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An Approach to Change Management in Higher Education: Developed Country Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This article is an endeavour to show that organisational learning is linked to organisational performance in higher education sector. This study is the outcome of an exploratory research. It has reviewed literature related to change, followed by higher education in the United Kingdom, issues on change management and then it has explained different critical issues such as environment, organisational state, management style and approach to change and so on. These core issues seem to become even greater forces for organisational change within this sector. Having identified these issues, the study considers a form of organisation which, it is claimed, has a capacity for continuous change that enables it not only to adapt to, but also to anticipate, changes on the 'learning organisation'. It then discusses the issue of what a learning organisation does, when it 'learns' and, in particular, what different forms of learning this might entail. The study concludes with the argument that despite the challenge to create a situation where changes can be implemented to the maximum benefit of the institution with the lowest possible risk and cost, such a move cannot be effective without risk or cost, and the criticisms raised by organisation theorists are reviewed in this context.

Keywords: Change, Higher Education, Organisational Learning, Micro-Level Environment, Macro-Level Environment.

INTRODUCTION

Change

Change is a complex "dynamic" (Calabrese & Shoho, 2000) and "continuous process" (Coram & Burnes, 2001) which is at the heart of organisational development (Cole, 1997). It is important to know how to spot the need for it, how to judge when it is not necessary, and how to know what result you want the change to accomplish (Morgan, 1972). Change includes relinquishing old ways of thinking and behaving and replacing them with new ones (Fox & Amichai-Hamburger, 2001). According to Schermerhorn (2002), "Change is intertwined with the

processes of creativity and organizational innovation." Andrews (1971) argues that change is needed to maintain a strategic fit. Every strategy developed by an organisation's senior management is aimed, at least formally, at strengthening and developing its performance, as well as sustaining and nourishing its very existence. Growth is all about change. As Burnes (2000) states, "organisational change involves moving from the known to the unknown, with the possibility of loss as well as gain." Similarly, Marris (1975) and Wolverton (1998) make the case that all real changes involve anxiety, stress and struggle. White (2000) argues that, "change events can happen simultaneously and in a self-organising way." Failure to recognise this phenomenon as natural and inevitable has meant that we tend to ignore some important aspects of change, and misinterpret others. Brody (1972) stresses that change becomes manageable if there are principles that do not change. According to Marris (1975), "whether the change is sought or resisted, and happens by chance or design; whether we look at it from the standpoint of reformers or those they manipulate, of individuals or institutions, the response is characteristically ambivalent." Schön (1971) has developed essentially the same issue, suggesting that all real change involves "passing through the zones of uncertainty..." (Schön, 1971). Stewart (1996) summarises the key points surrounding the analysis of change, and its impact upon individuals and organisations by stating that:

- Change is a natural phenomenon;
- It is continuous and ongoing;
- The main purpose of change is to aid survival and growth;
- Survival is dependent upon adaptation to a changing environment;
- The environment can be shaped by the organisation;
- Experiential learning is essential for adaptation and growth;
- Individuals and organisations change in both unique and common ways.

Higher education institutions are in a unique position to serve as the agents for institutional change and transformation (Smith, 1996). With regard to academic institutions, Delanty (2001) indicates it "is a resilient institution that has been formed in a continuous process of change." Change, therefore is a relatively continuous, dynamic and converging process in which the drivers of change are strong norms about what constitutes appropriate organisational forms, and that come from institutions outside the organisation (Morgan, 1983). As a process, change is often resisted, but the rationale behind any change is usually based on the belief that the organisation's effectiveness must be improved and maintained. Simultaneously, Burnes (2000) states, "it is difficult to establish an accurate picture of the degree of difficulty organisations face in managing change successfully."

Higher Education in Developed Country[1]

Education can be viewed as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society (Ahmed, 2003, 2008). In a study, Adeyinka (2000) defined education as "the process of transmitting the culture of a society from one generation to the other, the process by which the adult members of a society bring up the younger ones." The organisation of a university is fundamentally that of a community of scholars. Smith and Webster (1999) suggest that: 'the university is, has been and can only be a place where thinking is a shared process, where the teaching is part of the unending dialogism of the outer society, 'where thought takes place beside thought'.

The university, as we know it today, is a medieval invention, if by 'university' we mean a corporation of people engaged professionally in the discovery of knowledge on the one hand - research; and in the dissemination of knowledge – teaching, on the other (Greenwood & Levin. 2001; Muller & Subotzky, 2001). The traditional role of universities in defining and valuing knowledge is less clear.

Most of the universities throughout Europe today can trace their ancestry to a few universities established toward the end of the 12th and 13th century (Mayor, 1992). In Italy, the University of Bologna was founded in 1088. The first Spanish University organisation was a royal foundation of Alfonso IX of Lon in 1212, but the first to become permanent was the University of Salamanca (1220). The first German university was not, strictly speaking, in Germany; it was at Prague, founded by the Emperor Charles IV in 1348. After Prague, University of Vienna was founded in 1365, Heidelberg in 1386, Cologne in 1388 and Erfurt in 1392. In next century other universities followed in the north and south of the German dominions. In the lesser countries of Europe. Cracow dates from 1364; Hungary had two in the fifteenth century; University of Upsala (1477) and University of Copenhagen (1479) both date from the second half of that century. As early as the end of the 15th century it became clear that Oxford and Cambridge were to be England's sole heritage from the European medieval movement (Ahmed, 2008). Being creatures of Church and State, they had been pulled first this way and then another, as their patrons changed with regularity, often losing freedom over selection of students, curricular ideas and staff. The Church of England was

[1] The Developed countries are classified as being developed is a contentious issue and there is fierce debate about this. Economic criteria have tended to dominate discussions. One such criteria is income per capita and countries with high GDP per capita being described as developed countries. Another economic criteria is industrialization. Countries in which the tertiary and quaternary sectors of industry dominate being described as developed. More recently another measure, the Human Development Index (HDI), which combines with an economic measure, national income, with other measures, indices for life expectancy and education including higher education has become prominent.

accustomed to view education as an Anglican monopoly in theory, with dissent a *de facto* but not *de jure* competitor, and purely secular education an abomination (Graves, 1988).

About two thousand years before, Aristotle (384-322 BC) was seeking to discover the exact purpose of the education of his age (http://en.wikipedia.org). Was it to produce learned men, to educate in virtue, or to satisfy the material needs of society? Day (1994) defined the purpose of the university as: "testing and improving the quality of knowledge; developing knowledge further; using combination and confrontation as tools. The classical role of the university is both to bring cohesion to scholarship and to stimulate creativity".

However, there was another aspect of the debate about the purpose of universities which was of great significance in those years and that was the place of research. Many commentators described the university as knowledge 'producer and transfer of knowledge' (Delanty, 2001; Greenwood & Levin, 2001; Stevens & Bagby, 2001) in 'a community of scholars and students engaged in the task of seeking truth' (Jaspers, 1965). Moses (1985) asserts the traditional view of the university: "as a community of scholars and students, with everything else subservient to that concept. There are certainly people on the academic staffs of universities who continue to hold that view, and who hold it very strongly indeed".

Similarly, Mayor (1992) asserts, "in the context of rapid economic and social change, the universities have been themselves increasingly called upon to place their knowledge at the disposal of the community by assuming more pragmatic functions".

In higher education systems knowledge is discovered, conserved, refined, transmitted and applied. As Blunkett addressed in THES, universities are powerful drivers of innovation and change. Vught (1989) suggests, "[if] there is anything fundamental to systems of higher education, it is this handling of knowledge. The primacy of the handling of knowledge is related to some other fundamental characteristics, which can be found within higher education institutions." Wall (2002) expressed by the equation 'HE = knowledge + skills', where knowledge and skills are assigned an economically instrumentalist interpretation and value, which is major part of the knowledge economy. Similarly, Gibbons *et al.* advise that higher education must prepare a future generation of 'knowledge producers' to 'travel fast' from one research project to the next, which means researchers 'must travel light, in skills as well as attitudes' (Gibbons et al., 1994). Gibbons (1998) identifies a 'dynamics of relevance' for higher education and defines it explicitly in terms of orienting towards these changes in knowledge production. As Greenwood and Levin (2001) assert:

> We believe that universities can make a valuable contribution to society based on the critical and reflective knowledge that systematic research techniques bring forward. Universities are among the very few designated centres of knowledge generation and transfer in our society and have amassed immense resources in libraries, equipment, and faculty. Thus, they have an important role to play.

METHODOLOGY AND WORK ORGANIZATION

This study is an outgrowth of an exploratory research. This is based on literature survey entirely. This work aims at gaining knowledge about organizational learning linked to organizational performance in higher education sector. This study has followed exploratory research method mainly to gain a deeper understanding of what has been carried out in the initial stages of the research process. This study has been organized into (1) introductory part, (2) issues in change management, such as organizational learning, learning style and change, knowledge creation and innovation in organizational learning and so on, (3) types of changes in higher education sector, and (4) concluding part.

ISSUES IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Organisational Learning

Organisational learning accounts exist to inspire, provide exemplary accounts of 'best practice' (Garratt, 1990; Marquardt, 1996), or serve as aspirational models which, while unattainable, may stimulate good works (Burgoyne, Pedler, & Boydell, 1991; Easterby-Smith, 1997). Senge (1990) has warned that many organisations are unable to function as knowledge based organisations because they suffer from learning disabilities. According to his definition, learning organisations are: 'organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the result they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together'.

Similarly, Argyris and Schön (1978) remarked organisational learning as:

"a process in which members of an organisation detect error or anomaly and correct it by restructuring organisational theory of action, embedding the results of their inquiry in organisational maps and images".

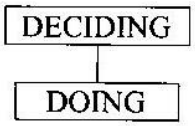
Probst and Buchel (1997) argue that there is as yet no comprehensive theory of

organisational learning. Nevertheless, they state that: "Organizational learning is the process by which the organization's knowledge and value base changes, leading to improved problem-solving ability and capacity for action".

Indeed, Senge (1990) explored a generalised organisational model, the 'learning organisation'. Garvin (1993) defined this as "an organisation skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights." Similarly, Tsai (2001) noted that inside an organization, learning involves the transfer of knowledge among different organizational units. Whereas some writers have viewed universities as learning organisations (Harris, 2000) or "as the archetypal learning organisations or communities" (Rowley, 2000), Greenwood and Levin (2001) argue that "universities, the 'house of knowledge', lack many of the characteristics of learning organizations. Since universities exist in an environment filled with dynamic and competitive learning organizations, we suggest that, without undergoing fundamental changes, they may not be able to compete successfully for much longer." Within this context, learning organisations accounts have included praise of chaos, creativity, post bureaucratic forms of governance and working (in unspecified ways) for the social, public and environmental good (Senge, 1990).

Swieringa and Wierdsma (1992) identify four types of learning organisations, these are: entrepreneurial; prescriptive; unlearning; and learning organisations.

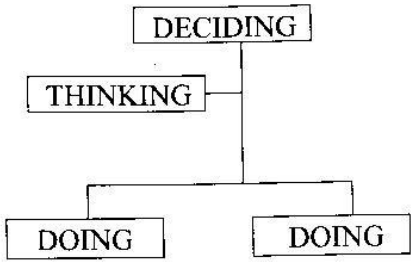
'*Entrepreneurial organisations*' cope with rapidly changing environments by rapid intuitive reaction; they do not really have time to think, individually or organisationally, but as Wilson (1992) notes, "Managers have been encouraged to adopt an entrepreneurial style in order to realise the planned vision."



Source: Swieringa and Wierdsma (1992); Becoming a Learning Organisation

Figure - 1: Thinking and Learning in Entrepreneurial Organisations

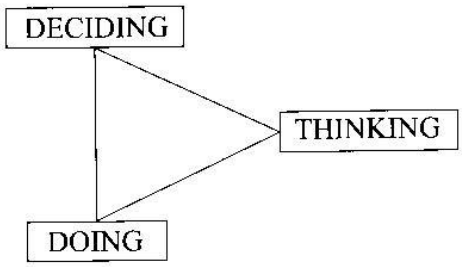
'*Prescriptive organisations*' change slowly through the application of tried and tested rules and bureaucratic procedures; thinking and learning happens away from the process of service by individual departments such as administration, finance and personnel.



Source: Swieringa and Wierdsma (1992); Becoming a Learning Organisation

Figure - 2: Thinking and Learning in Perspective Organisations

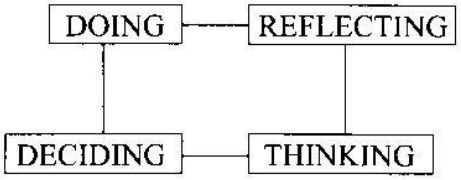
Organisations can be '*anti-learning*' (Salaman, 1995) or 'unlearning organisations' (Blackman & Henderson, 2000) and in these instances, a surface approach through minor adjustments is unlikely to satisfy future contexts. As a result, such organisations engage in whole-organisation reviews and audits to prepare themselves for a paradigm shift.



Source: Swieringa and Wierdsma (1992); Becoming a Learning Organisation

Figure - 3: Thinking and Learning in Unlearning Organisations

Organisations must be able to learn, and to learn from their learning. In Senge's concept of the learning organisation, high value is placed on developing the ability to learn and then to make that learning continuously available to all organisational members. 'Learning organisations' accomplish the paradigm shift but they also acquire the capacity for going through the whole process repeatedly, setting up long range environmental scanning facilities to monitor when a future 'cusp point' requiring further engineering, might be approaching.



Source: Swieringa and Wierdsma (1992); Becoming a Learning Organisation

Figure - 4: Thinking and Learning in Learning Organisations

However, despite their differences all accounts have as their main point of reference, the notion that it is possible for organisations to learn. In this connection, a number of writers have remarked that an organisation could be "'working towards' being a learning organisation" (O'Sullivan, 1997) or working towards "generative learning" (Senge, 1990), or "quantum" (Zohar, 1997) learning that increases the institution's or individual's capacity to create new solutions to increasingly complex problems (Lueddeke, 1999; Probst & Buchel, 1997). In the same vein, Senge (1990) described adaptive learning as coping and dealing with the current environment in new and better ways, describing generative learning as moving beyond adaptation and developing new ways of looking at the world. According to Burnes (2000), the key purpose of organisational learning is "facilitating organisational change" which is able to transform the shared meanings embodied in collective knowledge and skills (Hales, 2001). Without all the essential characteristics of a 'learning organisation', organisations are unlikely to survive competition with actual learning organisations in the long term. It is argued that the outside environment is a turbulent one and that the changing demands placed on organisations mean that, to survive and compete, organisations must change to cope with the new realities facing them (Lueddeke, 1999).

Learning Style and Change

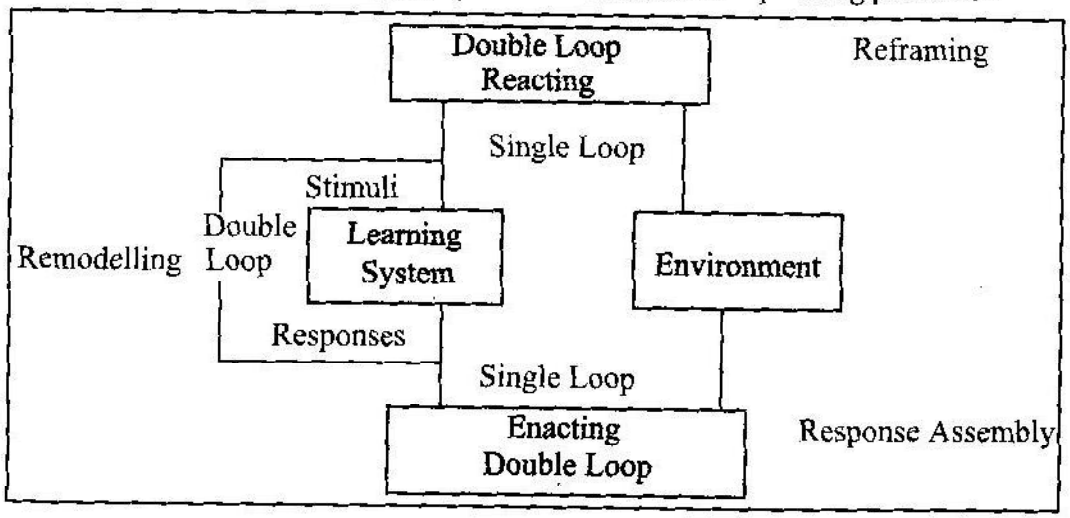
Institutional theory implies an evolutionary process toward isomorphism (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996). Many models of organisational design and change imply incremental change (Clark, 1984), that is to say, step-by-step change that adapts the institution better to its environment or makes it more efficient at the margin. Incremental change is analogous to learning by exploitation (Cummings & Worley, 1997; March, 1991). First-order change (Garratt, 1990), or first-order learning (Lant & Mezias, 1992), or single-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Heracleous, 1998) are learning changes which serve to make existing patterns of behaviour more stable, predictable, and efficient. Incremental change can be very

small-scale or larger in scope and depth (a new information system) but is still planned and controlled (Burnes, 1996). As Schön (1983) observes, "single-loop learning occurs through the interaction of individuals who occupy different roles in the task system." Similarly, Hedberg and Wolff (2001) comment, "Single-loop learning occurs when decisions made about new responses are based on old stimuli and interpretations of stimuli." "Single-loop learning," as Bennett (1998) suggests, "typically involves the setting of standards and the investigation of deviations from targets." Heracleous (1998) considers that single-loop learning involves thinking within existing assumptions and taking actions based on a fixed set of potential action alternatives. The outcome of the first-order learning is expected to be incremental change or adaptation conducted to further exploit existing technologies, routines, and processes in ways that do not alter underlying assumptions or values (Argyris & Schön, 1978; March, 1991). Incremental change is convergent. Its purpose is to improve operations by improving the alignment among organisational structures and systems and the organisation's environment. Such change does not challenge the organisation's core values, but rather builds upon them and does not imply any change in fundamental assumptions and values about how the organisation should be operate.

Organisations also experience periods of discontinuous, diverging, and fundamental change, which is known as radical change. Knowing that radical change occurs and that it is different from incremental change does not tell us much about when and how it is manifested on how it should be managed. Organisations that do not change radically when environmental events call for it, risk poor performance or even failure (Miller & Friesen, 1982). Paradoxically, if organisations have succeeded through incremental change in the past, inertial forces increase inside and outside the organisation, and these tight coupling decreases the organisation's ability to make radical change (Baum & Oliver, 1991; Hannan & Freeman, 1984). The more successful incremental change an organisation has experienced, the stronger its core values become, and the more its core channels change, to keep it within the bounds of the existing paradigm. Radical change begins with a breakdown of the existing system of core values, followed by a period of confusion and the creation of new core values (Gersick, 1989; Gould, 1980; Quinn, 1996). Without a sense of direction, change will likely follow old paths. This is not to suggest that the course of radical change can be specified in advance. One key characteristic of radical change is that cause-and-effect relationships are not well known, and that the results of actions are not always predictable. However, without vision, direction, and enthusiasm from top management, radical change is unlikely. Radical change is large, discontinuous

change that "takes organisations outside their familiar domains and alters bases of power" (Starbuck, 1983). Greenwood and Hinings (1996) suggest that radical change cannot occur without the organisation having sufficient understanding of the new conceptual destination. Toyne (1991) asserts that radical changes have been occurring in the higher education sector in the UK. Finally, leaders of change need to balance issues of timing and consistency. Haveman (1992) found that radical change was more successful if organisations made their change close in time to the environmental trigger event.

Haveman (1992) also established that changes which made use of existing capabilities were more successful than changes that required the organisation to develop new capabilities. However, existing capabilities can be an inertial feature, part of a organisation's core values and deep structure, limiting the type of change and ultimately constructing change so that is appears as incremental rather than radical. Radical change is akin to metamorphosis (Meyer, Goes, & Brooks, 1993), learning through exploration (March, 1991), second-order change (Billing, 1998; McWhinney, 1992), or second-order learning (Lant & Mezias, 1992), or double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Garratt, 1994; Hales, 2001). As Thompson (1996) notes, "single-loop learning in an organisation is more straightforward than the challenge of double-loop learning." Levy and Merry (1986) note that long-term change must result in a change in an organisation's mission, which is classified as a second-order change. Bartunek and Franzak (1988) note that an organisation must undergo both first-order as well as second-order change to successfully alter its mission and operating processes.



Source: Hedberg and Wolff (2001); Handbook of Organisational Learning and Knowledge

Figure - 5: Single-loop and Double-loop Learning

A double-loop links the detection of anomaly both to strategies of action, and to the norms by which actions are evaluated, and often there is an accompanying change in the organisation's model of its world (Argyris & Schön, 1978). According to Bennett (1998), double-loop learning "means questioning whether the standards and objectives are appropriate in the first instance." It implies quantum and fundamental change in the organisation's core values, as well as its strategies, structures, and capabilities. Garratt (1994) suggests that double-loop learning "allows multiple feedbacks from information flows, direction-giving, and the monitoring of changes in the external and internal environments." Heracleous (1998) claimed that double-loop learning challenges existing assumptions and develops new and innovative solutions, leading to potentially more appropriate actions. Levy and Merry (1986) list various writers who label double-loop phenomena, 'policy making', 'radical', 'revolutionary', 'root', and 'transformational' change. The range of changes that can logically be considered as second-order learning is extremely broad, because such learning involves the creation or change of a context. McWhinney (1992) notes that "[it] presents new images, defines (bounds) new concepts, or intrudes into the space of existing concepts, for example, by forming classes, labelling objects, and organizing acts." Underlying assumptions about what business to be in, how business should be conducted, and the core values that accompany those assumptions are all modified during radical change. In essence, second-order leaning allows organisations to break out of existing patterns of thoughts or behaviours by exploring qualitatively different ways of thinking and doing things. Additionally, first- and second-order learning by individual organisation members must be translated or externalised from the tacit knowledge of individuals into a form that the organisation can use (Duncan & Weiss, 1979; Huber, 1991). Some writers (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Fiol & Lyles, 1985; Senge, 1990) have drawn a distinction between 'higher order' and 'lower order' forms of organisational learning. Sadler-Smith, Spicer, and Chaston (2001) for example suggests that the main typologies that recognise such a distinction is in terms of type and level. Diffident writers described organisational learning in different ways. Sadler-Smith et al. (2001) categories Argyris and Schön (1978) single loop learning as lower level learning and double-loop learning as higher level learning. Fiol and Lyles (1985) understanding lower level learning means relatively simplicity and higher level learning means complexity. Senge (1990) classified adaptive learning (Sadler-Smith et al., 2001) as lower level learning and classified generative learning as higher-level learning. Dibella, Nevis, & Gould, (1996) addressed lower level learning as incremental learning and higher level learning as transformational learning.

Radical change differs from incremental change principally because radical change involves a "metamorphosis" (Meyer et al., 1990), or a change in "deep structures" (Gersick, 1991), or a change in "core values" (Tushman & Romanelli, 1985). Gersick (1991, pp. 17-20) illustrates the difference between incremental and radical change in the following statement:

> During [periods of incremental change], systems maintain and carry out the choices of their deep structure. Systems make adjustments that preserve the deep structure against internal and external perturbations, and move incrementally along paths built into the deep structure ... [Periods of radical change] are relatively brief ... when a system's deep structure comes apart, leaving it in disarray until the period ends, with the "choices" around which a new deep structure forms.

Instead, the punctuated equilibrium model suggests that radical change is triggered by **(a)** a decline in recent performance (or an expected decline in the near future) below some acceptable threshold (Boeker, 1997; Lant & Mezias, 1992), **(b)** a significant change that redefines the competitive environment, such as information technology in the HEIs (Meyer, Brooks, & Goes, 1990; Romanelli & Tushman, 1994) or **(c)** a change in top management (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994). The important distinction is that radical change is not about better alignment between existing business and existing strategies, structures, capabilities, and core values. Nor is it an accumulation of incremental changes over a long period of time (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994). Instead, radical change is about pursuing new and different strategies, structures, capabilities, and resources, supported with new and different core values.

Knowledge Creation and Innovation in Organisational Learning

Knowledge is widely recognised as one of the single most important factors and a key source of competitive advantage and innovation in creating and sustaining superior organisational performance (Blackman & Henderson, 2000). As Blackman and Henderson (2000) notes, "It follows from this central role of knowledge, that learning is crucial to creating and disseminating knowledge throughout the organisation." This requires the design of an organisational transformation process delivering more effective knowledge to create organisational learning, creating superior performance through innovation

(Blackman & Henderson, 2000). Organisations face an environment characterised by rapid and unpredictable change. Innovation is crucial for achieving successful organisational change - and that is essential for sustained competitiveness and wealth creation (HMSO, 1994; Schermerhorn, 2002). Therefore, it can be argued that the only way in which organisations can sustain competitive advantage is by creating knowledge more rapidly than their competitors. Nevertheless, "learning organisations can only enable competitive advantage via learning if 'knowledge' exists, can be identified as important to the organisation, can be transferred and if the learning organisation does all this better than other organisations"(Blackman & Henderson, 2000). The creation of knowledge for superior performance depends upon the organisational learning context (Nonaka, 1991; Patterson, 1999). It is dependent upon the development of an enabling social architecture, structure and infrastructure which are unique to an organisation.

Individual Learning and Change

People are the organisation (Greenfield, 1973), and therefore their commitment to social goals must be developed. This view supports that of Mumford (1991) that "the learning organisation depends absolutely on the skills, approaches, and commitment of individuals, to their own learning." Their individual learning, for example staff development linked to institutional strategies, is the basis for organisational learning because, only learning people can create a learning organisation (Billing, 1998; Duke, 1992; Husen, 1990; Nedwek, 1998). As Thompson (1995) argues "an organization itself doesn't learn - people learn." Therefore, "individual learning is transmitted throughout the organization" (Palmer & Hardy, 2000). The development of individual staff is an integral part of a learning organisation; in order to release people skills which are encouraged by making people stretch into performing old tasks in new ways and thus support organisational development (Thompson & Valley, 1998). Within this context, Burnes (2000) observed, "in most organisations, the achievement of a high level of organisational learning will necessitate a fundamental shift in how individuals learn." As far as Higher Education Institutions are concerned "successful change efforts depend heavily on the active involvement of faculty and staff as collaborators" (Wolverton, 1998). Therefore, in the higher education context, it is crucial to create a learning environment in order to develop 'individual learning' or 'people learning' which will bring organisational change. Kim (1993) interpreted individual learning as increasing one's capacity to take effective action, and organisational learning as increasing an organisation's capacity to take effective

action. To quote Mumford (1991) again: "It is crucial that we manage to improve the capacity of individuals to recognise and take advantage of learning opportunities, both those planned on a large scale and those which occur intimately on a smaller scale."

Managing Change Factors

Burnes (1996, 2000) and Salauroo and Burnes (1998) have identified four major factors involved in managing change; the environment in which the organisation operates; the organisational state; the management style; and the organisation's approach to change.

The Environment

The process of learning to learn hinges on an ability to remain open to changes occurring in the environment, and on an ability to challenge operating assumptions in a fundamental way. Unless planning is determined by inquiry-driven action, some writers consider that it is likely that organisations will suffer due to failing to keep abreast of the requirements of changing environments (Pascale, 1990; Stacey, 1996). In the environment context, Patterson (1999) sees learning organisations emerge as strategic responses to changing environmental conditions and pressures. In this respect, Thompson (1996) commented:

> Some of the environmental changes will be the result of external forces; others will be the outcomes of actions taken by the organization itself. The extent of the organisation's success is partially dependent on its ability to be proactive as well as reactive to the environment.

Organisations face strong pressure to conform to existing exceptions, especially concerning structures and processes (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; North, 1990). Change in response to the environment is necessary in order to maintain strategic fit and remain competitive (Andrews, 1971). The institutional environment provides templates for organising, establishes the macro "rules of the game", and rewards consistency and conformity. Organisational structures, capabilities, and resources are developed and solidified to be consistent with, and effective in, the institutional environment (Levitt & March, 1988; Nelson & Winter, 1982). Senge (1990) described adaptive learning as coping and dealing with the current environment in new and better ways; he described generative learning as moving beyond adaptation and developing new ways of looking at the world.

On the face of things, 'institutional theory' is an explanation of organisational similarity and inertia, and has highlighted organisational motives to acquire social acceptability by conforming to the rules and norms of the institutional environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Stability is required to function effectively. It also is useful for understanding the institutional change within higher education during the 80s and 90s, because the institutional context was strong and stable before those decades. As environments change, institutions also must change to realign themselves with the new conditions, and those that do adapt will perform better (Meyer, 1982). To survive, organisations must develop new capabilities very quickly, since, if they do not change, their survival chances are diminished (Hannan & Freeman, 1984).

All organisations are dependent to some degree (usually a large degree) on their environment, and thus, the environment is a key factor in managing change (Peterson, 1995; Wilson, 1992). As Wolverton (1998) noted "change in a dynamic environment, fraught with uncertainty, becomes more radical and its consequences patently more severe."

Many commentators (Barnett, 1990; Ewing, 1994; Hague, 1991) have suggested that universities need to change in order to adapt to a new working environment. What they have not produced to date, is a prescription for that change (MacBryde, 1998). Indeed, higher education institutions have identified that there are many external influences to be considered in the planning process, that new ones come on stream from time to time, and that it is crucial that these be considered both individually and in combination. The change process is becoming less dependent and more powerful vis-à-vis the environment, which, in tern, reduces uncertainty for the institutions. The forces for change can result in institutional inertia and far more stability than exponents of change might predict. Institutions need some ability to resist change otherwise they might react to every perceived change in the environment. Winter and Sarros (2001) stress that corporate reforms of universities represent a fundamental change in the way that they relate to their environment. Therefore, organisations change in response to normative, mimetic, and coercive pressure from the institutional environment.

Organisational State

Salauroo and Burnes (1998) suggest that some environments can affect organisations in differing ways depending on the state in which the organisation exists. In the 1980s and 1990s many writers identified two basic organisation states: convergent and divergent (Burnes & James, 1995; Gibbons, 1992; Salauroo &

Burnes, 1998). As Salauroo and Burnes (1998) noted, the convergent state occurs when an organisation is operating under stable conditions in a predictable micro and macro-level environment, and the divergent state occurs when environmental changes challenge the efficiency of an organisation's goals, structures and working practices. In this context, early 1980s university funding cuts and also the early 1990s Higher Education Reform Act 1992 in UK have created divergent organisational states in the whole higher education sector. At present 'old' universities are operating in the divergent state, and the 'new' universities and Higher Education Colleges (HECs) are operating in the convergent state.

Table I. Framework for Understanding Change

	Stable	**Dynamic**
Environment	(Mintzberg, 1979; Salauroo & Burnes, 1998; Wilson, 1992; Wolverton, 1998)	(Handy, 1994; Kanter *et al.*, 1992; Mintzberg, 1979; Peters, 1995; Salauroo & Burnes, 1998; Wolverton, 1998)
	Convergent	**Divergent**
Organisational State	(Beatty & Lee, 1992; Burnes & James, 1995; Burnes & James, 1995; Burnes, 1978; Gibbons, 1992; Salauroo & Burnes, 1998)	(Beatty & Lee, 1992; Burnes & James, 1995; Burnes, 1978; D'Aunno & Alexander, 2000; DiMaggio, 1988; Gibbons, 1992; Oliver, 1992; Salauroo & Burnes, 1998; Thornton, 1995)
Management Style	**Transactional** (Salauroo & Burnes, 1998)	**Transformational** (Cummings & Worley, 1997; French & Bell, 1995; McLennan, 1989; Mirvis, 1990; Salauroo & Burnes, 1998; Zeffane, 1996)
	Planned	**Emergent**
Approach to Change	(Bullock & Batten, 1985; Burnes, 1996, 2000; Coram & Burnes, 2001; Cummings & Worley, 1997; Lewin, 1958; Lippitt *et al.*, 1985; Salauroo & Burnes, 1998; Stoner *et al.*, 1995; Wilson, 1992)	(Burnes, 1996, 2000; Coram & Burnes, 2001; Dawson, 1994; Kanter *et al.* 1992; Kotter, 1996; Pettigrew, 1985; Salauroo & Burnes, 1998; Wilson, 1992; Worrall *et al.*, 1998)

Source: Salauroo and Burnes (1998) modified; International Journal of Public Sector Management

Management Style

Salauroo and Burnes (1998) identified two key styles of management: transactional and transformational, arguing that transactional management occurs through incremental changes within the "existing policy, structure and practices" of organisation. On the other hand, the transformational style of management results from a radical change process, such as affects power and leadership issues.

Approach to Change

Any approaches to change must be gradual, systematic, and consistent. Therefore, organisational change is a process. As Dawson (1994) suggests: "the new bias for organisational action rests with an emergent breed of manager, whose job involves the strategic management of change in work processes, structures, ...employment relations and organisational culture".

Burnes (2000) argued that most approaches to change lie on a spectrum between the planned and the emergent change. The essence of planned change, referred to as Lewin's (1958) three-stage model of change which involves unfreezing the present level, and changing and refreezing the new level finds its appropriateness in a dynamic environment being increasingly questioned (Burnes, 1996; Dawson, 1994; Lovell, 1995). Palmer and Hardy (2000) noted that "unfreezing the way the organization currently operates, changing the organization in a specific direction, and then refreezing these changes and the associated behaviours into the operations of the organization", require recognising the need to change, generally in response to one or more catalytic events, creating a vision for the future, and overcoming the resistance to change (Stoner, Freeman, & Gilbert, 1995). The process of changing involves teaching new skills and behaviours, mobilising organisation resources and changing the organisational components (Schermerhorn, 2002). The final stage in the planned change process is refreezing, which involves reinforcing newly acquired behaviours and institutionalising the change and creating the conditions for its long-term continuity (Schermerhorn, 2002).

When a planned approach for new behaviour is adopted, the old behaviour is discarded and new behaviours are accepted successfully (Burnes, 1996; Zeffane, 1996). According to Stoner et al. (1995), "planned change is the systematic attempt to redesign an organization in a way that will help it adapt to significant changes in the environment and to achieve new goals." However, Wilson (1992) indicates that the nature of planned change is stated in advance and heavily reliant on the

managerial role, whereas emergent change is a process of the interplay of multiple variables (context, political processes and consultation) within the organisation. Within this context, Ford, Goodyear, Heseltine, and Lewis (1996) asserts:

> A planned approach that continuously assesses the needs for and implications of change, and implements policies to incorporate approved changes will place institutions in a much stronger position in the increasingly competitive world of higher education.

Emergent change approaches stress the developing and unpredictable nature of change (Burnes, 2000). As Worrall, Collinge, and Bill (1998) noted that emergent change is associated with the process of "muddling through", where the organization finds its way by accident, while designed change is associated with the process of deliberate, rational management.

Whereas, Salauroo & Burnes (1998) suggests that in emergent change "the role of managers is not to plan or implement change, but to create or foster an organizational structure and climate which encourages and sustains experimentation and risk-taking, and to develop a workforce that will take responsibility for identifying the need for change and implementing it." Nevertheless, as Burnes (2000) suggests, the planned and emergent approaches to change have their own limitations in so far they both developed with particular situations and types of organisations in mind. Their universal applicability must therefore be questioned in order to allow approaches to change to be matched to environmental conditions and organisational constraints so that these develop along a continuum of best and unique practices in organisations (Burnes, 2000; Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991). Dixon, Kouzmin, & Korac-Kakabadse (1998) offer their view that managerial pressures thus create a need for a unique set of organisational changes within public agencies that would bring them into a more congruent "strategic fit".

TYPES OF CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

To situate academic responses to higher education reforms in UK universities, a three layer change framework is found, these being: national structural level; organisational level; and individual level. This three-layer change framework, based on the prior research of Becher and Kogan (1992) and Clark (1984), was utilised by Jary and Parker (1995) to examine major changes to the higher

education sector in the UK. Jary and Parker (1995) argued that changes in the political, institutional and funding environment (national-structural level) produced forms of corporate work organisation (organisational-level) that increased the power of higher education institutions' management, and diminished the autonomy and motivation of academic professionals (professional-subjective level). The 1980s funding cuts and 1990s higher education legislation have brought major changes and new catalysts for organisational and professional development in higher education sector (Partington, 1995). The major influencing changes and developments have been:

- the wider, integrated university system;
- the increasing accountability of HEIs to the Funding Councils;
- the obligation to: new quality systems for learning and teaching academic audit;
- the impact of the research selectivity procedures;
- consequent quality assurance processes for all personnel;
- pressures from employer's' bodies for undergraduate and post-graduate;
- programmes which relate better to job and career requirements;
- the Enterprise in Higher Education (EHE) initiative of the Employment Department (Partington, 1995).

The Micro-Level Environment

Wilson (1992) suggests that the key to understanding change is individual cognition and interpretation of the micro level environment. Micro-level environment change only occurs in internal change processes, such as organisational hierarchy and structure change, culture change, departmental change management and so on. However, these micro factors are impacted upon by the organisation's divergent state.

Organisational Structure

Most large organisations in the UK have undergone major restructuring programmes during the 1980s and 1990s (Davies & Thomas, 2000). As Sinha (1999) asserts, "There was no doubt that public sector authorities were under enormous pressure to rethink and change their organisational structures and working practices." Concomitant to developing an understanding of the internal environment is the use of organisational structure as a lever for change, which can

organisational structures with day-to-day responsibilities devolved to identified functioning teams within the organisation" (O'Neill, 1994), in which levels of management are reduced to avoid communication distortions, and in order to improve communication flows up, down and across the organisation (Dixon et al., 1998; Main, 1988). Without new organisation structures, it is difficult for an organisation to be more efficient or learn and adapt to environmental changes. Toyne (1991) observes that, "A whole new approach to what we do has come about and with it we have all been looking for new organisational structures in which to bring about many changes." However, Bennett (1999) argues that there is no single ideal structure that is universally applicable to all businesses. Nevertheless, "organisational structure is an important element in developing and managing a learning environment. The Jarratt Report (Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, 1985) caused most of the chartered universities to review their organisational structures, bringing, in many cases, a streamlining of operation, a better integration of academic, financial and physical planning, and clearer lines of accountability" (Ford et al., 1996). Again, Toyne (1991) offers his opinion that "structures involving devolved responsibility or flatness must also be simpler. They must be minimalist, not complex. Fewer units, fewer committees, fewer complications to make for simpler straightforward responsiveness, involves in turn empowering managers."

Institutional Culture Change

Culture is widely understood to be made up of a collection of fundamental values and belief systems which give meaning to organisations (Hales, 2001; Hatch, 1993; Pettigrew, 1979; Probst & Buchel, 1997). Culture may also be regarded as "shaping and maintaining an organization's identity" (Stoner et al., 1995) or "challenge" (Dixon et al., 1998) or "conservative restraining force" (Flood & Jackson, 1991) or "mental programming" - it is learned and it is "always a collective phenomenon" (Hofstede, 1991). Furthermore, as Mayor (1992) stated:

> Culture has continuously diversified its content and has developed its own institutional systems; however, it has always relied on the University as that seat of learning where inherent cultural values have gained legitimacy and universal recognition.

Organisational culture is a normative or seductive concept, providing standards of conduct for facilitating, lengthy organisational learning, corporate change and renewal (Chan & Wong, 1994; Wilson, 1992). During the 1970s, organisational writers began to examine the emergence and impact of organisational culture

(Pettigrew, 1979; Turner, 1973; Messenger, 1978). Changing culture is 'extremely' difficult (Chan & Wong, 1994; Cummings & Worley, 1997), because "culture change is quite different from strategic or structural change" (Bate, 1994), what Gangliardi (1986) described as "cultural revolution" strategy. Writers' (Allaire & Firsirotu, 1984; Handy, 1999) stress that in order to operate effectively and efficiently, an organisation's culture needs to match to its structure". In addition, Mills, Boylstein, and Lorean (2001) argued that organisational culture is institutionally crafted. As Torrington and Weightman (1989) remarked, "culture is most effective when a majority of members agree on and own the changes that they all want to bring about." Therefore, institutional culture change and the role of the leader are important in change management but the interplay between them is complex (Bate, 1994; Jenkins, 1997; Martin, 1992; Mavin & Bryans, 2000). There are good reasons for focusing on the building and management of institutional culture(s) as Davies (1997) notes:

> A healthy culture can promote identification (who we are), legitimation (why we need to do) communication (with whom we talk), co-ordination (with whom we work) and development (what are the dominant perspectives and tasks).

However, when the concept of organisational culture was applied to a study of academic organisations in an Australian university (Harman, 1989), it was found generally that within this higher education institutional context, the head of the educational institution Vice-Chancellor or Principal considered that their main task was one of the changing the culture and aligning it with their vision for the institution. In this process, articulating the vision was important.

Departmental Change Management

Involving staff in change management requires "creating a readiness for change ... and helping to overcome resistance to change" (Cummings & Worley, 1997). Middlehurst (1993) emphasises the ambiguity of the head of department's role, which arises from the dual identity afforded to the position, one of which is manager or leader, the other of which is academic colleague. Ritter (1998) argues, "under external pressure, management had too little time to motivate staff and seemed to feel the way to success was to drive the change." Again, Middlehurst (1993) stresses that: The problem is in managing academics; they are highly individualistic with no strong sense of corporate identity either to the department or to the University.

The Macro-Level Environment

A need to change can be, and often is triggered, from outside an organisation (Lippitt et al., 1985; Schermerhorn, 2002). As Wilson (1992) suggests, "A macro..... [environmental].... change requires that the rate and level of change in the operating environment are monitored and counted in the overall equation." Within this context, higher education institutions are large, diverse, but integrated organisations, very much dependent upon their ability to anticipate and respond to developments in the macro or external environment. Tichy (1983) says that organisations react with change whenever there is a modification of their environment. The ability to react positively, to be able to benefit wherever possible from changes when they occur, is essential to the planning process. These macro-level environmental changes will determine to a large extent the efficiency of more micro-level strategies of change (Wilson, 1992).

Partnership and Collaboration Relationships

The nature of the relationships in which the organisation is engaged, whether with other organisations or individuals, will affect its ability to change, especially in the absence of a fully functioning institutional environment (Baum & Oliver, 1991; Peterson, 1995; Xin & Pearce, 1996). As Neto (1986) commented, collaborative relations between universities and industry are good things to be doing', and such collaboration is done to:

- recruit
- solve short-run problems
- broaden the research horizon of company staff
- obtain advice in areas where the company is not very strong
- obtain fresh ideas for on-going research
- obtain commercially important results help universities
- influence university research
- increase the academic stand of the company

Some academics (Peterson, 1995) view a university as a "network organisation" or part of an "inter-organisational network" as well as partnership with a variety of organisational networks in the public and private sectors (Mavin & Bryans, 2000; Palmer, 1996; Rowley, 2000). From the mid-1960s, government and other agencies began to provide universities with both encouragement and pressure to become less academic and "more relevant" to the needs of industry.

Between 1967 and 1974, for example, the University Grants Committee (UGC) gave "pump-priming" assistance for specific schemes of collaboration with industry. It gave grants for the introduction of 37 industry-oriented courses, for 10 research and consultancy services and for 11 industrial liaison posts and bureaux. These partnerships have the benefit of enhancing the quality of key aspects of college, institute and university research and training programmes (MacBryde, 1998). They involve "a wider variety of actors - different disciplines, universities, industries and levels of government" (House, 2001) bringing together their unique expertise and resources to work on a common development priority, thus offering an example of the sort of collaboration which exists with the external environment. The need of universities to generate alternative source of funding in the face of reductions in state support has been much focused on university-industry relationships (Bell, 1996; Geisler, 2001). As Geisler (2001) has asserted that, "universities co-operate with industry to gain a source of funding and access to industrial capabilities." However, perhaps even more importantly, almost all of them encourage university-industry relationship by means of consultancy (Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, and Liverpool) by making their facilities available to industry (Leeds, Newcastle) or by offering special courses to industry (Sanderson, 1972; THES, 2000). However, government science and technology policy began to focus on "university-industry relations and upon the development of 'strategic' research to underpin new fields of technology, often across the boundaries of established disciplines" (Gummett, 1991). As Mavin and Bryans (2000) comment, "universities can help the partner organisations to know what it is they already know and learn new ways of doing and being. They can help organisations to see the conscious and unconscious ways in which they block learning and development. These partnerships are learning partnerships; the fact that both parties have something to learn and, therefore, something to gain is a central and explicit aspect of the relationship." Indeed, organisational links have become a crucial element of today's universities and Peterson (1995) identifies some factors, which he suggests:

> All force us to view universities from an inter-organizational perspective as an organization with extensive and perhaps, primary inter-institutional involvement with non-educational organizations. The metaphor forces us to re-examine boundary relationships, interpersonal dynamics, and the nature of competitive and collaborative arrangements with non-educational organizations.

Regional Co-operation

Many universities have responded to the reductions in governmental support by encouraging professional enterprise in contract research, product development and other forms of corporate co-operation and collaboration (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Indeed, "Universities have a key role to play in underpinning the economic strength of their regions" (THES, 2000). A similar view is also expressed by Meldrum and de Berranger (1999):

> Many universities have already been encouraged by external sources of funding to develop their programmes for SMEs. Most now have specialist units responsible for links with SMEs, mainly aimed at local businesses, although some offer distance learning opportunities.

The expansion of higher education has also taken place in the further education sector (Ahmed, 2002). As for example, the University of Bradford and Bradford College are to take the first steps towards joint operation after pledges of support from funding bodies as Learning and Skills Council and HEFCE (Alison, 2001, 2002). Nevertheless, writers MacBryde (1998), Trim (2001) and Harvey and Ashworth (1995) suggest that in recent years, co-operation between universities and institutions in higher and further education has been increased. They also suggest that an increase in mergers between specialist higher education colleges, particularly in teacher education, and universities has occurred, and that in some cases, universities are taking over further education colleges in which there is a significant block of higher education work (Ahmed, 2002).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study made an endeavour to illuminate the dynamics of organisational change. Change creation is a proactive process whereby change is an accepted and even welcomed reality as a fundamental part of future success; the desired future is defined, justified, and designed; and then a transition plan to create the designed future is developed and implemented. This means taking a genuine responsibility for leading a change, effectively planning for the desired change (i.e., strategic planning), and developing and implementing a change approach that capably transitions people, processes, and circumstances from what exists to the shared

desired future. Regardless of the different approaches taken by organisational learning and the implications of each, the study clearly presents problems of adjustment of the organisation. As organisations grow and evolve, they change; the problems of the management of change; and ultimately the organisation's policies, procedures, and structure will have to change. This article focused on different aspects of change management theory and also examined different organisational models. Organisation structure is defined as the relatively endurance of administrative mechanisms that create a pattern of interrelated work activities and allow the organisations to conduct, co-ordinate, and control its work activities. There are some models that are used to explain change management and organisational development and assist with the identification of change options. Organisations are easy to criticise, particularly with hindsight, and difficult to change. Change in the university seems slow and difficult. Many faculties concerned with the pace of change bond together to seek support for change initiatives. Change initiatives, however, encounter great resistance. A more beneficial way of considering change in the university is to understand the change factors and micro-level and macro-level environment. When external pressure forces to change, it affects all levels of the hierarchy, but different levels of change are transmitted throughout the organisation in different ways. In higher education institutions, successful change efforts depend heavily on the active involvement of faculty and staff as collaborators (Wolverton, 1998). All this implies that effective strategic planning is essential to effective change creation but is only one key element in the critically important change creation process. The concepts, activities, and procedures in this article, though complex and demanding, outlined a detailed map for effectively planning and implementing meaningful change creation in higher education in the UK.

The challenge for senior higher education administrative managers is to establish a strategic framework which learns from macro-level environment within the institution, and opens a channel for component sections and administrative departments to feed into the corporate strategy. At the same time, the challenge is to shape and harness these component strategies by establishing a corporate environment in which they are channelled in a concerted direction. The major kinds of changes that correspond to macro and micro level environment change pressures as well as the principal tasks involved in managing the change process.

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