

Leadership for Cultural Change: Developing a Community of Learners in Teacher Education, 5(10)

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Abstract

If we understand ‘culture’ (in its simplest sense) to be ‘the way of life’ or ‘the way in which we do things,’ then asking the staff of a university faculty to adopt student-centred approaches and embed them in an outcomes-focused environment is expecting of them quite a degree of cultural change. What many staff are faced with is a massive reassessment of their role — what they are expected to know, to do and to be — even those who thought they were (and were acknowledged as) good teachers in the first place. An outcomes approach to education requires a shift in emphasis from focusing on teaching to focusing on learning. A student-centred approach to education requires focusing on the learner rather than on the syllabus. For most academics, this is a major shift in their understanding of ‘the way in which we do things’ in a university.

This paper describes how Faculty of Education staff involved in a university-funded Learning Effectiveness Alliances Program (LEAP) have gone about this process of cultural change, some of the alterations they have made in their practices as university teachers and some of the challenges they have met and grappled with along the way. After two years into a five year project, no one, including the leadership, is totally clear where the end point, if any, might be or what it will exactly look like if they do get there. By listening and responding to the teachers and students as the program is implemented, flexibility is maintained, adaptability encouraged, and ownership achieved. What is already evident is a renewed excitement in the process of education

and how it can and should be pursued in a Faculty of Education. For this group at least, it is once again a community of learners with the teachers providing a thought-provoking model for their students.

While the program and changes are by no means complete at this stage, and indeed may never be (we keep telling participants and interested parties that it is in draft form only), the challenge of educational leadership roles and cultural change has not been easy for both teaching teams and management. However, one of the most pleasing outcomes has been the success of the collaborative approach to curriculum development and teacher planning with a close working relationship maintained between management and teaching staff.

Introduction

This paper describes some of the challenges involved in operationalising cultural change in a traditional academic department in a university. Some of the change was planned; yet some change appears to have been almost accidental. After two years, everyone involved is convinced that change has occurred; whether it can be sustained is yet to be seen.

The Education System in WA

Western Australia, like most other states in Australia and many places elsewhere in the English-speaking world (notably, New Zealand, parts of Canada, the U.S.A. and the U.K.), is in the process of adopting an outcomes approach to education. While debate continues as to what exactly an 'outcomes approach' does and should entail, and how much its adoption is driven by the quest of school systems for accountability as opposed to it being a pedagogy, there are some aspects on which most educators agree. According to the [WA Curriculum Framework \(1998\)](#): *An outcomes approach means identifying what students should achieve and focusing on ensuring that they do achieve. It means shifting away from an emphasis on what is to be taught and how and when, to an emphasis on what is actually learnt by each student.* (p.14)

Jasa and Enger (1994) (quoted by [Willis and Kissane, 1995](#), p.21) suggest that:
An outcome:

- provides a picture of the student behaviour that would result from learning;
- describes long term learning;
- reflects discipline standards beyond the school setting;
- acknowledges differing learning styles and forms of intelligence;
- is understandable to students, parents and the community;
- is appropriate developmentally;
- addresses higher order thinking skills; and
- is assessable directly or indirectly.

Fundamental to an outcomes focus in education is a shift in focus from an emphasis on teaching and holding staff accountable for what they teach, to an emphasis on learning and holding staff

accountable for what and how students learn. In other words, in the past teachers focused on looking after the teaching and tended to assume that if they did that right it was the students' responsibility to take care of their learning. When shifting to an outcomes approach, the teacher needs to take responsibility for ensuring that all students learn — and make progress. Implicit in an outcomes approach is student-centredness. This implies a significant cultural change about what school education is and how it should be delivered.

The Faculty of Education at Curtin was faced, as it always is, with the introduction of new concepts and directions in education, and how they might best introduce these changes to their students, the potential education work force of the future.

For many years, the approach in most Education faculties to the shifts and manoeuvres in Teacher Education has been to teach incoming students about the changes that were occurring. Students have often been critical of this approach, feeling that there was a basic inconsistency in the way in which they were introduced to educational innovations; for example, new developments in education were taught through extremely traditional methods. The academic and intellectual justification for this has usually been that the role of a university was to encourage critical analysis of all approaches, rather than be part of them.

However, this particular change has presented another challenge. If the education system (and it should be understood that every school in WA has agreed to implement this change as it is supported by an Act of Parliament) does really manage to adopt what is a significant shift in the way students are taught in schools, then the products of that system, the students who will be entering the university in several years' time, may well be very different from the students entering the university today. They may well have much higher expectations of what a university education can and should offer them, and be more than able to articulate their beliefs and understandings. Coupled with the increasing financial cost of higher education to the students themselves, they could prove to be very discerning consumers who will demand that the university meet their needs — or they will take their custom elsewhere; that is, to other universities in the state, or even off-shore to universities offering their degrees on-line.

The Learning Effectiveness Alliance Program (LEAP) Project

In 1998, Curtin University of Technology introduced the Learning Effectiveness Alliance Program (LEAP) which, as the promotional literature states:
is designed to enhance the quality of teaching and learning by providing financial and other forms of support for several exemplary developments in selected areas of the University. Those selected are seen as being able, through participation in LEAP, to make a major impact on other areas as well as their own.

[Further, it] aims to facilitate significant change through collective effort by teams of colleagues. It also enables the University to refine its indicators of quality in teaching and learning.

LEAP is part of a response by Curtin University to a perceived need by the University to more effectively focus attention on improving teaching and learning. The reasons for this are many, but as a paper about the project ([Reid, Weir, Radloff & Thornton, 1999](#)) points out, too often in

the past efforts to change have been focused on individuals or small groups. They too, see that change, if it is to be widespread, is about changing 'cultures,' not just individuals. Rather they suggest,

a collective approach is needed to bring about widespread change. While individual projects may involve expertise, enthusiasm and excellence on the part of project coordinators, this does not usually translate to the School or Division as a whole, and therefore such programs do not lead to empowerment. The evaluation of the 1993 National Teaching Development Grants highlighted the need for systematic support to facilitate successful project outcomes and to bring about cultural change in higher education. ([Reid, Weir, Radloff & Thornton, 1999](#))

A group of staff within the Faculty of Education saw in this an opportunity to rejuvenate the educational focus of academic staff. In recent years, the faculty had declined in numbers, was aging, and was no longer a centre of educational excitement, although its programs were still held in high regard in the community. It was not that there were no highly effective individual teachers (and researchers) in the faculty; in fact, there were many (e.g., one of the LEAP team was awarded the 1999 University Teacher of the Year National Award for Education). However, the faculty as a whole did not embody a culture of learning, there was more of a culture of teaching being emphasised.

The authors of this article have participated in various aspects of the design, development, or evaluation of the Faculty of Education LEAP Project. These participant-observer roles have included being part of the project management team; trialing and implementing outcomes focused, student-centred learning while teaching within the target program (Bachelor of Education); interviewing staff; and undertaking reflective evaluation of the project outcomes over the initial two years of implementation. The article is therefore written from their multiple perspectives and is a reflection of their collective experience, as well as an analysis of the ongoing evaluation strategies established to monitor the project (e.g., staff and student interviews, and document analysis).

What is 'Culture'?

The simple way in which we think of culture is as 'the way of life' or 'the way in which we do things.' This is a not unreasonable approach for conceptualising the changes that were required and have occurred in the faculty, yet it is perhaps a little too simplistic. The fact is that 'culture,' while often in political discourse in Australia, has been understood as a static, stable entity ([Jayasuriya, 1997](#), characterises this as an 'idealist' or 'essentialist' approach); it is, in reality, much more dynamic. As Jayasuriya, building on Williams' interpretation, points out, it is a 'contested negotiated concept' and one needs to 'avoid the danger of reifying culture as an entity, or identifying it as fixed value system' (p.8). He therefore endorses Williams' definition of culture as:

a 'signifying system,' through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, represented, experienced, and explored (1984, p.13; quoted in [Jayasuriya, 1997](#), p.7)

Recognising the dynamism inherent in culture helps us in exploring change to understand that there will always be contest; there will always be resistance when creating a new and different 'social order.' Understanding culture in this way helps us to appreciate that, while these responses occur, it does not necessarily mean that the proposed change is 'wrong,' or that there

are not ways to ameliorate some of the more negative impacts of it. Rather, when we come to understand how to manage change, we can accept that there will continue to be differences, there will continue to be debate about all the issues involved, and that it is through this contest that new shared understandings will emerge, that themselves will continue to grow and not be fixed or static.

Managing Change

The following matrix was developed as a way to conceptualise the process of complex change in an educational setting, and help those involved in implementing change to understand both the process and the ways in which their reactions to change might be understood. While it is usually used in advance of educational change, it is used here as a framework to review and reflect on the changes that have occurred in the Faculty of Education as a result of its involvement in the LEAP project .

Table 1. Managing Change

Adapted from [Villa and Thousand \(1995\)](#)

Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Collegiality	Change
***	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Collegiality	Confusion
Vision	***	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Collegiality	Anxiety
Vision	Skills	***	Resources	Action Plan	Collegiality	Resistance
Vision	Skills	Incentives	***	Action Plan	Collegiality	Frustration
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	***	Collegiality	Treadmill
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	***	Isolation

In terms of the above model, **vision** is ‘the big picture’ that people need if they are to have a sense of where any change is leading them. Often the people in charge or who are driving an innovation have a good sense of the ‘vision,’ of where they are all going and what will be achieved, but frequently this is either not conveyed to everyone else, or it is not accepted by those who are expected to follow. Building a shared sense of vision is therefore a critical factor in managing change, without which participants are likely to feel **confused**.

If people involved in change feel, for whatever reason, that they do not have the necessary **skills** to effectively take on the proposed change, they will more than likely experience **anxiety**. Change frequently implies acting in new ways, trying out different strategies, implementing new plans. It is not surprising that, if people feel they are inadequately equipped to do these things, they will feel a sense of anxiety; however, too often those driving change fail to appreciate this and do not put in place strategies for identifying the skills staff will need and the means for acquiring them.

If people have no **incentive** for change, they are likely to be **resistant** to it. In other words, if people feel that they are not going to get anything out of it, their normal reaction is to ask themselves ‘why change?’

Resources are a vital ingredient in managing change — not necessarily physical resources, but any of those items which people feel are necessary to enable them to make the required change. It might be new equipment, but it might just as easily be emotional or social support. If the perceived needed resources (i.e., those that are perceived to be needed by the participants themselves, not necessarily just by those who are driving the change) are not provided or accessible, the participants are likely to feel **frustrated**.

It is rare these days for people to contemplate change without putting in place a **plan of action**. Funding is so tightly tied to plans these days that most people are accomplished at drawing them up; but without a plan (and without it being convincingly and clearly explained to all participants) people will quickly come to feel as though they are once again, on a **treadmill**.

While proposed change can sometimes bring people together, it can also just as readily drive people apart. Without a sense of **collegiality** when managing change, people may feel lonely and **isolated** and without collegiality; any attempt to develop a ‘community of learners,’ as this project was trying to do, would be doomed to failure. While this factor was not part of the original Villa and Thousand matrix, the experience of one of the authors of this paper (Alderson) has found this to be as an essential ingredient in managing change.

The following sections of this article will use the [Villa and Thousand \(1995\)](#) matrix to explore and report on how each of these factors affected the change processes that occurred during the implementation of the project.

Vision

Vision for the change to outcomes-focused, student-centred learning in the Faculty of Education came initially from the project management team who conceived the project in the first place. Over a series of planning days, staff were introduced to the notion of the vision for the LEAP project in relation to the need for change, given the broader issues facing teaching and learning both within the university environment and the wider educational community.

The staff professional-development activities designed to identify overarching outcomes for the faculty, to define what the ‘learning areas’ should be, to wrestle with what developmental continuum for each of these might look like, and to ponder how these might effectively be

assessed, were intense and sometimes exhilarating experiences for the teaching staff and those in the management team. However, the real challenge was going to be to introduce the results of these deliberations to the rest of the teaching staff in the faculty and have them accept them. Change in education systems is ubiquitous, and many changes come and go relatively quickly. Some of the staff argued that the role of university staff was not to accept such changes but to challenge them. Surely the divorce of education training from the state education system meant that teacher educators no longer were at the mercy of system planners. Instead, they could assume the role of scholars and researchers — and many education staff who now work in universities prize this role. Staff at Curtin University Faculty of Education were no different, and many argued vociferously that the proposed changes should be perceived as current 'trends' and challenged rather than embraced.

On the other hand, the staff who were involved in the LEAP management team were innovative educators. Several of them were readily acknowledged as well-respected university teachers. They had been integrally involved in the discussions in the wider WA education community on the introduction of the new Western Australian Curriculum Framework (K-12) and were themselves pedagogically committed to this approach. They certainly had a vision for Teacher Education, but the challenge was how to ensure the vision was transmitted to and shared by the rest of the faculty.

Several factors combined to make the chance of the adoption of a new and united vision more possible. In the first instance, the need to revise all courses in the undergraduate Teacher Education degrees because of the change from a three-year degree structure to four years meant that rethinking the courses was already expected and planned. Secondly, after years of relative stability (or rather a steady decline in numbers of full-time staff with the only new recruits being casual lecturing staff), a number of senior staff retired, moved on to other positions, or left the university. Suddenly, there were several appointments of staff who were new to the university, were well-experienced and also recognised as talented teachers. Finally, while there was opposition from some staff to these innovations, there were also other staff who themselves had independently been trying to change and improve their teaching (or had come in from schools) and were already using student-centred learning approaches, even if they were not using an outcomes approach. These staff were often younger and casual employees — they were certainly not particularly influential — and they often (it was later revealed in the evaluation) felt intellectually isolated and unrecognised in their efforts to teach university students innovatively and well, in a manner that was consistent with their philosophical and pedagogical beliefs.

In the first year of the project, given the focus on clarifying and conceptualising the innovation, only a few isolated volunteers started to seriously examine their teaching approaches, two of whom were members of the management team. However, during the year, the planning for the actual implementation of the new four-year degree began and a new planning team of staff who were to teach all the new first-year units was formed. This team was largely composed of new and/or casual staff and was coincidentally led by the LEAP project team manager. The group proved to be responsive to both challenge and change and by the end of the second year were not only convinced of the direction in which they were going, but were forging their own vision of what an outcomes and student-centred focus might mean within a university environment (e.g.,

there is now a proposal to not talk about ‘student-centred approaches’ but rather about ‘learner-centred approaches’). They were also keen to wrest the management of it from the original team.

This desire to create a new vision of Teacher Education at Curtin University was also evident in the debates about whether or not the faculty ‘learning area’ outcomes should be retained as well as the overarching outcomes for the course as a whole; the desire to not interfere with the momentum gained by having a separate first- and second-year planning team; and the concerted assault the participants made on the proposed technology to monitor outcomes which led to the decision to abandon its use. One of their most persuasive arguments against the proposed technology was that the system did not fit comfortably with the approaches the staff were now using with students, which required much more flexibility and openness than the proposed electronic system allowed — approaches which they saw as integral to the new vision they were constructing.

While it is not yet possible to clearly articulate exactly what the new vision is, there is little doubt that one is forming — that it is different from that which the faculty previously held, and also is different from that which the LEAP management team initially identified. It is one that is growing and evolving as staff grapple with what an outcomes focus can mean in a university environment and how student-centred learning can be made to work for tertiary students. What they are creating is a vibrant culture of learning and a cooperative community of learners. The management team is an integral part of that learning culture as they too act as learners interested in unravelling the mysteries of outcomes-focussed education and student-centred learning in a university environment.

There is little doubt that, in the early days of the project, before much sense of a shared vision had developed, there was confusion. By the end of the second year, most of this uncertainty had disappeared, suggesting that these staff, at least, were well on the way to developing a real vision of student-centred learning within an outcomes-based environment. It should be stressed, however, that there is unlikely to be a time when a single vision is adopted. This is likely to be an on-going quest — and a major challenge remains in enabling the rest of the staff, some of whom are long-serving and others of whom are very new and casual, to share this growing vision.

Skills

The new skills that Faculty of Education staff involved in this project needed were many and varied. While not all staff needed to learn the same skills, there were some staff who needed to learn each of the following examples. Some needed to learn (or work out) how to plan curricula with an outcomes focus. Some needed to develop skills of working in a student-centred way (or at the very least) explore more and different ways of working with student-centredness. Some needed to try the use of different learning activities with their students, and others needed to try different instructional strategies (e.g., co-operative learning). Many needed to experiment with different means of assessment (beyond the conventional essays and exams) to ensure that it was more comprehensive, that it was truly valid (in the sense of it being meaningful), and that the criteria used for assessment in their units were explicit and fair. Many staff developed a variety of skills in negotiating aspects of the curriculum with students, e.g., negotiations about course content, course structure, and student assessment.

Most staff had to learn how to integrate IT into their teaching, and, in varying degrees, all had to try to learn how to use the proposed technology to record and monitor outcomes.

Where inadequate support was available for staff to acquire new skills, anxiety began to develop — as suggested by Villa and Thousand. A significant case in point was the proposal to monitor outcomes electronically with the establishment of an electronic portfolio, which would maintain records of individual student outcomes. Educational systems worldwide, which have taken on an outcomes focus, have been grappling with the issue of how to measure and record complex outcomes and to chart individual student progress. The management team of the Faculty of Education LEAP project proposed the trialing of IMSeries 5. This was an electronic information management system specifically designed for school systems in the U.S.A. that were adopting an outcomes approach to education. After two years of effort, the faculty finally decided that the program did not meet their current needs, and the trial was discontinued. Instead, they are now examining web-based software such as WebCT and ANGAZI. However, it was recognised at the beginning that, if staff were to use IMSeries5, there were new skills that they would need to develop. They would need to learn how to use the technology effectively, and, as a result, some time and resources were built into the budget to accomplish this. In retrospect, given the complexity of the program, the time and support for staff were insufficient, but that was not the major reason for its discontinuation as noted above. For those who did not have the necessary computing skills, or who found them too difficult to acquire, there was a great deal of anxiety reported.

For all staff trialing the software package, the time required to acquire and use these new skills caused considerable anxiety and irritation. When one of the key staff responsible for implementing the IMSeries left the program, followed shortly after by the technician, both of whom had expressed concern at the lack of progress and frustration with the mammoth learning task ahead of themselves and participating staff, the decision to drop the system was forced on the project team.

In general then, the need to recognise the new skills that staff might need and provide the time and resources for them to learn them is critically important in managing change. In this particular LEAP project, the management team did not really give a great deal of thought to the way in which staff might acquire new skills beyond the arranging of a series of seminars for staff and some PD days. In retrospect, more time and thought about the skills staff would need, how they would identify which skills they had and which they needed, and how they would then be supported in acquiring them would have been time well spent. As it was, a great deal of time, energy, and money was expended on the electronic system that eventually was abandoned.

Incentives

Many cultural change theorists suggest that incentives can be a powerful catalyst, but, equally, other studies of actual change suggest that, once the incentives cease, so too does the change. Incentives, however, can be extrinsic or intrinsic. Part of the budget for the LEAP project included additional payments for staff to compensate them in some small way for the additional time it was expected they would need in planning, attending extra professional development, working together, and so on. While there was not a large amount of financial incentive for full-

time staff, for casual staff, it potentially made the difference between them being able to attend meetings or not — if they had to choose between attending unpaid faculty planning meetings of PD and other paid work they might undertake. In the evaluation of the project, no one interviewed suggested that the payments made a significant difference to their involvement in the project. Most of the full-time staff seemed largely unaware of them by the end of the second year; however, the fact remains that it is undoubtedly more costly for casual staff to come into the university to attend planning meetings than it would be for them to plan in their own time, especially if baby-sitting and/or travel is required. Staff in the faculty (including those who are full-time) have argued that when the LEAP funding ceases, additional payments must be budgeted for casual staff if change is to continue (they don't see this as an incentive but as a legitimate cost to the faculty); however, whether the faculty budget will permit this remains to be seen.

While the payment was obviously an extrinsic incentive, ultimately this LEAP project proved to have a number of 'intrinsic' incentives; albeit most were unplanned. In this sense, one of the major intrinsic incentives that this project has engendered has been the genuine intellectual excitement about what good teaching is and how one can become more proficient as a university teacher. At a time when many academic staff in universities throughout Australia believe good teaching is no longer valued in universities (knowing that resources for it are limited and are constantly squeezed), then this excitement is a real bonus to staff and one which all involved have appreciated. Had this not developed, resistance to the whole project would probably have ensued.

Similar intrinsic incentives that emerged during the project were opportunities for collaboration with other staff, particularly teaching in teams and finding support through working in planning teams. For example, the lecturer in Educational Psychology teamed with the lecturer in Educational Technology to develop common web page assignments; the lecturer in Teaching-Learning Strategies teamed with the Mathematics Curriculum lecturer to develop teaching models and team teach them to their students; and the Early Childhood Studies, Primary and Secondary Teaching-Learning Strategies teachers all teamed together to design common elements across their curricula. Even the encouragement to take some risks in one's teaching, to try some strategies that one has not used before, to attempt to negotiate an aspect of the course with students when previously one has taken the full responsibility oneself, can be exciting challenges for teaching staff, and ultimately such activities became 'incentives' in their own right.

The value staff placed on being part of an innovation in teacher education should not be overlooked. The Hawthorne Effect is as powerful as it ever was — and a number of staff in the Faculty of Education LEAP project were excited and energised by being part of a large funded project which signified that the university valued good teaching. Thus, while incentives alone are insufficient to drive change, they nevertheless have an important part to play and can reduce the resistance that people are likely to exhibit, especially when the incentives can become genuinely intrinsic.

Resources

Resources, in the context of this project, cover a number of different areas — and when they were lacking, considerable frustration amongst staff resulted.

One of the resources needed was 'knowledge' or 'expertise' about outcomes-focused education and student-centred learning, especially in the context of a university setting. This was addressed in several ways. Firstly, the funding for the project enabled the staging of a number of seminars at which outside 'experts' could come to speak about their understanding of these topics. Secondly, part of the role of the project officer was to seek out relevant references and ensure that these were made available to staff. Finally, the planning meetings and the LEAP project meetings (as well as many informal meetings) enabled staff themselves to debate and wrestle with these issues. The evaluation revealed that staff felt they had thoroughly explored the issue of outcomes-focused education and felt reasonably comfortable with the resolution that had been achieved (although the debate about whether there should only be overarching outcomes or whether there is value in continuing to pursue learning area outcomes, continues). However, a number of staff still felt uncomfortable about what was really meant by 'student-centred learning,' and especially whether all staff shared a common understanding, let alone practice, of it. It was debate about this matter which led staff to discuss whether what they were doing might better be described as 'learner-centred learning' and how this then should be defined. This is an issue to be further debated in this, the third year of the project.

'People,' in terms of the support they can provide, are another resource which was also important in this project. The provision in the early stages of the project of a project officer was a valuable resource to both the management team and the project participants. His presence was made possible by the funding for the project. The management team itself, most of whom had considerable experience and understanding of outcomes-focused education and student-centred learning, was also a resource for staff trying out new approaches, as, of course, were many of the participants for each other.

Another resource which was lacking and which led to considerable frustration for staff in the LEAP project, was 'time'. They, of course, are not unique in this respect when many professional people in all walks of life are stretched beyond their limits to fit in all that is required of them. But when significant change is necessary, the additional time needed to talk, to think, to read, and to change one's practice is a precious resource and is not readily found.

Material resources are in relatively short supply in many universities and the Faculty of Education is no different from any other faculty in this respect. While it was not necessarily linked to the LEAP project specifically, the lack of adequate and appropriate technology, especially computers and the necessary connections to enable them to use advanced IT in teaching spaces, for example, has made life more difficult. In a situation where staff are much more conscious of trying to model what they are teaching and how they are teaching, the lack of appropriate technology was a source of considerable frustration.

Generally speaking, in this LEAP project, there were some resources which people had access to and others which were lacking. In a common sense, what a lack of resources may say to people is

that this change is not sufficiently important to support with the provision of necessary resources. This is a matter which will be raised again as the funding for the project ceases entirely at the end of the third year.

Action Plan

One of the important outcomes of applying for any funds these days is to ensure that there is a plan of action. The LEAP project required relatively detailed plans of what the applicant was going to do, and so the faculty's entry into the project was based on this. In addition, the plan had to be revised annually as three-year funding was not guaranteed at the beginning but was only continued on the basis of the university's evaluation of each project. Thus, each year, the plan has been revised in the light of the previous year's experience based on the formal and less formal evaluations that were undertaken.

The Villa and Thousand matrix suggests that, without an action plan, staff may well feel that they are on a treadmill. There were two levels of planning involved in the LEAP project, however, which significantly mitigated against staff feeling that they were just on another treadmill. In the first place, there was the overall planning which was needed to develop the new four-year degree. Much of this had been completed before the LEAP project fully got underway. However, staff involved in delivering the first year of the new degree had the responsibility for planning new units within this new structure. With overarching outcomes determined for the faculty as a whole and specific outcomes determined for each broad learning area, these became the context within which each new unit was planned. What quickly became obvious was the absolute necessity for units to be planned in conjunction with each other. If each unit was planned separately (and only 'checked' afterwards), it was not possible to ensure that all outcomes were being 'covered.' Thus, the planning activity became a much more collaborative effort and from this collegiality developed in a way that hadn't been felt by many in the faculty for some time.

Action plans, frequently called for in project applications, are often a cause for irritation by those who are required to provide them. However, there can be little doubt from this project of the value of having an overall three-year plan which was revised on a regular basis. It set a direction for all involved (thereby avoiding the sense of being on a treadmill), but it required forethought about the issues which might arise, and it provided criteria by which the project could be evaluated by the university along the way. The funding of the project was deliberately structured so that the amount available diminished almost by half each year, and planning had to take that into account. By the fourth year, funding is planned to cease altogether and the faculty is to be reliant on its own resources and management.

Collegiality

One of the recurring themes which emerged in the interviews undertaken as part of the evaluation of this project was the difference it made to so many participants to be working in a collegial atmosphere again. Without exception, staff commented on the value they found in working as a team and of the support they found in doing so. Academia, which once was a place renowned for collegiality, has for many now become a place of intellectual isolation and

loneliness. The many reasons for this are beyond the scope of this paper, but the LEAP project in the faculty brought people together in a forum where they had to re-examine their own philosophies of education, challenge the assumptions that they had developed about students and learning, and explore new strategies to deal with old (and new) problems. They found that it all became that much easier if they could do so in an atmosphere of support and encouragement from their colleagues.

The renewed atmosphere of collegiality was probably helped by the influx of new staff to the faculty. The fact that most were new to outcomes-based education and some were new to student-centred learning meant that they were all learning together and willing to help each other. More established staff who had previously struggled in isolation with these concepts now had support for what they were trying to do and felt accepted, in some instances for the first time. 'Education talk,' curriculum and pedagogy, once again became respectable — and the norm rather than the exception. This is not to say that there were not differences and that the debate that these engendered were sometimes not intense, nor that suddenly everyone changed, but over and over again staff involved in the LEAP project commented on the excitement they felt when engaging with the education debates the project generated, and the collegiality which has been both a cause and an outcome of this project.

Conclusion

Adaptation of the [Villa and Thousand \(1995\)](#) matrix for explaining success or failure in the *Management of Complex Change* (itself an adaptation from [Ambrose, 1987](#)) has been a useful heuristic for us to make sense of the leadership for cultural change and the development of a community of learners which appeared to have emerged from this project. While the matrix is normally used as a strategy for planning change, in this paper it has been used as a means of analysing, and in some respects, evaluating change. The matrix has helped us to

- describe the changes that occurred;
- identify the reactions people had to the changes;
- understand why those reactions occurred;
- identify the successful strategies that were employed; and
- consider what strategies still need to be addressed as the change process continues.

Change is as complex as culture itself. While a dramatic cultural shift appears to have occurred among the small group of teachers who participated over the initial two years of this project (18 to 10 of whom were directly involved), the authors are well aware of the lengthy period of time normally required for cultural change, the eight months the project still has to run, the problematic involvement of other faculty members (about 15), and the uncertainty of continuing faculty support once the funding ceases. The messages of the original Rand Studies of federal change programs in the U.S., in which change was short-lived and ended once funding ended, echo loudly in the background for us. While we were reminded of the complexity of change, particularly for members of a traditional, formal, higher education institution, we also learned:

- that change doesn't proceed as neatly as planned — and many structural things impede progress, e.g., having the building rewired so that staff were denied access to their

computers all through summer; having staffing allocations undecided until close to the beginning of the year; having a large number of sessional staff appointed; having not enough time (again and again and again) for everybody to do the necessary thinking and debating;

- that it is easy to focus on aspects which seem vital at the time but really are only tangential to the main business, e.g., in retrospect, the time and resources spent on trying to adapt the IMSeries 5 technology to our own unique problems was not well spent. It is doubtful we would have focused so much time and energy on the technology had we considered the key elements of Villa and Thousand's Managing Change matrix a little earlier;
- that gaining a shared understanding, and clarity of vision is difficult and time-consuming, despite a number of meetings or interactive workshops. While the vision may have been become clear to some faculty in the early stages, it took many workshops and meetings over almost two semesters before it became clear to the participants. What remains uncertain is whether the vision is clear for the dean and shared by other senior staff of the faculty who will have to support it if transfer to the mainstream is to continue. The true test will be seen when the funding ceases in 2002.
- that we managed to get a number of the key elements reasonably right, e.g., the incentives (which became intrinsic and self-motivating); the planning, documentation and provision of supportive materials (which the project leader pursued so diligently); and the collegiality (which thankfully happened as we all struggled in our learning together). The collegiality was undoubtedly helped by the structures the project leader put in place, his energy, drive, and enthusiasm, together with the eagerness of a mix of inexperienced and senior but committed staff to participate in an innovative program.
- that, in retrospect, we did not put enough effort into helping people identify the skills they needed and how they could get them. It needed to have been much more structured and hence would have been more effective if we had thought about it sooner. Earlier use of the Villa and Thousand model as an organizing framework, rather than an evaluative one, may have assisted our planning in this respect.
- that assessing students' achievement of outcomes, monitoring them, and reporting them still remains a major issue — both at a unit level and at the overall program level — and a number of questions emerge. If this matter of assessing, monitoring, and reporting is not resolved, will the whole project have failed? Did we waste valuable time and energy trying to adapt a way of technologically recording them when our energies should have been focused on ways of identifying them and then looked for ways of recording them once that had been resolved?

In terms of our own project outcomes, a number of questions remain. Has there been a shift to learner-centredness and an outcomes focus? Certainly the responses of staff and students in the follow-up evaluation exercise suggest this to be the case, though how much and how sustained it will be remains to be seen, especially with the addition of the third-stage team members this year (who are mainly sessional or long-term staff). Adding to the uncertainty is the change of personnel that occurs over the years. Most of the original management team have now dispersed to other places across the university or to outside bodies. Has the transfer of management to other members of the team been done soon enough and effectively enough? Will the project have provided them with sufficient status or professional authority to be able to continue growing a

learning community, or will their enthusiastic attempts be jeopardised by changing work loads and long-term staff who have not been involved in the project?

In trying to reflect on the leadership and management of the change process, we have been struck by the whole notion of the development of a learning community. While the leadership initially provided essentials such as vision, planning, incentives, and supportive materials, it was the 'one down learner position' of the leadership, the facilitation role they played, and the collegiality that emerged from all of us being learners together as we developed our skills and expertise that appears to have been the major driver of this program. All documentation has deliberately remained in 'draft form' and constantly up for review. Change is ongoing.

It is intended by the funding agency (the university), that the program, if successful, be adapted for use by faculties across the university. Whether the project will successfully transfer to other areas, utilizing a cascade change process, remains to be seen. In terms of enrolling high school graduates from outcomes based K-12 school systems, time is on our side. The state school system is implementing the outcomes-focussed curriculum over a seven-year period, and the graduates of that system will not enter university for a number of years. However, the deadline may be closer than we think. As we penned the final words of this paper, a memo from the University Director of Teaching and Learning passed over our desks. It requested all faculties report on the degree to which 'Graduate Qualities/Attributes' were being incorporated into their varied curricula. We perceive Graduate Qualities/Attributes as another form of outcomes-focussed education, and so the challenge continues.

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