What are the implications in terms of Change Management likely to be as a consequence of the new initiatives in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education?

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I hereby certify that the material submitted for this assessment leading to the award of an MA in HRM is entirely my own work and not work copied from the work of others. Any work cited here that is not my own has been referenced and acknowledged.

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Acknowledgments

Abstract

Background

This Research emanated from the changes taking place in adult education as result of the framework set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education. According to this paper adult education and life long learning is the last mass or area of education to be developed in Ireland. This research aims to investigate the change management implications as a result of the initiatives set out in this Paper. The research will concentrate on the provision of adult education within the Further Education Sector and on how the implementation of life long learning has created a need for change.

Method

The raw data was collected through the use of structured interviews that were conducted at two colleges of Further Education. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed before undergoing systematic qualitative analysis.

Results

The overall results found the impact of the framework set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education had a positive affect on the provision of adult education. The main findings identified the need to change the delivery structure of programmes to cater for the adult learners. There was a perception among the respondents that the VEC and the Department of Education were not placing enough focus on Adult education. The two colleges were of the opinion that there was a need to develop networks between the colleges and local industry.

Conclusion

Life long learning has become a reality for the Further Education sector. The opening up of access to mature students has challenged the traditional approaches to education. The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education has facilitated this change. It was found that there are still parts of this framework that could be utilised more to develop the programmes for life long learning within the Further Education sector.

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Executive Brief

The last phase of mass development in education in Ireland is life long learning and this together with the development of the National Partnership Agreements helped the framework set out in the Learning for life White Paper on Adult Education to shape the adoption of a new phenomena in education. The overall framework identifies policies and priorities set out by the Government for the development of adult education through life long learning.

> The White Paper defines Adult Education as *'systematic learning undertaken by adults who return to learning having concluded initial education or training'*. The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education (2000:12)

Many of the proposals set out in this White Paper deal with further third level and continuing education for Adults as a means of helping them to return to gainful employment or develop their current skills and self-esteem through Back to Education Initiatives (BTEI).

This research used the framework set out in this White Paper to examine the change management implications it will have on the Further Education Sector in relation to developing programmes for adult learning. Two Colleges of Further Education have been used in this study that was conducted over the three months between March and May 2005. The research aims and objectives were to examine the implications of change in order to meet the needs of mature students as they return to learning. The changes necessary in relation to staffing implications and the delivery of programmes to suit adult education.It will also

explore the leadership qualities necessary to develop the initiatives set out in the framework.

Chapter1 deals with the historical developments of education through three phases. Phase one goes back to the foundation of the State in 1922 and the development of the Department of Education. Phase two from the mid 1960's witnessed the opening up of access to the second level of education. Phase three starts with the development of the National Programme for second chance education in 1989. This programme opened education to a whole new profile of students through the VTOS and BTEI schemes. This chapter concludes by outlining a summary of the framework set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education.

Chapter 2 on the Literature Review starts by examining what the literature has to say on change and how it affects both the strategic and operational structures of an organisation. It alludes to various theories held on changing structures in response to change. It looks at what the literature has to say on how to respond to change in relation to the developing knowledge based Irish economy. The topic of leadership and change is discussed before this chapter concludes.

Chapter 3 defines research methodology and methods of collecting data. It goes on to give a brief description of the location of where the data for this research was collected. It outlines how the data was collected through the use of structured interviews and collates the data for analysis.

Chapter 4 is an analysis of the main themes that emerged form the research. There were four major themes identified in the research. They were as follows:

1. The need for flexibility in the delivery of programmes to suit adult learners.

2. The need to consider childcare when designing the programmes and this could mean delivering them on a part-time bases.

3. The need to include personal development for these students who may have left school early or may have been out of the education system for a long time.

4. The leadership necessary to implement the changes was also a strong theme emerging from the findings.

The results were discussed in more detail and some disparities between the two colleges were identified such as one of the colleges had mature students in their college prior to the introduction of this framework. This college found it more difficult to initially identify the changes while the other college used the framework to drive the initiatives in their college. The two colleges agreed that a lot more could be done to develop the interaction between industry and the colleges.

Chapter 5 made recommendations that:

1. The development of flexibility could be brought about through negotiation and fair process.

2. The colleges could survey mature students to make the course content more relevant.

3. In order to develop networks with local industry the colleges could invite employers to open days at the colleges.

In conclusion the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education is a framework to raise the level of access to education for adults to a level comparative with other OECD countries. This research found that the framework was successful in bringing about changes in the Further Education Sector and facilitating the changes that has already taken place.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Ireland's Celtic Tiger has created a whole new work environment where knowledge and new skills have become the currency for growth and development of our economy. Our current knowledge based economy demands highly educated and skilled individuals. So 'The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education' endeavours to capitalise on this demand by upskilling and promoting life long learning for all. The purpose of this research is to establish the implications involved in terms of change management, brought about as a result of the implementation of the initiatives set out in the 'Learning for life White Paper on Adult Education'.

Research will be conducted in two Colleges of Further Education in relation to the changes that were implemented in both. It is hoped that this study will provide an insight into the change management necessary to deliver education to an adult population and to afford access to education for all.

The recommendations set out in this 'Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education' provides a framework for the college to develop its links with both the third level institutions and the community for all students including adults who may be returning to learning. This will bring about major change implications in the colleges. This research hopes to establish what these changes are, how they will be managed and the impact they will have on everybody concerned.

Research Aims and Objectives

The research aims and objectives hope to discover what change management processes had to be put in place to implement the proposals set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education?

What changes were necessary to meet the needs of the mature students both academically and practically?

What staffing implications did these changes bring with them?

How will the change be implemented?

What leadership qualities are necessary to manage the new initiatives?

The demographics of students attending colleges of further education has changed dramatically especially in the over thirty age bracket. Going from 12.3% in 1996 to 20.6% in 2001 and this trend is expected to rise. '*The Further Education Sector serves more new mature students each year than the whole third level sector put together*' McIver Report (2003:4)

Although the number of leaving certificate students is decreasing the number of adults returning to education is more than compensating for this decrease. This change in student profile at colleges of Further Education must be creating a change in the content and delivery of the courses.

The research hopes to identify if the courses are closely linked to industry and if they equip graduates with skills and competencies that leads to a high percentage of them entering gainful employment. The colleges have many links with other third level institutions in both Ireland, U.K. and even into mainland Europe where many students go on to pursue Degree Programmes and other higher qualifications. The Research hopes to investigate the uptake of this link among the mature students.

The colleges of Further Education need to manage the changes involved in developing the adult education programmes. This will probably involve changes in staffing arrangements and various supports required for this new profile of students. Many of the adult students will be early school leavers or second chance in education. These students may require a different delivery method of programmes and personal development that students who are familiar with the current education system do not need.

So this research hopes to identify the implications in terms of change management likely to be as a consequence of the new initiatives in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education. The Research will be conducted within the Further Education Sector by comparing and contrasting the findings in two colleges of Further Education.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE WHITE PAPER

Historical Context

The evolution of Adult education in Ireland from the foundation of the State in 1922 until now could be divided into three broad stages. Phase one is from 1922 until the late 1960's. During this time under 'The Ministers and Secretaries Act 1924' the Department of Education was founded. 'The Vocational Education Act' passed in July 1930 resulted in the setting up of the VEC. The 1960's witnessed the expansion of education. 'The Investment in Education Report 1965' drew attention to the access barriers to second level education particularly for the poorer citizens of our society. As a result of this the process of long-term investment in education began.

> *'The introduction of free secondary education saw the numbers at*
>
> *secondary school rise from 104,000 in 1966 to 144,000 in 1969'.*
>
> Green Paper 1998:37.

Phase two is from 1969 to 1988. The Irish economy grew during the 1960s so there was a correlation made between the success in the economy and the investment in education. However the investment was not directed at Adult education. It was not until 1969 that the first body was set up to look at Adult education. The committee on Adult education (1969-1973) submitted a report on Adult education known as 'The Murphy Report in November 1973.

> *'The report expounded a student centred and integrated philosophy of*
>
> *education, outlined the need for close cooperation between Adult*

Education agencies, and made suggestions for an improved structure for

administering Adult Education'. (Green Paper 1998:39)

This Report was later followed by 'The Kenny Commission on Adult

Education "Life Long Learning" published in May 1984. This Report was

primarily on the requirements of Adult Education and the development of

structures to deal with the needs of the Adult Learner. By 1984 some aspects of

the Murphy Report were in place and the Department of Education had

established an Adult Education section.

The third phase of our education system included the introduction of

'The National Programme for second chance education in 1989. This gave Adult

Education a whole new dimension. Schemes such as VTOS were introduced to

provide a high quality second chance education for unemployed people over the

age of 21 years.

'This scheme has grown from 260 places in 1989 to over 5000 places in 1998'

(Green Paper 1998:41).

A decision was taken by the Department of Social Welfare in 1990 to

enable the long-term unemployed to attend approved education courses. Under

'The Universities Act 1997 Section 9(j) states that one of the objectives is to

"facilitate Life Long Learning through the provision of Adult and Community

Education" So the development of our education system has contributed to the

change management implications in our Further Education Sector today.

There are other major contributing factors found in the development of

the social partnership programmes. The first being the Programme for National

Recovery (PNR) 1987-1990, followed by the Programme for Economic and

Social Progress (PESP) 1990-1993, then by the Programme for Competitiveness

and Work (PCW) 1993-1996, the Partnership 2000 (P2K) (1996-2000), the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) (2000-2003) and the Programme for Sustaining Progress (2003-2005). The agreements from 1987 to 2000 concentrate on tackling unemployment through moderate wage increases. Since P2K the agreements have addressed many more aspects of our economy and education is included here.

According to Keenan in the Irish Independent (Dec 2000) social partnership '*is to set policies with moderate sectional interests and spread the benefits of economic growth more widely*'. The Programmes identified unemployment, poverty, lack of education and discrimination as some of the causes for the exclusion and polarisation in our society.

The PPF agreement highlights the plight of the marginalized in society. Many of these people were considered unemployable due to their lack of education and limited skills. At this time there was an increase in inward investment, this was encouraged through the low tax policies pursued by the Government. The low tax incentives and our open economy encouraged more multi national organisations to set up in Ireland. These organisations created a demand for a highly skilled and a well-educated workforce. The educational response to emerging social and economic needs is set out in the PPF agreement where it proposes to enhance staff development, implement curricular reform and promote strategies to address learning difficulties. (PPF Framework IV:109)

The Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) '*provides opportunities for those with inadequate educational levels or skills to access quality learning opportunities*' (PPF Framework IV:110). The BTEI is aimed at developing young people and adults and affording them a second chance in education,

training and development within the Further Education Sector. The initiative provides for the development of adult literacy and numeracy. It is expected that up to 46,000 people will benefit from this programme that will be developed in collaboration between National Adult Literacy and Return to Learning (RTL) programmes. These are some of the many programmes that will benefit those in the workplace. The social partnership agreements propose to create a country that has a level of participation in third level education that is comparable with the best in the OECD countries.

> *'Investment will be sustained and enhanced so that Ireland is well within the top quarter of OECD countries in terms of the participation of the population in post second level education and training, and in the quality of that education and training.'* (PPF Framework IV:111)

It is hoped to achieve this through the strategic development of policies and procedures set out for the Further Education sector. Adult friendly policies that will support mature students in third level education. It is expected that by 2005 15% of the intake to the third level colleges will comprise of students aged twenty-three years or over. (PPF Framework IV:112).

This increase in mature student intake will mean that the educational faculties will have to change their delivery of education programmes. This could involve providing part-time programmes that would facilitate people in the work place. It could also involve flexible options like distance learning and e-learning. Programmes may be timetabled for the morning. The adults may be attending their programme while their dependent children attend primary school.

In order to implement the strategies proposed through 'The Green Paper' and 'The Social Partnership Agreements' the Government has developed a

strategic framework for life long learning. This framework is called 'Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education'.

The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education

In July 2000 the Government published the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education. According to this paper this is the last area of education in Ireland that requires development and the Government acknowledges that it will require significant investments.

The Paper outlines the need for Adult Education in our society and it also sets out Government policies and priorities to develop this sector of education. So the aim of the paper is to create a framework that can be used to create a complimentary fit between education and our rapidly developing knowledge based economy.

The Paper defines Adult Education as *'systematic learning undertaken by adults who return to learning having concluded initial education or training'*. It would be true to say that this definition is quiet broad and includes a large percentage of our population. It recommends that adult education should be shaped by three core principles.

1. A systematic approach that will interface between all levels of education. In order to make these changes happen educational policies must be put in place to promote life long learning.

2. Equality of access means there must be proactive strategies in place to cater for an all-inclusive society.

3. Inter culturalism there is a need to develop policies and practices that will cater for our more diverse society. This diversity does not only mean

people from other countries. The education sector must also make room for minority groups, older people or people from disadvantaged areas.

The Paper looks at the emerging trends among participants in education. Some of the trends are

1. Leaving school early particularly among the young males.

2. The subject options taken at third level seems to be on a gender bases.

3. Poor educational standard among the older members of society.

4. Barriers to education for females entering education and the labour market due to a lack of child care facilities.

The White Paper outlines the objectives and policies to broaden education to include cultural, social and economic goals and not just personal development. It proposes clear strategies to develop the role of the community education providers. Policies will be developed to reduce barriers to access. The possibility of more work-based learning will be looked at.

One of the proposals in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education places an emphasis on offering free access to all the part-time mature students on the 'Back to Education Initiatives' (BTEI). At present this is not feasible to implement across the board.

The strategy to create adult friendly policies and develop core services such as guidance, counselling and childcare to support them are getting priority. Supports need to be put in place to include the marginalised and adults with low level of education. The Government programme proposes putting core programmes in place for adults including fee relief for those in need. The impact

of this will be monitored to establish the target groups likely to take up the initiative.

The Further Education sector focuses primarily on providing a second chance in education in areas like adult literacy, BTEI and VETOS. '*In the Further Education Sector the recommendations provide for the development of a comprehensive framework for second chance education for those with less than upper secondary education.*' The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education (2000:15)

Community Education groups are mainly women involved in self-directed learning. The government proposes to appoint facilitators working with the National Adult Learning Council to support these groups.

Work Place Education aims to address the skills shortage in the work place. It is hoped through life long learning to develop a partnership between the education sector and the training requirements in industry. The National Qualification Authority of Ireland will work with the National Adult Learning Council to provide support and policies to promote education and training in the work place. It proposes to provide funding and put strategic plans in place to make third level education more Adult friendly.

The Government is aware that there is a need to put a good foundation in place in order to make Adult Education and life long learning a success. The Government is setting up thirty-three Adult Education Boards around the country. These Boards will be statutory sub committees of the Vocational Education Committee (VEC). The local boards will play a key part in ensuring there is area-based input into the overall strategic policies.

According to the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education (2000) the provision of Adult Education is the last area of mass education to be developed in Ireland. This development is not purely for economic reasons because the learning will enrich and develop the self-esteem of individuals, families and the greater community. This development of Adult Education will demand a cultural change, flexibility and a responsiveness to change in our educational institutions. This research will concentrate on the change management implications in the Further Education Sector.

> *'The Programme of change and development set out in the White Paper will be implemented on a phase basis in light of the resources made available in the context of the National Development Plan and the Annual Estimates for Public Service.'* (The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education 2000:200)

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

'As we approach the 21st century the pace and scale of change demanded

of organisations and those who work in them are enormous, Global

competition and the advent of the information age, where knowledge is

the key resource, have thrown the world of work into disarray'. Jones et

al (1996:10)

As a result of the framework set out in the Learning for Life White Paper

on Adult Education changes will occur in the Further Education Sector . This

research hopes to identify some of the changes in relation to Adult learners.

French and Bell (1990:216) describes this type of change as a planned systematic

process where practices are introduced into an ongoing organisation. The

research will focus on organisational effectiveness and on improving goals and

objectives.

Implementing Change

Change is both strategic and operational. It can also have a psychological

affect on the way people in the organisation react to change. There is a grouping

together of people in any organisation and people do not want this to be

disturbed. Kurt Lewin (1951a:195) describes this dislike or resistance to change

in his 'Force-Field Theory'. Lewin claims that this grouping behaviour is as a

result of reaching equilibrium between two sets of forces, one driving and one

restraining. The change occurs when the driving force wins. According to Lewin

(1951b:224) and Lewin (1951c:308) describes the managing of change as unfreeze- change behaviour, culture, process and refreeze. Now this unfreezing will involve destabilising this equilibrium in the force field. So the change process must consider the opportunities and threats the change will present for the organisation. This research will explore the change process involved in the development of Adult Education as a result of the framework set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education.

> *'Managing change is being skilled at creating, acquiring and transforming knowledge thereby modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights'* Garvin (1993).

As outlined by Holmes and Rahe (1967) *'Change whither positive or negative, planned or unplanned requires individuals to readjust to their environment and therefore this constitutes a stressor'*

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs could be applied to explain some reasons for denial of change. People find their psychological safety in the organisation and change will threaten this. *'Some people may resist change because they believe it will affect their self-interest and it could diminish their power or influence'* Stapley (1996). Daft (2000), Griffin (1993) and Weihrich and Koontz (1993) would all concur with this fear of personal loss as a reason for resistance to change. According to Bandura (1995) self-esteem is the largest determinant of behaviour and it is more central or pervasive in behaviour than people's beliefs about themselves.

Even Machiavelli pointed to the difficulty of introducing a new system in 'The Prince'

'The founder makes enemies of all those who are doing well under the old system, and has only lukewarm support from those who hope to do well under the new one. For men do not truly believe in new things until they have practical experience of them'.

Beckhard (1969:25) is of the opinion that change should mean setting goals that define where the organisation should be at the end of the process. Then the transition should be planned in a way that will fit with the achievements of these future goals. There is also a step-by-step approach advocated by Kotter (1996:329). Implementing this type of change will transform the organisation in the long term. But in order to reach this long-term goal it is important to have short-term milestones that can be measured along the way. Kotter refers to these as short-term wins that can be used as motivational factors or targets and goals on the road to the overall achievement. Fullan (2001:33) claims that there are five elements involved in the process of implementing change. They are

1. A moral purpose that acts with the intention of making a positive difference to all the stakeholders and to the greater society.

2. It is essential for those responsible for implementing and driving the change to understand the change process.

3. Building relationships are key to the successful implementation of change.

4. The sharing of knowledge depends on the previous three elements and the sharing only occurs in favourable conditions.

5. Change takes place on the edge of chaos but it is at this point that most creativity occurs. So there will be a certain amount of

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ambiguity but once there is enough knowledge of the change it is imperative to look for coherence. Coherence makes the change comprehendible and useable.

Michael Beer and Nitin Nohria (2000:135) in their paper 'Cracking the code of Change' examined how two theories worked in two companies producing paper products. Theory O concentrated on change strategies to build the corporate culture of the company. Theory E in the other company took a different approach focusing on economic incentives and restructuring and planning out how the change would affect the functional side. The findings showed that Theory E had all the strategic change right. Theory O had reinforced the operational goals and objectives for change. But Beer and Nohria point out that it takes a combination of both Theories for change to be successful.

According to Canadian Educational change theorist Michael Fullan (1991:4) large scale Government initiated reforms have proven spectacularly unsuccessful because they ignore 'how people actually experience change as distinct from how it might have been intended.

Change and our knowledge based economy

The traditional view of the education system in Ireland is that one goes directly into the third level system through the CAO route. Many of the issues raised regarding this system are found in the 'Commission on the Points' (1998). One of the main concerns highlighted by this document was how the system primarily focused on assessing people for third level places. This system militated against many of our adult population and people who were disadvantaged or had learning difficulties.

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'The White Paper has proposed a multi-faceted range of initiatives in second chance and further education; in education, in the community and in the workplace aimed at addressing these disparities'. (The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education:138)

Twenty years ago Drucker (1988: 12) maintained that by 2008 organisations would be almost wholly information based. We see this happening today with the swing in the Irish economy to a more knowledge-based workforce. Drucker now predicts the demise of middle management and organisations being almost exclusively staffed with executives and specialists. This puts more emphasis on further education and creates an even greater need for people to return to education.

'The Institute for Employment Research' (2000) carried out research in the U.K. The results predict that there will be an increase in managerial and professional occupations with a decrease in skilled, semi-skilled and clerical tasks between 1998 and 2009. Ireland appears to be following along similar lines with many of the labour intensive tasks moving out of the country. So the Education System must change and be ready to meet the new requirements of business and the changing culture of work.

The Government initiative set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education is a framework to meet the need for more flexible training and education where everyone has access to learning. One reason for this is due to the skills shortage for new entrants to the workforce. Take the nursing profession for example there is not enough trained staff to meet the demands of our hospitals. Of course a big change has taken place here the training has moved from the hospital into the university. Nurses are now pursuing a degree

programme as part of their academic training to become registered nurses. The Further Education Sector of education is contributing to this development as was evident from the O'Connell article in the Irish Times on April 19th 2005. Chris Mulrooney and Michael Pearn (1996) in their article 'The Learning Organisation beyond concepts to practice' hold a view that

> *'Learning is something you do at school; adults grow out of it. But perceptions are changing thanks to a major insight – the capacity to learn is an asset with a value that may turn out to be priceless for both the individual and the organisation in which they work'*

There is pressure on developing those already in the workforce. Organisations fund or partly fund people to develop skills relevant to their work. This demand for developing a well-educated workforce looks as if it will become even greater as Ireland focuses more on a knowledge-based economy.

> *'Both the National Employment Action Plan (2000) and the National Development Plan (1999) in recognising this have now elevated life long learning to a pivotal role in labour market policy.* (The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education (2000:17)

Leadership and change

This approach to change was reflected in the research carried out by Mauborgne and Kim (2003) who found change to be successfully implemented it was necessary to win the hearts and minds of the critical mass of the people involved. This is achieved through natural leaders irrespective of their position who influence people's beliefs. They also found that that a transparent, ethical and fair process made the management and implementation of change a success.

All the literature tells us that it takes leaders to create change and make it happen. Clarke (1994:13) holds that the past decade has brought with it a time of unprecedented change. Dawson (1994:13) concurs with this view and holds that managers must become leaders and leaders become managers of change. Margerison (1979) holds that there is no such thing as an effective leader in all situations. So it is the matching of the styles of leadership to the situation and finding the leadership skills that will best make the change happen that appears to work most effectively.

Mintzberg (1973) attributes many roles to leaders for example: public speaker, figurehead, group leader, allocating resources, negotiator and conciliator to name a few. Burns (1978) holds the view that there are two main leadership styles to manage change transformational and transactional. One of the main paradoxes of a transformational leader can be associated with the phrase 'no pain-no gain'. These leaders drive change to create a dynamic new environment but they must also deal with the issues caused by the change. It is true to say people in general do not like change. The leader must be able to empower and motivate the people to help make this new dynamic environment.

There is a lot more literature available on the topic of change, change management and on education. This literature review has focused on information that pertains to theorists and literature necessary to develop this research. The implications in terms of change management likely as a result of the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education. The research aims and objectives hope to discover what change management processes had to be put in place to implement the proposals set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education?

The changes required to meet the needs of the mature students both academically

and practically. The staffing implications the changes caused.

The way change were implemented and the leadership qualities necessary to

manage the new initiatives.

CHAPTER 4

Research Methodology

Introduction

'Research is an attempt to increase available knowledge by discovering

new facts or relationships through a systematic enquiry' Macleod et al

(1989:8).

Methodology according to Robson (2004:641) is the theoretical, political and

philosophical background to the research and the implications for its practice and

for the use of particular research methods.

There are many research methods available to gather data. These are

coherent processes used to gather data for the purpose of proving the outcomes

of the research. *'The research process takes in a number of distinct steps, leading*

from the time when the investigation is begun to the time its findings are

published or made available in written form' Giddens (2001:641)

The two different approaches that compliment each other when pulling the

completed research together are:

1. The qualitative approach can be used when collecting descriptive data

    about people's opinions, values, beliefs and so on.

2. The quantitative approach is more objective amassing statistical data of

    observable phenomena. The aim is to discover the facts and causal

    relationships and the method will depend on the subject matter being

    researched.

Ethnography is the study of people or the behaviour of groups of people

over a period of time. It is where a participant observer closely examines the

group over a period of time. The ethnographic researcher must explain the reason

why the observation is being carried out and gain the confidence and commitment of those being observed. *'Ethnography is often referred to as a type of qualitative research because it is more concerned with subjective understandings than numerical data'* Giddens (2001:647). The biggest danger of this type of research is that the observer could go native and become too involved in the group to be able to accurately assess what is happening in the group being observed.

Surveys used in research can target a larger population and be more quantitative in nature. The survey can often rely on the questionnaire as the main tool for gathering the statistical data. There are many ways to reach the target population. The survey can be carried out in person. It can also be sent out by e-mail or through the post. The design of the questionnaire should consider the characteristics of the respondents for example will they see the reason the researcher has for asking the particular questions. In many cases when research is being carried out it impossible to involve everyone concerned in the research. In this situation the researchers use a sample population. They must ensure the sample is big enough to be representative of group as a whole. The use of random sampling should ensure that any member of the group has the same probability of being chosen to be part of the sample group.

For the purpose of this research that was conducted over a three-month period between March and May 2005, a qualitative approach in the form of structured interviews has been used to gather the data. The structured interview had predetermined questions set out in a particular order. Powney and Watts (1987:271) are of the opinion that this type of interview allows the interviewer to remain in control of the research. The face-to-face interview allows the

researcher or interviewer the possibility of following up a line of enquiry. This could mean probing deeper where the response is interesting or unexpected. It also allows for elaboration when the response is short or too vague.

The way the questions are composed for the structured interviews are paramount to achieving successful outcomes. '*The substitution of simple words for difficult ones often turns simple sentences into difficult ones*' Dillman (1978:236). This can be evident where a difficult sentence rather than a simply structured sentence is used to ask the same question. According to Petty, Renier, and Cacioppo (1978) the forced-choice wording tends to elicit a better response than agree and disagree wording. The 'don't know' reply can create problems for an interviewer. At times this reply could just mean the respondent has no knowledge of the topic. On the other hand the respondent could be reluctant to discuss the issue.

Each question in the interview has been structured to examine a particular aspect in a change management situation. Payne (1951:237) claimed that if the question contained an implied alternative it is better to state it explicitly making it vivid and salient. The ability of the interviewer to gather valid data will depend on the question structure and interviewing behaviour. 'Interviewing is part art and part science' this is a view held by Dillman (1978:253), Connell, Miller and Oksenberg (1978:253) and Bradburn and Sudman (1979:253).

The purpose was to draw out the significant changes in human interactions brought about as a result of the strategic shift in adult education within the Further Education Sector as a result of implementing the framework set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education. It is hoped that the questions in this research have been formulated in a way that will draw out

the relevant information and that the information gathered will be accurate and as free from bias as is reasonably possible.

Locations of Research

The two Colleges of Further Education were contacted by letter, seeking permission to conduct the research on the change management implications as a result of the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education. (see Appendix A) The choice of two colleges allowed for comparisons to be made. The two colleges are actively providing education through the Vocational Education System and in line with the requirements of the Department of Education. The education is provided through excellent teaching and guidance within a caring and supportive learning environment. Both of the colleges are situated within working class areas of the city and within the boundaries of the City of Dublin VEC.

According to statistics from the 2002 Census the records indicate that approximately 55% of the population in the communities around these colleges have not completed upper second level education. A break down of the results from the 2002 Census for the communities around these colleges are as follows:

Education ceased before the age of 15 years	25%
Education ceased at the age of 15 years	15%
Education ceased at the age of 16 years	15%
Education ceased at the age of 18 years	10%
Education ceased at the ages of 19-20 years	5%
Education ceased at the age of 21 years plus	10%
Education ceased at an age not stated	20%

The two colleges chosen for this research have experienced great change. About fifteen years ago College A moved from providing education to students at the Junior and Leaving Certificate cycle of second level education. The college changed to providing education within the Further Education Sector catering for students who have completed their upper second level education and mature students returning to learning. College B made the same change about five years after College A.

So now the whole structure of these two organisations have changed. Structure of an organisation according to Rosenfeld (1990:70)

> *'is the established patterns of relationships between the component parts of an organisation outlining both communications, control and authority patterns. Structure distinguishes the parts of an organisation and delineates the relationship between them'.*

Bartol and Martin (1994:70) include elements designed by management in their definition of structure. They claim it is the formal pattern of interactions and coordination designed by management to *'link tasks of individuals and groups in achieving organisational goals'.*

Data Collection

Permission was granted to carry out the research at the two colleges. Structured interviews were used to gather data for this research. It was considered a useful tool for researching futuristic strategic changes that may have impacted the colleges as a result of the framework set out in the Learning for Life White paper on Adult Education.

The interview questions were formulated and a trial run or pilot study was conducted with some colleagues. The idea was to test the questions for the following reasons before conducting the interviews.

A. To test the content of the interview question as a tool to elicit valuable data for the purpose of the research being carried out.

B. To establish if the questions will target the main aims and objectives set out in the research being carried out.

C. To ensure the questions are structured in a way that will extract the information they are expected to extract.

D. To make sure the questions are formulated in a way that will give clear reasons as to how the change was managed.

The result of this pilot study suggested that because the research was examining the change management implications as a result of the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education it would be reasonable to assume that people do not like change. A question on this should be included in the interview process. As pointed out by Stapley (1996) in the literature review '*Some people may resist change because they believe it will affect their self-interest and it could diminish their power or influence*'. Again from the pilot study it was recommended that resistance to change should be part of the data to be examined. As a result of this pilot study questions nine and ten were added to the interview questions.

Then a letter together with the interview questions were sent to all the interviewees expressing in broad terms issues the researcher would like to address. The letter also stated that the interviewees had an option to discuss issues they would like to address in relation to the change management

implications they experienced as a result of the initiatives set out in the Learning

for Life White Paper on Adult Education. (see Appendix B) The following are

the questions used in both colleges to conduct the interviews.

Interview Questions

1. How has the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education impacted on the functioning of the college?

2. Has access to the college changed as a result of the introduction of this Paper? If so in what way have these changes taken place?

3. Has the content of the courses changed or have new courses come on line in direct response to the implementation of the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education? If so did this bring with it staffing implications?

4. Are you conscious of any change in teachers' attitudes towards students in relation to the delivery of Life Long Learning?

5. Over the past five years since the introduction of the Learning for Life White Paper are you aware of many mature students from this college going on to further education at other third level institutions?

6. Are you aware of any changes in the relationship between the college and local industry over the past five years?

7. To what extent do you think local industry know about the State support available to them through the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education?

8. What type of leadership was required to implement the changes at the college?

9. Were there issues encountered during the process of implementing the changes in relation to developing adult education programmes at the college?

10. What were the main sources of resistance to implementing the change process? How did you overcome the resistance?

From the questions it is hoped to be able to clearly see how the change process was implemented, championed and driven to bring the colleges to where they are today. As pointed out by Garvin (1993) in the literature review *'Managing change is being skilled at creating, acquiring and transforming knowledge thereby modifying its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insights'*

Each interview lasted approximately one hour and the information was recorded on tape to eliminate note taking during the interviews and increase the content value of the data. The researcher was there to clarify and correct any misunderstandings on the part of the respondent in relation to any of the questions. This was a way of ensuring the quality and validity of the data being gathered. If the answered appeared to be too short or too vague the interviewer tried to elicit more information from the respondents by probing. This involved asking questions like 'have you anything more to say or is that all?' According to Robson (2004:276) *'A probe is a devise to get interviewees to expand on a response when you intuit that they have more to give.'*

There was a very good rappore between the interviewer and all the respondents so this added greatly to the collection of the data.

The selection of the participants in the research was on a random sample of willing participants at College A. At college B some of the contacts were

made through colleagues and friends. Thee interviewees included management and members of the teaching staff from both colleges. At College A 80% of those contacted took part in the interview. At college B it was lower with 60% of the contacts taking part in the interview. Two of the contacts refused to take part claiming they were not familiar with the White Paper. The reason given by the others were time constraints.

Responses to the Interviews

All the interviews from both colleges were recorded onto a tape. The data was transcribed straight from the tapes. Then the transcribed text was divided up into meaningful units that were referring to the same topic. Similar statements from the respondents were grouped together. Each question was treated separately in this manner. This is consistent with the analysis of qualitative data as described by Miles and Huberman (1994).

In response to question 1 and the impact the Learning for Life White Paper had on the functioning of both colleges. The response to this question has been significantly different from the two colleges researched.

College A had gone through a major change about ten years prior to the introduction of the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education. This college were of the opinion that their major change occurred back then and the introduction of this paper had little or no impact on the functioning of their college. One of the areas where it had some impact was in the lifting of restrictions for students on the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI). Prior to the introduction of the framework set out in this paper only the students on

Unemployment Benefit and Unemployment Assistance were eligible for this scheme as a means of returning to education.

College B on the other hand saw the Learning for Life White Paper as having a major impact on the functioning of their college. *'The dispersed VTOS and the lifting of the restrictions on those eligible for BTEI schemes increased the number of students entering the college'.* (response from College B)

Question 2 on changes in access to the colleges. College A in general saw no change in access to their college. They see their main cohort of students as those who have just completed the upper second level of education. For the past ten years the college has run a Return to Learning course (RTL). This is made up of twelve to fifteen mature adult students and it has not grown over the years. One of the respondents was very aware of the need in this college to develop life long learning in response to Ireland's knowledge based economy. This respondent has submitted a paper to the academic council to spend the next two years looking at this initiative for the college.

College B have found the initiatives set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education has opened up access to their college. In the past year the college had an increase of 175 students as a direct result of BTEI and VTOS. They are now able to offer more FETAC courses at foundation, level 1 level 2 and level 3 on a part time bases that really facilitates adult learners.

The results of Question 3 in relation to the changes to course content were as follows:

College A the courses at this college that came on line in direct response to the White Paper were night classes. These classes are held two nights per week and the courses offered varies according to the demand for them. From the interviews

it became clear that some of the interviewees were of the opinion that the changes at this college happened when they moved from teaching the second level cycle of education back in 1993. At this time the college concentrated on developing Further Education courses and inside five years the college had 1500 students. They were mainly students striving to go on to third level education but they had insufficient points to go directly there. Some of the interviewees spoke about the developments in the two new degree courses at the college and how many boundaries had to be pushed back to make this happen. The interviewees responding to the current changes were of the opinion that the White Paper could be a good framework to develop more courses at the college.

College B have experienced great growth in the FETAC Syllabus at all levels directly as a result of the frameworks set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education. The teachers approach at this college has positively changed towards the needs of adult learners on their courses.

Question 4 dealt with teachers' attitudes in relation to life long learning. At college A all the teachers have a positive attitude to mature students. The college itself has an open door policy to consider mature applicants onto any course at the college. At college B the teachers are embracing the change. They are all very enthusiastic about the FETAC work and all that is involved in working with adult students.

Question 5 was in relation to mature students moving onto pursue courses at other third level institutions.

College A most of the interviewees spoke about a mature male student who was in the college about five years ago. He progressed onto Trinity College where he was accredited with a very high Academic Award. Many of the RTL and VTOS

students progress to other courses both inside and outside the college. Many Business and Pre Nursing students progress to other third level institutions both here and in the U.K. This was evident from 'Stepping stones on the way to success' an article in the Irish Times on April 19th 2005 where a student from the college is now on a BSc Degree course in nursing at U.C.D. The respondents were of the opinion that the White Paper enhanced the links system for progression from the college to other colleges of third level Education. College B have five to ten Adult students who progress to Higher Education each year. All the respondents are satisfied to say that this is directly as a result of the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education.

Question 6 looked at changes in the relationship between the colleges and industry over the past five years since the introduction of the White Paper. At College A three of the interviewees did not see any great change in the relationship between the college and local industry. Four of the interviewees were of the opinion that the relationship was much stronger four to five years ago. There was a strong network of about one hundred business from the greater local area where these employers were active participants in course content. They came to the college twice each year in order to build the connections. In recent years this has not been encouraged and as pointed out by one of the interviewees there has been a drop in unemployment in the area and this could be a contributing factor. There are a number of teachers again actively trying to put new courses in place that will meet needs in the local industry. The link between College B and local industry did not appear to be as strong. They seem to think the local industry will have a greater appreciation of the new FETAC courses that are being run in the college.

In relation to Question 7 and how much industry know about the Learning for Life White Paper. Both Colleges A and B were of the same opinion that local industry knew very little about this framework. Both colleges claimed that their evidence for this opinion was based on the behaviour of local industry. It was generally felt that most small private industries are fairly frantic industries. By this they meant that they were just keeping their heads above water. Both colleges saw a need for these industries to be made aware of what is available to them. But as was stated during the interviews '*it is like most Government Publications you get to know about it by default rather than through active publicity*' One of the proposals from College A was that a degree student could be allowed to do a project for a local firm over the course of one year. This respondent felt that small firms by enlarge just focus on day-to-day issues rather than looking at projects for their future. They view education in the same way '*an employee on a course is not working*'.

Question 8 focuses on the types of leadership necessary to implement change.

At College A small number of the interviewees were of the opinion that no major change had taken place at this college since it moved away from delivering the second level cycle of education about fifteen years ago. The change at this time happened very smoothly because the then leader was very good at delegation. Other respondents were of the opinion that innovative leaders were necessary and that there is a great need in the college to change its culture to one that is more accepting of different kinds of courses and different methods of delivery. Visionary leadership was also mentioned to drive the strategies of the college. The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education was viewed as a useful

framework to move the college from what was described as a 'Safety Driven Strategy' to becoming a college willing to take more risks. Many of the interviewees were of the opinion that the college has a culture around the fear of failure rather than putting this behind them and taking on new initiatives in the way some of their leaders want to go.

College B were in agreement that they used flexible, innovative leaders to drive their move from a college that delivered second level education to becoming a college of Further Education as it is today. The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education played an active part in making this change happen. The leadership used very transparent policies and procedures to take their staff with them. This would concur with the concept put forward by Kim and Mauborgne (2003) who believe that the fair process of change is underpinned by what they call the three E's.

> 'Encouragement for gathering collective wisdom.
>
> Engagement everyone involved and understanding why the decision was made
>
> Explanation allows for understanding of the underlying thinking on how the decisions were made'.

Question 9 looks at issues encountered during the process of implementing change.

At college A one of the respondents was of the opinion that the implementation of change at college A occurred fifteen years ago. At that time the then Principal went to Europe to raise the funds to implement the changes. The result of this has left the college at the forefront of Further Education initiatives. Other interviewees were of the opinion that there were a lot of issues in implementing

change at the college. One of the strong ones alluded to was the lack of flexibility in the school year as agreed between the employers and the union. (Teachers work 9-4 over a 33-week year). According to some of the interviewees this does not allow for the most efficient use of resources. This does not align well with the flexible hours necessary to cater for Adult learning as proposed in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult education.

College B like College A was originally a college that taught the Second Level cycle of education. A lot of change processes had to be implemented to facilitate the Adult learner. Some of the processes and procedures looked at ways of tailoring courses to suit their Adult students. This included facilitating childcare or morning timetabling.

Many of the courses involved personal development to cater for the early school leavers or those returning to education after many years out of the system. Again College B encountered problems with the rigid structure of the teaching hours.

Question 10 explores sources of resistance to implementing the change process.

Apart from one interviewee at College A in general the interviewees saw no resistance to any change at the college. The response to this question was quiet similar from both College A and College B. The core staff from the earlier system at both colleges found it hardest to cope with the change. They saw things one way and found it difficult to see why they should change. As already mentioned in the literature review even Machiavelli pointed to the difficulty of introducing a new system. The new and the part-time teachers are less resistant to the changes. The main reason given during the interviews for this was thought to have been the fact that they came to the colleges to teach adults. Lack of finance

was also mentioned at College A as a resistance to change. At the time this college moved into Further Education the number of students grew rapidly in the first five years and this was still pre White Paper era. Work practices changed to team meetings, learner feedback, cross modulation and assessment planning as a team. Some of these practices were seen as a great challenge and they contributed to the resistance to change. It took the implementation of fair and clear well-explained process to overcome the resistance.

CHAPTER 5

Analysis of Themes and Discussion on Findings

Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis is to summarise the complete observations in a way that will provide answers to the questions set out at the beginning of this research. The research set out to explore the change management that had to be put in place to implement life long learning. The interpretations will be linked back to other information and in particular the framework set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education. All the processes in the research so far have been to gather the data and get it into a meaningful format to analyse it.

One of the questions asked at the start of this research was about the changes necessary to meet the needs of mature students. On initial examination College A would appear to be responding with a resounding 'no change'. The point made here was that the RTL and VTOS programmes were in the college prior to this White Paper. However one of the respondents was not totally negative and alluded to the fact that this Paper lifted restrictions on social welfare recipients applying for BTEI and VTOS Schemes. The easing of these restrictions opened doors for a new profile of adult learners. The restrictions lifted as a result of this framework are listed in Appendix C

College B attributed the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education as the catalyst to drive change at that college. The respondents at College B were very positive about the impact the White Paper had on their college. A respondent from this college said that *'The White Paper has made*

significant changes, the dispersed VTOS has added 60 students, BTEA 15

students and BTEI 100 students to the college this year alone'. The content of

their courses has changed and the management and teachers are very enthusiastic

about meeting the needs of their Adult students.

One respondent from College A was of the opinion that Colleges of

Further Education tend to be reactive and by this the respondent was saying that

in general they follow trends rather than create them and it is only now that

College A is starting to create more new trends through the development of new

degree courses at the college. A respondent during the interview quotes *'I think if*

you ask a number of teachers here about the White Paper they will say 'what

White Paper?'

Stapley (1996:17) would hold the view that change is inevitable at some

time but it is like an excursion into the unknown. *'Uncertainty refers to the lack*

of information. If people do not understand the changes they can worry about the

unknown demands that lie ahead of them or even deny what is causing them to

change.

The BTEI is one of the strong pillars of the Governments comprehensive

strategies for second chance and further education as outlines in the White Paper.

One of the major influences alluded to for participation on the BTEI was the

developments made in the financial incentives for the participants. (4.5.1 The

Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education 2000:93).

From this research it is true to say that the two colleges were in

agreement that these financial incentives have increased the diversity of Adult

learners coming to the colleges. College A did not see the number of students

increase to any great extent but did agree that the profile of the adult students has

changed. *'Adult students make up about 10% of the student population'*. This is a quote from a respondent at college A.

College B were very positive about the new courses available to them in order to attract adults and develop life long learning at the college.

The major changes identified at the colleges in order to cater for mature students were as follows:

1. The need for more flexible teaching hours.

2. The need to change the delivery methods of programmes.

3. The need to provide more support in the way of guidance, counselling and personal development.

One of the respondents at college A envisaged the change to more flexible hours as a big problem because the current system is that teachers' work is 9am-4pm over a 33- week year. This arrangement has already been agreed between management the union and the teachers. To quote the respondent *'I see this as a very inefficient use of teaching hours'*. In relation to course content some of the respondents were of the opinion that *'between the VEC and the Department of Education there is not enough focus on Adult Education'* and this is also contributing to the problem creating changes in the course content. Some of teachers who taught in the colleges prior to it changing to the Further Education Sector one of the interviews believed that they may have found it more difficult delivering education to mature students. To quote the response *'This cohort core found it harder to change'*

Another question posed at the start of this research was in relation to Leadership. From the findings of the interviews on the type of leadership to champion change apart from some respondents who did not recognising any

change most of the main theorists of change management would be delighted with the responses here visionary leaders, great at delegation, recognising the need to change the culture, flexible and innovative leaders where the themes coming back. To quote one of the respondents *'the implementation of change at the college required innovative leadership and a change of culture to accept different kinds of courses with different methods of delivery'*. According to Armstrong (1999:171) the best way to change culture is to identify what needs to be done and prioritise the order it must be stepped through. Then identify any levers for change and use them to bring about the cultural change. Adair (1973:155) is of the view that a good leader must be able to satisfy the individual needs, the group maintenance needs and the task needs. These are all separate needs but the leader must be able to harmonise them in a way that will create a successful change.

In relation to mature students moving on to other third level institutions three of the respondents at College A spoke about a mature male student who attended the RTL course five years ago and progressed onto Trinity College were he was accredited with a very high academic award. Many of the respondents agreed that the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education contributed to building the links or networks between their college and other colleges of third Level Education here in Ireland, in the U.K and now moving into the European Mainland. College B have 5-10 adult students progressing to further education each year.

The relationship between the colleges and local industry one of the respondents at College A states that *'five years ago the college had a very strong relationship between industry and in particular with the business school'*. This

respondent claims that this network has not continued. One possible reason was thought to be the drop in unemployment in the area. Apart from students on work experience there was no evidence of a strong relationship between the colleges and industry at present.

These are the analysis of the main themes set out in the research aims and objectives at the start of this investigate. Now the research will go on to discuss the findings in more detail.

Discussion on the Findings

According to the findings at the two colleges in this research the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education was a response to change rather than a force that brought about change. The White Paper was perceived as being more supportive of the change as opposed to being the driver of the change. The framework set out here allowed for the lifting of restrictions in relation to Social Welfare Recipients access to BTEI and VTOS initiatives. The research showed how this opened up access to courses at both College A and College B. However College B seemed to recognise this to a greater extent. In the course of the research College A acknowledged the fact that restrictions in relation to those on Social Welfare had changed the profile of Adult students at the college. In general the respondents at College A did not see this as a change of any significant proportion. There was a divergence in the data here between the two colleges. (Appendix C. outlines the list of Social Welfare and Health Board benefits covered by BTEI.)

The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education facilitates the incorporation of new practices into the current education system. '*The Lifelong dimension of Adult and community education refers to its place within a*

continuum of education from cradle to grave. (Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education (July 2000:32)

The White Paper highlights the need to structure educational strategies that will embrace life long learning. It highlights the fact that the educational system has challenges in this area that require attention in order to make these changes happen.

This concurred with the research findings from both colleges. The rigid structure of the current academic year was seen as a factor preventing the implementing changes in line with that set out in the White Paper. Another factor was the current teaching hours already agreed between teachers, union and management. At the moment teachers work nine to four over a thirty-three week year. *'The short college day limits the scope for free, study-time for students, and also for computer access outside class hours'* McIver Report (2003:138). This was viewed as a major issue that will take a lot of negotiation before implementing a more flexible structure to facilitate the Adult learners within the Further Education sector.

The McIver Report supports this idea of flexibility set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education and with the view held by the respondents in this research. *'Colleges teaching capacity and timetabling systems should be capable of delivering all year round from morning to evening and into Saturday, flexibility responding in ways that use teaching hours efficiently while meeting client or learner needs'.* McIver Report (2003:31)

'The overall target is to increase the opportunity for participation in Life Long Learning through a significant expansion of part-time options so that by the end of 2006 about 52,000 early school leavers and adults will be

participating annually, in Further Education compared with the figure of

32,000 participants in 2000'.

(4.5.3. Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education 2000:94).

The finding on the need for flexibility is in accordance with the

framework set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education. It

was evident that the move to flexibility is very significant and a hard change for

teachers to accept. If we are to look at the description of school given by the

theorist on cultural change Charles Handy in 'the elephant and the flea'

(2002:32) school taught him to '*endeavour to keep the rules and pass their tests*

until death or retirement overtook him'. Now it would be hard to envisage

colleges continuing along these rigid lines and at the same time developing

students and in particular adult students for Ireland's developing knowledge-

based economy that is very flexible and ever changing. Again change as pointed

out by French and Bell (1990:123) using the analogy of the iceberg '*traditionally*

the hidden part of the domain is not examined at all or is only partially

examined'. But this informal organisation exists and it can become very

powerful when change is applied to it.

Another point made was how the framework set out in the Learning for

Life White Paper on Adult Education could have been a stronger influence in

driving change within the Further Education Sector. The Research found that this

could have happened if the Government had placed more emphasis on promoting

and marketing the initiatives set out in this paper. One of the respondents said '*its*

like most Government publications it is a nice piece of work but very few know

about it'.

Another respondent spoke about how the National Learning Council set up as a result of this paper and how they only met once since the implementation of the framework in July 2000. According to the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education this Council were to meet regularly. Their aim was to develop programmes that would coordinate policies and procedures with input from council members nation wide.

From the research it was clear that there was an open door policy for mature students at the two colleges. It was clear from the research that both colleges have adult learners progressing on to other institutes of third level education to continue along their path of life long learning. The research indicated a good rappore between the colleges and the local communities. This was not as good between the colleges and industry in the greater local area.

According to the McIver Report (2003:4) the demographics of students attending colleges of Further Education has increased in terms of the over thirty age group. From this research College B would strongly agree. This was not the view held at College A one of the respondents claimed that College A catered primarily for students coming in straight after completing their Leaving Certificate at the end of upper second level education. The number of Adult students in the college has decreases slightly in recent years there were no figures given to show by how much the figures had decrease. As there were only two colleges partaking in this research it would not be possible to verify the statement made in the McIver Report but it is true to say that there are mature adult students at both colleges.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS,LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Recommendations

1. The implementation of more flexibility in relation to teaching hours and changes in delivery methods will require negotiation between teachers, union and management. But the key to success lies in open transparent policies and procedures to keep a team working together. As pointed out by Kim and Mauborgne (2003:128) '*Fair process profoundly influences attitudes and behaviours. It builds trust and unlocks ideas*'.

2. A way of making the course content more relevant to the adult learner. The colleges could possibly look at conducting a survey on the needs of potential adult students in the community.

3. In order to build networks between the colleges and local industries. They could visit or make contact with employers and identify skills gaps. Some courses could be tailored to develop these skills. This could help to alleviate some of the franticness experienced by the small businesses in the area as outlined by respondents in this research.

4. The majority of the respondents were of the perception from the behaviour of businesses they are not aware of the framework set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education. A possible way of increasing this awareness could be if the colleges were to invite employers to open days at their college. This could have a two fold effect:

(i)   It could be a way of increasing awareness of initiatives like those set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education

(ii)   It could help to enlighten employers as to how their business can be improved as a result of sending their employees on courses to develop their skills and education.

Limitations

Some of the limitations in conducting this research were as follows:

1.   One of the biggest was time constraint to carry out this research that was conducted over three months. It was only possible to access two colleges within this period of time.

2.   The scope of the research was limited to the Further Education Sector the framework set out in the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education covers a wider scope of education.

Conclusion

Looking at the challenges facing our society as we move into the new millennium and the evolution of a more knowledge-based economy. It is vital that the development of education focuses on programmes to develop adult learners and ensure that life long learning becomes a reality. The framework set out in the Learning for Life White Paper points to the fact that the education level of adults and their access to further education was poor in Ireland compared to other OECD countries.

> *'The programmes of change and development set out in the White Paper will be implemented on a phase basis in the light of the resources made available in the context of the National Development Plan and the Annual Estimates for Public Service provisions'.*

Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education (2000:200)

This research explored the change management implications likely as a result of opening up access to adult education in line with the framework set out in the White Paper. The research focused on the Further Education sector by conducting structured interviews at two colleges of Further Education. The aims and objectives were to primarily look at the change management processes necessary for the implication of this framework.

The research focused on the structural changes in terms of the delivery of programmes and the need to tailor the working hours of teachers to meet the requirements of these new initiatives. Both colleges were in agreement that work would still needs to be done in this area to cater for the flexibility necessary to facilitate the delivery of these courses. The need to develop links with industry

was identified as means of improving the development of adult education at the colleges.

The research looked at the leadership necessary to drive this change and found there were visionary leaders willing to support change at both colleges. The findings also pointed out that Adults who have been out of the education system over a number of years needed to have personal development, guidance and counselling built into their programmes.

The findings were consistent with expected outcome of the framework in terms of the development of the BTEI and VTOS schemes. College A initially were saying there was no change at their college. But it became clear that the lifting of restrictions on social welfare recipients opened up access to more diverse Adult learners. College B caters for more adult programmes but the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education supports and drives the opening up of access to mature students at this college.

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RATIONAL͞E FOR THE RESEARCH

1. At present I am teaching within the Further Education Sector. I am involved in providing education at one of the colleges researched.

2. The research will be carried out through structured interviews at two colleges of Further Education so it will give a broader view of the changes affecting the sector as a result of implementing the framework.

3. I believe there are huge changes in the delivery of education to adult learners and I would like to think this research will identify some of those changes.

4. It is hoped that the research will show the strategies and processes that that work well for opening up education to the adult learner.

5. It is also possible that the research will reveal some of the pitfalls that were encountered at the Colleges.

6. I am currently pursuing an MA Degree in Human Resource Management so the change management and implications and consequences of change are significant to this field of study.

APPENDIX A
LETTER OF ACCESS

Re – Permission to conduct Staff Interviews

Dear Principal

As previously discussed I have to conduct a small research project on change management, likely to be as a consequences that will result from the initiation of the new strategies for Further Education; in pursuance of a Masters Degree in HRM.

I intend to keep my intrusions into college work to a minimum. To undertake professional confidentiality I will use pseudonyms for both the college and the respondents.

Thank you for your consideration of the matter.

Yours Sincerely,

Teresa O'Leary

APPENDIX B

Dear Participant,

Thank you, for partaking in this research study I am researching for my Dissertation in pursuance of a Masters Degree. The purpose of this piece of qualitative research is to gather data on the change management implications likely as a consequence of the new initiatives in 'The Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education'.

The questions address broad areas of possible change as a result of the White Paper. The interview will be based on the outlined questions. The interview should take no longer than one hour. I hope to use a tape recorder to record the data. I would like to agree a time to meet with you to conduct the interview.

Confidentiality will be assured by ensuring the names of the participants or the college will not be disclosed in the report. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. Permission to carry out this research has been granted by the college.

Yours Sincerely

Teresa O'Leary.

Interview Questions

1. How has the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education impacted on the functioning of the college?

2. Has access to the college changed as a result of the introduction of this Paper? If so in what way have these changes taken place?

3. Has the content of the courses changed or have new courses come on line in direct response to the implementation of the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education? If so did this bring with it staffing implications?

4. Are you conscious of any change in teachers' attitudes towards students in relation to the delivery of Life Long Learning?

5. Over the past five years since the introduction of the Learning for Life White Paper are you aware of many mature students from this college going on to further education at other third level institutions?

6. Are you aware of any changes in the relationship between the college and local industry over the past five years?

7. To what extent do you think local industry know about the State support available to them through the Learning for Life White Paper on Adult Education?

8. What type of leadership was required to implement the changes at the college?

9. Were there issues encountered during the process of implementing the changes in relation to the adult education programmes at the college?

10. What were the main sources of resistance to implementing this change process? How did you overcome the resistance?

APPENDIX C

SOCIALWELFARE BARRIERS LIFTED

The Social Welfare and Health Board Benefits covered by BTEI include:

1. Unemployment Benefit

2. Unemployment Assistance

3. Supplementary Welfare Allowance

4. Medical Card

5. Family Income Supplement

6. Carers Allowance

7. One Parent Family Payment

8. Community Employment

9. Part-time Job Incentive scheme

10. Widow and Widowers Non-Contributory Pension

11. Blind Person's Pension

12. Old Age Non-Contributory Pension

13. Orphans Non-Contributory Pension

14. Invalidity Pension

15. Pre-Retirement Allowance

16. Disability Benefit and Allowance