

Herding Cats? Obtaining Staff Support for Curriculum Change and Implementation

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***Abstract:** Academic staff can be notoriously difficult creatures, particularly when others might seek to intervene in their teaching. How then do we go about something as threatening as the overhaul of an entire undergraduate curriculum within a Faculty? Change management literature provides some direction for dealing with such a challenge and leading staff through the development and implementation issues. A prominent aspect of successful change such as this is to go beyond merely obtaining majority compliance – it involves considerable negotiation and communication, inclusiveness and teambuilding, and leadership and drive.*

This paper reports on a recent occasion when a radical transformation of a Faculty's curriculum was attempted. In doing so it reviews the approach that was taken against criteria developed for models provided in the literature for change management in organisations. It looks to these criteria for explanations of successes and difficulties encountered. It seeks to evaluate performance of the change management processes adopted. This in turn has informed plans for future action. The approach taken here with this case study demonstrates how a framework can be applied when widespread collaboration is critical to achieving transformation within a higher education setting. It is an approach that can be utilised in other contexts and applied to other situations where academic staff are to be effected by major change.

***Key words:** Academic collaboration, transformation management, curriculum change*

Introduction

Higher education is undergoing momentous change as a result of powerful external forces. It has moved from being an elitist provider to a mass provider; from an input-run system to an output-driven system where achievement in research and teaching determines funding. Increased complexity and competition, globalisation, decreasing staff numbers, and new technologies all require academics to perform at ever higher efficiency levels. The changing nature of the workplace and the increasingly diverse needs of potential students are

compelling higher education institutions to adopt more flexible learning strategies. It is against this dynamic backdrop that a major review of the undergraduate curriculum at the University of Sydney's campus at Orange commenced early in 1997. The review culminated at the end of 1998 in formal approval of significant and challenging curriculum change. The implementation of the new curriculum is being phased in over four years commencing in 1999.

The process of attaining agreement for such change has been intricate, fascinating, occasionally vexatious and frequently fragile. There has been conflict and cooperation, negotiation and compromise, risk taking and risk aversion. Personal and collegial power has been used and sometimes abused, there have been leadership successes and failures, there has been considerable teamwork and individual initiatives have been accommodated. As a case study its lessons are rich in scope for those who are concerned with leading change in higher education. The authors have applied an approach that can be utilised in numerous higher education settings, particularly where faculties are contemplating or undertaking major curriculum innovation.

This paper focuses on the change process as the curriculum implementation phase begins and utilises Kotter's eight steps to transforming an organisation as a means of analysis (Kotter, 1995:61). Although Kotter's prime interest was in corporate change the authors believe his eight steps are equally applicable to the higher education sector as it moves towards a more competitive business environment. It appears that higher education faces an almost certain future of relentless variation in a more austere economic environment. As Ramsden (1998:3) bleakly says:

There will be more competition for resources, stronger opposition from new providers of higher education, even more drastically reduced public funding.

Literature Review

Baldrige (1972) contrasted two broad approaches to organisational change; the human relations approach and the political systems approach. Curriculum change at a faculty level demands some form of human relations perspective to effect change.

The three best known strategies for effecting change in human systems are those described by Chin and Benne (1961); the rational-empirical, normative reeducative and power-coercive. The rational-empirical approach assumes that intelligent people are rational and reasonable, and that once sound arguments for organisational change are presented to them they will adopt the change proposal. In contrast, the normative re-educative set of strategies assumes that the average person is driven by impulse and need satisfaction. Those committed to this strategy see the person as the basic unit of social organisation and change. Such people want to know 'what's in it for me?' Unless they detect opportunities for personal gain they are unlikely to support change. Power-coercive strategies, however, emphasise political and economic power as the means by which to achieve change. Such power may come in the form of sanctions on those who flaunt the rules and moral power that plays on the sentiments of guilt and shame. Typical of a more autocratic and dictatorial leadership style, the power-coercive approach attempts to legitimise certain courses of action. Those responsible for effecting curriculum change in a university faculty need to be well aware of the three strategies and to determine the right 'strategy-mix' for their context. Many curriculum innovations have fallen by the wayside for lack of attention to the process of change itself (for

example see Cochran, 1971; Wideen and Holborn, 1984; Kelly, 1986 and Boser and Hill, 1990).

Wideen and Holborn (1984) conducted an interesting analysis of the process of curriculum change at ten Canadian university faculties. They concluded that changes emanating from within the faculty are “rarely paradigmatic but rather incremental and all too frequently inconsequential”. They identify five factors which must all be operative if change of any magnitude is to occur within a faculty:

- **The presence of external influences.** External pressures for change may come from government legislation, commissioned reports, professional groups or linkage groups (linkage groups are indirect influences that come from conferences, journals, the media and other contacts). Hopkins (1980) argues that faculties exhibit an enormous ability to resist external influences, in part, because of academic freedom.
- **The exercising of power.** It is highly unlikely that faculty change can occur unless someone or some group is in a position to exercise power in support of the change.
- **Shelter conditions.** University academics are trained to question and criticise; such criticism can effectively destroy any emerging ideas that are seen to threaten the status quo. ‘Shelter’ conditions are necessary to blunt such criticisms.
- **Role of key players.** Wideen and Holborn’s research showed the importance of key individuals to champion faculty change. Often this involved different key players, those who initiated the change and those that actually implemented the innovation.
- **Receptive faculty and students.** Not only must faculty staff be well disposed towards change but students will also exert a powerful influence in determining the success of an innovation.

Boser and Hill (1990) argue that three further factors are critical to the success of curriculum change. The first of these is that the various stakeholders recognise the benefits. For faculties this involves the university as an institution, academic and general staff, the students, professional organisations, employees and even parents of the students. Secondly, faculty structure needs to change to accommodate the new curriculum and perhaps individual work roles accordingly. Thirdly, the relationship of the faculty with the community environment in which it operates needs to be a positive one.

More recently some research into changes in higher education has focused on ethnographic studies of cultures within universities. Trowler (1998) identified four ideological positions: traditionalism, progressivism, enterprise and social constructivism. Traditionalists view universities as elitist in nature with academics as the custodians of the cultural, research and disciplinary heritage of society. Progressivists reject elitism and advocate universities being open to all comers in order to overcome inequalities imposed by an unjust social system. Enterprisers are career oriented, the university exists to develop human capital and must equip students with skills. Teaching is more important than research. Finally, social reconstructivists claim universities are about encouraging social change and are, therefore, change agents. One outcome of such studies is to highlight the difficulties that faculties and universities have when their staff hold diametrically opposed ideological perspectives about

what universities are about. Understandably, innovation and major change may not be achievable if there is no shared 'culture' amongst academic staff.

Guskin (1996) believes academics can be their own worst enemies. Academic freedom is so entrenched and academics have been rewarded and supported for so long in their present behaviors that for many it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, now to change. As Guskin says, "The longer we analyse the current ways of operating, the further we fend off that awesome day when we will have to change something. Analysis thus becomes a defensive manouver to avoid making fundamental change." Yet, says Guskin, universities are in the midst of unprecedented change and survival is the name of the game. Universities, and each of their faculties, must adopt internal change (or have it imposed) if they are to maintain a sense of integrity, autonomy and dignity. Strong academic leadership is important but substantial curriculum and structural change must in the end be based upon cooperation between all the members of the faculty. Few models are available to assist universities and faculties to re-engineer themselves, however, the Kotter model, used in this paper as a tool for analysis, may well be one worthy of wider consideration.

Overview of the main curriculum changes proposed

At the University of Sydney's campus at Orange, fundamental changes to the teaching-learning process are being introduced. The nature of these changes, and the deep tensions that develop as a consequence, are most likely typical of thousands of faculties throughout the developed world. There are four areas of change:

- The restructuring of the seven undergraduate courses (degree programs) available to provide students with considerably greater opportunity to construct a program more suited to their individual context, needs and preferences.
- An extensive rationalisation of the units (subjects) offered leading to a reduction by one third in the number available. These units are being developed for the most part so that they will be suitable for use in a range of courses rather than for one specific course.
- The specification of nine generic capabilities that all graduates will be required to demonstrate.
- A move from an essentially teacher-directed, content-driven philosophy towards a more constructivist, learner-centred approach.

A powerful driving force behind the curriculum change process was to make the courses more appealing to students. It had been promoted for some time that this could be achieved by reducing the number of core (compulsory) units of study that students require in any course and extending the scope from where they could choose their other units (Morgan, 1995). Each course unit is of equal weighting and no more than 12 of the 24 units that have to be completed to obtain an undergraduate degree are permitted to be classified as core. Previously all courses had a much higher proportion of the course rigidly prescribed. Now most have specified a lesser number of core units than the allowable maximum. Students may pick the remainder of their units from a group of 'course selection' units and from optional units. Course selection units are those identified as being of special relevance to that particular course and students are required to take a minimum of four such units from the choice provided. Optional units may be selected from units available from other courses at

the campus, other campuses of the University or at any other recognised higher education institution. In a further attempt to open up student choices and provide more flexibility, all seven undergraduate courses are now to be offered by both on-campus and off-campus mode.

Students have a greater say in what they study, and how and where they learn. However there is tension for some academic staff, who fear that now the mantle of compulsion has been lifted from their unit, there will be an inadequate enrolment in their units to justify their continuance. Some such staff responded by lobbying to have their units made core and met with varying degrees of success. There is, of course, substance to such fears as students will select units that they perceive to be relevant and well delivered, and once the artificial protection of core status is removed then some of these units can be expected to be at risk.

Over the years a process of 'unit-creep' occurred at the campus whereby lecturers in each degree program argued that they needed their own unit on 'soils' or 'management' or 'law' or whatever. The result was a mushrooming of many units similar in both content and assessment but carefully customised to accommodate the specific needs of each small group of students. Whereas it could be (and was) argued that this was educationally sound since it was an attempt to meet specific student contextual needs, the multiplication and duplication became untenable in a time of steadily shrinking resources. Thus a rationalisation of units was the second fundamental change arising from the review and this has led to the reduction of the number of units by one-third. In order to avoid disenfranchising some students who may expect customisation, rationalised units are being developed with a firm requirement that they be contextually relevant to the students who enrol in them.

This also has been threatening for some staff as they see units they have taught for years disappear or amalgamate with one or more other units. With redundancies imminent the staff concerns were real. Since a number of the new units are now common to two or more courses this has called for the formation of unit teams to determine common goals. For some staff this is the first time they have had to negotiate learning outcomes and assessment procedures with other academics and 'team-teach'. Again a stressful experience for some as they are exposed to new and different ways of teaching and learning.

The third main change associated with the curriculum review occurred in the area of capabilities. In 1994 the University of Sydney adopted a set of generic attributes that it expected all its graduates to aspire to on completion of their courses. Whereas this was a commendable development, it has led to little adjustment in the curriculum throughout the University as few academic departments have done more than note the desirability of such attributes. At Orange, however, some staff wanted to go much further. They succeeded, with the encouragement of industry, in having those at the campus at Orange adapt the University's attributes into their own set of nine "generic capabilities". These capability statements range across the areas of creativity, critical thinking, communication, leadership and management, reasoning and judgement, continuous learning, broad perspective, ethics and citizenship.

The development of these capabilities and the means for verifying such development are being embedded into every unit offered, a process that has eventuated in many academics changing the approaches and assessment procedures they employ.

Convincing some academics that they should reconsider their philosophical stance as to what constitutes the most valuable learning they can provide for their students can be both threatening and difficult to achieve. This was the fourth major outcome of the review and

predictably, a few of the mostly older academics have resisted accepting that there is more to education than transmitting information and then measuring the success of its reception by regurgitation in examinations. Such academics tend to have been conditioned by their own educational experiences to believe that possessing relevant 'knowledge' is the essential element of a successful education. It can be a battle to persuade such academics that it is how learners employ their skills and what they **do** with knowledge that is more important, and that students will want to use their own knowledge in a smorgasbord of ways. These staff are reluctant to surrender their didactic, teacher-dependent style of teaching for a more student-oriented learning pattern whereby the students take greater responsibility for their own learning. But academics can no longer hide behind their lecterns!

These four curriculum initiatives combine to portray a powerful change imperative. All academic and some general staff at Orange are having to adapt to the changes. For some it is a highly threatening working environment full of uncertainties and they mourn the loss of the secure and comfortable workplace they have known for many years.

Change of this magnitude needs to be managed. In the remainder of this paper the authors will use Kotter's eight steps of organisational change to reflect on how Orange has managed the change process. What has been done well? What mistakes have been made? What can be done at this halfway point to smooth the process? What can be learned from the experience? It is this application that lends itself widely to utilisation throughout the higher education sector.

Kotter's eight steps of organisational change

Each step identified by Kotter (1995:61) has been further explained, applied to the case study curriculum innovation and a grading system applied as shown in Table I against each criterion.

Grade	There is evidence that at Orange this step was . . .
A	very strongly in existence across all aspects of the change process and throughout the time involved
B	strongly in existence across most aspects of the change process and most of the time
C	present during some aspects of the change process and for some of the time
D	present occasionally but not for sufficient time or across sufficient aspects of the change process
E	essentially non-existent

Table I: Grading system used for the application of Kotter's eight steps to curriculum change at Orange.

Step one: Establishing a sense of urgency

Kotter argues that change will not occur unless the people within the organisation recognise the need for the change and there is a sense of urgency in getting on with the process. In Kotter's words, "...make the status quo seem more dangerous than launching into the unknown". Staff must be convinced that business-as-usual is unacceptable and that they have to move out of their comfort zones and create new opportunities (Kotter, 1995:60).

To what extent has a 'sense of urgency' been imparted on the Orange campus? Do staff recognise the need for change? As discussed earlier, underlying the thrust towards a new curriculum at Orange are the external forces impacting upon almost all higher education institutions - reduced funding, greater competition for students, increasing pressure on academic staff to work smarter, emerging technologies, and the demands of students for more flexible delivery of their academic programs. To these generic pressures Orange, which has a rural management focus, can add some of its own. The agricultural economy has been perceived by many as being in the doldrums – people experiencing hardship are leaving the land, there are falling prices, droughts and floods continue to wreak physical and emotional damage, and marketing instability arising from the uncertainties of globalisation is causing distress. Together these perceptions, whether they are accurate or not, are reducing the pool of students interested in pursuing qualifications that are seen to be directly linked to agricultural industries. This has been a powerful motivation for staff at this particular to develop higher quality unique academic programs to attract more students.

At Orange a sense of urgency has been promoted and purposefully maintained by a number of senior staff on appropriate occasions. The Dean and other senior staff have addressed staff at times on matters pertaining to future trends with regard to financial constraints, falling enrolments and redundancies. Such talks certainly focused the collective mind on the need for change and these have been regularly updated using other methods of communication such as electronic mail and paper memoranda. Urgency was also reinforced in the Undergraduate Review Committee's report which was released at the end of 1997. It is reasonable to suggest that the first of Kotter's eight steps, establishing a sense of urgency, was achieved at an A grading level.

Step two: Forming a powerful guiding coalition

Kotter claims that once a sense of urgency has been established any major renewal program will only progress if a guiding coalition of leaders forms early on in the change process. The coalition does not need to include all senior staff but must consist of a substantial number of 'powerful' members in relation to position, information and expertise, reputations and relationships. Such a group, if sufficiently powerful, will maintain the momentum for change (Kotter, 1995:62).

With the total number of staff at the Orange campus in excess of 100, the authors identified those that hold senior academic positions, those that are recognised as having specialist expertise in curriculum development and those that have established a reputation as opinion leaders (but are not senior staff or display specialist curriculum expertise). The next step was to determine how many of the staff in these three categories had formed part of a 'powerful guiding coalition' in the process of curriculum change.

The vision for the Orange campus is that it must achieve further market penetration by creating a new curriculum that is enticing to potential students. Such a curriculum must be streamlined (no repetition) and flexible to suit the varying needs of today's students (mode of presentation, wide choice of units and student paced). The overriding philosophy should be based upon constructivist thinking whereby students are empowered to be more in control of the learning processes with the lecturers acting more as facilitators rather than didactic instructors. The campus niche market remains unaltered with the focus of the curriculum upon management as it applies to all branches of the food and fibre industries. Finally, backed by industry's endorsement, the curriculum is to be enhanced by the development of nine generic capabilities that will add a significant further dimension to graduates.

However, there is little point in the authors stating their perception of the vision at Orange, if the same vision is not shared by other academic staff at the campus. Unless the great majority of staff involved in implementing the proposed changes understand and agree with the vision then the changes are likely to be seen as lacking direction, momentum will be lost and the process of curriculum renovation will disintegrate. The sharing of a common vision is facilitated if it is set down in writing for all to see and discuss. The nearest the staff came to discussing such a vision statement was a list of 'Educational Perspectives' accepted by academics at their meeting in April, 1998 (Roberts, 1998). Certainly at this early stage there was broad agreement as to the educational vision although the authors doubt that all members of staff understood the meaning of such terms as 'praxis model', 'constructivism' or even 'capabilities'.

While there may well be a vision for the Orange campus, there was not exhaustive debate and clarification of that vision culminating in a definitive statement wholeheartedly achieving general and formal acceptance. The authors consider that there may have been a presumption by the guiding coalition that a clear and shared vision was in place but it is considered this crucial step has in fact not been completely realised. Consequently Step 3 can be rated at B- .

Step four: Communicating the vision

Kotter argues that without credible and frequent communication of the vision the hearts and minds of the staff are never completely captured. The communication must be powerful and the message sufficiently convincing for staff to be prepared to make short-term sacrifices. The guiding coalition must then make use of a range of communication channels and take every possible opportunity to broadcast the vision. Furthermore, they must "walk the talk" and demonstrate genuine commitment to the vision through example since communication comes in both words and deeds (Kotter, 1995: 64).

The effectiveness of the communication process at Orange can be assessed in two ways. Has the guiding coalition taken every reasonable opportunity to communicate the vision through example and made good use of the various communication channels available? Has the staff been prepared to make the required sacrifices?

A review of the earlier months (1998) during which the vision needed to be communicated demonstrates that many avenues were used. These included meetings across a range of groups, widespread circulation of minutes and other prompts both in paper and electronic format, as well as academic staff development activities

The overall effect of these ensured that most staff were kept mindful of the work entailed and progress being made. The majority of academic staff were to varying degrees quickly engaged in curriculum revision and redevelopment. However, much of this curriculum revision deteriorated to becoming a minor adjustment of the status quo rather than any revisiting of the Orange campus vision. Very early in the process the assumption was made that the overall vision had widespread acceptance and that implementation would occur quickly. The danger of this assumption being incorrect is that staff could become embroiled in the mundane matters associated with the targeted development and not resolve any conflicts through reference to the bigger-picture vision.

A positive feature of the implementation was that staff did become very active in the review process where their own teaching areas were involved. Undoubtedly self-interest was a strong motivator. Unit development teams devoted countless hours to revising curricula but there were some occasions when they lost sight of the main thrust of the review. There was both ready acceptance and an enthusiasm among staff to start curriculum revision and redevelopment, however change was at times only superficial as they lost sight of the emerging educational philosophies espoused by the vision. In some cases this was not unintentional!

Many staff have been called upon to make sacrifices, an expectation espoused by Kotter. The rationalisation process (with a one-third reduction in the number of units) meant many staff have had to abandon units they may have 'owned' for years. Furthermore, the rationalisation process has necessitated the formation of unit teams so that most staff have been forced to work in team situations designing new units and curricula. A guidance document was developed and twelve responsibilities for each team were communicated as well as the defined role of each team leader (Morgan, 1998). In some cases this has led to the building of healthy professional relationships among academic staff who have worked collaboratively for the first time. Overall this has been a beneficial experience from both a collegial and educational perspective, but progress in some teams has been desperately slow and painful as compromises are thrashed out between traditionalists anxious to retain existing content and didactic methods and those championing the new philosophies and curriculum. To a greater or lesser extent all academics have made sacrifices and the majority have done so in a cooperative manner.

The authors believe it is essential to keep the vision central to the transformation process. Unless staff are reminded from time to time of the direction the new curriculum is supposed to be taking, they are in danger of losing their way. At crucial times staff have lost sight of the vision and allowed themselves to be sidetracked by largely irrelevant procedural matters. Interestingly, it has usually been those who are less than enthusiastic about the vision who have sought to undermine progress by raising inconsequential issues to frustrate the energies of others. The communication of the 'vision' has not been as prevalent and inspirational as it should have been for both staff and students. While the above would suggest that considerable effort has been expended in communication, unfortunately this has been concentrated in the early period and has not been sustained sufficiently well as the implementation of the vision has proceeded. Despite the fact that virtually all staff are making some sacrifices for the new curriculum this step has not been particularly well promoted. The authors are conscious of the deficiencies in this area and have awarded step four a shaky C.

Step five: Empowering others to act on the vision

The previous section highlighted the authors' concerns that the 'vision' was not being communicated well enough. This weakness can be exacerbated by failure to remove any obstacles to the new vision. Kotter claims that the guiding coalition can empower others to take action by communicating the new vision but at the same time it must remove any obstacles that might prevent them from doing this. These obstacles or 'blockers' are of three kinds; the organisational structure may impede change, staff may resist by placing self-interest ahead of institutional goals, and senior staff may make demands that are inconsistent with the overall effort. Whatever the type of obstacle, if it is major it must be confronted and removed (Kotter, 1995:64). What obstacles to the development of the curriculum existed at Orange and how effectively were they removed?

There are seven undergraduate programs offered at Orange, each administered by a course team under the guidance of a course coordinator. Course teams include all academic staff teaching in the program. They meet at regular or irregular intervals to debate and take action on a range of academic issues pertaining to the conduct of their program. Course teams have wielded a certain amount of power and contributed strongly to academic debate and decision-making within their particular spheres of influence.

A strong feature of the new curriculum is that it is more holistic and flexible with a common framework adopted for all seven courses. This common structure was designed to reduce the mandatory nature of the courses and thereby give students wider choices and greater flexibility. In effect it required a new organisational structure for the seven courses.

Resistance was strong initially from most course teams as members realised more control of the learning process was to pass to the students and core (compulsory) units were to be significantly reduced. This was not surprising as some staff may have relied on compulsory enrolment of students in their units to ensure viability. While one course team had no problems with the new structure (already very flexible) and five others eventually accepted the arguments put forward, one course team determined not to accept the proposal and fought the issue through the available channels. An 'obstacle' had been created that was potentially very damaging to the entire curriculum reform process. If this one course team was successful in its opposition, a major thrust of the new philosophy (more flexibility) could be undermined. The matter had to be confronted. Fortunately, after some lobbying, the opposition was reduced to an ineffective minority and the new structures were strongly endorsed at the point of official sanction. A potentially major obstacle to reform had been eliminated.

Resistance was also experienced from a number of individuals. Some were motivated by self-interest ('I have taught this unit for ten years and students need it'), some by a fear of the unknown ('what the hell happens to me if two of my three units disappear') and some by a concern that essential content was being abandoned ('students will be no use to industry if they don't know...'). There followed a period of considerable reflection and debate, at times heated and acrimonious, as members of staff tried to find a secure niche for themselves in the new environment. Fortunately the majority of initially dissenting individuals quickly found the security they needed and came 'on-side' leaving only a few staff still angry and lost. Their concerns were dealt with on an individual basis so that by the time of official approval for the changes was being sought most had accepted (in some cases reluctantly) the need to move on. Another potential obstacle had been confronted and largely resolved.

Two major obstacles to curriculum reform were identified and successfully confronted. Staff were now empowered to act on the vision. Step five has been graded B.

Step six: Planning for and creating short-term wins

According to Kotter innovation takes time and will lose momentum if there are no short-term goals to meet and celebrate along the way. Change process managers need to establish clear short-term goals, achieve them and reward the staff involved before proceeding to the next set of short-term goals. As Kotter (1995:65) says:

Most people won't go on the long march unless they see compelling evidence within 12 to 24 months that the journey is producing expected results.

Orange campus utilises a semester system and this readily translates into a fixed timetable with deadlines for the completion of specified tasks by staff prior to semester start. Since the new curriculum was to be introduced to the cohort of students commencing their courses on-campus in first semester 1999, management decided that definite deadlines to enable presentation to this cohort had to be set. Another set of deadlines was established to enable presentation in the distance education mode one year later. These deadlines have, of necessity, become the short-term goals to be achieved along the way. Over the four years required for the implementation of the seven new courses, (1999-2002) a whole series of these short-term goals (deadlines) will be established and hopefully appropriately met.

Kotter also stresses the need to **celebrate** the meeting of short-term goals. Unfortunately this is an aspect that has not been achieved particularly well in this case. At one stage a staff lunch was provided as reward but other than that, little more than encouraging remarks from the Dean at major staff meetings has been forthcoming. Kotter speaks of substantial rewards for goal achievement such as promotions and pay increases. These were out of the question for a small campus enduring budget constraints. Nevertheless, staff central to the implementation process such as those guiding the process deserve recognition. Opportunities should be found to reward these staff and to link those rewards to goal accomplishment. An aim of such celebrating is to maintain or even boost momentum and keep up morale. There are many ways short-term goal achievement can be celebrated and it is important that those responsible receive appropriate recognition and reward.

Orange has been very successful at establishing the short-term goals but disappointing in celebrating their achievement. Unless short-term wins are appropriately recognised staff will become less and less enchanted with the long-term process, lose their commitment and the quality of what is accomplished will be jeopardised. Step six is awarded a C grade only.

Step seven: Consolidating improvements and producing still more change

Kotter warns in this penultimate step of the dangers of declaring the war won prematurely. While it is recommended that short-term goals should be properly celebrated, substantial and meaningful change is something that may take five or more years to eventuate. Unless the pressure and momentum for real change is sustained over the long-term (four or five years) the organisation may slip back into its original state. Kotter cites examples of major organisations that declared victory too early (after about two years) only to find the momentum lost and the powerful forces of tradition re-established (Kotter, 1995:66).

At Orange staff need to guard against the complacency of thinking that because a few short-term goals have been reached that major philosophical changes have occurred. Surface change (minimal) is quickly achieved but deep and meaningful attitudinal change can take years. How will staff know when real and lasting change has been adopted? Returning to the vision statement, the authors suggest that positive responses to the following questions would be clear indicators:

- Do the teaching staff demonstrate through their teaching strategies that they believe in learner-centred approaches?
- Have staff adopted a more process-oriented, constructivist approach to learning?
- Do staff continuously seek to provide students with greater flexibility in what they study and how they go about learning?
- Has the incorporation of capabilities into the curriculum become a highly valued enhancement?
- Is the quality of the courses reflected in satisfied students and increasing enrolments?
- Are students well accepted into the workplace?

Orange needs to progressively monitor the responses to the above questions over the next few years. If the responses become increasingly positive it may be able to declare the victory won circa 2003. While it is too early to make a meaningful assessment, an absence of any obvious consolidation strategy to date suggests that step seven may only be achieved at around a C-grade.

Step eight: Institutionalising new approaches

Kotter declares that change ‘sticks’ when it becomes a part of the institutional culture. Until new behaviours are rooted in the organisation’s social norms and shared values there is always a danger of degradation to the old ways. Two factors are particularly important in the institutionalisation process - demonstrating why the new approaches have helped improve performance and ensuring that the next generation of top management personify the new approaches (Kotter, 1995:67).

Again, it is far too early for the authors to assess performance in step eight. It is possible however, to make predictions and some recommendations. Kotter stresses the importance of making conscious attempts to show people why the new ideas, strategies and values have produced major improvements. He argues that failure to do this may result in people making the wrong connections (Kotter, 1995:67).

The implication here is that Orange needs a process whereby there should be constant reminders of what has been involved over the years of curriculum implementation that has improved the quality of the educational process offered. This reflecting time for Orange campus is likely to start around 2002 and continue for a few years after. Apart from continuing staff being reminded of the improvements, and how and why they happened, it is essential that new staff are properly oriented.

Orange campus is embarking upon major changes in its top management. Early in 2001 a new Dean will arrive and up to three professorial chairs will be filled for the first time. This represents a completely new team of academics at the top of the campus’ structure. Kotter advocates ensuring that the next generation of senior staff personify the new approaches

adopted by the institution—not an easy task! The current guiding coalition must do all it can to explore the attitudes to teaching and learning held by all applicants and to use this as a crucial criterion for acceptability. Unless the three or four senior academics are strongly supportive of the new curriculum, embrace the underlying philosophies and lead by example, the paradigm shift that is presently taking place may be seriously undermined.

It is unknown how other staff movements will influence the transformation process. The composition of the guiding coalition will likely vary as will the degree of influence of individual members. The attitudes and characteristics of these staff could have substantial impact either positively or negatively as change progresses. Staff represented in the snapshot depicted as Figure 1 could move to different categories with similar consequences for the project.

The authors will need to wait for a few years and write a follow-up paper before attempting to grade step eight. Nevertheless, again there is no evident plan in place for the succession process of senior staff so it appears at this stage that the grade for this final step could well be only a C-.

Conclusion

Table II brings together the authors' gradings for Kotter's eight steps for effecting change at the Orange campus [the final two grades are projections based on current indications].

The foregoing demonstrates the application of Kotter's criteria for effective change management to a higher education setting. It suggests that in this case the process of major curriculum change began well. A sense of urgency was successfully created and is probably being maintained. A group of significant staff have been acting both formally and informally as a powerful guiding coalition. There are some serious concerns, however, regarding the adoption of a shared vision and the effective communication of that vision to stakeholders. Major obstacles to curriculum innovation appear to have been eliminated (at least for now) and well staged short-term goals established. There is a concern that successes are not being progressively and appropriately acknowledged. The grades and current indications associated with the final steps suggest that there will likely be difficulties ahead.

On the immediate horizon lurks a major unknown that has the potential to destroy much that has already been achieved. The appointment of the 'right' replacement and new senior and influential academic staff over the next two years is crucial for the success of the curriculum revision.

Those considering similar exercises in other higher education settings need to be mindful that organisational change is both hierarchical and cumulative. Each step must build upon the success or otherwise of earlier steps. A weakness in one step renders the change process more difficult to achieve at a later stage. The particular case analysis presented here identifies areas that need immediate and substantial attention if that campus is to achieve the level of high quality education it seeks. One potential benefit of this investigation is that by providing the opportunity for reflection and analysis, it has revealed areas requiring attention. It can be anticipated that if the deficiencies identified are addressed purposefully then the project could indeed succeed and the campus prosper.

Step	Kotter's steps for transforming on organisation	Grade
1.	Establishing a sense of urgency	A
2.	Forming a powerful guiding coalition	B
3.	Creating a vision	C +
4.	Communicating the vision	C
5.	Empowering others to act on the vision	B
6.	Planning for and creating short-term wins	C
7.	Consolidating improvements and producing still more change	C-
8.	Institutionalising new approaches	C-

Table II: Kotter's eight steps applied (and graded) for curriculum change at the Orange Campus.

Kotter's analysis of organisational change processes is a valuable tool in investigating curriculum innovation at the faculty level. The methodology employed here should also be valuable for non-curriculum innovation studies at departmental or whole-of-university level. The authors commend its use and indeed challenge other university faculties to undertake similar studies.

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