agreed upon - clear articulation of goals, timelines, expected achievements and review points will be established (Ogawa & Scribner, 2002)</p>	<p>Create familiar routines with predictable timing and transition procedures that link the present to the future (Eisenbach et al., 1999)</p> <p>Include short-term goals that can be tracked to show that progress is being made toward the ultimate vision and that the long journey will be worth it (Goodstein & Burke, 1991)</p> <p>Remove any obstacles that may exist by finding resources to support the needs of the change action such as time, money and the people (Cork, 2005)</p>	<p>It is recognised that significant organisational change takes time and assistance will be given to institutionalising lasting change as long as it is supported through formal systems such as employee selection, socialisation, and rewards to support the change (Beer et al., 1990)</p> <p>Organisational members will find it frustrating if they do not have the time, money, help or support needed to effect the change (Bartkus, 1997)</p>

Phases of change	Themes and practices	Actions to be taken by leaders	Perceptions of employees
<p>Communicating –</p> <p>Help people to see things differently (another viewpoint) and react differently in the future (Schein, 2006)</p>	<p>Communication should be regular, timely, honest, clear, interactive and easy to understand. Avoiding jargon and hype and including information about success but also about failures or mis-steps if and when these occur (Tschannen-Moran, 2007)</p>	<p>Communicate the message repeatedly up, down and across the organisation to ensure the momentum and enthusiasm for change is not diminished over time. ‘Walk the talk’, and teach new behaviours by example (Collinson, 2005; Katzenbach, 1996; Kotter, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Senge et al., 1999)</p> <p>Listen – do not just talk – because communication should be two-way and genuinely interactive (Sergiovanni, 2007)</p>	<p>Communication is critical to successful change and a compelling vision must be followed by consistent communication (Kotter, 2007)</p>
	<p>Change messages should be realistic, genuine and balanced with real involvement of people throughout the organisation in determining the direction and implementation of change (French, 2001; Rasmussen, 2002)</p>	<p>Motivate people by taking the time to talk to them about their potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves (Herrin, 2005)</p> <p>Encourage people to comment openly, to seek information and clarification about the changes and their role in achieving them (Weber & Weber, 2001)</p> <p>Empower others to act on the vision by allowing them to start living the new ways and make changes in their areas of involvement (Hyland et al., 1998)</p>	<p>Commitment to change will be gained when the change reflects or affirms employees closely held values and when there is confidence in their ability to respond successfully to change (Kane, 2005)</p>

Phases of change	Themes and practices	Actions to be taken by leaders	Perceptions of employees
	Improvement needs to be consolidated to avoid stalling and the momentum for change kept moving to avoid slipping backwards toward the 'old' ways of doing things (Duck, 1993)	Model the way: enact the new behaviours in deeds as well as in words; personally demonstrating involvement and commitment; don't just mouth the language of change, your words and actions need to personify the intended culture (Bartkus, 1997; Fullan, 2007; Kanter, 1982; Katzenbach, 1996; Kotter, 2007; Senge, 2008)	Leadership can become a lightning rod for those opposing change, even when the content of the change is the primary reason for resistance (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001)
	Real transformation takes time; therefore the loss of momentum and the onset of disappointment are real factors (Sergiovanni, 2007)	Employ symbolic and substantive actions: recognising short-term gains or success stories to emphasise recognition of the new behaviours; and taking decisive action in identifying and addressing resistance. Move people committed to the new ways into key roles (Kaplan & Norton, 2005b; Morgan, 2005a; Morgan, 2005b; Saunders, 2005)	

Phases of change	Themes and practices	Actions to be taken by leaders	Perceptions of employees
<p><i>Refreezing</i></p> <p>Make a new beginning, that is much more than the relatively simple 'new start' required in a change (Bridges, 1986)</p>	<p>Integrating the change process through taking the new, changed way of doing things and fitting it comfortably into one's total self-concept, while integrating the new behaviour in interactions with organisational players (Schein, 2006)</p>	<p>Recognise your shortcomings and genuinely try to build the skills and experience that you lack (Katzenbach, 1996)</p> <p>Follow through and continuously check on progress to ensure that the change is successful is going to last (Cork, 2005)</p> <p>Tackle the processes and structures reflecting the old culture, which will try to re-surface, to ensure that the new behaviours and procedures become engrained in order to make the change complete (Harrison, 1972)</p>	<p>An effective leader must have integrity, a willingness to initiate action, a humble orientation toward serving others, and yet, a resolute confidence in the aspirations and direction of the organisation (Collins, 2001)</p>
	<p>Change is made operational by providing a set of ground rules, principles, shared assumptions or beliefs with which the people in the organisation can use to figure out how they are going to follow (Bartkus, 1997)</p>	<p>Openly acknowledge obstacles and setbacks as an open examination of failures to provide the opportunity to learn from the errors and encourage a willingness to learn from experience, to take risks and to think outside of the existing organisational parameters (French, 2001)</p>	

Phases of change	Themes and practices	Actions to be taken by leaders	Perceptions of employees
	<p>Profound change must 'seep into the bloodstream' of the organisation and become 'the way we do things around here' before it is truly successful (Kotter, 2007)</p>	<p>Spread the change throughout the entire organisation by ensuring that systems, structures, human resources, competencies, development and management behaviours are in place and aligned with the new structure (Lewis, 1994)</p> <p>Initiate ceremonial activities during the transition as a way to celebrate achievements, mourn the old ways and welcome the new organisational practices to mark the transition to 'business as usual' (Fullan, 2003; Oakland & Tanner, 2007)</p>	

Change leadership is an emergent, attributed status and is not something, which is automatically bestowed by virtue of executive role incumbency (Gravells, 2006). Leaders wishing to become 'change leaders' need to have a coherent knowledge about purposes, strategies, use of power, cultural development, effective management and formative evaluation processes if they wish to lead successful change actions (Fullan et al., 2005; Kaplan & Norton, 2005b; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Senge, 1999b). This knowledge has been described variously as domains of change leadership, and are particularly relevant to the leading of successful change. They are:

- Philosophical leadership, to help determine what is right and to improve the "moral purpose" of the organisation;
- Strategic leadership, to identify significance, trends in the context, options and consequences;
- Political leadership, to boost commitment and realign social reality,
- Cultural leadership, to mobilise and legitimate changes to norms and practices;
- Managerial leadership, to use and develop resources effectively and efficiently; and
- Evaluation leadership, to measure the achievement of objectives and to review purposes.

Fullan (2006), when considering the future of educational change, recommends that if the main aim of leaders is to become successful then there is a need in the system for leaders who are "trained to think in bigger terms and to act in ways that affect larger parts of the system as a whole - the new theoreticians" (p. 122).

Organisations must nurture their employees and encourage their initiative as they increase their reliance on employee involvement in all aspects of their activities, including creating and implementing change, as they recognise that their success depends on the ability to harness employee skills and knowledge (Powell, 2002). In this proactive climate organisations require more than just traditional managers – they require managers who are also leaders – who can help develop employees and instil a sense of commitment and engagement (Joseph & Winston, 2005).

A sentiment eloquently supported by Warren Bennis (2005) when he proposed that:

The future belongs to the 'leader' who can juggle a dozen conundrums *and* who can 'manage' a dozen things at once!. (p. 4)

SUMMARY

The literature has constantly described change leaders as those senior managers at the very top of the organisation, whilst change managers are those middle level managers and functional specialists who carry forward and build support for change within business units and key functions (Bartolomé & Laurent, 1986; Gosling & Mintzberg, 2003). Implicit in this distinction is at least a partial clarification of the relationship between leadership and management (Mintzberg, 1975). It is acknowledged that the two challenges are different, yet complementary (Caldwell, 2003). However the identification of leadership as intangible, unknowable and nebulous as compared to the specificity, clarity and pragmatism with which management is depicted, suggests a relationship between the two that is more complex and nuanced than straightforward negativity or opposition (Carroll & Lester, 2008).

Educational middle leaders themselves as being at the forefront of change in key areas such as teaching and learning and in the advancement of core pedagogical and academic, as well as organisational goals (Gunter, 1995). Maintaining this identity enables organisational change to take place in a less confrontational and abstracted manner through the middle leaders deep understandings of the networks within the professional organisation, through the requirement on the role to act as colleague during times of trouble and as people who are seen to learn with their colleagues in times of change (Huy, 2001). In this way the educational middle leader can be seen as representing forms of collegiality rather than those of managerialist control (Wallace, 2003).

The educational middle leaders possession of a stock of knowledge of a substantive area of expertise or knowledge can be a powerful approach to change management in professional organisations (Clegg & McAuley, 2005). Because they are in the middle of it all, they have a unique up, sideways and

down perspective of the needs and process of successful organisational change (Kanter, 1982). Therefore, given these factors and the requirement on the role to act as colleague during times of trouble and as people who are seen to learn with their colleagues in times of change (Huy, 2001), educational middle management is more than capable of enabling change to take place in a less confrontational and abstracted manner (Grint, 2003; Ramsden, 1998).

In this chapter, I have reviewed three major literature themes. Part one began with an overview of leadership theory and the developing theoretical road towards a definition of the educational leader and manager. Part two examined the context of educational leadership and the organisational cultures of higher education, and part three discussed organisational change and contextualised the role of the middle educational leader in successful change while presenting a number of theoretical perspectives of success oriented leadership attributes, capabilities and practices.

In the next chapter I discuss the rationale and justification for choosing a qualitative methodology for data collection and analysis for this study and the two qualitative investigation techniques will be introduced.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

This chapter provides a rationale and justification for choosing a qualitative methodology for data collection and analysis for this study. It describes the methodology and methods employed for the focus group and semi-structured interviews, explains data management procedures and details the analytical procedures. It also identifies and addresses sampling challenges and ethical issues.

This qualitative study has gathered empirical data to define the critical role of the middle leader in organisational change in a tertiary educational setting. It has examined the ways in which middle managers act as 'change leaders' and analyses factors, which facilitate [and impede] the successful change process. Qualitative research approaches were employed to ensure that flexibility was maintained and that experiences that were not shared by all participants were taken into account. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) argue that "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). Yet, Tolich and Davidson (2003) caution that by its very nature, qualitative research can become very messy and convoluted, thus making it a time intensive process. However, it is agreed amongst qualitative researchers (for example, Bryant, 2006; Cassell, Buehring, Symon & Johnson, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Patton, 1990) that the time taken to collect and analyse data qualitatively is necessary if the finer details and unique features of events such as organisational change, how leaders respond to it, and what methods they employ for success, are to be investigated and understood.

Collins (1998) argues that researchers who are "committed to making a real contribution to the study and practice of change and its management" should adopt interpretive approaches that highlight relevant "issues surrounding change ... (and the) attitudes and behaviours ... of individuals" involved in it (p.

190). Therefore, this research adopts an interpretive paradigm using a constructivist epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 1998) to gain an understanding of how individual leaders [managers] interpret their experiences of organisational change. Constructivism advocates that the only reality that can be known is that which is represented by human thought as apposed to objectivism, which embraces a static reality that is independent of human cognition. While the reality may be independent of human thought, the meaning (knowledge) is always a human construction (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

A constructivist epistemology embraces flexibility and maintains a heightened sense of how information can be hypothesised by the researcher and the participant as well as the subjective nature of individual realities “as the investigation proceeds” (p. 207). In this sense, the research is hermeneutical in that the researcher seeks to find meaning in the respondents’ narratives of organisational change, and dialectical since respondents’ constructions of change “can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondent” (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p. 207). Schwandt (1998) argues that truth according to the constructivist “is the result of perspective” and that “we invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience ... [which are constantly tested and modified] in the light of new experience” (p. 236). With such a methodology, the participant and the researcher can make sense of and interpret their shared understanding of organisational change.

Supported by relativist ontology, the constructivist approach recognises that although the participants may share similar experiences or common characteristics of organisational change, individual realities are contextually specific (Wetherell, 2003), thereby suggesting that no two experiences are exactly alike and the information gathered about organisational change following the constructivist paradigm is the result of an individual perspective (Schwandt, 1998). Both the flexibility of this research approach and the emphasis on the individual experience enables the reader to interpret the similarities and differences of the personal experiences as they add to a collective understanding of ‘successful’ change methodologies.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The knowledge-management literature suggests a difference between data, information and knowledge (Wiig, 1997). In this literature, data are most often seen as simple facts that become information when they are combined into meaningful structures, which in turn, become knowledge when they are put into context (Despres & Chauvel, 1999). Within this model, data without interpretation lacks meaning and comprehensive meaning is only derived when information is endowed with relevance and purpose within a particular setting (Call, 2005). Once endowed with meaning and within context, data becomes predictable and intelligent choices about its use(s) may be explored by members of the organisation (Weick, Sutcliffe & Obstfeld, 2005).

Two qualitative investigation techniques were employed for this study. Each addressed its own distinctive area of the research but each acted as a reference and cross check for the other. The first was the phenomenological focus group, which was used in the confirmation of criteria for 'success'. A template was created from the findings of the focus group that illustrated the core capabilities and attributes employed by middle managers in successful organisational change actions that might have been important in creating an organisational culture and climate conducive to successful change. This data was employed to define the nature of success and was used in the second part of the study as the foundation for the interview questions.

The second part of the study employed a semi-structured interview format to create 'success' case stories, utilising traditional case study techniques, as a way of documenting each of the participants' experiences. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 1994). A collective case approach was undertaken which utilised a group of individual studies to gain a fuller picture (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). In this study, I wanted to explore the research issues in a 'real-life' context and in a New Zealand setting, therefore this success case

method enquiry used a variation of the case study that is both holistic and exhaustive to capture the meaningful characteristics of realistic events (Bassey, 2007) and to examine a multifaceted approach to change (Wetherell, 2003).

Brinkerhoff (2003) describes the success case method (SCM) as “combining the ancient craft of storytelling with more current evaluation approaches of naturalistic inquiry and case study” (p. 17). Stories of ‘success’, which have corroborating evidence and documentation to ensure that each is defensible and thus reportable, are sought out. A ‘success story’ is not a testimonial or a critical review. It is a factual and verifiable account – citing evidence that would ‘stand up in court’ – that demonstrates how valuably a person used some new method or tool or capability (Brinkerhoff & Dressler, 2003). Following identification of the success cases the more traditional interpretive methods are employed using the social inquiry processes of key informants in order to examine the features of ‘success’ of each case and draw forth data that may inform future practice (Gold & Holman, 2001).

The SCM does not seek to learn about the ‘average’ or modal participant in an enquiry, rather it intentionally seeks the very best that a program is producing, to help determine if the value a program is capable of producing is worthwhile, and whether it is likely that it can be leveraged to a greater number of participants (Brinkerhoff & Dressler, 2003). Typically, an SCM study results in only a small number of documented success cases - just enough to poignantly illustrate the nature and scope of the success. The method achieves efficiencies by purposive versus random sampling, focusing the bulk of inquiry on only a relative few (Brinkerhoff, 2003). The success cases allow the researcher to look at the experiential whole, not simply the component parts (Kruse, 2003). This method is used to connect the explicit, formal, symbolic presentations of knowledge with the practical know-how found in each individuals’ effective actions (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

This study has explored the lived experiences of the participants to provide a basis for an understanding of how these people think and act in the world (Danzig, 1997). They have constructed their personal accounts of practice

based on reflection (Forster et al., 1999). These personal accounts have led to deeper understandings of how expertise is gained in the real world through linking the study of leadership to professional practice (Hancock & Hellowell, 2003). Reflecting on these personal accounts of practice, in turn, has led to a greater understanding of professional motives and workplace practices (Hannabuss, 2000).

METHODS

This study occurred in two phases. The first was the focus group and the second was the semi-structured interviews. The data collected in these phases linked to each other, and supported and qualified the results of each. Each phase was designed to exploit its potential for gaining reliable, valid, rich and insightful data that would assist in answering the aims of the research study. The research design is described in pictorial form in Figure 2. The two phases of data collection show the interconnected relationship between the two and the data gathered. Immediate results were able to be drawn from findings of the data collection and cross-referenced with each other before being used to propose applications for the use of the data toward a final overall goal of the study.

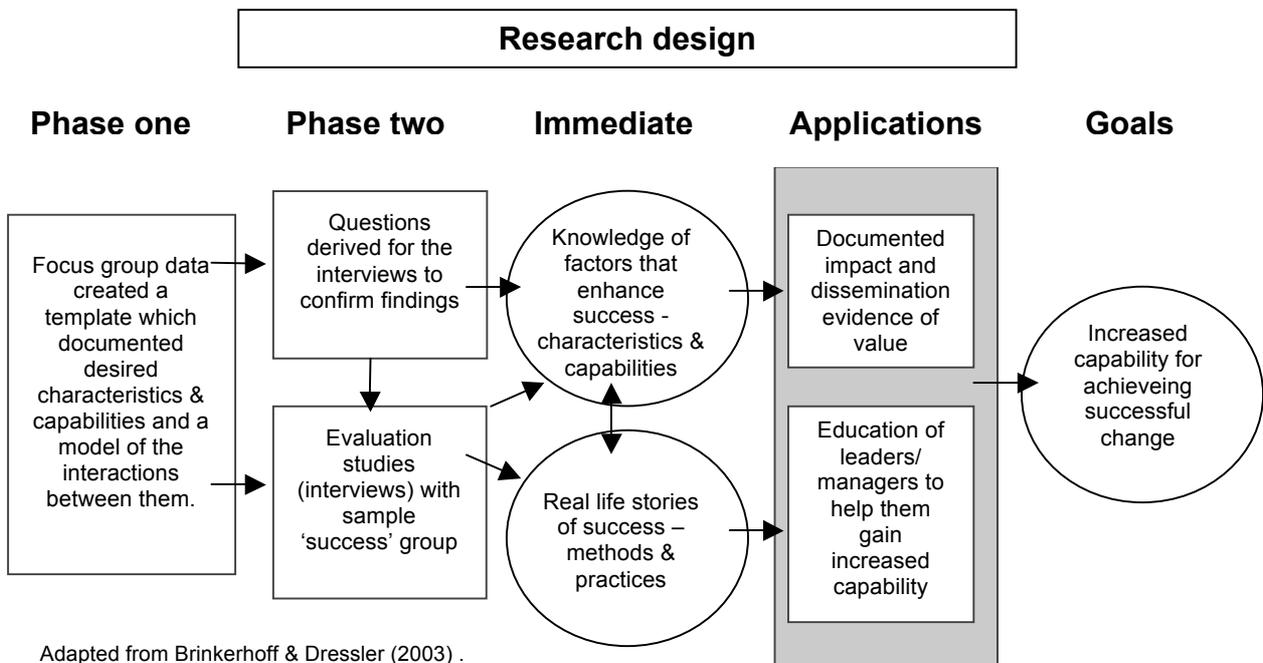


Figure 2: Research design

Focus group study (phase one)

The phenomenological focus group is designed to share the experience of a group of people and to allow the researcher to participate in that shared understanding. The researcher therefore attempts to experience the view of the world from the point of view of the participants being observed (Cohen et al., 2000). A focus group generally consists of a small number of relatively similar individuals who provide information during a directed and moderated interactive group discussion. Focus group participants are typically chosen based on their ability to provide specialised knowledge or insight into the issue under study.

A specific focus group interview was used to confirm and elaborate on the literature synopsis of the skills, knowledge and abilities employed by successful change leaders. A list of potentially relevant attributes of successful change leaders, drawn from the literature, was presented and the focus group members were asked to synthesise, narrow-down and rank the attributes by an evaluative decision process designed to achieve a degree of expert consensus. The 'characteristics' were explained to be broadly conceived as a mix of skills, knowledge, capabilities, competencies and personal attributes that are perceived to be of considerable importance to successful change agents in performing their role. The definition was deliberately inclusive and practice-oriented to ensure that no important characteristics were excluded from the initial review process. Focus group members were also invited to contribute and further attributes throughout the interview. Confirmation of the skills, knowledge and abilities required for successful change leaders was derived and the results were used to create a template of desirable 'success' attributes (see Table 3) and a model to demonstrate the way that the attributes interact (see Figure 3). The results were also used in the design of the questions that formed part of the individual semi-structured interviews.

The approach used was a four-step Delphi-style decision process which was designed to allow the characteristics considered important by practitioners and researchers to be evaluated within the context of an expert discourse on change agency (May, 2002). Alternative methodologies are, of course, possible,

but were discounted as they may arrive at different lists of characteristics, or encourage critical dissent, rather than expert agreement, as to the validity of characteristic categorisation (Johnson & Cassell, 2001). An overall list of 'characteristics' relevant for successful change agency was arrived at by:

- (a) A review of some of the literature on leadership and change agency; and
- (b) An analysis of a number of recruitment advertisements in major national newspapers and employment based web services which use keywords or phrases, such as 'change agent', 'managing change', 'change leader', 'leading change' and 'change management'.

This resulted in a comprehensive list of 77 characteristics, some empirical and others prescriptive, which were identified as relevant to change agents in general. The group was asked to confirm the initial list and to add any additional characteristics that they thought were missing prior to beginning. No new characteristics were added at this time.

The focus group then followed the following four step process:

Step one. The group was asked to select those characteristics, which were, in their opinion, directly relevant to successfully leading change, rather than those characteristics or traits most often associated specifically with leadership roles. A large number of the characteristics from the list were immediately discounted at this point.

For example, 'ambition and drive' is often characterised as an essential leadership 'trait', although it is not necessarily a characteristic that differentiates 'leaders' from 'change leaders'. Some leaders may have enormous ambition and drive while being deeply resistant to change.

Step two. The group then further narrowed down the overall list of characteristics by discussing those which they believed were key and which specifically contribute to 'successfully' leading change.

The objective was to get 'expert' agreement on a separate and limited number of key characteristics, which differentiated successful change leadership from the wider range of characteristics, which simply describe attributes for change leadership. This was achieved by the application of the following rule: where a majority agreed that a characteristic should be included on the list, then this was taken to be a consensus agreement and the characteristic was included. The epistemological presumption was that such differences appear to exist,

certainly in the literature and other empirical research, and that these differences needed to be clarified.

Step three. Once the list was narrowed down to include characteristics that the group felt should remain, they were asked to group the attributes and characteristics into groupings of likeness, compatibility and/or time/process based groupings.

The object of this was to get the group to decide which characteristics interacted with others to construct processes and approaches, or which were synergistic to each other, or to various time based stages of the change process.

Step four. Once the final list of groupings of the attributes was achieved a follow-up discussion was held to confirm the group's agreement with the results and to allow them to make any last changes in ranking, flow, or alignment of the groupings.

Individual semi-structured interviews (phase two)

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore in depth the core capabilities and job characteristics that were employed by each participant in creating an organisational culture and climate conducive to successful organisational change. Also explored were the policies and practices which were employed to minimise the potential negative impact of change. The interviews confirmed the core capabilities and nature of the 'successful' middle change leaders approach to their personal change activity. The resulting data assisted in verifying the focus groups contribution within the frame of 'success'.

A semi-structured format of interviewing was employed because of its highly individualised nature and its ability to elicit unanticipated information and insights by adapting to the interviewee's personality and priorities (King, 1994). As the interviewer, I guided the direction of the interview using primarily open-ended questions that encouraged the participant to discuss their experiences of successful change leadership. I allowed the interviewee to follow whatever tangents that they felt compelled to follow, as this enabled them to report their accounts within the context of their personal values and experiences in a way that a more structured interview format might have constrained (Bryant, 2006).

The semi-structured interviews took place over a period of three weeks at the convenience of the interviewees. There were five interviews in Auckland at a range of institutions, one interview in Wellington and one in Christchurch. The interviews were conducted in the place of work of the interviewee over a period of approximately one hour each. All interviews were audio taped and fully transcribed with the gathered material being considered confidential. Interviewees and the organisations, which they represent, have been identified in the text that accompanies the publication of the results by a pseudonym. Interviewees were asked a range of questions about their understanding of their role within, and contribution to, the change action; how they reconcile top-level perspectives with peer generated negotiations and with lower level implementation issues when engaging in organisational change; their view of their organisational relationships as a subordinate, an equal and as a superior; and how they facilitated employee trust in management, perceptions of supervisory support for improvement, and organisational readiness for change.

Internal validity

Throughout this research project I sought to ensure that the explanation of any event, issue or set of data which were a piece of this research could be accurately sustained by the data collected and that the findings accurately described the phenomena that was being researched (Cohen et al., 2000). Efforts to ensure internal validity of the data collected centred on minimising the amount of bias that may have been present in both the focus group and semi-structured interviews. I intentionally set out to remove any source of bias from the content of the questions and from my attitudes, opinions and expectations as the interviewer. Any potential misunderstandings on the part of the respondent as to what was being asked of them was checked at all times. I also checked with the respondents that I was recording their answers to questions accurately and that I had interpreted their answer correctly before proceeding to the next question. The focus group reviewed and confirmed the final outcomes of their discussion on screen before the conclusion of the session. Each interview participant was sent an electronic copy of the transcript of their interview and asked to comment on any inaccuracies. There were no negative responses to this request.

DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is not a “passive endeavour” rather it requires active comprehension, synthesising, theorising, and re-contextualising (Cohen et al., 2000). This is achieved by active observation, accurate recall, astute questioning and a relentless search for answers (Cresswell, 2002). Qualitative research is also often inductive, particularly when small samples of respondents and case studies are used, and the process of generalising from them takes place (Bassegy, 2002). It has been imperative to this researcher to gain as much as possible from the available data through careful analysis techniques.

Focus group

The focus group findings were coded into broad themes based on the research objectives to create an initial template (King, 1994) within the proceedings of the focus group meeting. A list of codes (template) was produced which represented the themes identified in the textual data (Watling, 2002), and the results were then further examined and modified with each broad theme being subjected to a more detailed analysis leading to the formation of more specific categories within each theme (Cassell et al., 2006). The template was then subjected to comparison with the key findings of the case interviews and updated where there were gaps or inconsistencies. The full proceedings were recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Interviews

Within the interview process, case interview ‘narratives’ were constructed by participants about their broader experiences of organisational change and success in particular and were often presented in a non-linear and fragmented format. Consequently, it was important that the case stories were analysed in a manner that provided a way of bringing meaning to them as a whole (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004) while preserving the individuality of each participant’s experiences of change and acknowledging common themes across the interviews. It was important to explore the uniqueness of each participants’ experience of ‘success’. To this end the coding and notes of the case interviews preserved the ‘raw and fragmented material’ as much as possible in an effort to help make greater sense of the participants’ stories

(Czarniawska-Joerges & Gagliardi, 2003). An axial coding approach was used to “build up a dense texture of relationships” around the ‘axis’ of each category (May, 2002, p. 64). Research which sets out to represent the meanings that middle leaders [managers] construct around their participation in change, particularly as they reflect on their specific experience, contains not only intimately experienced evidence (Forster et al., 1999), but whole sets of reasoned narrative structures with their implied connectivities (general connections), causalities (explicit or implied examples of one thing directly or indirectly causing another) and implications (those logical connections where, as a result of premises, particular conclusions arise, valid or invalid, true or untrue) (Taylor, 1999).

This study structured and analysed data using elements of narrative theme analysis, to investigate the inductive themes embedded within the participants’ case stories (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Narrative theme analysis was a useful tool in exploring the individual case stories as it enabled me to seek out common patterns that occurred across a group of participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998), which in this case were the approaches and methods used to lead successful organisational change. The literature suggests that there is a strong connection between using narrative analysis and using inferential analysis when examining the reasoning processes of managers (Lawler, 2002), where one is looking for antecedents, which have a causal impact on the events that cause things and the states of mind that induce choices and behaviours (Taylor, 1999). It is further noted that participants tend to tell it as it was/is for them, which means that there will be a rich, and sometimes confusing amalgam of fact and fiction, objectivity and apologetic (Bryant & Cox, 2004). These personal narratives were no exception to this understanding and proved to be autodiegetic and situationally placed from the interviewees’ viewpoint, with all the advantages and constrictions that implies.

SAMPLING

The purpose of sampling is to investigate features of the population in greater detail than could be done if the total population was used, and to draw

inferences about this population (de Vaus, 2001). The degree to which these inferences would hold for other persons in other places and at other times is known as external validity (Cohen et al., 2000). Sampling can reduce the number of participants for a piece of research, whilst retaining - as accurately as possible - the characteristics of the whole group (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002). Questions of generalisation are tied to those of sampling because the sample is the bearer of those characteristics that it wishes to infer to a wider population (Williams, 2002). The most reliable data for this study would have been gained by interviewing the entire population of academic middle managers who have ever been successful change leaders. This was neither possible, nor necessary. The pragmatics of available time, resources and access to participants available dictated the approach to data collection.

Focus Group - Participants in the focus group were selected from middle managers at a medium sized higher education organisation who were acknowledged as change leaders and identified themselves as having recently participated, or currently participating in, change leadership. Purposeful sampling was employed, to draw selected subjects, who displayed specific characteristics with respect to organisational role and responsibility, from the identified population (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002), to allow the findings to be generalised back to the entire population. They were invited to participate in the study via a general e-mail invitation detailing the topic, the date and time of the meeting however availability and willingness to participate was a factor in the final make-up of the group. The sample was based on self selection initially and had there had been more than eight positive replies, the sample would have been stratified to gain as representative a group as possible with such factors as department/school, division, programme type and gender being taken into account. If the initial response had been even larger than anticipated, then the sample would have been selected randomly from the stratified groups by drawing their names from a hat.

Interview cases - Interview participants were sought from a variety of tertiary institutions in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch via an unsolicited e-mail request, which outlined the criteria of 'success' in change leadership as well as

the nature of the project and the contribution that the individual could make to the research. Purposeful sampling was again employed and assisted in selecting information rich cases for in-depth study. The participants for this phase of the project represented an extreme case sample of individuals who were highlighted as being outstanding successes. Extreme case sampling allowed highly unusual manifestations of the phenomenon of interest, such as the outstanding success cases of this study, to be included. This sampling method was chosen because it permitted the logical generalisation of the results to be applied to other success cases, therefore applying the notion that 'If it is true for this one case, it is likely to be true of all other cases' (Cohen et al., 2000; Stake, 2000). Self-nominated candidates were contacted by e-mail and supplied with an outline of the nature of the project and the contribution that the individual would be able make to the research. Participation was then determined by individual willingness to take part. Had the initial response been too large, the sample would have been stratified using a maximum variation sampling method. This form of stratification would have involved purposefully picking a wide range of variation within the sample group such as ethnicity, gender, professional background, and organisational type to document unique or diverse variations that emerged in adapting to different conditions. It would also have helped to identify important common patterns that cut across those variations.

Response rate

There were initially seven positive responses for participation in the focus group. Availability to participate became a factor in the final make-up of the group and unfortunately as the date approached, one of the participants pulled out leaving six confirmed attendees. It was decided to continue with the event and a second invitation e-mail was sent to see if anyone else could attend at short notice to keep the numbers up, however there were no positive responses to this second invitation as it was very close to the day of the event. On the day of the focus group two more members sent their apologies due to illness. It was decided to continue with the evening and I spoke to the group about the number of participants and the possible effect that it may have on the results. The group determined that they should be regarded as a non-representative sample and

that the event should continue. Upon reviewing the results the group advised me that they considered that the results were a valid representation of the data sought. In this case the limitations of the single-handed masters study precluded organising another focus group. I determined that given the quality and standing of the participants who could be regarded as 'experts' and the way that the focus group data was to be used in the study, there would be no need to conduct another focus group to confirm the results.

The semi-structured interview candidates were either indicated by their immediate superiors to be contacted directly or accepted for themselves, so that in the end all the participants self-nominated based on an understanding of the required criteria involved in the study. Seven people responded that they were both interested and prepared to become part of the study. The make up of the group of interviewees was four men and three women, from a range of ethnic backgrounds from Universities and Polytechnics and representing large, medium and small organisational structures. This number was considered to be the most manageable in the given timeframe available for this study.

ETHICAL ISSUES

In order to formally commence this study, proposals and ethics approvals had to be gained and submitted to the relevant committees for approval. Preparations were made for this study in accordance with ethical guidelines with detailed participant information and consent forms distributed to each willing participant. Not only did I need to consider the ethics and professional standards required by the institution, but I also had to consider both my personal code of ethics in relation to the above as well as the topic under consideration.

It is acknowledged that research inside organisations that has a view to affect or even change policy and practice may present difficulties and cause tension (Wilkinson, 2001) and this was anticipated and managed by me in an honest and open manner. Participants of the focus group were known to me professionally, as were three of the semi-structured interview subjects. However

none of these participants were known to me personally. The remaining four interview subjects were unknown to me either professionally or personally. To avoid any potential conflict of interest, all participants were fully informed in advance of my identity and background, therefore allowing them to choose not to participate if they felt that there might have been a conflict of interest. By employing these basic tenets of ethical research behaviour, where the dignity, privacy and interests of the participants are always respected, I believe that there has been no conflict of interest in this research project.

Focus group and case interviews were considered in terms of their ethical considerations such as anonymity and the issue of intrusion into the participant's thoughts, observations and beliefs (Snook, 2003). Since the 'objects of inquiry' were human beings, extreme care was taken to avoid harming them, and to ensure that their right to privacy was respected (Irvine & Gaffikin, 2006). While the possibility existed that the interviews might have caused distress, this was minimised by ethical conduct on the part of myself as well as the participant's ability to have 'considerable control' over the interview process (Bryant, 2006).

Confidentiality can be a serious issue in the conduct of focus groups and semi-structured interviews, especially if the material is sensitive; people who agreed to participate might have been risking a great deal by speaking about their situation (Opie, 2003), and as a result I went to considerable lengths to establish trust, protect identities, and maintain the confidentiality that had been agreed upon (Wellington, 2000). Care has been taken to store any recordings and transcripts of the focus group and interviews in a secure place, to send transcripts in envelopes marked 'confidential', and never to disclose the content of an interview to anybody else (Irvine & Gaffikin, 2006). I have employed a multiple stage method of assurance for interviewees of confidentiality, as suggested by Irvine and Gaffikin (2006), which included in the participant information sheet sent as part of the initial invitation communication (e-mail), when confirming the appointment by a follow up communication (e-mail), at the beginning of the interview (verbally) and on the consent form (in writing).

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Two key limitations were highlighted in the research. These were associated with validity linked to the focus group and the difficulty in capturing the expertise of change agency.

The focus group was conceived as a Delphi-style tool to clarify the attributes of successful change leadership. A larger empirical survey would be required to verify the attributes, ideally with a cross-cultural dimension (Feldman, 1986). For example, a survey might be able to establish whether there is a predicative association between the attributes considered important by the expert group and a representative sample of leaders and managers performing change agent roles.

The second limitation is linked to the fact that there is rarely a straightforward way to capture the 'expertise' of change agency, nor is it always possible to translate change agent attributes into competency profiles, training interventions or empirical measures of performance (Morden, 1997). Despite this limitation, the research presented here provides greater clarity and some general guidance as to the key attributes that may be useful in understanding the specific change leadership roles of 'success' in leading and managing change. It has also illuminated the interconnectivity, specificity of change context, demanding requirements and complexity of these roles.

A further limitation of both the focus group and the case interviews could have been the narrowness of the sample. This study would benefit from a larger, more culturally diverse and nationally focused sample.

SUMMARY

This chapter has provided a rationale and justification for choosing a qualitative methodology for data collection and analysis for this study. It described the methods employed, explained data management procedures and detailed the analytical procedures. It also identified and addressed sampling challenges, ethical issues and limitations of the study.

Two qualitative investigation techniques were employed and each addressed its own distinctive area of the research while acting as a reference and cross check for the other. The first was the phenomenological focus group, which was used in the confirmation of criteria for 'success'. The second part of the study employed a semi-structured format of interviewing to create 'success' case stories, utilising the success case method and traditional case study techniques, as a way of documenting each of the participants' experiences. The success case method provided two results:

1. In-depth stories of documented capabilities and job characteristics that can be disseminated to a variety of audiences involved in change management. These stories are both credible and verifiable and dramatically illustrate the actual change effect results that 'successful' middle leaders are capable of producing; and
2. Knowledge of factors that enhance or impede the effect of middle leaders on change results. The key factors that seem to be associated with successful applications of middle leaders as change agents have been identified and compared and contrasted to those where the factors seemed to impede success.

The next chapter presents the findings gathered from the focus group and seven semi-structured interviews, as described in the this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the findings gathered from the focus group and seven semi-structured interviews, as described in the previous chapter, and is divided into three parts that are linked to the research questions presented in Chapter One.

Part one presents the findings of the focus group inquiry into the attributes associated with successful change leadership. Part two presents the perspective of all the participants in the study (focus group and interview participants) of the being in the middle and a middle-up/beside/down perspective of educational middle leaders engaging in change. Questions such as 'what is the middle?', 'who is in the middle?' and 'what it is like being in the middle?' were posed as a way of framing the conversation around the participants perceptions of the middle. Part three presents the personal stories gained from the semi-structured interviews of the role that educational middle leaders play in successful organisational change.

IDENTIFYING THE ATTRIBUTES OF SUCCESS

The research undertaken within the frame of the focus group addressed the first of the research questions posed in this study by identifying the core capabilities in the form of leadership 'attributes' perceived to be most associated with 'successful' change leadership. As noted in earlier chapters, attributes are broadly conceived as a mix of skills, knowledge, capabilities, competencies and personal characteristics that are perceived to be of considerable importance to change agents in performing their role (Morden, 1997).

An overall list of attributes, relevant for successful change agency, was arrived at by a review of the literature on leadership and change agency and an analysis of a number of recruitment advertisements in major national

newspapers and employment based web services which use keywords or phrases, such as 'change agent', 'managing change', 'change leader', 'leading change' and 'change management'. This resulted in a comprehensive list of 77 characteristics and attributes, some empirical others prescriptive which were identified as relevant to change agents in general.

A small focus group of acknowledged change leaders from a medium sized higher education institution then reviewed the comprehensive list of attributes using an evaluative decision process suggested by Caldwell (2003) and that has previously been described in Chapter Three. Their role was to synthesise, narrow-down and rank these by a process that was designed to achieve a degree of expert consensus as to the attributes most associated with successful change leadership.

Introduction to focus group participants

As described in Chapter Three the participants in the focus group were selected from middle managers at a medium sized higher education organisation who were acknowledged as change leaders. The following paragraphs briefly introduce them.

Ange has been the academic leader of a small programme for many years and recently led a substantial programme re-development for her discipline area which represented a substantial change to both the programme and the staff. She now head's the school and is preparing it for the next iteration of organisational change.

John is a highly experienced leader in a large School unit. He is the academic leader of a large programme and has led change of both academic programme development as well as departmental organisational change. John also engages with industry in many areas of change through his private consultancy firm.

Kate has been with the institution for many years and has led change developments in her specific discipline area. In recent years she has taken on a

wider institutional role and has been responsible for leading and contributing to organisational structural changes.

Pru is currently an administration manager specialising in admissions and enrolments. Pru has undertaken a number of administration roles in the institution and in more recent times has led teams engaged in substantial organisational procedural change.

Successful change leadership: exploring the attributes

Against the background of research on leadership and change, the ranking of the attributes of successful change leaders by the focus group revealed some predictable, but also some unexpected, results. The focus group reviewed the comprehensive list of attributes which was drawn from the literature and popular press. The first distinctive aspect of the findings was the format of the final ranking of the attributes for the template. Very early on in the discussion the participants suggested that the characteristics could be ranked in importance depending on the timing and stage of the change process, or the nature of the change. John summed it up as a “conceptualisation of change, the initiation or the implementation phase or whatever phase of change it is, some of these other characteristics will be of differing importance”. A general discussion followed and consensus was reached which decided the grouping of the attributes as five realms of activity with a number of attributes within each. The overall objective was to get agreement on a separate and limited number of key attributes which differentiate successful change leadership from the wider range of attributes which simply describe those for general or change leadership, and. The following template (Table 3) presents the grouping of those attributes which the focus group felt were key to successful change leadership.

Table 3: Focus group findings - Attributes of successful change leadership

<i>Grouping</i>	<i>Characteristics/attributes</i>
Change Leadership	Courageous and not afraid to take risks Adaptable and flexible Thinks strategically Future focussed and keeps the future in focus Highly creative and imaginative
Intrapersonal Communication	High degree of emotional intelligence Highly committed & highly motivated Independent & autonomous Self-confident & aware Insightful
Interpersonal Communication / People	A listener who learns from others Open to new ideas Good communicator who is adept at consultation Builds capacity and empowers others Builds teams Develops cultures for learning Is both caring and empathetic Great at networking Good negotiator Resolves conflicts Manages resistance
Leading Change	Has an inspiring vision Believes change is possible Passionate about it Personifies intended culture Clear focus Committed and shows it Credible/Honest/Trustworthy/Has integrity Is realistic and genuine
Managing Change	Understands the change process Keeps a balance between outcome & process Has competent specific knowledge Plans effectively Solves problems Follows through and maintains momentum Perseveres and persists Delegates effectively
All of the above	Evaluates and keeps the feedback coming

Once the general shape of the template was determined, a further question arose as to whether to rank the individual attributes under the various headings in any order of importance, however it was agreed that the nature of the change, the environment and context, as well as the stage of change may effect

this, therefore, the five domains, or realms, do not contain ranked attributes, nor do they themselves follow a specific process order. It was determined that the agreed attributes were collectively essential to successful change leadership, however not all would need to be employed at all times. As Kate reflected:

I was kind of just starting to scan down them. And thinking that collectively that what's required. If you start to peel out some of those and say for example a change leader had some of those but not others of those, you would query their capacity to lead the change if they didn't have clusters of those things. Not necessarily all of them, but you know you could have a person who's fantastically open to new ideas for example but can't inspire others with them at all. Or you know is really good at conflict resolution but doesn't think strategically. There are some combos of them that are going to create your best change leaders.

When conceiving the five domains of success attributes, of greatest importance was the need for change leadership to have excellent intra-personal and inter-personal skills. These two domains of communication were seen by the group to intersect with each of the other three – change leadership, leading change and managing change.

Leadership

The leadership domain was seen as being foundational to both leading and managing change. Whilst the two domains of interpersonal and intrapersonal communication were seen as being complimentary to each aspect of leadership as well as to each other.

Courage was explored and was described by John in terms of it being “one of those questions that always comes up when we discuss the institution's values... [Courage], what does it actually mean?”, however it was determined to be an essential leadership quality. Entrepreneurship was discussed but discarded as a term that carried too much baggage. It was replaced with associated attributes of a leader being courageous and not afraid to take risks. Ange qualified her understanding of courage “not as in ‘rashness’ but more like in a fortitude/willingness to stick your head up”. This made sense in its grouping with risk-taking when Kate described it as “not about being risky, but its about being prepared to take a risk”. This was broadly perceived as an important engine of innovation and change, and was allocated to the general change

leadership domain as one of the governing attributes that initiates change prior to the implementation or management of the change actions themselves and is directly related to setting the groundwork for managing resistance to the idea of change, as was explained by John as follows:

It's in the implementation. My experience is that you have to move people from the status quo and it's incredibly, incredibly difficult to do that because at every opportunity they will put mechanisms in place to maintain the status quo at every single step. It safe and it means no disruption. It reduces my work, my potential work and therefore, let's not change anything.

However the courage to use power was also highlighted as being sometimes a necessary evil when dealing with some types of change. Pru explained:

For some changes ... you're not going to be able to consult, sometimes it just has to be done and it has to be done incredibly quickly other wise something terrible could happen. So that the type of change is really important to consider. Sometimes you have to have a dictatorial, instant decision, has to be done immediately type change.

Adaptability and flexibility were seen in terms of the leader being 'flexible and responsive'. The attributes of creativity and imagination were perceived as a collective or team based transformational attribute, rather than individual, however the capacity can be 'enabled' by change leadership. The question was then raised as to whether transformation is the nature of change?

Pru: It can be. It might not be.

Kate: I think it [is] those other things, courageousness, strategic thinking, creativity, what have you, that will create the transformations.

This was referred to in terms that leaders do not necessarily create all the new ideas; often they simply create the contexts in which ideas emerge. The group felt that in the educational environment with which they were familiar, everyone in the organisation has the capacity to be creative and can therefore be called upon to act in change agency.

Communication

The attributes associated with communication were highlighted by the focus group as being pivotal to 'success' when leading and managing change as Ange explained:

The good communicator and strong personal skills go over into the people stuff [communication] I reckon. The intrapersonal communication is the... what's left of the high belief, high degree of emotional intelligence. All of those things.

Following some discussion around this it was further explained by Kate in terms of its relationship to success:

I do think to lead change, or effect change, you have to be a good communicator but I watch people around the institution who are actually very good communicators and who don't effect change. So I would put that one much further down the hierarchy. I do think you have to have good communication skills but just because you've got them doesn't mean you're a good change leader.

There was also general agreement that a leader's consistency of purpose and openness of communication was the best way of gauging 'trust'.

Emotional intelligence was discussed as being a highly desirable attribute to effect change, as Ange suggested it is "needed in order to engage with people in different places and in different ways and bring them on board early on". Further discussion, however, questioned the cultural appropriateness of emotional intelligence, as it is currently defined, with Kate explaining:

I just read a fascinating book last week which reviewed Bolman's 'Wizard and the warrior, leading with passion and power', and I feel quite strongly about emotional intelligence as well. I think it's critical but she is quite critical of the way that emotional intelligence is structured in the literature currently it's a very patriarchal construct and talks about emotional intelligence from marginalising women's ways of knowing and then suddenly saying emotional intelligence is important and using it as a construct for change, largely in the context of male CEO's and when I read this thing it just kind of shocked me and made me think quite a lot about my own belief about emotional intelligence and I think there's some food for thought in there about whether emotional intelligence is... what is it? What is it? And how do we use it? And who defines what it is? So, most of me agrees with you, but I've got this little niggle at me now from having read this thing.

Intrapersonal communication skills such as motivation and commitment, independence and autonomy, self-confidence and awareness, and insight were also ranked highly. These were variously recognised by the group as self-empowering attributes for change leadership:

A motivator, someone who will motivate others? ... and therefore if you've got that sense you will feel confident to be able to motivate other people to have that same sense. (Pru)

To actually follow through on what's right once we go back to modern morality too, it's going to follow you through on what's right. (Kate)

Self confidence with the awareness is part of insight isn't it. Or insight, or being insightful. (Ange)

Being a good communicator who is adept at consultation was seen by the group as someone having the ability to communicate the vision for change and was qualified as the need to communicate and be consultative, placing the importance on consultation. Openness to new ideas was related to this and considered an important attribute. There general agreement that a leader cannot have a fixed view of the outcome and that they need to be open to the changing realities and ideas that may be generated as a result of the empowerment of others and any other learning that inevitably may occur along the way. This was seen as being essential to both leaders and managers of change as a way to differentiate them from those who may be resistant because they have something to lose.

Another interesting attribute, 'listeners who learn from others', was ranked highly and appeared to confirm a general endorsement of the concept of organisational learning, at least in the sense that for successful change, learning has to take place at all levels within organisations. As Ange put it:

For example, I began to look on that process of restructure and the degrees being a research project. It was really, over a long period of time starting with each year in that review. And that requires learning from others, listening and getting input. And also, is not learning from others making sure that you are open to change and that the change journey may morph and change as other opportunities come along.

This led to a discussion about a contemporary emphasis on the ability to empower employees, encourage team working and manage their self-development through learning. Kate explained that for her "it's something about high belief and empowering others to control their own destiny ... or high belief in the capacity of people to control their destiny".

Ange cautioned that she thought that as a change manager there might not be "a lot of time for that sort of thing". This was countered by John who remarked for himself that "I'm not sure about that, as much as being a dictatorial leader is

attractive to me, you get to the point where you actually can't do it all ... you have to build capacity in others". This discussion led to a general agreement that change leadership needed to build capacity and empower people to do things through a delegation process even though they may come up with things that may not necessarily be agreed with. In this case the developing of cultures for learning was seen as relating to capacity building and empowerment, where each was regarded as an important attribute of successful change leadership. Being caring and empathetic was discussed as fitting comfortably among these other concepts and were regarded as 'basic requirements', however not without a moment of cynicism from Kate when she suggested that "you have to care about what's going to happen to people, to the organisation and what have you but it's a bit kind of blah!. ... I think empathy is more for me".

Four attributes that were similarly placed were negotiation skills, managing resistance, conflict resolution and networking, all of which appeared to be interrelated in that they reflected the front line aspects of communicating and therefore managing change in the face of obstacles, conflict or opposition. The participants readily agreed that middle managers were more likely to experience the 'raw' realities of how people experience change, and that they have to deal with the consequences. However, further discussion proposed that while these were supported by the literature as being essential attributes for change leaders and managers, when looking through the lens of success it may be possible to list negatives such as managing resistance, at the bottom of any listing as the successful employment of the higher ranked attributes should mitigate the necessity for these negative aspects.

Leading and managing change

The focus group placed a high level of importance on the need for leaders of change to have an inspiring vision. There is an assumption here that change leadership is about creating a vision of change, while change management is about translating the vision into agendas and actions. The group agreed that the two challenges, while different, are complementary and qualified them with other actions that are needed to complement vision, such as leaders and managers being realistic and genuine about what they are saying. This also

includes having a belief that the change is possible, and being passionate about both the vision and the possibilities it offers. These were discussed as being relevant to the personal view and nature of the change leader and her or his approach to leading the change action. As suggested by Ange:

Isn't it the difference between an internal and external locus of control which is if you've got an internal locus of control, you believe that you can shape your own destiny whereas if it's external you tend to believe that everything is someone else's fault; you're a victim. If you've got an internal locus of control you see things, you define things as, you can shape it yourself. I think that's what's intended there. You're a self starter.

Personifying the intended culture was discussed in terms of being a role model for real engagement - passion and courage on behalf of one or a few people. It was explained by Ange as being "focussed on the people on the ground who've got conviction and belief and a drive and they can see a sensible goal and they can explain why it's sensible" rather than being "external people coming in and saying thou shalt do this that and the other". Maintaining a clear focus and commitment to the change action was agreed as being complementary to these attributes. This led to a number of reflections on the way that others may perceive these 'messages' from the change leadership:

You ask yourself the question, 'what is it that drives them to do what they do?' and 'do they have some sort of purpose in their lives around what they do?' (John)

I was reading something the other day about trying to link it with peoples values because if you're trying to change people in a way that actually works against their values then you're basically '@#\$%&!' because if it's really against their values, whatever you do and say and even if you they put the most perfect business case to them, they're not going to do it because it actually offends them. It's fraught with so many difficulties in terms of espoused values and real values. (Pru)

I think I really quite strongly agree that's tied with believing change is possible. It's like being able to envisage, and be confident about and optimistic. (Ange)

As a result of this, 'values' as a distinct characteristic was not included on the list as it was felt to be incorporated into the other attributes of inspiring visions, integrities and honesty and also into personifying the culture by 'living the life and doing the do'. These interlinked and complementary attributes of vision, passion, belief and demonstration by doing, give a direction to the transformational leadership of change and the change action itself whilst being

cognisant of the attitudes and beliefs of the others involved, which led on to discussions around the underpinning of leadership by the ethical attributes.

Ethical attributes including credibility, honesty, integrity and trustworthiness were given a reassuring endorsement by the entire group, indicating the importance of these virtues. This was followed up with a discussion about why credibility is so important which elicited the following response from Pru:

I think that you may not need to have a detailed knowledge of exactly how everything's done but you need, as a change agent, you need to be seen as credible by the people who you are trying to change. So that actually implies that you actually will have some knowledge because you're not going to be seen as credible if you don't have any knowledge. You're going to have a knowledge of the change process, because otherwise you're going to lack credibility when you're actually trying to effect change. So I think that credibility is actually quite important.

Ange further remarked that "along with that goes integrity and honesty, because that's what creates or builds credibility".

There was general agreement that a leader's consistency of purpose and openness of communication was the best way of gauging trust. Moreover, given the uncertainties that change creates, maintaining trust was considered very important. Nevertheless, it was agreed there were realistic limits to honesty, especially if it might exacerbate uncertainties, generate anxiety or cause greater de-motivation for those who might loose out in the change process. This sparked debate around the attributes of being realistic and genuine in the way that the leader of change conveys information about the change action. A question was asked as to what is realistic and genuine about telling the truth? Was it being realistic about what was going on and being genuine about it? Further discussion suggested that the answer lay in 'realistic' being conceived as both 'genuine' as well as conceiving of something that 'actually can happen'.

For the attributes most associated with managing change the group began with an understanding of the change process itself because of its fundamental links back to the effect that it may have on the people involved. Kate summed it up as follows:

Understanding the change process is critical. If you don't understand what's going to go on for people and how they're going to resist or how they're going to be slow to change – all those kinds of things. I reckon understanding the change process is probably much more important than a really strong understanding of the issue of the business itself. I don't think you can go in ignorant, obviously. But I think part of also promoting change, is actually being prepared to let go what they know about the way it operates currently and they're there to actually perceive the whole thing differently.

Added to this was the ability to keep a balance between the outcomes of the change action and the processes involved in the various stages of the action. It was agreed that understanding the balance between outcome and process is inherent in understanding the change process.

The group then turned its attention to the concept that a successful manager of change needed to be both 'competent' and 'knowledgeable'. The following discussion explains the importance placed on these attributes:

- Ange: There's a couple of other very important ones for me. One is knowledge. You've got knowledge of the business. But in order to do this sort of thing, you have to have a very good, very detailed knowledge of the issue and the relevant information. The whole territory and working within. So you have to be an expert really.
- Steve: So is it knowledge of the business of change, or is it knowledge of the change business?
- Ange: No, it's the specific whatever it is, whether it's in education or a particular area of education or somewhere else or something else To me, the knowledge is important in order to achieve influence and to persuade the people you have to have the information that the rationale or facts that support whatever it is you're trying to do.

There was general agreement that while the knowledge of the 'business of change' and the knowledge of 'the change business' were two different things, they represent the 'process' and 'outcome' aspects of the change action and each play an important part in allowing the manager to leverage various situations to maintain a balance. Further to this the ability to problem-solve and plan effectively were regarded as essential and were seen as embedded in the two sides of the knowledge paradigm. Also noted was the importance of following through which elicited a number of lively observations about what occurs when there is a lack of follow through:

Oh, I reckon that's our number one problem. People have got some of the other skills but they actually don't keep the momentum up, they don't follow through. They initiate, they're flexible, they're nice, they understand, they're all those things but they just don't carry it through to fruition. (Kate)

I think it's all about the implementation. You can have all the vision in the middle but if you don't have the follow through the vision is going to go poof. (Pru)

My supervisor for my PHD ... told me a while ago that the really important thing, fundamental thing towards the end is, you've got to keep the boulder rolling. You know you've got this great big massive thing, but you start it and you've got to just keep it moving. Cuz if it stops you've got to put all that energy into starting it again, and it's really maintaining momentum with any kind of project is critical. (Ange)

Can't think of the number of things we have around here that people have gone 'ouuaaagh' started and never finished. (Kate)

Perseverance and persistence were highly rated but were seen as personal attributes of the manager because they describe the level of belief in terms of following through and maintaining momentum. The question of delegation was seen as an important attribute of a successful manager of change by John, who proposed that one should "delegate, otherwise you can't manage it and things can get too big". This was agreed to be particularly true in today's complex organisational environment and shifting climates, however John went onto suggest that it comes with a caveat:

Frustration sets in too with delegation, because as a change leader you have to be able to live with the output, the results of delegation. So you empower people to do things through a delegation process or whatever and they may come up with things that you may not necessarily agree with.

The final attribute that was discussed was an evaluative process which was agreed to be embedded in each of the domains so that the communicator/leader/manager was constantly checking progress and striving for continuous improvement. The group suggested finishing the template off with evaluation which then linked back into leadership, and which allowed the leader/manager to explicitly see that they were following through and evaluating all of the time.

PERCEPTIONS OF BEING IN THE MIDDLE

This section provides findings associated with the second research question into the perceptions of middle leaders' organisational relationships. The findings present a middle-up/beside/down perspective of educational middle leaders engaging in change.

The following questions were posed to all of the participants (focus group and semi-structured interview) as a way of framing the conversation around their perceptions of middle management as well as gauging the opinions of practitioners who identified themselves as being in the middle:

- What is the middle?
- Who is in the middle?
- What it is like being in the middle?

Ten participants in total therefore took part in answering these questions, four from the focus group and six from the interview group. It is important to note that one of the focus group members was also an interview participant.

Introduction to the semi-structured interview participants

The focus group participants have been introduced previously and the following paragraphs briefly introduce the semi-structured interview participants who were acknowledged as being successful 'middle' leaders of change. The circumstances of each of their organisational situations and the change actions that they led are also introduced. While their respective organisations vary in size and structure, they share similarities in the ways in which they each approached their change action and the way that they managed the people and the change toward a successful outcome. To begin the conversation and to set the scene, here is a personal view of leadership offered by one of the participants, Ange:

I'd come to think of leadership as like a mantle, like something that you wear it's something that other people give you and you start to realise that you're wearing this thing that people have given you. It's like a gift.

Lee has been a manager in higher education for over 20 years and is a head of school at a medium sized institution. She heads a school, of over 60 staff which is large by comparison to others in the institution, with some of the departments

within her school being the size of some of the other schools in the institution. Lee felt that this was somewhat unjust for her heads of departments not to be acknowledged for the big management job that they were doing. She therefore began a process of enlarging the middle management of her school to achieve more equity for her staff by establishing departments and putting in heads of departments. The process acknowledged that people were already doing the management work and that by advertising the positions, it allowed the staff to see that there was an opportunity for progression, and as Lee states, “it helped them engage in the management of school instead of ‘chugalugging along’ to work and expecting everything to be on a plate”. She informed me that the idea to seek change came from herself:

It probably came from me just responding in the start, to the managers in particular saying they were overworked. Me, sitting in my position being able to see that some of my departments were as big as some other schools, never felt right, didn't feel equitable. So I always thought that we should do something about it, that it was really wrong.

Nick is the acting head of school in a medium sized institution and he did not initiate the change within his organisation, instead he inherited a change action which was well underway. He had been with his organisation for 26 years and had held a number of positions, first as a lecturer and then progressing into academic management roles. His school was amalgamated with another to form a single unit under a faculty structure. The two schools, while having some potential for collaboration, were somewhat disparate in their teaching and learning methodologies and their pedagogic cultures. There have been financial and organisational imperatives that dictate the need for change in the programmes and to seek interaction to increase efficiencies in the organisational environment. In his previous position he was involved in the conception of the change from within and had a different relationship with the staff than the one he currently holds. He was never afraid to “poke spears” at the ideas for change and make lots of suggestions. He has therefore been close to the action of change, albeit from a differing perspective to where he is now, from the start. Nick laid out the frustrations that he and his staff felt about the situation:

I think we've all felt in the school that we're pedalling bloody hard for what we're getting out of it. Staff are complaining bitterly about their excessive

teaching hours and you're aware that the classes are too small to be really viable dumping two majors. Cutting out a number of non-essential papers, and fining everything down. Convincing some people who have been teaching this stuff for the last... since 1960 something, that this is the way you teach it It's a bit of a hard row to hoe.

Sid heads an academic department at a large institution and has only been with the institution for two years. He was brought in to the department as a senior lecturer with the view to take on the head role upon the retirement of the incumbent. He described a traumatic change cycle which had occurred in his institution and department recently which was initiated as a result of various directives and decisions from above. A substantial proportion of academic staff were shed over a three year period, through a plan which Sid describes as "highly controversial" and which was subject to much "back and forth", involving public and non public negotiations of various kinds within the department as a whole and with the individual members of staff and the faculty office. This left the department facing a substantial reduction in the number of full-time equivalent (FTE's) staff members available to deliver its programmes and conduct its research. However Sid explained that while this occurred there was also institutional strategic and long term planning demands which he described as "not fitting comfortably with a profile of organisational shrinkage", (he did not call it decline). He explained:

So there's quite a lot of change going on around here at the moment we have to accommodate reduced numbers of staff to curricula, structure and course delivery, we have to manage the changes in the profile of seniority in the department which have been quite dramatic as a result of some retirements. We have to look at restraints around the availability and non-availability of particular expertise that is going to retirement. It's very complicated and it's quite unpleasant.

Peg heads a school for an education unit at a large institution. Prior to a merger of the old college with the local University, she was the director of the school. Unlike some of the other institutions where colleges of education have merged with universities, Peg's unit remained a stand alone school within a new larger structure. In some ways the merger process was straightforward for Peg's school because people basically stayed in the same place, and there wasn't a lot of reestablishment in the first instance, only the establishment of the new faculty and the coming together of staff from both organisations. The merger

was the catalyst for Pegs change action and it placed a number of considerations in front of Peg as a leader, with regard to the actions that she would need to take to guide her school and staff into the new environment. She informed me that her focus was on:

How to support the staff to move them to the new head space and not keep pining and hankering for the days of old, but also to not lose everything that was good from yesterday.

Ian spent ten years as a senior lecturer at a large institution and was recently appointed as a professor. The change action, or revolution as he described it, was not immediately connected with an organisational restructure that had recently taken place. Rather it was a few years ago and triggered by the external pressures of the 'practice based research funding' (PBRF) regime. However the problems were around the internal leadership of the department which, as Ian suggested, made the process "very, very unpleasant". He described how some of the staff, himself included, who had sufficient rank and tenure, felt that the only way to deal with the problem was to take action to make the change happen because those who were most effected could not effect it for themselves. In Ian's organisational situation there was simply a head and then everyone else, therefore the senior staff saw themselves as the management layer, caught in the middle, that was going to have to enact change. These people formed a group to discuss options for change and called themselves the 'tea group'. Ian explained that the name came from the famous political moment when former Prime Minister David Lange paused prior to making a massive change to taxation proclaiming that 'we had better have a cup of tea'. However it also had a flavour of the revolutionary connotations of the 'Boston tea party', if only in name rather than violence. This act of revolution, like its violent namesake, began with small organic actions that helped to undermine established behaviours and was an opportunity for concerned staff members to pause, gather and consider what to do to solve a dilemma. Ian described it as "pure good old-fashioned political sort of stuff. And it was successful". As Ian explained:

We'd meet outside of the office because we felt there was no way we could just found one in our tutoring rooms. So we'd meet on campus but not in the building, and we had this tea group, and the tea group was just to sit and have a cup of tea and talk about what was going on, what we

might do etc. and basically the first one was very dramatic and sort of clandestine, but a lot of people were there, a lot of people had very similar feelings about what we could do and the fact that if we didn't do something basically things weren't going to change, and what would we do and what could we do.

Ange was recently appointed as the head of a small school in a medium sized institution, prior to that she was the programme leader of the school's degree programme which recently underwent substantial change. The programme that Ange was leading suffered from falling enrolments and a general malaise around its identity. It had a name, which was considered important by the original authors, and which they very strongly felt articulated the point of difference for the programme over similar offerings at other institutions. Parallel to this was an organisational re-structuring that occurred within the institution that set the school into a vulnerable financial position. With all of this Ange decided that there was finally a sense of 'do or die' and following some commissioned market research around the future of the programme, the results were presented as three options - don't change it and it will die, sell it, or change it. She explained her immediate reaction when she heard this:

I really felt any action had to come from me. It was the program that I was managing, I had the best knowledge and everything else. I also had a sense that it was my baby. I knew that, because one of [the] recommendations was to change the title of the degree and I knew that that would be like the world tilting on it's axis for many people in the school but I thought let's have a look at it and I sat down at my computer and just typed the words [of a new title], and then again four times with names of majors in brackets and I just looked at them and thought, that's scary and what would it mean, and I just started to type up, and took it into [head of school] and said, 'here, what do you think of this?' and from that point I knew that, well, she kind of let me lead things.

Ken was on secondment as the leader of a single programme school whose staff and organisation had undergone substantial change in recent years. He also maintained a teaching and research role in the faculty within which the school resides. Prior to the secondment he was a program leader and has held an academic leadership role of co-head of school. His change task was to transition the school and its programme from one institution, from which the programme was being displaced, into his own institution. The school which Ken was asked to lead, had a single programme and was originally a private training

establishment (PTE) which then joined a higher education college where it transitioned into a degree programme. In 2006 the college was notified that it was being taken over by the local university. The university did not feel that the schools' programme fitted very well with their desired profile, however the institution for whom Ken works did feel that there were interesting possibilities and that it would complement other programmes within its discipline portfolio. For the school this became the second time that they had relocated and experienced 'dramatic' change in recent years. It was disruptive for the staff and students and as Ken confirmed "they weren't terribly excited by that". They were worried about the terms of the coming restructure as they felt that they had worked quite hard to develop their new degree and they were "extremely anxious about the move". The staff felt let down by the organisation that they had only recently joined and were dismayed that the university did not want them. At the beginning of 2007 Ken was seconded onto the program and he shifted his office out to the college and began working with the team in its transfer to his institution. As Ken pointed out, this was not simply a transfer of locations:

It was a transfer in terms of academic processes, a transfer in terms of culture, in terms of [my institution], and also in terms of physical resources, like in terms of buildings, and other resources around, you know, computers and all that sort of stuff, you know, teaching resources.

In between

Nick described being in the middle as "one step removed from God". Others spoke of being 'caught in between', or 'sandwiched between' senior management to whom they have responsibility for securing the implementation of organisational policy, and lecturers whom they described as colleagues or peers, and subordinates whom they described as staff for whom they have some functional and often moral responsibility, be they junior faculty, part-timers or support staff. Ian described the flat hierarchical system of his organisation in terms of his own experience as a middle manager when he remarked that "I never saw that I had sub-ordinates, because as you know, most people don't really work for you, they may work with you or against but they don't see themselves working for you".

Sid described himself being in the middle in number of senses in that he has management responsibility for both academic and general staff who are, from the point of view of a hierarchical structure, beneath him. However he qualified this when he said:

Though I don't regard them as beneath me in almost any other way and I am, from the point of view of the same hierarchy, in turn some senior management people to whom I report.

He also described being in the middle in a more colloquial sense, in that he is often caught between competing imperatives, institutional dynamics and institutional structures:

I am often the point of interface and contact between two quite different constituent groups in the institution and it's often up to me to make them speak to one another or to explain the needs of one to those of the other.

Sid represents his department to the organisation and institutional units outside his department. He explained that while he was not a formal representative of the deans' office or the examinations office or the academic management groups, he frequently represents their views to the department.

I don't act on behalf of them but I do represent them in the sense that, imperatives and directives that they want to have executed by the department and I explain to the department what that will involve or attempt to form policy with respect to those with the members of department if they decide that they don't like those ideas or they don't want to follow those directives.

He also admitted to being sometimes in the middle in the bad sense, when he stated that "I get stuck with it, when it comes down....". This may not necessarily be seen as an institutional or hierarchy pyramid but rather as mediating intra-institutional communications.

Lee also believed that she was in the middle and explained her organisational relationships as being:

I've got a dean who's part of an executive management team, so while I am deputy dean and I'm a head of school, I do see that to some extent we have some autonomy in managing our own institutions, but we are part of a much greater organism. So we're definitely a conduit where we're part of a system, we're not on the top. I'm probably not right in the middle, but I'm definitely part of a big middle group.

Ken described himself as being 'very much' in the middle in terms of line management of both resources and academic matters:

I have limited power or responsibility so like a lot of managers, decisions gets made higher up and then I'm expected, in my role, to present those to the staff and to manage that. Whether I personally agree with that or not, that's part of my role, and I have to in some ways separate myself out from that and see what is institutional need and how best can we make that work for the staff and ultimately the students learning, I suppose, as it trickles down. So it's very much in the role because with the delivering of some hard information or some hard decisions there's a response that comes back the other way.

Organisational structure

Reflecting on the continued changing environment of higher education in the last twenty years, Sid described his perception of the situation:

I think large institutions have an unfortunate habit of developing an imperative for change which is not always well grounded in an actual perception of what's good for the institution. And there are some divisions of the institution that regard facilitating change as their job, sometimes where change might not be helpful. Sometimes institutional change, adaptation, is necessary, but sometimes not doing anything is as good a policy as any other. And it's not always easy I think for institutions to see where they are doing fine and to not mess with it.

Some of the participants saw the higher educational setting as setting the culture of 'middle' as contingent on the collegial structure of the organisation. As Ian explained:

I think in an academic environment part of the dynamic is how much senior leadership you have versus middle and lower ... the middle should not only have numbers, but we just didn't have a lot of other senior people to look too. I would say that I'm in the middle, I mean I've only been a professor for a year. I spent ten years as a Senior Lecturer, so as you know in this system that seems to be smack-dab in the middle.

Peg felt that it was quite often easy for people who look from a top down perspective to see staff as being reactive and unwilling to change when in fact it was not that on its own and was more likely the result of many things, including anxiety about how they were going to manage the change, and anxiety about workload. Staff often feel like they are barely keeping their noses above the water, yet a change action undoubtedly increases workloads and stress levels. Peg acknowledged that it was her responsibility on behalf of the staff to keep

reminding those people at the higher level who were not always seeing that ground and simply cannot have that level of detail:

And every so often you've got to come and remind them of what they're doing so there is the upward kind of thing. But also there's the upward thing in terms of, yup lets suggest that there are some issues around how we can implement that. And that's going to impact on time-table. And that's going to impact on x, y and z.

Sid described his organisation as being highly collegial and pointed out that educational organisations are not nearly as hierarchal as those found in the private and public sector. He suggested that there might be several senses in which he was in the middle due to the unique condition that an educational leader must negotiate. Lee explained the collegial nature of her organisational system as not being very hierarchical:

I mean sure there's a hierarchy in our organisation but we do have quite flat structures and because we're academics everyone thinks they know everything anyway, that's my experience, everyone thinks they know how to market, everyone thinks they know how to communicate, everyone thinks they know how to run the accounts, everybody thinks they know everything. And so, I think it's quite useful to tap into that idea of self knowledge and self worth that the staff have, and they don't respond that well to strong hierarchies. You'll always get a few old fashioned people who say, oh just tell us what to do and we'll do it. But academics respond much better, I think, to other types of structures.

Pru, however, pointed out that there are differing perceptions of where the middle may lie, "people who may be a team leader of a small team who consider themselves to be in a different middle from perhaps where we are". Ken saw being in the middle as being part of a process of implementation or managing at a certain level. This related to being bound to institutional policies and procedures that need to be followed. However John explained that the middle also comes with a level of frustration: "we're very limited as to how much strategic stuff we can actually implement because of the stuff that sits on top of us".

Kate felt that organisational structures themselves could often place barriers in the way of middle leaders and that authority did not necessarily rest where the responsibility rests. She suggested that there might be consequences for both the leader and the people that they lead:

Someone is responsible for something but doesn't have the authority to make it happen and so you get this frustration from people who see that this change, for example, should be made but actually can't get there because there are six other people who stand between them and that even though they're responsible for that change.

Sid elaborated on his understanding that the condition of educational leadership is quite different from a corporate environment where a leader who may hold a similar organisational status can simply tell people what to do, and they would have little choice because they can always be replaced. Sid described higher educational institutions as:

Oddly political, and oddly hybridised politically in that you have essentially a collection of peers and a culture which encourages [collegiality], on the one hand, but which does actually operate from an institutional point of view hierarchically at the same time. So the situation is actually quite delicate.

John provided a perspective of change that he had experienced as a consultant in the private sector when he suggested that change knowledge could be lost from the organisation if organisational players themselves did not hold it. He recounted:

A new CEO will come in, look at the problem, stand back a little bit and then change. And not only change processes or change strategy or whatever, but they'll also change the team as well. And I've certainly been working for large corporate organisations as a consultant where knowledge, the body of knowledge, that underpins much of their business, sits in the consultancy not in their own team's head because the continuity has been me as a consultant rather than their own executive team. And after about three of these changes you then see them repeating the mistakes.

Leading and managing in the middle

As has been presented in Chapter two, leading and managing are seen as two mutually exclusive processes requiring different skills and personality traits. These perceived differences between leadership and management were discussed by participants and a range of views and perspectives were given, including:

I don't think you'll be a successful manager unless you've got some attributes around leadership and some will to kind of lead and basically make a stand around things, have a view. Where managing is just following through as a slave and you're obeying someone else's

instruction, I don't really think that's successful management. It might be operationally significant to do what someone else has told you to do but to me that's not good management, that won't work. (Lee)

There's a big part of my job that is management and it's one of the uncomfortable things at the moment about being a head of school is the realisation that I'm regarded by others as now part of 'the Management' I [hope] that they will believe that even though I have to be a manager I can still be a person. (Ange)

I have colleagues who speak dismissively about management and just completely distance themselves from that sort of level of involvement and think that managers are some sort of four-eyed, horned creatures. (John)

Another area of leadership and management that was discussed was the changing identity of role positions as one moved up and sometimes away from the centre of action. The following observation came from Kate who had recently moved into what can be described as an 'upper middle' management position within her organisation. It illustrates the idea of progression outside of a specific unit and into a larger, different part of the organisation as being like having to start again:

I remember when I first took up this job that I'm doing I remember saying [to my boss], one day, after I'd only been doing it for a little while, about how shocked I was at some of the stuff I saw around the [organisation], like coming out of a particular job and knowing what to expect in that job and know what the norms were and expecting those to be the same all over the [organisation] and being really shocked at not seeing that stuff all over the [organisation], and I said to him about that one day and he said. 'You have to understand it's a little bit like growing up, it's like, you're now an adult rather than a kid and you get to be part of adult business, rather than kid's business.' And I said 'mmm, no, it still feels like kids business, because I'm close enough now to see stuff I couldn't see before but I'm not close enough to influence it.' I still feel like that. You know, I can see stuff, but I'm very much in the middle and I can't always fix stuff or do something about stuff that I'd like to.

Others also had contributions to this perspective, as many of the participants identified with being promoted to management/leadership roles often at the expense of the things that they were originally employed to do. They identified a loss of focus and sometimes control over the work of their departments or work sections. Some of their views included:

As a faculty admin manager I was much more in control of the many parts of my own destiny than I am in my current role. (Pru)

When I was programme leader, I felt I had much more autonomy, much more scope for change. I lead a lot of change. I felt really innovative. I felt really empowered as a programme director when I had responsibility for my particular programme much more so than I feel now. I feel now that I have to wait for others to make decisions. (Kate)

However, others described a re-invigorating of their ability to be involved in the centre of the action:

Well I don't feel like that yet maybe I'm naive and I'm in that first flush of having a new role and it's all quite exciting but I feel at last in a different area of decision making I can actually make decisions that might make a difference. (Ange)

Before when I was a co head of school, I went from quite a junior position, academic staff member, straight into that position, and that was quite a leap, not a lot of knowledge. But I've actually enjoyed being a program leader because I've been really involved in the detail of the academic delivery and how that works at a program level. There's a lot of really good ground work and training that goes into that, in this role that enables me to, if I wanna have a pathway in this, to move out of it and further up. I've actually really enjoyed that. I've actually really enjoyed having the parameters actually. (Ken)

So, in a sense, being associate head of school in my role, I get this wider opportunity to influence academic direction. (John)

Sid offered his perspective on recently taking over as a leader in his organisation. He joined his organisation as a senior lecturer and spent his initial time teaching and was a member of the department during some controversial changes in which "nobody performed especially creditably, being driven by imperatives that were handed down from even further up". Sid was asked to take over the headship and he inherited a situation not of his own making. He joked that he was only gradually "discovering where the bodies are buried and who used to be married to who". There were, however, some advantages to Sid's situation, as he explained:

I can pretend not to know things that it is convenient not to know and sometimes unfortunately, I discover things that I really don't know that I should have known. Ideally one would know everything and be able to deny knowing anything if necessary. Which sounds Machiavellian but essentially quite useful. They say 'oh, we've always done it this way so far.' I can say, 'well I don't see any reason why we need to continue doing it that way if it's not serving our needs'. It is much easier for me to do that but it is becoming less easy for me to do that as the months go by.

Ange explained that when she first took up the leadership challenge, she initially suffered from what she described as 'impostor syndrome' in which you have a "little voice in the back of your head, or the sense that one day you're going to be unmasked as someone that's actually not very capable". She tried to counter this feeling by becoming adept at "something that rhymes with wool fitting" by proscribing to an old adage that "you fake it till you make it" which she found to be true up to a point. However she firmly believed that she had finally accepted the role and reflected on the slow growth of her personal awareness:

I was thrust into an environment of change and there were probably incidents along that period that I could talk about but probably as an important leadership apprenticeship I suppose, and it was during that period that I became aware that people were looking to me for leadership and that somehow through intuition or something, I was providing it and it all became all bound up together so that the feedback I was getting, was giving me the impetus to provide the leadership that made it grow.

Learning to lead

The participants agreed that as academic middle manager service posts have varied backwards and forwards between 'permanent' and 'fixed-term' appointments there was a need for institutions to consider who leads and why they lead. Ange commented that one of the dangers of natural selection in her institution has been that "often people who are very good are promoted up to a level where often they're not doing what they're so good at". Sid related the problem in his organisation as the upper management regime not fully understanding the behaviour of educational institutions. He commented that:

In the educational system you can have some people who are very good at managing, people who are very good at teaching, which we desperately need and people who are very good at research which we also desperately need, but only very rarely do you find somebody who can do all three things at once.

When reflecting on the need to explicitly find people with leadership potential, Ange described herself as having been in the 'middle manager' space for several years as a program leader, however as a head of school she was now able to finally take on the mantle of leadership which had been thrust upon her. She remarked that over the last few years she began to be regarded by her

colleagues as a leader. She cited her previous head of school as helping to develop her understanding of her leadership potential during this time:

Especially during performance appraisal times and they write up their fact comments to me that I needed to be far more aware of the respect that people had for my point of view and they actually wanted to know what I thought, and I should seek more opportunities to have something to say.

Ange's head of school was conscious of fostering emergent leaders and giving them opportunities to shine and it was at this point that Ange realised that she was being groomed for leadership. She expressed her thoughts that "there probably was an altruistic sense that she [the head] was setting up the right staff with the right passions and ... fresh view points". This became apparent within a few months when the head of school announced her retirement once "she was able to make her exit knowing that things were in safe hands".

Ian spoke of the notion of good followers, whom he suggested quickly become good leaders in the sense that "they're good and that they challenge the leaders or they're engaged and they're not thinking and offer their ideas". He described that in his department, one of their explicit agendas has been to grow leadership. He commented on the need as being "in these schools it's all very well and good to pass leadership around but if you don't have a cadre of capable leaders you're stuck". In Ian's organisation the staff themselves posed the question - who else are you bringing through? He explained how they decided to help ensure that the potential grew organically from within by sharing leadership in committees around:

It's not like skills training, we kinda know who each other are for a start so we feel this collegial sort of comfort. And then again, practice airing our views on things and trying to have a bit of ... and representing those views either upward or downward. So we're basically taking on the practice of leadership.

Lee described how it is not only middle leaders who feel that there is a lack of training for leadership. Following the appointments of her new layer of management she organised a catapult leadership course to assist her new department heads with their roles. She was spurred to do this when one of her managers explained that "she thought she was a fraud" because she had never done any management training and she didn't feel like she was legitimately a

manager, even though she'd been managing for a long time. She told Lee that some training would help her to feel qualified.

MIDDLE LEADERS - LEADING CHANGE

In the following two sections research question three and four are addressed through the discourse from the seven middle leader semi-structured interviews. These findings are presented as a way of explaining the ways educational middle leaders act as successful change leaders and the practices that they employ to minimise the potential negative impact of change. The interview participants share their personal perspectives of the successful change, and the ways in which they confirmed, created and legitimised their role and purpose within their organisations change actions. Within the following discourse it can be seen that there are both similarities and differences in approach to change and an illustration of how, and in what ways, middle leaders navigate the change process in the setting of higher education.

Middle leaders of change

Each participant contributed his or her thoughts on being in the middle and being responsible for leading change. Ange described herself as essential to initiating innovation and creating a vision of change, as well as implementing change through change leadership and management by translating the vision into agendas and actions. She stated that it was “not about a person being one or the other, but rather one can have strong leadership characteristics but also the nature of the job means that one has to have a management perspective as well”. A point that she made in one of her classes recently while examining faulty decision-making:

At one point one of the characters says to another, take off your engineers hat and put on the manager's hat, and I used that as an example the other day in my class and said well, what does that imply about management? And one of the implications is that, that kind of thinking that you put on, you might take it off again.

For Kate, there was a question of “where you will sit in the hierarchy of structure” and therefore “what influence you can bring to bear”, but for her it also resonated around the leader's ability to set strategic direction and be able

to implement the strategic changes. John described successful change leadership as being real engagement, with “passion and courage on behalf of one or a few people”. In his opinion “it is not about external people coming in and saying thou shalt do this that and the other”, but rather in terms of the people on the ground “who have got conviction, belief and drive and who can see a sensible goal as well as being able to explain why it’s sensible”. However Kate cautioned that the first thing most people think about when change comes is “how it’s going to affect me? They will look at the other stuff ... but the first thing is how’s this going to affect me?”

When considering the way that change is often initiated from the top of the organisation down, Peg noted that in her circumstance there was a lot of discussion through the college management team at the level that she was engaged in. She described it as “kind of open and frank about the issues that there were going to be. And then really it’s been our role to support staff to hook into the new structures”. She described the level of openness as being:

Quite a lot of open discussion and there was quite a lot of consultation with staff about the initial shape of the faculty and what it should look like. And the initial proposals which would have involved a mixing up were actually thrown out and we went for the status quo option. I think probably people assumed that would go on forever. And its been... I mean I don’t have an opinion as to whether people actually originally thought this is a holding pattern and we’ll move or whether that has been completely a response.

Peg suggested that the institution did not do things to the school and staff because they felt like it, rather they were usually responding to government funding issues and other external forces. The staff did not always see this, as she explained:

I’ve got a couple of staff who are quite staunch kind of union people who get into the employer/employee and what a rotten employer sort of thing. And actually in most of the situations it’s not them being a rotten employer it’s them being an employer who’s responding to the kicking that they’re getting from the government So I try to see the bigger picture, policy picture for them. And I think that’s one of the things that’s quite helpful for a leader to do is to help fit this context.

Ange made the distinction that for her change was not about just “trimming the cloth down and cutting, and cutting and cutting so that we’ve got a financial

model that's sustainable, that's viable". It was to create a framework that ensured that the people she worked with, and who worked with her were 'located' in a sustainable environment:

Instead of cutting staff to match students, what we're doing is growing the number of students to enable us to keep employing those people, and to engage more and more and more people because that's what we want to do, is to create more opportunities for people. There's, for me, a lot of unpicking of stuff to gain that, to get to that point, not only is your job secure but the opportunities we're going to put in front of you are much better and greater. The people often see it that what you're doing is a hatchet job, trying to make staff redundant.

In considering this, Lee described herself as "quite self reflective" and placed herself in the transformational leadership conceptualisation. She expressed her primary interest as being with people and what makes them tick, and as a consequence she framed management through the lens of working with people to achieve change. She stated that she asks herself:

What works and what doesn't; what do I do about that, what is my role, my responsibility? And so I guess I've noticed, that the way that I behave and the way that people perceive my attitude has a huge impact on what people do and how they respond to things.

Ange made a similar observation when she suggested that middle change leaders were not necessarily interested in changing personnel but rather in the relationships, attitudes, perceptions, and values of existing personnel. She suggested that a combination of the careful training that she received at teachers training college around organisation, goal setting and communication deeply ingrained an intuitive approach to evaluate constantly. She also noted the effect that her involvement in the play centre movement, once she had her children, had on her with its hugely democratic foundation consisting of "meetings, meetings, meetings". She described her view as:

You never just leave it and think, 'Oh well.' you constantly re-examine what you're doing and look for better ways to do them. And I think that's become part of my approach to this, always expecting that there's a better way. And you never achieve the perfect product or process.

The contextual pressures of Ian's situation were that the PBRF meant people were going to be ranked and that there were threats to his department in terms of this ranking. The head at the time took the imperative of PBRF to show staff

who were rated as 'non' or 'low' research active to the door. In Ian's opinion the head was pushing them away, just by the nature of who that leader was. There was a growing perception of the unfairness of the situation particularly because it was the junior staff and the powerless that were getting the biggest pushes. Ian pointed out that when people in his organisation looked to leadership they saw the cultural leadership, or the research leadership, or the maintenance of the values of the place. He suggested that "staff do look to senior folks even though they may have no formal authority". He observed that "the department always had a fairly good sense of unity together and all that, and that all seemed to be really going down the tubes". He described the dilemma that the senior teaching staff found themselves in:

I guess that the problem with an official appointment like a Head is that you can't just go into the Dean and say we don't like this person. We had, in fact ostensibly supported this person when they got the job. So, the Dean was not going to say, oh well you know, you just change willy-nilly. That's the other thing, I think in an academic environment ... part of the dynamic is how much senior leadership you have versus middle and lower because we felt that the middle should not only have numbers, but we just didn't have a lot of other senior people to look to, so we really felt that the pressure was on us.

On the inside or the outside

The position of being on the inside or the outside of the change action was discussed with most of the participants locating themselves on the inside of their respective change actions. Lee located herself inside the change action as the motivator of the change, as did Ian as the organiser of the 'tea group'. Nick had both the credibility and the mana to take on his change action and his strengths were that he was an insider with 26 years experience who had 'made good' and had vast operational and relational skills. Nick suggested, however, that his predecessor had a lot of trouble because he was out of touch with what was happening on the floor and also because he came in from outside.

Peg trained at the old College of Education before going out into the workforce as a teacher, returning to the College in 1992. As a result she carried a deep internal knowledge of the culture of teacher education as it is approached in the institution as well as an understanding of the way the system works. As she acknowledged, she went from lecturer to senior lecturer to associate director, to

director and now head of school. She commented on how important she thought her knowledge and understanding of the organisation was to her staff when they were confronted with the change:

I think it was important for them. I think there's some stuff around credibility, but it's not enough just to have knowledge of having been a teacher or having had the university thing. I think it's about actually pulling that knowledge from a whole lot of different areas together, so that you end up with something new. There's no way we could still be delivering how we were delivering in 1992. The world has changed too much for that.

Ange "was thrown into change" that never stopped when she was appointed as programme leader in 2001. She expressed her feelings of being thrown in at the deep end and having to learn fast and to become accepted as the leader:

Initially I was probably not that well equipped to cope with it ... but by about 2004-2005 I was beginning to feel, I mean, I hope it doesn't take everyone that long, but it probably took me that long to know the program and the wider environment well enough to have the confidence to just stand up to the various points of view. But, also, more importantly, have established my own point of view and be able to articulate it.

Ken, however, was seen as an outsider by his client group as someone who was charged with coming to do a "hatchet job" on them and to "clean them up" and move them to "yet another institution". He described the staff of the school at that time as a 'very tight group' explaining that they operated a 'family' model, through which they had dealt with everything within the school, being quite insular and isolated within the college. They were in effect operating as a totally autonomous sub-culture within the organisation with their own highly developed and distinct set of values, beliefs and attitudes as Ken discovered when it came to bringing the two processes together, between the school and the new institution, "it just didn't fit". He explained that the change preparations he was making were floundering so he had to move into a less structured way of approaching the problem:

We moved into it with quite a fluid concept and resistance and some of it quite valid resistance, some of it not so, but, you know. And we had two different concepts, they had a concept of this family, as a family, we resolve this. In [this institution] we see ourselves not as a family but as a learning institution that has a series of processes, policies and processes, that affect quality learning for our students. It protects both staff and students, and keeps the processes transparent.

Sid reflected on his 'newness' in his position and whether it was aiding or inhibiting his leadership of the change action. He suggested that because he spent a lengthy time when he first arrived, "on the chalk face", that he was not regarded as an outsider when he was appointed head, and in fact the staff knew when he first arrived that he was engaged to eventually take on that role. He noted:

I simply would have drowned if I had come in raw and attempted to learn the character of this institution while trying to do it. It's hard enough doing it after a year and a half and not having been deputy head of department or having long experience of simply sitting in department meetings and listening to how things work and I'm sure of daily fear that someone will come bursting through the door and say 'there's all this stuff you haven't done and you are supposed to do'. Nobody told me I had to do that. But you know that fear recedes more as time goes on.

PRACTICES OF SUCCESSFUL MIDDLE LEADERS OF CHANGE

This section documents a range of practices and approaches taken by the middle leader interview participants to minimise the potential negative impact of change. They began by discussing the nature of their individual success.

Forming a guiding coalition

To help achieve his change actions, Sid decided, as a new leader, to work with people in key positions, whom he thought needed to be persuaded of the situation. He acknowledged that there were those who he did not consult with. As he had not been in the job very long, he was trying to use the existing departmental committee structure to further certain kinds of perceptions rather than doing it himself. He asked one particular committee to look at both the demands and the availability to provide particular kind of course profiles/structures or courses that the department were committed to delivering because of the degrees they have to service, and to ask 'what staff do we have available to fill those courses?', and are there recurring gaps where we have a course that we have to teach but no-one to teach it'?

And I am in a good position in this respect they're basically, well disposed towards me and aware that there are changes that need to be managed because of the crisis that we went through a couple years ago. But they have different views about how that might ... [occur].

Ian's experienced a similar situation with his change agency. He explained that while the 'tea group' had their own reason and drive, they did not consult widely with the entire staff. Instead they listened and picked up the 'feeling' of where the others were sitting. One of the reasons that they did not, as Ian explained, "quickly rush back and say, Oh, gosh, you know, you're for us or against us, what do you think about this?" was because they knew that the more people who knew what was being planned could lead to talk and the whole design could just unravel. Ian admitted that the group had to assume the needs and sympathies of the wider collegium. The group placed a lot of credence on role modelling which he suggested was "another thing that goes in the middle". They felt that it was important to role model having a voice.

The approach to the way that Ian's advisory group was set up was dictated by the make-up of the people involved in that there were "a lot of sociologists and psychologists and various folks", and a lot of time was spent thinking about how that group should be consensual and that it should be elected. Ian explained that democracy was important, as it was felt that if it was hand picked or shoulder tapped, then it would carry all of the usual political problems and distrust. Representation was a concern as Ian pointed out that in a large school with many staff, it could be very difficult to communicate up and down the organisation. Ian made it clear that the advisory group was formed to enable the change to occur in a way that protected and was mindful of the rest of the staff and the values of the organisation. By airing their grievances in this way, the department did not have to go through the upheaval of departmental meetings where the quiet new and junior staff "sit in fear of being blown away or of getting sucked into conversations they and making comments that they may regret". As Ian pointed out, much of that had been done offline, as it were, with the head, and the advisory group was clear that this was for the department, and not about him personally. Ian admitted that personally they had serious concerns about the head's leadership but this was not a vendetta. As Ian explained:

A lot of times in departments you get the for and against. The gang that supports the Head or hate the other people, but this was pretty much unanimous we said the department is not in good shape but we care about it.

Sharing the vision and encouraging participation

To achieve the change action in Lee's case, she began by discussing the options for a new structure with her staff to confirm that it was what they wanted to do prior to seeking approval from above, so that collectively they would all be able to articulate the vision and therefore gain acceptance that it was what was 'best' for the school. Once the vision was articulated and agreed to, Lee gained agreement from senior management and human resources to establish an organisationally acceptable process for making the change. Lee was creating in a structure within the school that did not exist elsewhere in the university and she was able to 'sell' the vision upwards by arguing that the changes were concerned with her schools organisational effectiveness, improvement, development, and enhancement. Once approval to proceed was gained, a further consultation period took place within the school as Lee explains:

We had departmental meetings, we came up with lots of different models for how we might run it, what the systems might look like, we had consultation periods, feedback, discussions, we ran that through twice I think to get down to a model that we agreed on.

Lee spoke of the collegial nature of her school as contributing to the success of her change action and the fact that "we can have free and frank discussions about things". She was quite used to receiving criticism, and having to respond to people's issues, which suggests that there was openness in the school and that care had been taken to ensure that it was not a negative environment. She explained her leadership philosophy and the approach she took for successful change:

I think it is about openness, you need to have an idea about what you want and why but then, you don't want to have the solution embedded in your mind, if you genuinely want people to buy into it. So I believe in that grassroots consultation and getting buy in ... my strong view is that if people don't buy into it, it will never work. You need to spend the time talking to people and consulting them and getting their views, and then having a solution that addresses some of the issues as best you can. So that people know that it's a genuine invitation to look at the future with them. So, to me, it's about while you have a view, being open to genuinely discussing solutions, rather than slapping the solutions on.

Lee explained that one of the benefits of this process being initiated from inside the school was that it was very good to have the school talking about its management and therefore "instead of it just being how it is, a lot of people

were engaged in how it could be and to me that's quite useful". When I asked about advice which is commonly offered in the literature about the best way to initiate change, Lee had this to say:

There's a view I've read where people say you need to create crisis to make change happen. Well if there is a crisis, fair enough but I sort of believe in sincerity and honesty around those things, and I don't like the idea of.... I couldn't do it, I wouldn't be able to pull that off.

Sid also engaged his staff in talking about the change and worked with a level of transparency of information that both informed them of the seriousness of the situation, but which also encouraged them to participate in becoming part of the solution. He wanted to ensure that the opportunity to come up with solutions, was framed within a context of the organisational realities so that the staff would not come up with 'mad' ideas and that the ideas were actually pertinent to the situation that they faced. Sid shared information in an open way, both the good and the bad, as an important form of empowerment to ensure that all of the staff could jointly accept a situation and its challenges, and then be better able to strategise a lasting solution to the problem. Sid explained the way he approached this:

So one thing I am trying to do at the moment is to persuade my colleagues first, first to instruct them in what the situation actually is, to those who don't really understand it. It's all very well having this programme if it's chewing up X percentage of the discretionary budget. X being substantial every year. I'm just beginning this process ... explaining exactly what the situation is Explain it again, explain it again, keep on explaining it and each time say 'we have to do something about this', 'we have to do something about this' Having made it clear, I hope, what the necessities of that situation are, I will then try to manage the ideas for doing something about that cutback, by my own picture, but not everybody will agree with that. So I'll have to simply keep talking 'if you don't want to do that, what do you want to do?'

To facilitate this, Sid put forward a number of options for the staff to discuss and consider. These included radical ideas such as dropping the expensive programmes all together; employing part-time workers to cover some parts of the teaching which he explained was not as expensive as full-time staff who's workload would include a substantial research allocation; through to taking on extra supervision work themselves, while having committee workload reduced to compensate, and a number of other options. Sid's approach not only

empowered the staff to consider their involvement but also emphasised that they had the power to find the solution. They, in turn, had to decide what they were prepared to do, or not prepared to do, to collectively solve the problem. Sid decided that the only way to achieve the changes that were needed was to convince the staff that:

If they don't want to solve it, then the problem will remain They have very strong opinions about what it should be, and the way of getting from 'should be' to 'is' can actually encounter quite a lot of resistance. And people are entrenched in the idea that my specialty should be supported by the department because I am terribly important and prestigious and I need all these graduate students around me or workers in my field and so forth. It's very difficult to explain to somebody that your field is, for instance, unusually expensive of resources in equipment or staff time or general staff whatever ... Oh, it can be quite tricky.

In Nick's case each programme in his new school unit had its own way of doing things and neither party could see why there might be a problem, however, for Nick it all came down to the way that students, who may be potentially doing courses across the two programmes, perceived the information that they were given. As Nick suggested "if we had some staff doing it that way and some staff not doing it that way, I think the students would get upset" so it was important to find some sort of middle ground, while he acknowledged that there was a need for honouring the different cultures of the two programmes.

Employing inducements and rewards

Some of the leaders included inducements and rewards to encourage participation and commitment to the change action. Lee specifically wanted to make these new positions that she had created as part of her change action to be desirable instead of them being thought of as the "sort of a job for a sucker". She employed benefits such as an allowance, sabbatical leave, a cell phone, and negotiable teaching hours to acknowledge that the work involved was important. She also sold the benefits of the change action itself to the staff that by adding this additional management layer there would be an improvement in staff workload. She confirmed that it worked too, "they've got more time to manage, more time to teach, deal with quality issues rather than fire fighting and being completely bogged down in operational stuff day in and day out".

The interview with Ken actually took place in a corridor which he called his office. When I asked him about this he explained that he had “given all the best spaces to the staff. My senior staff have the best there is”. He then took me to see them and I can attest to the fact that they were generally larger than the usual institutional offering. Ken described himself as “a bit of a real estate shark” during the process of finding them a new home on the campus for the school, because he knew the institution really well and he knew that there was a building which had recently been vacated by a department that had moved into new accommodation. He explained:

They were going to put us in these little buildings off some side street. And I went and looked and I thought, oh these are really hideous, these are horrible, they've got asbestos, and they're going to be too small. I thought about this space, so I did this really big sell and, because no one else was interested at that time, we were just ahead of the game, of all the other development, we got in, and that secured this as a venue, for the program ... that really installed some confidence in them. Because we created a home for them and they had something physical to plan their new future around. That was really important. Really important.

Peg described a larger support structure which was put in place for her staff at an institutional level. She explained that despite an understanding of the inevitability of the merger, staff across her institution, particularly those from the old college, had very mixed feelings about it. They were anxious about where education was going to be placed, how it was going to be valued, and whether the practice and the professional aspects were going to be valued or reduced? Peg described how the institution helped with this transition by offering quite high levels of support with one being to take the reserves from the old college and earmark them as a research development fund. That provided a lot of practical ways of supporting people including the more traditional payment of fees and research grants, time off for data gathering and periods of time for drafting proposals and for completing theses. Also complete funding of peoples' first international conference as well as bringing visiting professors and running useful workshops around how to get published and research approaches in general.

Communicating and fostering consensus for change

Not all change actions occur seamlessly and without problems and the change action that Ange took was not without its challenges. She was concerned about the effect on her relationships with colleagues who were 'shocked by the turn of events', and that they felt that she was presenting the changes as a fait accompli with the result that a lot of people were quite angry. Ange admitted that she may have put her "foot wrong a little bit" and may have presumed too far, and that she needed to present her ideas carefully, but clearly to people to gain their confidence. She commented:

It was a difficult thing to judge there, as to whether we're heading that way or we can take one of these three paths, here they are, these are the reasons why I think we've got to make our choice ... there's a lot of judgment involved.

Ange described one staff member in particular who was known for his intransigence, as being difficult, principled, and very moral. Ange admitted that she really admired the person's intellect and values as well and the fact that "he never lets you get away with anything that's not being scrutinised and defended". She commented that there are "not many people in this world, who are like that", suggesting that rather, "most people are more comfortable with compromise, and that they are more flexible". Ange utilised a tactic which proved very successful in this case to help this individual come to terms with the need to change. She aligned the idea with her visual thinking style, admitting that she needed to see the structure of things in pictorial form, so she put charts up on the wall outside of her office which graphically showed the shape and progress of the degree and the changes. It had the desired effect and as Ange described it:

It was a mess really but it enabled people to shift things around or to write comments and I found that for a couple of people who needed to see what if anything had been changed today and it gave them a sense of being consulted. I mean there were glitches with all of that as well but on the whole I think people were given the opportunity to contribute to a team effort.

By putting in place a new structure that made previously latent strengths much more available and obvious, Ange sought to protect and strengthen the best parts for the longer term. As she confirmed, "the staff can see now in hindsight

that it has been a very desirable thing and it has allowed them to see the program in a new way and see ways to continue to enhance it". She was very pleased to state that her previously chief opponent became one of the most ardent supporters.

Each of the leaders employed various communication activities to keep their people informed of the progress of the change, as well as allowing them to continue to contribute to process as it evolved. As Lee suggests "it's sort of a balance between having the vision but being open to discuss it. I just think that for all of these things, it's just about communication". She went on to suggest:

I think you need to be patient and you need to be able to listen. For me listening is absolutely core skill. And you do need to be open-minded. People come at you with really valid kind of comments and you haven't thought about them. You need to be able to take them on board and say, yep, that's right I didn't think about that, damn, instead of just putting it in the cupboard.

The way that Nick kept the communication flowing and the change action moving was by 'walking the floor', dropping into the offices, labs and classrooms catching up with the staff and spending a lot of time talking to people. He felt that this was the best way to keep in touch with the 'coalface', as he explained "I talk to people a lot but you gotta know all the stuff, you gotta know what they're doing".

Ian described himself an 'organisational development person', and he explained how he used some fundamental approaches to get the tea group to communicate and function:

We asked questions, we didn't assume, we checked in with people. You know, we had to have a process once we gathered people, I leavened the conversation ... if something quite radical was said, I might have countered it with, are you sure that's how? ... Because there's a lot of assumptions and gossip and all that so we kind of checked our own assumptions and tried to stick as much possible to being pretty inquisious or inquiring, I guess.

Once the advisory group was set up, at least two rounds of elections were held to elect representatives to participate in guiding the change process. From this point on other members of the faculty were able to begin to participate and it became an explicit part of the fabric of the department. The outcome was that

staff saw the democracy working in action and this helped to allay fears that there were other agendas or that control would be predetermined by a few.

So it was a big sort of a dose of democracy when we needed it and it did also soften some of the issues I think quite well, and we still lost people afterwards and there were probably a few darker hours after that moment so it didn't just instantly turn things around, but it certainly, I believe, made a positive impact on the department.

Empowering others to act on the vision

Good followers quickly become good leaders in the sense that they're good and that they challenge the leaders or they're engaged and offer their ideas. (Ian)

Peg described her success in managing the transition for her staff as being based on valuing them, and showing them that they were valued, and that they had to go on the journey together. Others in the institution complimented her as providing a great role model, by doing her own PhD and being seen to be leading from the front, she reluctantly admitted. Along side that, she was really clear to staff about valuing what they already have, and valuing the steps and the progress that they were already making towards becoming research active, and helping them to find ways to do that so it did not feel like another add on. As an additional support to the staff, Peg initiated an increase to the administrative staff by appointing one new person to ease the administrative load. It was very successful and streamlined a lot of the processes in the systems so that the staff were feeling supported in that area. It was also part of Peg's strategy to get the staff to think of ways of enabling themselves to adjust to the new environment. As Peg told me, the staff had struggled with this and she endeavoured to get them to think:

Okay, you've taken this work off me, that's given me a bit more space ... so how can I reduce assessments to give myself more time? or move from a higher proportion of tutorials, to larger lectures? They don't particularly like that, I think they've probably just gotten used to the way things have been

To assist the staff further Peg initiated an early review of the school's programmes to allow them to examine what they were doing and to see where they could collectively make changes that would assist them with this culture change. The programmes were re-accredited every five years with teacher's

council and the last time there were only simple tweaks because the program was only five years old and it was going really well. She explained how the year-long process worked:

I heard people were saying, 'Oh! We don't do enough of this and that.' So I made the decision that we would do a major review process. We've made major changes and that was very much around giving staff a voice. And letting them have the opportunity to get things out on the table. They didn't get everything they wanted. You know, there's some staff who wanted us to go a long way in that direction, but when you've got 30 odd people, and it also meant working with people from other schools. Working with that number you're never going to have an agreement on everything. But I think we made enough progress in some directions that people felt like they had more ownership of the programmes and that they weren't just teaching what they'd been given when they arrived.

Managing resistance and gaining acceptance

As mentioned earlier, Ken was seen as an outsider by his client group. As a result of this he decided that an outside facilitator needed to be brought in to deal with a particularly tricky situation that came to be known as the 'Easter uprising'. The events surrounding this had left both the head of school and himself contemplating walking away. He explained the feelings that he had:

You know we had students and staff just dumped on us. But I think we did maintain belief in these people. Because that's all we had. They weren't going to go anywhere. We had to work with them. I really focused on really basic things like, these people deserve compassion even though they may not be generating terribly much of it themselves. There's a reason for that.

Ken chose a consultancy that used an enquiry method called appreciative enquiry. Appreciative enquiry has its roots in social constructivism, and is described as an approach to organisational change that emphasises and builds on positives such as the organisations strengths and potential (Krattemaker, 2005). As preparation the consultants, who were completely external to the institution, and didn't have knowledge of any of the individuals or any of the processes, came in before the meeting date and met with the staff, talked about their needs and their issues and then met with both Ken and the head of school. Ken explained that "we had quite a lot of things, we had disciplinary actions. We're talking something that was actually really quite serious". The event took place over two-days and during the process each participant was given time to

talk about the past, how they arrived and where they now were. Each person had to talk about why they were here. Ken indicated that this was the first time, as a group, that all of the key players had sat down and listened to each other. The event was a turning point for Ken and the school; as can be seen from the following exchange:

- Ken: I said I came here because I was really interested and passionate about [the discipline], that was my biggest thing really. And I saw this as the opportunity to be involved in [the discipline], that's why I was involved, for no other reason. And the Head of School also said that she had been involved because she thought it was a fantastic opportunity to develop a really interesting [portfolio of programmes] that they could be part of. In fact, in 2006 part way through she was the only person who was really interested in the institution and keeping it alive. And that turned it....
- Steve: And they got to hear that.
- Ken: They got to hear that.
- Steve: So their expectations, or rather, their prejudices against you which had been put up in the first place because you were just this person from this place. It was actually through finally sitting down and talking to them and being able to get them to hear and also you hearing them...
- Ken: And us hearing them. But that was a very short time, that was actually very controlled. After that we had to move on in terms of, what is our philosophy, what is it that we want this to be? What do we want this to be as a group? How are we going to move forward? What do we put in place? And as a group, we needed to decide that.
- Steve: So do you feel that the meeting where they heard about the enthusiasm for them coming over here and the possibilities of the future, became a catalyst for them to start to consider change?
- Ken: I think they felt that they'd been heard. They hadn't felt before that they'd been heard. They had felt that everything was being forced upon them. I don't know. I was quite skeptical that this process was actually going to work. But it actually it has.

Throughout the interview Ken frequently drew attention to his personal feelings of inadequacy and vulnerability as a manager. He described the anguish he felt during the early period of the change and how it left him wondering why he was putting so much energy into the work at all:

I think it really knocked my confidence quite a lot, the last year. I really struggled to think that I had any value. I still do actually. I still question my role and whether I have value to add and because I'm not part of 'The Family', that still lingers around. They still have that support. They still

have that way of communicating which I'm still external to. And [actually] that's really important that I'm not part of that because we have so much change to do. I do feel quite on the edge, quite lonely I suppose, in the old fashioned sort of term. And often feel really unsure. I have my support in terms of my Head of School to talk with and that's a fantastic support, and also with other program leaders. So there's quite a good team there. I don't know what it's like for other managers, this sort of position, but because I'm really passionate about education, because I'm really interested in people's learning and I am interested in being in a team, I invest a lot in that as a person.

Ange employed a rather different approach in garnering the support of some of her reluctant staff by using another tactic that made her reasoning quite transparent in order to engage, and to keep people emotionally with her. The tactic she used was a Trojan horse strategy where she suggested that the (disputed) original name of the programme, which was held dear by some members of staff, could be kept by explicitly naming one of the new majors with the old title. In this way she was suggesting to her staff that they were only playing along with the marketers, and with the requirement of the institution to do something with the programme to make it more viable, yet not really tampering with it too much. She was showing her staff that she was collegially with the team. She admitted that:

Some people might think that you need to be either one or the other, but I still try to be both It was very much about engaging reason. It's been quite transparent I think, in saying look, doing this sort of thing, it involves a lot of grey. And it's not entirely easy to put all your eggs in one basket and just go with that and it's all nice and easy. It's really difficult, and I'm with you on that, but we have to, so I tend to be really open.

Ange suggested that to be a successful change leader there is no single 'best management' and that the correct form of management will be contextually defined: a series of individual ways to adapt to situations and capabilities of her staff rather than a fixed template for action. She continually assessed this by getting out and talking to people and simply engaging with them. For Ange there was a huge satisfaction in the restructure because, people owned it:

And I began to hear them saying really positive things about it to others, and I thought, 'oh, god' I mean, that made it part of their own discourse, if you like. So that would be a goal that I aim for, I suppose which is to knit everyone into the process ... I think I have a responsibility to identify some options and to build enough to be able to explain [it to] them and

rationalise and all the rest of it but to involve people, and contributing to some choices.

Final thoughts on success

The interview discourse was replete with good advice for leaders of change. Each of the participants provided stories of real success from their own perspective 'at the chalk face'.

Sid suggested that in his organisation there are many factors that effect change from a variety of sources as well as institutional strategic and long term planning demands which he described as "not fitting comfortably with a profile of organisational shrinkage", (he does not call it decline). He explained the effect on his department of some of these wider actions:

So there's quite a lot of change going on around here at the moment we have to accommodate reduced numbers of staff to curricula, structure and course delivery, we have to manage the changes in the profile of seniority in the department which have been quite dramatic as a result of some retirements. We have to look at restraints around the availability and non-availability of particular expertise that is going to retirement. It's very complicated and it's quite unpleasant.

Sid applied his consultative problem-solving approach to working with the staff to come up with viable solutions. By chipping away at future positives, Sid worked through strategies that allowed for a better use of teaching resources and an exchange of some other duties to those in the department with capacity. I asked Sid what leadership approaches had been helpful for him when dealing with people and change:

Knowing when to keep my mouth shut. Strategic sentences like "I had no idea", "That's very interesting", "I must look into that". I tend to prefer talking directly to people when I can and probably should get out of my office and into other people's offices more. If I've got a particular sensitive issue that I want to run by someone I will always frame it in terms of asking for their assistance with something and usually when I can take to their office rather than invite them to mine. Because they feel more comfortable in their own space.

Lee expressed her attitude toward leading change and the way that she approached it in the following exchange:

Lee: You still have to talk to people genuinely about what the issues are, they have to understand the cases and accept them or

reject them. My own view is you'll become severely unhooked if you don't believe in it yourself ... Your battles with the change need to be taken up with the people who are bringing them onto you rather than with the people that you're trying to impose them on if you don't subscribe to them yourself.

Steve: Do you see yourself as a champion of the people that you're trying to take along with the journey, in that dialogue?

Lee: Only if I think they're right. To me it's all about.. it's a strong word but it's all about truth in a way, truth is too strong a word, but its about trust and about being able to be honest. I like, when my staff are sitting around the table, and some of them are going to lose their jobs, I like to know that I have sincerely addressed the issues and that it's honestly what I believe should happen.

Lee was genuine about her beliefs and was comfortable enough with herself to talk about her personal approaches because they had been successful for her, rather than a mere checklist from the literature.

Ian spoke of the success of the change action that he undertook when he reported that once the advisory group was active, the changes came pretty quickly and during the implementation phase the change was quite welcome and pretty easily done. People were pleased about it and seemed to be relieved. The tea group was the embodiment of a groundswell of action which came through from an empowered, collegial middle. It naturally conformed to a distributed form of leadership with a rotating chair of each meeting, so it was not seen, or labelled, as belonging to anyone in particular. Ian attributed this to the strong sense of collegiality that exists in his school:

You might find that these things happen possibly more so [in education] than they would in other organisations where we have so little other influence, so we almost have to make these political sort of variations.

Peg described herself as someone who does not look back and think "oh in the old days we did this and this and it was so much better". She was not sure that the new structure was necessarily any better, however, she was very clear about the principles that remain important in terms of teacher education and how people work as a team and the meeting of institutional imperatives. She suggested that one cannot simply apply an efficiency model about leadership and about the sort of business decisions that might be made, and that is why

keeping the human part of it is really important for her. There is a moral dimension to the work that Peg does which drives her values and the culture of her organisation, as she explained:

If we produce teachers who go out there who are bad teachers then not only do we wear it but actually so do families and children and that's why you can't just be a good teacher because you've got the technical skills. I think a lot of the teaching that goes on is not actually just about content and subjects and things it's actually about how to be a nice human being. And there's a lot of moral education that goes on.

The organisation for which Ange works is heading into a new organisational change cycle which may adversely affect her school unit and as she faced the latest bout of organisational change she reflected that she had always looked at change as being stimulating, stating that she would hate it if she were in a static, unchanging environment. I asked her how she was handling the 'doom and gloom' that had been generated around the uncertainty of further change:

I worried for a little while thinking well what am I suppose to tell people, I thought, 'I've got to tell them all.' And so we had, 9 o'clock on Monday morning I had them all in there and told them everything that had been told to us because I feel it's my duty to keep people well informed. I mean, it is a bit of a dilemma at times as to how much you tell people, but I err on the side of probably too much. But it's a way I suppose of inviting support, I suppose, for decisions that aren't just mine because they affect everybody.

Ken navigated a difficult pathway as a leader of change which effected his own personal sense of worth. He did however see the success as well:

Though I feel sort of anxious about my own position, my own worth as a manager, I look back and see that these people have come a long way and I've been part of that and I've learnt a lot as a manager about working with people. So, I'd say that that is a success

I will leave this section with a personal vision from Ange of what motivated her to lead:

I wanted to feel that I could do something that would change people ... that was wonderfully naive and all the rest of it. What's that about? Why would you want to change the world? ... well, it's not about changing people, it's more about offering an insight that I've found useful, because I liked to see whether it can be useful for them, can help them make better sense of their lives.

SUMMARY

The results of the focus group into the core capabilities and attributes associated with successful change leadership produced some interesting findings:

- The attributes selected and ranked by the focus group were congruent with most of those identified in the literature;
- The attribute template provided an insight into the differentiation between change leadership and the actual tasks of both leading and managing change;
- There were a range of specific attributes which were deemed to be essential in all aspects of change leadership including leading and managing change;
- There were a number of attributes that were deemed to be especially important for successful change leadership and management;
- The range of required attributes could be effected by the unique circumstance of the particular change action; and
- The overlapping nature of some of the attributes strongly suggested that the roles of leading and managing change are both concurrent and complementary activities.

What emerged most clearly from the focus group findings is a deeper understanding of the essential role that communication attributes play in leadership of any kind as well as a further clarification of the distinction and relationship between leading and managing change action. There was an interconnectedness of general leadership attributes with those deemed to be specific to leading and managing change. Inter-personal and intra-personal communications were seen to connect all of the domains. Attributes of leadership were distributed according to the various stages, and specific requirements, of differing change process. Not all attributes were deemed to be required at all times, and some may not be needed if the change action does not require it.

The second part of the chapter presented a perspective of the middle and a middle-up/beside/down perspective of educational middle leaders engaging in change that links to the second research question of middle managers perceptions of their place in change leadership and their organisational relationships. Specific questions such as 'what is the middle?', 'who is in the

middle?’ and ‘what it is like being in the middle?’ were posed as a way of framing the conversation around the participants’ perceptions of middle management as well as gauging the opinions of practitioners who identified themselves as being in the middle.

Participants variously described being in the middle in a number of senses. In one sense the leaders held management responsibility for both academic and general staff who were, from the point of view of a hierarchical structure, beneath them; they led teams of colleagues in collegial decision making, and they answered to higher authority in the form of senior organisational leadership. They also described themselves as being ‘very much’ in the middle in terms of line management of both resources and academic matters and often as being caught between competing imperatives, institutional dynamics and institutional structures. There was also some debate as to where the middle may lie with the view that people who may be the team leader of a small team may consider themselves to be in a different middle from a head of school or manager of a larger organisational structure.

Organisational structures were seen to influence decision making processes and power systems with the majority of the participants describing their organisations as functioning as collegial entities with little hierarchical structure. Organisational structures themselves were seen as possible barriers to middle leadership because authority did not necessarily rest where the responsibility rests.

Leadership and management were acknowledged as requiring different skills and personality traits however they were seen as both complementary to each other when engaging in leading (and managing) change. This was not seen as about a person being one or the other, but rather as having strong leadership characteristics and, because of the nature of the job, having a management perspective as well.

The participants agreed that as academic middle manager service posts have varied backwards and forwards between ‘permanent’ and ‘fixed-term’

appointments there was a need for institutions to consider who leads and why they lead. There was general agreement that one of the dangers of natural selection in educational leadership was that often people who are very good in one position are promoted up to a level where they are not doing what they are necessarily good at any more. Fostering emergent leaders was highlighted as an important activity for educational organisations.

Each middle leader interview participant was engaged in a unique organisational change action and each contributed his or her thoughts on being in the middle and being responsible for leading change. They provided examples of the complex relationship between the middle leader and their client groups (peers or staff), and the change action itself which leads ultimately to success. Each of them understood the negotiated processes and relationships that needed to develop between themselves and the group in the change situation. In these various change environments, the leaders offered multi-dimensional approaches which were inclusive and which recognised the need to accommodate their leadership style to the led, the task, the environment, and to themselves.

The positional location of the leader as being on the inside, or the outside of their client group was discussed with examples drawn from both sides of the equation. Staff generally responded better to those leaders who were on the inside and with whom they felt a value based bond. Those on the outside needed to use a higher level of communication and negotiation strategies to gain acceptance and to move their change processes forward.

The participants shared a wide range of practices and approaches taken by them which helped to minimise the potential negative impact of their various change actions. These approaches, while varying in detail and effect, generally concur with the change literature and are variations of well documented change themes and practices. However, the participant contributions of personal observations and unfolding real life stories which meld personal common sense with local meaning have formed a unique local ontology and allowed for a deeper understanding of contributing success factors.

The practices employed included forming coalitions to guide the change process; sharing the vision widely and encouraging participation at all levels of the organisation; employing inducements and rewards to encourage participation and to demonstrate that change has benefits; fostering consensus for change by utilising wide spread communication routines; empowering others to act on the change vision and to tangibly embrace the change actions; and working hard to gain acceptance from the client groups as a way of managing resistance to change.

The participant middle leaders identified successful change leadership as combinations of real engagement, with passion and courage on behalf of one or a few people; the leader's ability to set strategic direction and be able to implement the strategic changes; and as initiating innovation and creating a vision of change, as well as implementing change through change leadership and management by translating the vision into agendas and actions. Above all the focus on people, and the leaders interaction with them was placed at the centre of each change action. The middle leaders were not necessarily interested in changing personnel but rather in the relationships, attitudes, perceptions, and values of existing personnel.

Organisations are not homogenous entities and neither are the change actions described in this study, therefore the findings of this chapter need to be discussed and related to the key research objectives, guided by the research questions, and linked back to the literature, where appropriate to achieve clarity. The next chapter discusses the data presented here and examines these links from the focus group findings and the discourse of the interview participants to demonstrate a correlation between the two.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses the data which was presented in chapter four alongside the supporting literature base. The key research objectives and questions for this study are used to report on the findings. The aims are:

- To describe and critique the role that higher education middle leaders play in leading successful organisational change;
- To examine a middle perspective of successful change leadership; and
- To explain the characteristics of successful change leadership.

The key research questions associated with the aims and objectives of this study help to guide the reader through the findings. These are:

- What are the core capabilities and attributes associated with successful change leadership?
- How do successful educational middle change leaders reconcile their position in the middle and their organisational relationships as a subordinate, an equal and as a superior?
- In what ways do educational middle leaders act as 'change leaders'?
- What practices do successful middle leaders employ to minimise the potential negative impact of change?

This chapter discusses the findings as presented in Chapter Four using the key research questions to frame the shape of the discussion. The first part discusses the findings of the focus group's selection of the core capabilities and attributes of middle leaders in creating an organisational culture and climate conducive to successful organisational change. The second part discusses the perception of the focus group and semi-structured interview participants of role of the educational middle leader and their organisational relationships and dealings with their superiors, peers and subordinates. The third part discusses the findings of the semi-structured interviews as they relate to the role of the educational middle manager as 'change leader' in successful organisational change and the fourth part contextualises the role of the middle leader in organisational change by examining the policies and practices that they employ to minimise the potential negative impact of change.

THE CORE CAPABILITIES OF SUCCESSFUL CHANGE LEADERSHIP

First, I think leadership is character. Character is a word that comes from the Greek 'engraved'. It's from the French 'inscribed'. It isn't just a superficial style. It's got to do with who we are as human beings, and what shaped us. (Bennis, 1997a, p. 72)

Against the background of research on leadership and change, the ranking of the attributes of successful change leaders by the focus group revealed some predictable, but also some unexpected, results. The findings were grouped as five domains of activity with a number of success focussed attributes in each. This was influenced by the focus group participants' suggestion that they needed to be ranked in importance depending on the timing and stage of the change process, or the nature of the change. Further, the individual attributes under the various headings were not ranked in any order of importance, as it was agreed that the nature of the change, the environment and context, as well as the stage of change may affect this. Therefore the five domains, listed as change leadership, intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, leading change and managing change did not contain ranked attributes, nor did they follow a specific process order. The principal finding of this part of the process was that a wide range of attributes were collectively essential to successful change leadership. It was also determined that while all of the attributes were collectively desirable to successful change leadership, not all were needed to be employed at all times and the range of required attributes would most likely be effected by the unique circumstance of the particular change action.

The leadership domain was seen as being foundational to both leading and managing change. Whilst the two domains of interpersonal and intrapersonal communication were seen as being complimentary to each aspect of leadership as well as to each other. Leading and managing change were determined to be different, yet complementary and often concurrent activities. There were a range of specific attributes associated with success presented in the findings which were deemed to be essential in all aspects of change leadership, whilst there were some which were deemed to be specific to leading and managing

change. Communication attributes, both intra-personal and inter-personal, were highlighted as being pivotal to 'success' and were woven into each area of change leadership and management. The findings echoed Bolman and Deal's (1999) view of the virtues of communication as a means of empowering staff to help develop strong cultures for change. The interview participants described using a variety of communication methods including meetings/forums (small and large); written communications (formal and informal); and individual face-to-face discussion, with the method being determined by the particular message and its intended audience.

Leadership

Included in the template (Table 3, Chapter 4) under change leadership were attributes such as strategic thinking, being future focussed, creativity and imagination, all of which are frequently reported in the literature (Bennis & Nanus, 1997; Kotter, 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The attributes of creativity and imagination were perceived as a collective or team based transformational attribute, rather than individual, however it was agreed that the capacity could be 'enabled' by change leadership (Fullan, 2007; Schein, 1992). Being courageous and not afraid to take risks was determined to be an essential leadership quality yet these apparently essential attributes do not feature as prominently in the research literature on change leadership as might have been expected. Interestingly, some of the more traditional attributes associated with leadership, for example decisiveness and intelligence, did not appear in the groups' final template. This may suggest that the attributes of success change leadership, as perceived by the focus group participants, differ in some fundamental respects from those associated with traditional models of leadership. This was an issue that was probed throughout the discussion and whilst a number of participants did not believe that there was a 'profound' difference they suggested rather that there may exist shifting leadership styles to suit the context of change. Recently the literature has described change leaders as having a limited 'shelf life', with each new change potentially requiring a different leader capable of directing it (Caldwell, 2003). The domains within the template attempted to show some of these differences.

Intra-personal and inter-personal skills

Intrapersonal awareness precedes, accompanies and complements the development of interpersonal skills, and intrapersonal knowledge involves an awareness of both the presence and causes of ways of relating (Sample, 2005; Schein, 1999; Sergiovanni, 2001). Good communications was ranked highly and is regarded as an essential factor in successful change leadership throughout the literature (Kanter, 2008; Kotter, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Schein, 1992; Senge, 2008).

The middle leaders interviewed as part of this study provided general consensus with this view as they related their successful use of communication. Lee rated the success of her change action directly with her commitment to genuine and open communication at all levels of management and the involvement of all managers in the process of communicating about change. Nick focussed on walking and talking to keep in contact with the shop floor and to hear how the people who were most effected by the change were feeling. Ange advocated listening, rather than just talking, and communication as being two-way and genuinely interactive. She encouraged people to comment openly, to seek information and clarification about the changes and their role in achieving them. Ken employed communication regularly in an open and honest way and directly attributes his success to the opening of communication channels in both directions as trust began to grow. Ken was able to work through (and sell) the vision that the institution had for staff and as they listened, they began to accept the vision, effectively 'getting on the same page' and beginning to participate in setting the agenda for change. Each leader commented that organisational values and behaviours were deeply embedded, and recognised that successful organisational change takes time, and therefore that time should be given to communicate. This is a view shared by Kotter (1999).

As a result of an increased awareness of a relational element to leadership in the literature, some authors have specifically identified the need for interpersonal skills in leaders (Kotter, 1990; Zaleznik, 2004). However, the development of such skills requires more than a change in practice and to

understand the reactions of their followers, leaders need also to understand their own responses. One of the participants, Ken frequently drew attention to his personal feelings of inadequacy and vulnerability as a manager which may be linked to his feeling of being on the 'outside', yet he intensely desired to be on the 'inside'. However upon reflection, he rationalised that for him to be effective in his role, he in fact needed to be on the outside. This form of relational functioning highlights the importance of the affective domain in organisational relationships and aligns with Goleman's (1998) view that emotions are as much a concern for leaders as paperwork and forward planning. To fulfil his role as a relational leader, Ken had to develop both intrapersonal understanding, or self-knowledge as well as interpersonal relational skills. Viewing leadership in terms of its relational aspects and processes highlights the importance of followers as well as leaders in the leadership process (Russell, 2003), while the concept of relational purpose can help to explain the complexity of the leadership task and to highlight the role of leaders as relational managers (Bennis, 1999).

Emotional intelligence was determined to be a highly desirable attribute to affect change. There is, however, debate in the literature about the definitions of emotional intelligence and its continuously changing conceptual framework (Dulewicz et al., 2005), which has led to it being labelled by some as a misinterpretation of the construct of intelligence (Locke, 2005). Other highly ranked intrapersonal communication skills were motivation and commitment, independence and autonomy, self-confidence and awareness, and insight. Each of these is given prominence in the literature (Benson & Dresdow, 2003; Yukl, 1999).

The interpersonal attribute of 'listeners who learn from others', was ranked highly by participants and appeared to confirm a general endorsement of the concept of organisational learning as suggested by Lakomski (2001), at least in the sense that for successful change learning has to take place at all levels within organisations. Developing of cultures for learning was seen as related to capacity building and empowerment, and being caring and empathetic was placed among these other concepts that were regarded as 'basic requirements'.

The focus on these attributes appears to be congruent with the current literature (Bartkus, 1997), which notes a perceived shift in managerial roles towards the 'soft' attributes associated with empowerment (Sinclair, 2007). The emphasis is on the managers' ability to empower employees, encourage team working and manage their self-development through learning which in effect flattens the organisation to offer a new set of management actions; more teamwork, less bureaucracy, better communications, opportunities for professional development and greater job satisfaction (Powell, 2002). Four attributes that were similarly placed by participants in this research were negotiation skills, managing resistance, conflict resolution and networking, all of which appeared to be interrelated in that they reflected the front line aspects of communicating and therefore managing change in the face of obstacles, conflict or opposition. However, while these were supported by the literature as being essential attributes for change leaders and managers (Kotter, 2007), they were seen to have the potential to become unnecessary as the successful employment of the higher ranked attributes might mitigate the necessity for these negative aspects.

Leading and managing change

Of great importance to participants in the change leader domain was the need for leaders of change to have an inspiring vision, a finding that tends to reinforce the considerable emphasis on this factor in the literature (Katzenbach, 1996). There was an assumption that change leaders created a vision of change, while change managers translate the vision into agendas and actions. The overlapping nature of some of the attributes strongly suggested that the roles of leading and managing change were both concurrent and complementary activities. As has been presented in Chapter Two of this thesis, leading and managing are seen in the literature as two mutually exclusive processes requiring different skills and personality traits. Theorists differentiate between leaders and managers according to their objectives and time orientation (Bennis & Nanus, 2005) with 'leaders' being oriented toward change and long-term effectiveness, whereas 'managers' are oriented toward stability and short-term efficiency (Zaleznik, 2004). The focus group findings broadly formulated these differences as follows: change leadership embodies the concepts of envisioning, initiating or sponsoring strategic change of a far-

reaching or transformational nature. In contrast, leading and managing change rests in the middle where the change initiative is carried forward and support is built for change with the people that it is going to effect, within business units and key functions. The interview participants also showed a firm commitment to Kotter's (1996) view that people can use a mix of leading and (positive) managing behaviours and Yukl's (1999) assertion that a successful leader must be skilled enough to understand the situation and flexible enough to adjust the mix of behaviours as the situation changes.

These distinctions are at least a partial clarification of the relationship between leading and managing in the change process. This is demonstrated in one example by Ange who saw herself as both essential to initiating innovation and creating an honest, realistic and genuine vision of change, an attribute also noted by Pounder (2001), as well as implementing change through change leadership and management by translating the vision into agendas and following the change actions through to completion, a feature also reported by Mintzberg (1975). Throughout this study the two challenges have been presented as different, yet complementary and often concurrent. The idea that leaders and managers of change perform complementary roles is a useful corrective to many leadership models of change agency, with their negative counter-images of managerial roles. The distinction between leaders of change and managers of change demonstrated within this research is analogous to Doyle's (2001) perspective which conceptualises the multidimensional nature of change agency. As such, it is an attempt to counter traditional 'big business' leadership models which reduce the qualities of leadership to 'high-acts' disconnected from the realities of the 'coal-face' where the real work of changing the organisation takes place (Zaleznik, 2004). Equally, in this research, the breaking down of successful leadership attributes into separate domains that interconnect, compliment or indeed overlap in key areas, was designed to demonstrate just how complex the issues are of separating the apparently 'innovative' attributes of traditional change leadership from the more 'adaptive' attributes of traditional change managers. In practice, of course, the two roles may often be indistinguishable, because the attributes required to lead and manage change are simply inseparable aspects of leadership/managerial

work in organisations facing the ever-increasing challenges of coping with constant change.

In this research, the interlinked and complementary attributes of vision, passion, belief and demonstration by doing, were determined to be of high value and were seen to give a direction to the transformational leadership of change and the change action itself whilst being cognisant of the attitudes and beliefs of the others involved. Values, as a distinct characteristic, was not included in the template as it was determined by participants to be incorporated into the other attributes of inspiring visions, integrities and honesties and also into personifying the culture by 'living the life and doing the do'. Other ethical attributes including credibility, honesty, integrity and trustworthiness were given a reassuring endorsement by the participants findings which is consistent with major themes in the change literature (Goleman, 2000; Kaplan & Norton, 2005b; Lakomski, 2001; Schein, 1997).

Attributes that participants most associated with managing change were linked to an understanding of the change process itself because of its fundamental links back to the effect that the process may have on the people involved. The ability to keep a balance between the outcomes of the change action and the processes involved in the various stages of the action were agreed to be an understanding the balance between outcome and process, as also suggested by Kanter, Stein and Jick (2005). The knowledge of the 'business of change' and the knowledge of 'the change business' were seen to represent the 'process' and 'outcome' aspects of the change action, whilst the ability to problem solve and plan effectively were regarded by participants as essential and were seen as imbedded in the two sides of the knowledge paradigm.

The final attribute that participants added to the template was an evaluative process, which was seen to be imbedded in each of the domains so that the communicator/leader/manager was constantly checking progress and striving for continuous improvement. This is a concept which is strongly supported throughout the literature (Collins, 2001; Cook, Coldicott & Macaulay, 2004; Doppler, 2004; Oakland & Tanner, 2007).

The model illustrated in Figure 3, is a somewhat mechanistic one which depicts the interaction between and within each of the domain headings of the various attributes. The gears of intrapersonal and interpersonal communication both drive, and are driven by the large wheel of leadership. This action in turn interacts and drives the linked wheels of leading and managing change to output change in a simultaneous action. Evaluation and feedback keep the process oiled and working smoothly.

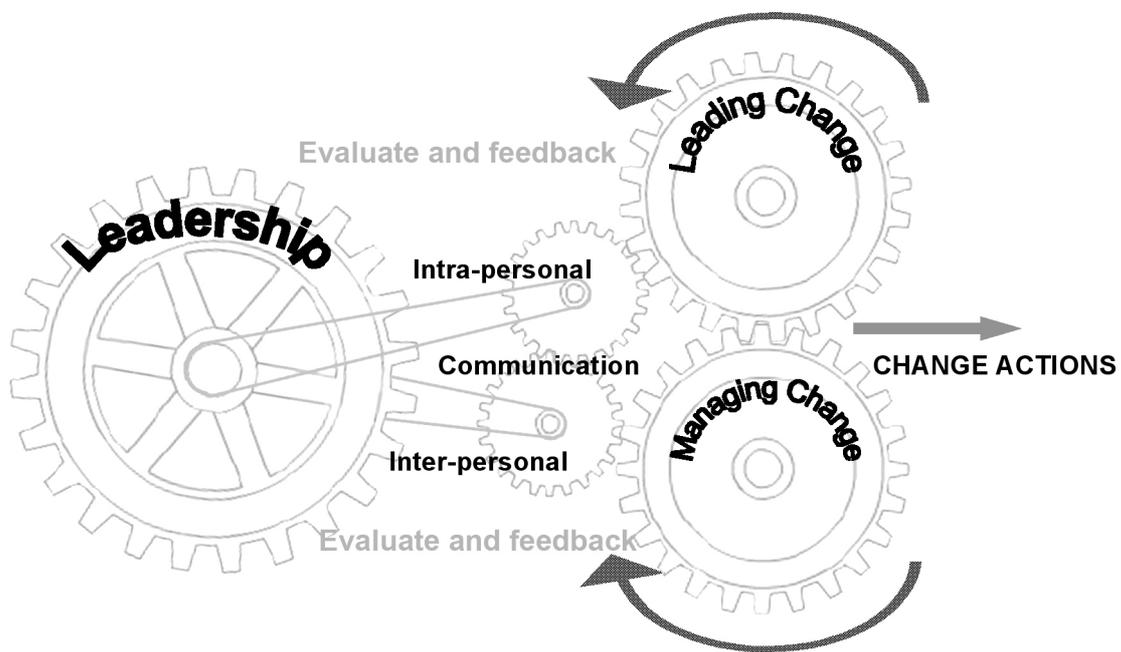


Figure 3: The driving motion of change

Many of the attributes which made their way into the template, can be described as 'soft'. This may be because the group was focussing on 'success' rather than more general leadership attributes. It was agreed by the focus group that this also might be a reinforcement of a perceived shift in leadership/managerial roles away from specialist or functional activities defined by practical business knowledge and problem solving abilities towards 'empowerment' as a mechanism of change. This is supported by Briggs (2004) who describes a paradigm shift in the role of middle managers towards leadership, because they are both the 'object and 'agency' of change. Also Denham, Ackers and Travers' (1997) suggest that managers must accept an overall decline in their traditional supervisory role, while at the same time expanding their new enabling and

empowering role. However in discussion, most of the focus group did not view the emphasis on change as simply a 'soft' versus 'hard' issue. Even though more, so called, soft attributes were included in this success-focussed template as apposed to hard ones, the consensus was that they had to be melded together in the practice of change leadership. This concurs with Bennis and Nanus' (2005) view that managers are increasingly expected to display a positive or exemplary 'change orientation' as demonstrated by personal flexibility, the competence to deal with uncertainty or ambiguity and the ability to take risks. The exercise of hard attributes such as leader 'power' were generally acknowledged by the focus group as being sometimes necessary but were mitigated by one of the participants, John as being the "ability to make decisions ... the avoidance of procrastination", and by another participant, Kate as "being influential and persuasive and not dogmatic and all sorts of things". This finds agreement with the views of MacNeil (2003) that as hierarchy is weakened and authority devolved, managers are increasingly expected to overcome organisational boundaries and bring teams and groups together to manage innovation and change.

ACADEMIC LEADERS IN THE MIDDLE

Academic middle leadership, placed in terms of role positions such as heads of academic department or school and academic leaders has been described as a unique form of leadership that is recognised as central to the effectiveness of higher educational organisations. Such leaders have been noted as being essential to the academic success of universities in the USA (Cohen & March, 1991), as indispensable to the effectiveness of Canadian post-secondary institutions (Jones & Holdaway, 1996), and, in a New Zealand setting, as key players in implementing organisational change (Curzon-Hobson, 2004). Furthermore, Fullan (2007) has argued that the current turbulence in many higher educational environments has given academic middle leaders a particularly prominent role in institutional effectiveness. The study participants strongly supported this concept as a way that the middle leader can be seen to be pivotal to the success of the organisation, and especially to the success of

organisational change. Lee, one of the study participants, eloquently expressed this conception of the middle as being:

The middle is the organisation ... are the people who deliver the goods. We are it. And so it has to be strong. The strength of the middle is far more important than the rest. If the whole of the executive management team blew up in a plane tomorrow, we would still keep this organisation running.

The participants of both the focus group and semi-structured interviews were all middle leaders who originally entered the higher education sector as classroom teachers. They described their place in their respective organisations in terms of being 'caught in between', or 'sandwiched between' senior management to whom they were accountable, lecturers whom they described as colleagues or peers, and subordinates for whom they had some functional and often moral responsibility. In this way, these middle leaders could be seen as enacting Lapp and Carr's (2006) scenario of being synchronistically, both masters and slaves enacting the complex roles of 'living' as a subordinate, an equal and as a superior. As suggested by the literature, each leader worked with senior management to create a sense of shared organisational identity (Brunetto & Farr-Wharton, 2004) that allowed the reconciliation of top-level perspectives with lower level implementation issues (Gunter, 1995). The constitution of 'middle' however, can be contingent on the organisational system in which it functions. For these middle leaders the question of self-identity was often problematic because of the lack of agreement over the definition of the 'middle'. This may be because the boundaries of the 'middle' extend across numerous levels of management and, therefore, the middle management structure is contingent on each individual organisational structure (Thomas & Linstead, 2002).

Organisational structure and culture

The participants represented a range of large, medium and small higher educational organisations and each in turn represented a unit within their respective organisation with its own distinct organisational culture, either department, division, or school. The various organisational cultures conformed to those described in the literature as collegium, where the knowledge grew out

of the ongoing experience of all organisational members and in which the organisational members created and held the organisation's knowledge (Dixon, 1998). Consensus was rated as critical to organisational decision-making and success, and members interacted as equals with a minimum of status differences (Brundrett, 1998), and power tended to be informal, and was exercised through networks of influence (Hellawell & Hancock, 2003).

Organisational structures were seen to influence decision making processes and power systems with the majority of the participants describing their organisations as functioning as collegial with little hierarchal structure. Organisational structures themselves were seen as possible barriers to middle leadership as authority did not necessarily rest where the responsibility lay. As suggested in the literature, traditional views of middle management assume a hierarchy of status and decision-making authority in an organisation, with those in senior positions providing leadership and support and those in middle having responsibility for spreading understanding of the leadership and support for that direction so that everyone works to the same objectives (Witziers, Sleegers & Imants, 1999).

Educational leadership

Peter Gronn (1997a) describes leadership as an emergent, attributed status. He suggests that it is not to be confused with headship or as “something automatically bestowed by virtue of executive role incumbency”, but rather as “influence deemed legitimate by followers and leading is a symbolic activity defined as the framing of meaning” (p. 277). Particular leader attributions may derive from a range of sources such as observation, prior experience, modelling, acquired knowledge or even peer opinion. They may also be acquired through education systems which sanction key leader attributes as valid and legitimate.

From a post-modern perspective, leadership in higher education is viewed as a collective activity among organisational members, a social relationship that focuses on leading (Rost & Barker, 2000). The middle leaders represented in this study were generally concerned with Fullan's (2002) approach of making

organisational changes that reflected the mutual interests of the organisational members. While their prescriptions varied, their diagnosis of organisational health pivoted on interpersonal or group relationships in keeping with Bennis' (1997a) perspective, and the implications of these on change structure, processes and tasks. Although they were aware of these non-personal factors and occasionally focused on them, their main preoccupation was with people and the processes of human interaction - a point supported by Bush and Middlewood (2005). One of the participants, Ange elaborated that middle change leaders are not necessarily interested in changing personnel but rather in the relationships, attitudes, perceptions, and values of existing personnel. Another participant, Peg described her leadership role as one of advocacy on behalf of the staff as to how they were coping with and reacting to the change processes, as a way of helping 'those above' to address practical issues that needed to be worked out to operationalise the change. The literature suggests that these are issues that are becoming more important on both personal and professional levels as the emphasis on clarification of the individual needs of the leader (Gabel, 2002), the issues of leadership style and organisational values (Bruhn, 2004) and the importance of the concept of community in organisations (Gronn, 2003b) seem to be achieving more prominence.

Organisational culture can also be seen in the way that power is distributed and decisions are made. Power is described by Bennis (1997a) as the ability to influence and is derived from at least five sources: coercive, referent (or identification), expert, legitimate (or traditional), and value power. The participants in this study exercised power and influence in a number of ways. Lee's influence as a successful change leader grew out of her relationship with staff and her embodiment of a shared set of values which she communicated to them consistently, such as concern for her fellow member of the collegium, openness, honesty, flexibility, cooperation, and democracy. Whereas Sid utilised a form of coercive power when he empowered people in key positions whom he thought needed to be persuaded while freely admitting that there were also those who he did not consult with. He used an existing departmental committee structure to further certain kinds of perceptions therefore removing himself from the focus of the decision making and positioning himself as the

leader who supported and motivated the efforts. Ian and his colleagues employed a form of referent power which is described by Bennis (1997a) as assuming that influence accrued to 'A' because the group, or person, is attractive or act as a role model, and a person 'B' wants to like and be liked by them.

Some of the participants' approaches called for a less formalised model of leadership where their role needed to be dissociated from the organisational hierarchy. There was a realisation, as presented by Ian's 'tea group', which embodied a leadership model well suited to an empowered, collegial middle, that no one individual was necessarily the ideal leader in all circumstances. These forms have been described in the literature as 'informal', 'emergent' or 'dispersed' leadership (Bolden et al., 2003). Ian's form of dispersed leadership utilised a rotating committee 'chair' which belonged to no-one in particular, and which consolidated his position as a member of the collegium. Ange also employed a form of distributed leadership where the physical act of adding something on a chart that stayed on the wall and became part of the whole picture satisfied the need to share in the task. It was a simple device that encouraged her staff to really look at the changes and to think, is this so bad after all? By beginning to introduce the proposals into documents, she was offering "here's what it might look like". This new framing helped people to confront it, work through their concerns and eventually to own it. These approaches permitted problem solving, decision-making and innovation to flourish with heightened teamwork and work performance, a point supported by Kogler-Hill (1997).

Peg performed more of a facilitation role where she was encouraging a re-commitment to an existing programme and thereby empowering the staff to be receptive to change by undertaking it for themselves. Peg displayed attributes of moral leadership such as transformative, visionary, educative, empowering, liberating, personally ethical, organisationally ethical, and responsible. She saw her position as an intermediary between her staff and her masters as one who empowered staff to actively participate in and own the change action and its results. Peg felt strongly that her school and staff were dedicated to their

profession and she stated that there were issues in terms of teacher education where you simply cannot afford to go wrong:

You know, if you're making plastic B-Balls or something and they fail, well then you give people their money back. And the worst you can do is you go broke. You fail in terms of producing teachers who are able to be effective teachers and the outcome is huge...

Change has also been characterised as a political process with competing interests and compromises (Ruth, 2006). This is evidenced in this study when Sid's narrative eluded to the hybridised political collegiality that exists in most higher educational institutions and in the way that Ian's 'tea group' political revolution forced the establishment of an advisory group to work with the head to create a more democratic governing structure in the department. Another example can be seen in the case of Peg's forced amalgamation through the blatant political decisions made well beyond the confines of the school or even the institution. There is a growing awareness of political processes in organisations, and the recognition that symbolic processes and management of meaning are as important as management of things, and the awareness that leadership processes are embedded in the culture of the organisation, shaping it and being shaped by it (Schein, 1992).

CHANGE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

While theorists argue over the nature of the exact relationship between leadership and management, there is a shared belief that the relationship can be differentiated through the nature of the skills, behaviours, techniques and activities (Zaleznik, 2004). The leadership interviews in this study exemplify the complex relationship between the middle leader and their client groups (peers or staff), and the change action itself, which led ultimately to success. Leadership was undertaken as a transaction between the leader, his or her client group, and the goal or dream of change. Bennis (1997a) describes this as a "resonance that exists between leaders and followers that makes them allies in support of a common cause" (p. 23). The findings highlight the leaders understanding of the negotiated processes and relationships that developed between leader and group in the change situation. The leaders employed multi-dimensional approaches which were inclusive and which recognised the need

to accommodate leadership style to the led, the task, the environment, and to themselves.

The participants of this study aligned themselves more closely to Sayles (1993) description of effective middle managers as 'working leaders', who focus as much on the operational aspects of 'getting things done effectively' as they do on maintaining the linkages between top management and supervisors. These leaders acted in a hands-on way to intervene, rather than delegate and evaluate results after the fact. The interventions that they undertook required an involvement in the work and an intimate knowledge of the operations.

Fostering emergent leaders

Management development and training for middle leadership is not consistent across the sector and in fact is severely lacking in some quarters. Most of this study's participants 'fell' into leadership positions and did not consciously undertaken training for the position. The assimilation of expertise and management capability from within can be a powerful approach to management in professional organisations according to Huy (2001), although as Dimmock (1999) points out, the capability often seems to occur through personal predisposition rather than through processes of management development. Much has been written about the development of leadership and the need for organisations to identify those who have leadership potential (Glatter, 1991) and then to nurture them as they would nurture any other precious resource critical to success (Densten & Gray, 2001). It is, however, surprising to note that few systematic efforts have been undertaken to pinpoint the early markers of leadership (Gewirtz, 2002) and that many organisations still rely on informal, natural selection or happenstance mechanisms of fostering leadership talent (Gronn, 1997a). In this study, Ange indicated that her previous head of school groomed her for her current position and that the previous head consciously fostered emergent leaders by giving them opportunities to shine. This situation was not the norm with other participants.

The lack of focussed management training may be symptomatic of the fact, pointed out by Hancock and Hellawell (2003), that academic middle manager

service posts have varied backwards and forwards between 'permanent' and 'fixed-term' appointments over the last decade. These positions are generally now appointments rather than post-holders elected from and by their colleagues. The difficulty for academic leaders may not only be confined to a lack of leadership and management development, but could be further complicated by a lack of agreement within organisations on just what academic leadership roles entail. There was general agreement among the participants that one of the dangers of natural selection in educational leadership was that often people who are very good in one position are promoted up to a level where they are not doing what they are necessarily good at any more. The participants highlighted fostering emergent leaders as an important activity for educational organisations.

Being on the inside or the outside

The positional location of the leader as being on the inside, or the outside of their client group was discussed with examples drawn from both sides of the equation. Gabel (2002) suggests that working in the middle requires a great degree of introspection as it carries with it a greater emphasis on the impact of conflict resolution on the manager or leader personally. Ken indicated that being on the outside of his 'client group' effected his ability to manage the change action as well as his personal feeling of his self-worth as a leader. While Ange noted that the change undertaken in her organisation was very personal to her client group and therefore for some of the change agency she was also regarded as an 'outsider'. Sid regarded his 'acclimatisation' time on the chalk face as essential to enabling him to come to grips with the culture of his organisation and in a way to bridge the gap between Bennis' (1997a) vision of the external change agent who may provide the perspective, detachment, and energy necessary to alter existing patterns, and the insider who possesses the intimate knowledge of the system and who does not generate the suspicion and mistrust that the outsider often does. The others, however, described themselves as internal change agents and did not feel separated in any way from their client groups. They enjoyed acceptance and credibility, which in some cases was guaranteed by their organisational status but more often by their interpersonal relationships.

Ken's narrative illustrated the effect that being on the outside can have on a change leader and documented his approach to self-doubt. Throughout his interview there was an implication that his feelings of being on the 'outside' were motivated by his intense desire to be on the 'inside', however he rationalised, that for him to be effective in his role in the change action, he in fact needed to be on the outside. Ken might not have been able to quickly change the circumstances which existed within the sub-culture of his school, but was able to change how he perceived and reacted to them (Hodgkinson, 1991). By shifting his personal experience of the events he raised the probability of having a more positive impact. Over time, Ken developed an understanding of the need to recognise and come to grips with his own motivations for taking on this complex change agency as a way of pushing through the anxiety. As pointed out by Bennis (1997a), often it is the interaction between the change agent and the group undertaking change that is crucial for understanding the state and readiness of the change. As a result Ken admitted that there was indeed success worth celebrating:

I think that because we came through that process with them and we're on the other side and we're working with them to develop new academic processes, communication processes etc, I look back and think, that's actually success.

SUCCESSFUL CHANGE LEADERSHIP

The findings concur with the literature that, within a 'success' focused proposition, to be successful change leaders, middle leaders need to: establish and communicate goals for change with clear and honest answers (Beer et al., 1990); create involvement among a range of participants at different levels of the organisation, involving as many people as possible to build commitment (Brunetto & Farr-Wharton, 2004); promote opportunities for employee participation and provide tangible support and recognition with appropriate resources (Kaplan & Norton, 2005b); engage personally in the change and model the way forward in deeds as well as in words - 'walk the talk' (Collins, 2001); and above all communicate the message repeatedly up, down and across the organisation to ensure the momentum and enthusiasm for change is not diminished over time (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

The interview findings present the middle leaders as taking on a variety of roles that helped bring about successful change and how they demonstrated a concern with organisational effectiveness, improvement, development, and enhancement, especially where the results related to the people of their various client groups. Each acted in turn as leaders, colleagues, trainers, consultants, teachers, and, in some cases, counsellors. Some specialised in only one role, but most shifted and switched from one to another. They each employed a range of operational and relational skills, as advocated by Bennis (1997a), to create situations in which success was able to occur, such as: the ability to listen, observe, identify, and report; to form relationships and inspire trust; and to manifest a high degree of behavioural flexibility.

While these middle leaders are not a very homogeneous group, they do have many similarities. Among them are the characteristics of transformational and visionary leadership as they have each been successful in changing the status quo of their organisations by displaying and employing appropriate leadership behaviours throughout the transformation process. The leaders have displayed many of the abilities advocated by Walker (2006) such as constantly and coherently thinking about the future, the ends, the greater good, the best interests, and larger purposes of each activity taking place in the changing environment. One of the participants, Peg emphasised this with her intent being to change attitudes and bring about a commitment to 'a better state' by being proactive about the organisational vision and mission, shaping member's beliefs, values, attitudes and developing options for the future, a view supported by Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1992).

Practices and approaches

Each leader was able to find an appropriate balance between structure and culture, and organisation and institution. They displayed the ability to steer and direct, while also unleashing appropriate individual's creative energies. It was part of Peg's strategy to perform more of a facilitation role to encourage the staff to think of ways that would enable themselves to adjust to the new environment and be receptive to change by undertaking it for themselves. Sid

worked with a level of transparency of information that kept his staff informed of the seriousness of the situation, whilst encouraging them to participate in becoming part of the solution.

Each leader's vision for improving on the present situation was well created and articulated and thus appeared realistic, credible, and attractive. They were therefore able to employ those visions to energise their employees (and others) to engage all of their skills, knowledge, and abilities to assist in making each vision a reality. Lee began the process of enlarging the middle management of her school to achieve more equity for her staff by first confirming that it was what the school wanted prior to seeking approval from above. Once the vision was articulated and agreed to, she then had to 'sell' the vision upwards by arguing that the changes were concerned with her schools organisational effectiveness, improvement, development, and enhancement. In this way the vision was employed as both a strategic and a motivational focus, as suggested by Schein (1997), which provided a clear statement of the purpose of the change action and became a source of inspiration and commitment, and a rallying point for both leader and staff to naturally join forces to achieve success. Lee included steps that allowed the staff to collectively be able to articulate the vision and therefore gain acceptance that it was what was 'best' for the school. It is interesting to note that the leaders in this study created successful and lasting change by providing a vision that was attractive to their staff rather than by creating dissatisfaction with the status quo. There is yet no consensus in the transformational leadership literature concerning whether a crisis or dissatisfaction with the status quo is necessary for transformational leadership to occur (Senge, 2008).

The collegial nature of higher educational institutions assumes that decisions are derived through consensus where power is shared among members of the organisation who are thought to have a mutual understanding about the objectives (Brundrett, 1998). This culture was understood by the leaders as they each endeavoured to harness the natural proclivity of their client groups to become involved in the change actions. Lee rated the success of her change actions as directly related to the collegial nature of her school in which there

was a culture of 'free and frank discussion' in which she was quite used to receiving criticism, and responding to people's issues. This suggests that there was an openness in the school and that care was taken to ensure that it was not a negative environment. The literature suggests that in the collegial environment of educational organisations, members see themselves as professionals, who like to be part of the decision-making and problem-solving process and they generally do not like being told what to do (Bartkus, 1997). To deal with this situation, many of these leaders focussed on creating feasible alternative options, thereby helping their client groups to reason through the options, gently bringing to their attention considerations they may not have taken into account. Ange employed a physical form of collective framing for her changes where staff were actively involved in adding their ideas to the change proposal as a way of working through their concerns. Whereas Sid and Ken employed open and honest information sharing about the current situation, both the good and the bad, and a range of options for their staff to choose from as a way of giving them the power to solve the problems. This was a form of empowerment to ensure that all of the staff jointly accepted the situation and the challenges, and were better able to strategise a lasting solution to the problem. These approaches recognise McKenna & Maister's (2002) assertion that individuals at all levels in the organisation and in all roles (not simply those with an overt management dimension) can exert leadership influence over their colleagues and thus influence the overall leadership of the change action itself.

Most of the leaders intervened in relationships, and focussed on the tensions, which were growing out of interpersonal relationships. Each was presented with a dilemma of some sort, and had to identify significant choice points or exigencies in problem solving, whilst trying to understand assumptions, and searching for alternatives. This was most evident in Ken's story of dealing with a totally autonomous sub-culture within the organisation with their own highly developed and distinct set of values, beliefs and attitudes, a point also raised by Lok and Crawford (1999). Ken had to shift his personal experience of the events to raise the probability of having a more positive impact. This is supported by Bennis' (1997a) recommendation that change agents must

observe, in a sensitive and mature way, how the change subjects are dealing with them in the diagnostic stages to best prepare their actions.

Each of the participants centralised the men and women employed in their organisational settings and their main preoccupation was with people and the processes of human interaction. Ken described his staff as a 'very tight group' explaining that they operated a 'family' model, having dealt with everything in an insular and isolated way which displayed resistant tendencies to change. He therefore had to frame his plan for managing the change around the issues of employee anxiety about change and their sense of outrage at the way they had been treated by their previous organisation. Ange was dealing with changing something that was 'very close to their hearts' of her staff and admitted that her first presentation of the change agenda had caused disquiet who viewed it as a *fait accompli* and that she had to find a way to present her ideas more carefully, but clearly, to gain her client groups confidence. These themes are similar to those found in the literature around employee resistance to change (Goldstein, 1988).

The leaders represented in this study continually assessed the need to stay attuned to employee's moods and emotional needs as suggested by Huy (2001) whilst managing the tension between continuity and change. They did this by getting out and talking to people and simply engaging with them. In particular Nick, Ange and Ken spoke about walking the floor and making a point of catching up with their staff regularly. The others kept an open door policy and welcomed visits and questions at any time from the staff. Only one, Sid, mentioned that he wished he had got out and about more. As champions of strong interpersonal communication ideals, the leaders each denounced bureaucratic values that were impersonal and task-oriented as these could have been seen as leading to mistrustful and non-authentic relationships which could lead to a state of decreased interpersonal competence. This was illustrated by Ken, who presented his passion for what he was doing and his willingness to communicate his feelings with his staff as a way to encourage their reciprocation to be open with him. This seemed to fit into their values construct of 'family' and enable them to feel part of something and confident in

their ability to respond successfully to change. This initially traumatic event therefore became a catalyst for further change. As the communication channels began to open in both directions and trust began to grow between them, Ken was able to work through (and sell) the vision that the institution had for the school. As the staff listened, they began to accept the vision, effectively 'getting on the same page' and beginning to participate in setting the agenda for change. As Ken commented:

I think it was around the fact that they felt that they could go on a journey with the Head of School and myself in this role. These [we] 'two' people. That there was a support and willingness and they'd been heard as a gateway into somehow being a part of the institution.

The literature suggests that without effective interpersonal competence between management and staff, an organisation can become a breeding ground for mistrust, inter-group conflict, and rigidity, which in turn may lead to a decrease in the ability of the organisation to achieve successful rejuvenation (Kanter et al., 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 2005; Saunders, 2005).

Change focussed interventions by the leaders varied at different levels and at different times. Some focussed on adding conceptual understanding to help people gain perspective as with the way that Sid employed clear and honest information sharing as a way of presenting the problem in its rawest form, thereby framing the problem in terms which allowed people to confront the issues and work through their concerns. Sid also employed a strategy which remove himself as the 'only provider of ideas', encouraged other perspectives from within an existing committee structure, and also brought together change ambassadors to guide the change agenda, therefore casting himself as the leader who supported and motivated the efforts, which were coming from the ground up, a strategy well covered by the change literature (Kotter, 1996).

Other interventions focussed on procedure as offering a critique of existing methods for solving problems as in the way that Ange employed a form of distributed leadership where the whole staff were invited to be involved in the change task. While some intervened by calling attention to a contradiction in action or attitudes, such as Ian's 'tea group' with its democratic approach to

leadership and group intervention to achieve mediation to a change action and Sid's range of solutions, framed within a context of the organisational realities, in which the staff jointly accepted the situation and the challenges, and then strategised a lasting solution. These forms of multiple option strategies are described in the literature as ways to lead the staff to examine each situation from a number of angles (Deal & Peterson, 2007) and to realise that there may be a number of solutions, rather than simply one which they may have thought of as the 'only' solution, and that therefore any resulting solution will be a 'shared' vision (Senge, 2008).

The use of inducements for encourage staff participation in the change actions is widely discussed in the literature (Weber & Weber, 2001). In this research these took the form of time and space, financial inducements, training, resources, or simply a sharing of information. Lee wanted to ensure that the new positions that she created would be attractive to potential applicants by creating a benefit package that she felt acknowledged the work that would be inherent in the role. Peg and Ian ensured that support for staff development of research capability was provided, and Ken helped to find resources, such as a new home for the school, as a way of helping the staff to cope with the changing situation, and he even gave them the best spaces for their offices, taking a corridor for himself, as a way of keeping them feeling that they were valued. Schein (2006) describes this interaction as a form of psychological contract involving reciprocation (contribution – inducement) where the employee and employer became engaged in an interactive process of mutual influence and bargaining. The inducements can also be ongoing following change as described by Lee who organised training to assist her new managers to up-skill, and to feel qualified and therefore better able to take on the new responsibility.

Each leader displayed perspective where they provided situational and historical understanding of problems, and also structure where they identified the source of problems as bound in the structure and systems, or the organisational cultural and traditions. In this way, as the literature suggests, leaders demonstrate their knowledge in unobtrusive ways to garner influence,

however the potency of the influence grows dramatically if leader action is trustworthy, fair, transparent, and underscores the optimism of the outcomes (Hoy & Smith, 2007). Throughout her change action, Ange displayed strong operational and relational skills with particular focus on the ability to listen, observe, identify, and report; to form relationships and inspire trust; and to manifest a high degree of behavioural flexibility.

The leaders all stressed the importance of social relations in the leadership contract, and the need for themselves as leader to be accepted by their client groups. Bennett (2003) describes this as a form of social rationality that emphasises the importance and necessity of social relationships and human initiative for the completion of action and achievement of aims of an organisation. Each leader established some form of social network and support to help motivate members by promoting their initiative and synergy to help implement the action plan and achieve the change aims. The success outcomes, as suggested by the literature, were the result of successful social networking and relations, human initiative which were grounded in key values and ideology of the shared organisational culture (Collins, 2001). As in Nick's case where he employed his vast operational and relational skills and knowledge built up over his years of being in the school to form strong relationships and inspire trust. Lee also held strong personal values as a leader and a deep understanding of the human effects that her actions could have on others. The core values and authenticity that she brought to her change effort allowed her to lead her staff towards a new organisational system which they were able to see as their own creation.

Organisational culture, unique to each participant, influenced the thinking of the participant leaders when approaching change. This culture assumes the nature, aims, and effectiveness of organisational action as determined by the values, beliefs, ethics and traditions shared among the organisational members (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Cheng, 2005). However it is in their values and goals that each of these leaders demonstrated, with varying clarity and specificity, their particular vision of people and organisation and a particular set of values that formed the base for each of their actions. Peg described her success in

managing the transition for her staff as being based on valuing her staff, and showing them that they are valued, and demonstrating that they were journeying together through the change. While much of the Lee's influence as a leader of successful change grew out of her relationship with the staff and her embodiment of a shared set of values which she communicated to them consistently, such as concern for her fellow member of the collegium, openness, honesty, flexibility, cooperation, and democracy. She also demonstrated these approaches through her humble orientation towards serving the needs and aspirations of her staff first and foremost. Organisational culture is also viewed by Schein (1992) as the accumulated shared learning of a given group, covering behavioural, emotional, and cognitive elements of the group members' total psychological functioning.

Cultural leadership has also been viewed as a form of moral leadership in the literature (Sergiovanni, 2007), where the social and political context of the situation in which the leader finds them self, can effect the leaders behaviour (Starratt, 1996). Attributes of moral leadership such as transformative, visionary, educative, empowering, liberating, personally ethical, organisationally ethical, and responsible (Greenfield, 2004) were displayed by each of the leaders. Lee was motivated to ensure organisational equity for her staff. Peg focussed on empowering her staff to adapt to change and modelled behaviours which acted as an educative example. Ian worked to protect junior staff by a forced intervention to bring the organisation to realise its moral responsibility. Ken described the staff of his school at that time as a 'very tight group' and He struggled to achieve a transformative change for them who treated him as an outsider, The issues of employee anxiety about change and the sense of outrage at the way that they were treated, threatened to lead them to withdraw or be resistance to further change. Ken therefore framed his plan for managing the change with these issues in mind and engaged them with compassion and worked to achieve an ethically based solution for them.

SUMMARY

This chapter has presented an analysis of the data which was presented in chapter four. It explored the core capabilities and attributes associated with successful change leadership; the perceptions of being in the 'middle' and the way that change leaders reconcile their position as a subordinate, an equal and as a superior; the ways in which middle leaders act as change leaders in successful organisational change; and the role of the middle leader in successful organisational change by presenting the practices they employ to minimise the potential negative impact of change. The themes which arose from the collected stories of 'real' leaders represent the personal common sense of each leader contextualised with local meanings which formed a unique local ontology. The success attribute findings of the focus group were discussed within the frame of the discourse of the semi-structured interviews and demonstrated the links between the two and the literature.

Specific attributes, such as communicating goals, empowering staff toward participation, knowledge of the organisation and its culture, engagement in the change, and a high degree of operational and relational skills were confirmed as being essential in all aspects of leadership with some being specific to leading and managing change. Communication attributes, both intra-personal and inter-personal proved to be essential to success and were woven into each area of change leadership and management. It was determined that not all attributes were needed at all times and the range of required attributes were affected by the unique circumstance of the particular change action. The overlapping nature of the attributes confirmed that the roles of leading and managing change could be seen as both concurrent and complementary activities.

The middle leaders represented in this study were generally concerned with organisational effectiveness, improvement, development, and enhancement. The leadership interviews related examples of the complex relationship between the middle leader and their client groups (peers or staff), and the change action itself, which led ultimately to success. Leadership was presented as a transaction between the leader, his or her client group, and the goal or

dream of change. The interviews highlighted the leaders understanding of the negotiated processes and relationships that developed between leader and group in the change situation. Organisational culture, unique to each participant, influenced their thinking when approaching change. Each change leader was simultaneously aware of the organisational relationships between structures and group members while critically appraising options to best carry through their tasks. The leaders commented that organisational values and behaviours were deeply embedded, and recognised that successful organisational change takes time, and that time must be given to communication at all levels.

The concluding chapter briefly reviews the main findings and the discussion the research project and draws recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

In this concluding chapter, the research project is briefly reviewed and its main findings highlighted.

This project was undertaken with participants who were identified as successful middle leaders of change from a range of higher education institutions. Two qualitative investigation techniques were employed for this study. Each addressed its own distinctive area of the research but each acted as a reference and cross check for the other. The first was the phenomenological focus group, which was used in the development of criteria for 'success'. A template was created from the findings of the a focus group that detailed the skills, knowledge and abilities of successful middle managers in organisational change actions and the core job characteristics that may be important in creating an organisational culture and climate conducive to successful change. This data was employed to define the nature of success and was used in the second part of the study as the foundation for some of the questioning. The second part of the study employed a semi-structured format of interviewing to create 'success' case narratives, utilising traditional case study techniques, as a way of documenting each of the participants' experiences.

Research sets out to find things and explain things and it could be said that change leaders [managers] do this all the time too. Using interpretive methodologies with a constructivist epistemology and narrative analysis techniques in this research has offered particular opportunities to the researcher to understand the representation of meaning. It allowed the participants to reveal how they make sense of the world of their work. Many of the meanings it has elicited can validly claim to have picked up both the explicit and implicit dimensions, with which middle change leaders [managers], consciously and unconsciously, give their work when they reflect on it. It has allowed the participants to provide narrative representations of how they see

their work, and to “look back as well as forward in an attempt to attain a fuller understanding of what it is to be a change leader [manager] and to be themselves” (Hannabuss, 2000, p. 228).

The aim of this research project was to identify and explain the contextual factors of successful middle leadership change initiatives as a way of helping to determine the value that success focussed initiatives may be capable of producing, and whether they could be leveraged to a wider constituency to assist in improved and sustained success in similar settings. The research objectives which supported this aim were:

- To describe and critique the role that higher education middle managers play in leading successful organisational change;
- To examine a middle-up/down perspective of successful change leadership; and
- To explain the characteristics of successful change leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER STUDY

Although this was a relatively small study, the research highlights the need for a more proactive approach to identifying leadership competencies and developing leadership throughout higher educational organisations.

Recommendation 1: That educational organisations develop strategies to identify and foster emergent middle leaders.

A primary research finding was that middle leaders need to develop both intrapersonal understanding or self-knowledge as well as interpersonal relational skills to fulfil their role as successful change leaders.

Recommendation 2: That the success focussed perspectives gained from this research be made available for the development of middle leadership and management training which includes relational awareness skills for future organisational change within specific organisational cultures and contexts.

Recommendation 3: That wider distribution of the documented results of this study be undertaken to disseminate evidence of the value of middle leadership ‘success’ in change management.

The middle leaders each centralised the men and women employed in their organisational settings and their main preoccupation was with people and the processes of human interaction. Further study in the area of the relationship between the middle leader and their client groups might help to clarify the relationship and allow for a refining of success focused approaches to organisational change.

Recommendation 4: That further investigation into the success of organisational communication on the relationship between the leader and the follower be undertaken to add to the body of knowledge for the leader of what success actually looks like.

Recommendation 5: That further study be undertaken to investigate the perspective of the staff who are led through change to gain insight into the relationship of the led up to the leader.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Organisational change is regarded as 'sine qua non' (without which it cannot be) and is now regarded as a natural response to environmental and internal conditions. Organisations are defined by their paradigms, that is, the prevalent view of reality shared by members of the organisation. Structure, strategy, culture, leadership and individual role accomplishments are defined by this prevailing worldview and therefore radical change may be construed as a discontinuous shift in this socially constructed reality. Leaders find themselves at the centre of complex sets of relationships between participants of change with divergent as well as convergent interests in environments of uncertainty, tension and conflict.

The middle leaders represented in this study were generally concerned with organisational effectiveness, improvement, development, and enhancement. While these middle leaders were not a very homogeneous group, they did have many similarities. Among them are the characteristics of transformational and visionary leadership as they have each been successful in changing the status quo of their organisations by displaying and employing appropriate leadership behaviours throughout the transformation process. As evidenced in this study, successful middle change leadership combines real engagement, with passion

and courage on behalf of one or a range of people; utilises the leader's ability to set strategic direction to be able to implement the strategic changes; initiates innovation and creates a vision of change; and implements change through change leadership and management by translating the vision into agendas and actions. Organisational values and behaviours are deeply embedded, and successful organisational change takes time, and that time must be given to communication up, beside and down the organisation at all levels.

Above all the 'success' focus is on people, and the leaders interaction with them. Successful middle leaders stay attuned to employee's moods and emotional needs whilst managing the tension between continuity and change. They employ high levels of inter-personal competencies for communication which they place at the centre of each change action. By developing strong operational and relational skills with particular focus on the ability to listen, observe, identify, and report; to form relationships and inspire trust; and to manifest a high degree of behavioural flexibility, middle leaders are better able to minimise the potential negative impact of change. They are not necessarily interested in changing personnel but rather in the relationships, attitudes, perceptions, and values of existing personnel.

Some scholars suggest that leadership can best (and probably only) be learned by actual real life experience that teaches, through successes and failures, how one can develop a personal repertoire of effective leadership skills (Caldwell, 2003). Organisations, like individuals, have different potentials for success and successful change requires the alignment of an organisation's internal architecture, individual actions, and collective goals in order to achieve optimal results. Leading change is a form of purposive action where the leader needs to exhibit transformational leadership behaviours that direct people towards constructive effort and that provide others with a more integrated understanding of what is to be achieved. They have to be flexible in making the most of the opportunities that emerge while working with what is there and is already working. Leading successful change is not simply a matter of a leader's style or personality; it is a leader's philosophy of how to generate and mobilise the people of an organisation to participate in achieving the change.

I began this thesis with a quotation about change from antiquity and I finish it with a whimsical quote which was cited by Bennis (1997b) as being a favourite of his. It comes from E. B. White:

I wake up every morning determined both to change the world and have one hell of a good time. Sometimes this makes planning the day a little difficult. (p. 71)

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