

Leadership of Major Organisational
Change in a Research Intensive
Institution: implementation of a
devolved leadership and management
model.

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Abstract

Leadership of Major Organisational Change in a Research Intensive Institution: implementation of a devolved leadership and management model.

In changing and unpredictable environments, higher education institutions need to adapt their models of leadership to ensure sustainability and continued development. The evidence base on how leadership is implemented as a part of major institutional change is limited. This research critically examined a model of organisational change through the implementation of a devolved model of leadership and management in a research intensive institution. The aim of this research was to identify the key characteristics of the activity and gain an understanding of the working relationships in the implementation of the model.

The research used an exploratory case study drawing upon Activity Theory. This single site study illuminates a detailed understanding of the complex and unfolding interactions underpinning the practice of leadership of change and other factors in the institution.

Participants for the study included senior executive staff, senior academic staff with education leadership roles, senior administrative and experienced academic staff at school level. Data was collected from semi structured and focus group interviews and relevant institutional documents.

This research reveals key emergent themes which are a sense of ownership and empowerment, a shift in power and influence, the education and research interface and the dynamics of leadership. This study offers a deeper understanding of the process and practice of leadership of change in one large, research intensive university which is predicated on leadership as an activity, relationship building and empowerment of individuals.

The research findings do not suggest that a devolved model is a panacea for major organisational change but that it does have the potential to liberate new ways of thinking and working. However, specific tensions became apparent from implementation of this model and these required identification, management and attention. While these tensions may not be unavoidable, a framework for managing them is proposed, based on the research outcomes, for the leadership of change, namely a framework for the leadership process in a rapidly changing environment in a research intensive institution.

This research is concerned with the practice of leadership of change on the education aspect of a research intensive institution but key principles emerge which have the potential for application to other situations of major change in the higher education sector.

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Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed *Rosalyn M Jowett*

Dated December 2016

Chapter 1.

Outline of Research

1.1. Introduction

This chapter identifies the background and political context to my research and the apparent gaps in current knowledge on the process of leadership of organisational change. A description of my personal position relative to the research topic, the research question, specific aims of the study together with the suggested significance of the research is also included. The chapter concludes with a brief outline of the remaining chapters in the thesis.

This thesis presents the findings from a study of a specific model of organisational change. The research was undertaken in order to gain an understanding of the working relationships in the implementation of a devolved leadership and management model. The rationale for the implementation of this model was to facilitate a shift in the locus of power and influence in the education activity. The context of this organisational change was a research intensive university with the author's emphasis on the practice of education leadership.

The study signifies a lived example of the impact and consequences, some unintended, of a major process of change in a higher education institution. Although this case study is now historical in context, an updated position on the case study's progress is included towards the end of the thesis. It is anticipated that this research will suggest potential lessons to be considered for future scenarios for other higher education of leadership of change.

1.2. Background

The inevitability of change in higher education is acknowledged by keen observers of policy change and the subsequent impacts of that change have been the subject of both academic and professional consultants' analysis (Deem, 2006; PA Consulting, 2009; Bolden et al, 2012). These changes in higher education include substantial increases in participation rates, the need

for globalisation, significant adjustments in funding arrangements and a heightened competitive agenda.

Leadership of these changes is and will be, crucial to a successful implementation and more importantly, to ensuring sustained positive outcomes. While there is considerable academic interest in leadership as a topic, it is the practice of leadership in a higher education environment with its corresponding relationships, tensions and social processes which relate to the practice of leadership, which is the subject of this study.

Higher education institutions are preoccupied with competing agendas in order to thrive, grow and become or remain successful institutions in a global environment. Identifying which of these agendas requires prioritising at any specific time will be important judgements to make by individual higher education organisations and their leaders. An opportunity presented itself to study in detail how one such judgement was made, the rationale, and preparation for the inevitable process of change and how this change was experienced by a sample of academic staff.

New ways of managing and leading the business of higher education have been considered and adopted by some organisations so that they remain competitive and viable both nationally and internationally. Higher education institutions need to consider adaptations to cope with maximum uncertainty, as well as attend to the significance of effective, confident leadership in order to address a challenging environment (Middlehurst, 2010; Watson, 2010; Bradwell, 2009; Jameson, 2012).

It is pertinent at this point to reflect on the culture, strategic direction and structures of the institution at the centre of this research prior to the period of major change, in order to understand why change was considered necessary. The main driver for the change was to shift the education culture away from a systems led education environment to an academic led education culture. This period also coincided with the appointment of a new vice chancellor to the organisation. New leaders are inclined to review the structures they inherit and plan changes and sometimes restructure the

organisation for which they are responsible, (Frederick and Morgeson, 2009; Watkins, 2003).

The government's strategy of research growth and excellence in the 1990s resulted in specific institutions positioning themselves as concentrated environments of research excellence (Shattock, 2012). In addition, it would appear that the Research Assessment Exercise has fostered a culture within universities that rewards research disproportionately more than it does teaching (Shattock, 2012). The consequence of the decision by higher education institutions to respond to the government's research strategy, perhaps an unintended consequence, was that in some instances, the leadership, energy and strategic direction of the education portfolio assumed a position of less priority for innovation and excellence. The successful implementation of a research focus in many institutions fostered a culture that rewarded research disproportionately more than it did teaching (Collini, 2010).

However, in this case study, the concentration of research energy secured a raised academic reputation for the organisation and attracted a significant number of high calibre academic staff to work in the institution. The outcome for the education agenda in this institution was less positive in raising the academic reputation and was largely led and driven by the administrative structures for education quality assurance and crucial decisions discussed and agreed through the institution's committee structure and process.

Recent literature on leadership indicates that it is probably timely to understand leadership differently, not as a process enacted by an individual or by groups of individuals but more related to the relationships and engagement of others in concerted action to achieve common goals (Lumby, 2003; Spillane et al, 2004; Petrov et al, 2006)

A combination of government reviews, policy and consultations set the scene for a shift in funding and growth in student numbers (Browne, 2010; Department of Business, Innovation & Skills, 2011). These policy drivers added to the existing competitive nature of higher education institutions as they attempted to attract high quality and talented students. At the same

time, universities were actively encouraging students who previously might not have considered higher education for further study after their compulsory education experience, as a viable option.

At the time of this research the higher education landscape was already changing. There was greater emphasis being placed on the education agenda, the quality of the student experience and the need for institutional processes, effective leadership and management structures to be established to reflect this change in focus towards greater student centredness.

1.3. The Research Topic and Gaps in in the knowledge

While there is, according to Bolden et al (2012), a 'moderate amount' known about formal leadership at an institutional level, the evidence-base on how leadership is implemented and the nature of formal relationships which can either promote or hinder leadership goals, is much less evident (Bolden et al, 2012).

Further studies on leadership in higher education (Spendlove, 2007; Gronn, 2002; Kennie & Woodfield, 2006; Zepke, 2007; Bolden, 2008) provide a perspective on leadership as an activity. Such studies highlight a gap in the evidence base concerning the process of implementation of a specific model of leadership and leadership practice.

My experience in working in two separate higher education institutions where one was education focused with some emphasis on research and the more recent institution which was research focused, led me to observe that there may be differences in the leadership approaches of the teaching research nexus in research focused institutions. It seems that external pressures such as institutional competition, separate funding sources for teaching and research and an increased accountability to government have all forced UK universities to justify their teaching and research activities and this in turn has led to separate management processes and structures for both the teaching and research agendas (Taylor, 2007). This fact initiated my curiosity to explore leadership of change in the education element of an institution's business in a research focused institution.

The challenge to individuals in strategic leadership roles in higher education is to generate a momentum to encourage others to work towards shared goals which will ensure the success and sustainability of their particular organisations. This is especially challenging in research intensive institutions which, by their very nature, are based on a culture of independent, autonomous, competitive and independent thinking and behaviour (Gibbs et al, 2009).

The learning and teaching activity is not isolated from the culture, structure or influences of the organisation as a whole, therefore an institution's approach to leadership for the learning and teaching element needs to be set in the context of the whole organisation's culture, policy and strategy.

The recent changes in public funding in higher education, increase in student fees (BIS, 2011) and the ever growing demands for accountability and transparency of key performance indicators, when combined with the uncertainty of a fast changing, global higher education environment, indicate the need for a different leadership culture (Middlehurst, 2010).

It is arguable that a model which fosters trust and innovation would enable institutions to recognise their internal strengths and distinctiveness. Watson (2008) reflects on the political, social and economic journey travelled by higher education development over the last 20 years and believes that there is an external perception by both the public and politicians of a leadership deficit in the sector. It is this perceived deficit which I believe is a highly relevant and timely subject for investigation.

The process of initiating change in such an environment is therefore not a simple or straight forward process. This study is concerned with one aspect of change, namely an education inquiry into the process and outcomes of implementing a devolved model of organisational change in learning and teaching in a research intensive higher education institution.

This research draws attention to the impact of organisational change on working relationships and the process of leadership in a higher education institution which was aiming to transform the culture of education

accountability and responsibility. The study aims to identify the effects of this transformation and the challenges of realigning and promoting greater academic accountability for education, taking place in a research intensive organisation, through the lived experiences of key individuals involved in and affected by the process of change. A framework for leadership of education change in research intensive institutions is proposed as a result of the findings, for possible consideration by other similar higher education institutions in the future.

University Y, the subject of this exploratory case study, considers itself and is considered by other institutions, as research intensive. It also prides itself in offering high quality, challenging education through a wide range of diverse, academic disciplines. In 2003, a new model of devolved management and leadership was introduced in the institution, which represented and ultimately resulted in a major change in the organisation's structures and processes.

The aim of the senior leadership team in implementing the new model was to reverse the situation described by Kogan and Hanney (2000), whereby the power had shifted in the institution away from senior academics to a more centralised, systems and administrative dominated model. This research is an in depth study of how one research intensive institution implemented a process of major change in its culture and leadership of education, with the aim of establishing greater accountability and responsibility by academic individuals who contributed to the delivery and quality assurance processes of education. In the current climate of an emphasis on quality assurance and public accountability, it could be suggested that a devolved model of organisation change is a risky strategy.

This period of major organisational change presented an opportunity to undertake a detailed study in one, large and complex higher education institution in order to explore the processes, effects and implications of leadership practice in higher education.

1.3.1. Personal Position and Relationship with the Research

My professional background in the National Health Service and during the last 20 years in higher education, has involved direct and indirect experience of various levels of leadership roles with corresponding staff development programmes in leadership. It is through practical experience I gained greater confidence and knowledge of the reality of leadership as a practice. I became curious to understand the process of leadership in more detail, especially the elements that seemed to make some leadership approaches more effective than others.

In 2003, I assumed a new role in a research intensive higher education institution, which was in the process of undergoing major organisational change and from which a new style of leadership was emerging for the institution.

My direct engagement with my institution's organisational change process and my observation and experience of leadership practice made me aware that there were inherent tensions within the organisation. These tensions were partly due to the fact that the institution was in the midst of a high degree of change to structures, process and organisational functions. The institution was organised in several academic units of activity, all experiencing and interpreting the process of change in varying degrees of disruption to normal working practices and relationships. The centre of power, control and influence was to transfer to different individuals and new groups. As a result, different relationships would need to be forged if specific agendas such as education, research and enterprise were to be successful. In line with the views of Middlehurst (2004) there was a purposeful move away from structures and roles to greater emphasis on the importance of people and process in leading change.

I discovered that I was in the midst of this fast changing, working environment but it was only sometime later, almost five years, that I had time to reflect on the experience without being absorbed totally within the process of change. I became curious to understand how individuals experienced this change and whether their working relationships altered in any way and how

these interactions were shaped by the leadership process, particularly in the area of education. How did this emphasis on education leadership influence or be influenced, by the research focus? Would the practice of education leadership change and if so, how receptive would individuals be to these changes?

It is within this context that I began to ask questions about how higher education institutions innovate and manage change and in particular how the changes are directed, implemented, embedded, integrated and perceived by individuals through the process of leadership.

As part of my doctoral studies, I realised I had an opportunity to undertake a systematic, education enquiry to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of leadership practice in higher education. In keeping with the views of Drake and Heath (2008), my intention was to use this opportunity to critically reflect on my own environment and provide new insights into a specific area of practice.

My employer organisation had recently experienced a period of major change and I grasped the opportunity to study the process in more depth, through the experiences and views of individuals who were either directly or indirectly involved in the process. I wanted to capture the development of shaping the new structures and understand the dynamics, activity and relationships which underpin major change in a large and complex organisation before the opportunity passed.

1.4. Research Question and Aims

The research question underpinning this research is:

How does a devolved model of organisation leadership and management impact on the education agenda in a research intensive University?

There are three specific aims as part of the research question, which are as follows:

- To identify and understand the working relationships between leaders and followers which underpin the education leadership process in a

research intensive university adopting a model of devolved organisational leadership and management.

- To trace the development of the education leadership process by identifying effects on institutional education practice.
- To identify key factors in the observed educational leadership behaviour which have the potential to transfer to other higher education institutional elements.

Contemporary research studies into leadership in higher education such as Collective Leadership in Higher Education (Bolden et al, 2008), the Role of Departmental Leadership (Gibbs et al, 2007), Defining Effective Leadership in Higher Education (Bryman, 2009) and Senior Management Team Structures in Higher Education (Kennie & Woodfield, 2006) provided a basis of research findings, research design and methods which informed the development of this research process.

1.5. Research Purpose

The focus of this research is to critically examine a specific model of organisational change, a devolved model of leadership and management, which was implemented with the aim of enhancing leadership of the learning and teaching agenda, also referred to as the education agenda throughout the study, in a research intensive university.

The intention of the research is to identify key characteristics of this model, the processes involved with implementation, the strengths and weaknesses of the process and emerging practices with a view to contributing to the body of knowledge on major institutional change management and the practice of education leadership in higher education. One of the aims of this research is that by studying the education leadership process, which forms the teaching element of the teaching research nexus, there may be lessons to be share across the wider higher education activity.

1.6. Conceptual Framework

This study is a qualitative study and the selected research design is an exploratory case study. The participants in this study are drawn from individuals working at specific levels in the organisation. These include senior executive staff in the organisation at the centre of the study and other key, senior academic and administrative staff occupying leadership roles in

the institution. The sample of senior academic staff is purposeful and includes those who have a direct or indirect role in the institution's educational agenda and with direct experience of the process of organisational change.

Data is also captured through key institutional documentation which provides an additional perspective to the process of implementation of the devolved model and major organisational change.

The theoretical approach chosen for this research is Activity Theory (Engestrom, 1999a) with data analysis using Activity Theory and Discourse Analysis. All of these elements are addressed in more detail in the chapter on research design, methodology and methods in the thesis.

1.7. Assumptions, limitations, delimitations and scope

There is an assumption in this research that participants will be honest and open in their responses and contribute to the study through personal accounts of their experiences. Considerable time and exploration was undertaken with regards to the methodology for this research and therefore there is an assumption that the final selection is both appropriate and relevant for this research question.

Limitations of this research are described later in the thesis, in chapter five and includes a reflective commentary on the purposeful sample of participants, student engagement and the effects on education practice.

As highlighted in previous text in this chapter, I made a deliberate decision to explore the process of major organisational change in a specific research focused institution because of the singular opportunity which presented itself and to strengthen and enhance my professional practice.

1.8. Significance of the Research

Major organisational change can occupy much, if not all, attention and energy during the implementation stage, resulting in no or limited time to analyse the process for evidence of best practice. My personal, subjective observations of previous major organisational change validates the fact that the concentration is all too often on the immediacy of implementing the

specific change, with little or no time for reflection or evaluation of the effectiveness of that change once the implementation stage is complete.

This research explores the activity of leadership of major institutional change from the perspective of key individuals who are immersed in the process of the political landscape and power shifts which are central to this activity. Such an analysis has the potential to benefit other situations within the higher education sector and contribute to the increasing literature and evidence on approaches to the leadership of organisational change.

The concept of an institution's self-awareness as an integral aspect of planning for strategic change is explored by Watson, (2010) and Keller and Price, (2011) with a view to emphasising that this requires a concentration on the people orientated aspects of leading an organisation. This research aims to contribute to the existing, limited knowledge base on the effects of working relationships during a period of major higher education institutional change

This research contributes to the existing evidence on how organisations learn to adjust their practices to the external context and policy drivers through a study of one model of leadership and management, at one large organisation, at specific point in time. It aims to capture the complexity of leadership activity and the impact of leaders' decisions which shape the activity of a higher education institution and the experiences of key individuals who adapt, resist or support such decisions.

1.9. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is presented in a series of specifically focused chapters which when combined contribute to the whole articulation of the research.

This chapter presents the external and personal contexts within which the research is situated. Chapter two presents a review of the literature underpinning the topic and provides a context for the research, which is situated in the dialogue and academic commentary on the topic.

Chapter three provides and an explanation of my chosen research design, methodology and methods. In chapter three, alternative research paradigms

are highlighted which might have suited the research topic are highlighted, with explanations as to why they were not selected. A detailed account is provided in this chapter of why an exploratory case study was selected, drawing on Engestrom's (1999a) Activity Theory as the theoretical approach.

Chapter four is essentially in two parts. The first is a discussion on the process of data analysis. I draw on discourse analysis based on Fairclough's (1992) approach which had been used by Dick (2004) and Coupland (2001). This chapter also describes the detailed process of coding the data to identify the emerging themes.

The second part of chapter four involves an explanation of the data analysis process, my interpretation of the findings and discussion. The findings are based on elements of the data as it was analysed into categories and eventually key themes, which stem from and evidenced by specific aspects from the interview transcripts.

Chapter five aims to integrate the topics highlighted in the research while offering a synthesis of the findings. It identifies possible theoretical and policy implications and conclusions which are both factual and conceptual. Recommendations are proposed for future change and research and an assessment is offered on the limitations of this study.

Finally, and importantly, an account is provided by way of a personal reflection of my journey through this research process in the final chapter.

Chapter 2

Theorising this Research Study: A Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

A review of the relevant literature underpinning the research focus identified in chapter one is addressed in this chapter. The aim of this chapter is to present insights into previous work on this topic which will contribute to the theorising and situating of this research study.

This chapter will explore the literature which underpins the nature of organisational change and leadership, specifically leadership of major organisational change in higher education. The literature search related to this research topic not only encompasses the process and approaches of leadership, but the changing nature of organisations during major change and the impact on key individuals directly involved in the implementation process of change.

A process of significant organisational change is situated in a wider contextual framework and the pertinent literature contributes to a broader understanding of the external drivers for change and how they relate to the research. The literature search is undertaken using electronic search programmes including EduAthens, the British Educational Research Index, Athens, Education Resources Information Centres (ERIC) and Cinahl. The parameters for the literature review are mainly focused on the UK higher education and included the period between 1980 and 2015 with consideration of other relevant, seminal articles related to the research topic.

2.2. The Higher Education Context and Drivers for Change

Higher education in the UK has had to adapt and orchestrate its internal structures and processes to accommodate the ever changing developments in disciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching and research, in addition to the effects of a highly competitive market both nationally and globally (Middlehurst, 2014). A new emphasis on marketisation and competitiveness has driven higher education institutions to review and adapt their established

structures and processes. Middlehurst (2014) argues that it is the major reviews on higher education which focused on the future of UK higher education, in particular the subsequent policy initiatives and new funding arrangements, which present major challenges to higher education institutions.

Since the start of this research a key government policy to ensure higher education teaching is valued and assessed for its quality comparable to the current process of research, has been published. This policy aims to introduce a fundamental change in how teaching in higher education is regarded (BIS, 2016). This government White Paper highlights the intention to ensure the English higher education system is one which is less variable in quality and outcomes, where teaching excellence matches that expected of research and where capability is enhanced to undertake cutting-edge, multi-disciplinary research.

The key drivers for change in higher education identified by Shattock (2012) are reinforced in the recent policy document on teaching excellence (BIS, 2016). This policy represents a significant mile stone since the last major legislative form of 1992 and accentuates three important points. The first is that the policy changes are based on information that students are concerned with the quality of teaching and dissatisfied with some elements of their programmes. The second is that increased competition will lead to 'better outcomes and value for students, employers and tax payers who underwrite the system' (BIS 2016, para 6, p.8). The third is that teaching is perceived as of less value than research and that this position needs to be rectified. The term 'teaching excellence framework' reflects an important policy position and is of direct relevance to this research. Agreeing and implementing the criteria by which such an aspiration is achieved is likely to be challenging for the higher education sector.

The policy on establishing a teaching excellence framework to match the established research excellence framework refers to the activity of teaching as being the 'poor cousin' to research. This indicates that a cultural change is needed in addition to introducing a new structure of assessment and

recognition of excellence (BIS, 2016). There is no mention of leadership in this policy document as a process underpinning this ambition. This is in contrast to a policy analysis on characteristics of high performing research units (Manville et al, 2015) where leadership, culture, values and autonomy are among the characteristics identified in establishing a positive and successful research culture which is pre disposed to quality research achievements.

According to Shattock (2012), there are two main drivers for change in higher education. These are the demand for places in higher education and the implications of financing this growth. In addition to these key drivers identified by Shattock (2012) and directly linked to greater competition for student numbers, is the emphasis on quality enhancement of learning and teaching, continued need for quality monitoring and alongside this, a gradual acceptance that students are increasingly seen as customers and beneficiaries of the outputs of universities. It is this awareness that the learning and teaching element of higher education activity is, and will continue to be, a priority for organisations, to ensure they position themselves to compete nationally and internationally in order to achieve a strong reputation in quality of research and education (Taylor, 2006; McRoy and Gibbs, 2009). This may present a major shift in emphasis for those institutions which had focused extensively on achieving research excellence.

Such key drivers demand changes in both internal leadership and management practices and suggest that higher education institutions might adopt a more structured, managerial approach in response to these external drivers (Bolden et al, 2008; Taylor, 2006; Bolden et al, 2015). One approach to manage such demands is for the higher education sector to adopt a more business model, with less reliance on public funding and more concentration on income gained from delivered value (PA Consulting, 2009). Deem (2010) expands on the emergence and reality of a business model in higher education and identifies globalisation, new managerialism, academic capitalism and entrepreneurialism as the underlying principles of such a model. Her analysis suggests that there is no unified model which higher education institutions employ in order to implement a greater business focus

to their activities. Further, there are indications that institutions will respond and adapt in different ways, depending on local conditions, their strategic leadership and vision.

The impact of commercialisation on the higher education sector through internationalisation and an increase in private involvement in higher education may require a shift away from competitive approaches to greater collaboration within the higher education sector (Broadbent and Middlehurst, 2013). However, it might equally infer that there needs to be a change in leadership style of higher education institutions which warrants greater internal collaboration of academic communities, with a focus on different working relationships.

As part of her analysis of current and future external drivers impacting on higher education, Middlehurst (2013) concentrates on the negative impact that 'command and control' styles of governance will have on the success, or otherwise, of higher education institutions meeting their current and future challenges. An over-emphasis on governance as a process is likely to stifle the ability of higher education institutions to be creative, competitive and innovative. Leadership approaches which promote a culture of collegiality and influence to address future uncertainties, and potential instability, offer a more appropriate strategy to ensure organisations are successful in achieving their ambitions (Middlehurst, 2013). At times of increased institutional competition there is a tendency for a more controlling approach to leadership and management (Blackmore, 2016). Higher education institutions have to balance the unpredictability of competition and the certainty of government involvement in their mission and business. The growth of attention on organisational governance is due largely to the increasing involvement of the state in operational details, holding universities to account for their achievement of national policy objectives, quality and financial performance (Shattock, 2013). While organisational governance is likely to be an adequate process to manage current business, it is questionable whether it will lead to innovative approaches to managing the drivers for change (Shattock, 2013).

This position is reinforced by Collini (2010) who believes that it is an error to assume that making individuals in universities more accountable for their output and actions will necessarily lead to increased efficiencies. He maintains that burdensome, external surveillance and excessive concentration on accountability and productivity will be counterproductive to creative, innovative, high achieving academic practice. Individual and partnership achievements, together with a combination of cooperation and shared commitment, according to Collini (2010), are the preferred drivers for meeting set goals and organisational ambitions.

A contrasting view to the discourse on transforming universities to reflect more of a business ethos in the way they perform and are managed is that voluntary cooperation and individual autonomy are more likely to deliver efficiencies in intellectual activities (Collini, 2010).

Blackmore (2014) indicates that previous surveys of academic staff show a strong sense of antipathy towards a culture of managerialism and that broader engagement in decision-making with complex institutional issues are more likely to motivate and stimulate interest and active contribution. However, this approach may not be a simple process to implement across large and complex academic institutions which are sub divided internally into disciplinary groups and areas of expertise. These areas of expertise are often further segregated into education and research expertise. The process of ensuring a broader engagement in decision making on educational quality and enhancement issues is at the centre of this research.

One essential challenge is how such organisations maintain their current business while developing their strategies to ensure they survive and thrive in these financially volatile times. Middlehurst (2014) suggests that examples of business models in other sectors and higher education institutions will be of interest to senior managers in their future planning and organisational design. However, Shattock (2010) suggests there is limited research evidence on the effectiveness of a specific structure which is fit for purpose in the field of higher education. While he agrees with Middlehurst (2014) that universities are therefore attracted to ideas from other organisations he

maintains that models from other organisations are not always best suited to the context, culture and demands of the higher education sector.

Leadership models which promote broader and cross professional boundary engagement in decision making may be a more effective method of managing the current and future demands on higher education organisations, especially in the area of significant change as experienced in the education element of higher education activity.

2.3. Teaching and Learning as a Driver for Change

The recent policy ambition to ensure teaching is valued as much as research will require the design of quality measures which will determine the level of institution funding, as is the established case for research funding (BIS, 2016). There is the possibility that such an ambition remains a policy aspiration instead of a lived reality unless there is a commitment by the higher education sector to confront the underlying tensions associated with teaching and research. However, the intricacies of defining teaching excellence, identifying and incentivising high quality teaching remain to be determined and may not prove as simple as declaring the aspiration.

The teaching agenda in higher education has developed into a significant source of growth and income for higher education institutions. A combination of government reviews, policy and consultations has set the scene for a shift in funding and growth in student numbers (Browne, 2010; Department of Business, Innovation & Skills, 2011). These policy drivers add to the existing competitive nature of higher education institutions as they attempt to attract high quality and talented students. At the same time, universities are actively encouraging students who previously might not have considered higher education for further study after their compulsory education experience, to see higher education as a viable option.

During the last six years the government's policy on higher education has gained greater momentum on placing the student and the student experience at the heart of the driving force behind the higher education sector's aspiration for growth (BIS 2016; Shattock, 2012; Collini, 2010). Such policies emphasise the value and importance of the education agenda and

maintaining the quality of the student experience. The need for institutional processes, effective leadership and management structures to be established so as to reflect this change in student centredness needs to be a priority for universities (Shattock, 2013).

While the teaching and learning agenda is a prominent driver for change in the higher education sector, the relationship between teaching and research has a significant impact on any process of change, particularly in research intensive institutions.

2.3.1. The Teaching Research Relationship – Partnership or Independent Activities?

The relationship between teaching and research is fundamental for all higher education institutions but especially true for research intensive institutions. In addition and relevant to this study, the corresponding leadership processes and ensuing tensions between teaching and research priorities require clear, effective strategies and implementation plans if universities are going to survive and flourish in a global market (Middlehurst, 2014; Shattock, 2012; Taylor, 2008).

The economic pressures on universities to promote research were, and some would argue still are, significant (Browne, 2010). The period of executive leadership in the research case study prior to the period studied, coincided with a stage in higher education's history which reflected a government view that there was a direct relationship between higher education and the country's economic growth (Shattock, 2012). This growth was primarily perceived to be beneficial to the country's economic performance through excellence in science and technology, which led to concentrated, increased research funding for higher education.

This decision resulted in a highly competitive environment and a greater discrepancy of strategies between research intensive and non-research intensive universities. Higher education institutions identified their research strategies so that they were able to compete effectively for these increased resources and enhance their reputations for research excellence, both

nationally and internationally. However, in some cases, this course of action may have adversely realigned their focus away from education towards research achievements (Shattock, 2012).

The funding streams which accompany research excellence present considerable incentives in directing effort and resources to obtaining competitive achievements. These achievements which are assessed nationally in the formal process of the previous Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and more recently the Research Excellence Framework (REF), have caused a gradual separation of teaching and research (McNay, 1995; Shattock, 2012).

A possible comparable process to assess the quality of teaching in higher education is the Higher Education Review, undertaken by the Quality Assurance Agency. This process has been seen by some academics as unhelpful in promoting teaching excellence and rather more about encouraging a culture of compliance and superficial perception of better teaching. It has been argued that such a process skims the surface and does not address the real need to raise the profile of teaching quality and excellence (Ottewill and Macfarlane, 2004).

It could be claimed that one of the defining characteristic of higher education is the symbiotic relationship of teaching and research and that the relationship between these two activities are mutually supportive and indivisible. However, this view might reflect an assumption or aspiration as opposed to the reality.

According to Marsh and Hattie (2002) there is no empirical evidence that the relationship between teaching and research is inseparable but that it is plausible to accept that research evidence should support and underpin teaching. It is highly likely that active researchers who are at the forefront of discovery in their disciplines will bring an element of authenticity and examples of their work to the teaching process (Marsh and Hattie, 2002).

The argument that teaching and research are interdependent activities is not compelling, according to Ramsden and Moses (1992). Further, that it may

not be possible or desirable for each and every academic to be active in research in order for the discipline or department to be effective in research.

In contrast to the view that the relationship between teaching and research could or should be complementary, some commentators suggest that the relationship is antagonistic. This antagonism is likely to occur due to the possibility of detrimental performance in teaching due to the pressures of research and a corresponding deficit in research outputs and performance due to teaching demands (Marsh and Hattie, 2002). The requirement for institutions to be excellent in both teaching and research may be impossible for some institutions and therefore influence their decision to concentrate on either research or teaching. Such a choice would not support the belief that higher education's defining quality is the symbiotic relationship of both teaching and research activities.

There is a view that the two activities are very different and require different approaches, characteristics, skills and personal values (Marsh and Hattie, 2002). Research is sometimes perceived as an individual pursuit whereas teaching may be seen as a more collaborative activity and current funding streams for each activity are different. It might be argued that it is unhelpful to perpetuate an ongoing discussion and debate on the extent of complementarity between teaching and research merely because it feels professionally more comfortable for this complementarianism to be true.

One way of achieving a more positive balance might be to make transparent the reward and recognition for academic staff who pursue creativity, commitment to inquisitiveness and enquiry in both teaching and research. This approach may provide some common ground and criteria for both activities (Marsh and Hattie, 2002).

While research remains the principal activity leading to acknowledged professional esteem and academic achievement in higher education institutions, teaching and research activities are likely to remain separated with the practice of academic time being 'bought out' of teaching to undertake research (Smith and Smith, 2012). The concept of separation is highlighted by Locke (2004) who states that the government's policy of

awarding university status to institutions without research awarding powers is promoting this division.

Although there are cogent arguments why the activities of teaching and research are not strongly linked, there is evidence from the Quality Assurance Subject Review reports submitted by higher education institutions which commends the connections and links between teaching and research (Locke, 2004). Very few research focused departments received low judgements for teaching. This fact implies that research active departments deliver quality teaching. However, this does not automatically assume that the teaching research relationship is indivisible but rather that a specific culture is beneficial to both activities (Locke, 2004).

Universities may use their outward facing mission statement to express their institution's teaching research relationship. However, Locke (2004) states that a limited number of institutions' learning and teaching strategies were submitted to HEFCE which explicitly mentioned the links between their teaching and research activities. This limited number suggests that in some instances, teaching and research are seen by some universities as separate entities, with discrete strategies. One approach to emphasise the link between research and education is use of the term 'research-led teaching'. However, this term is seen by some commentators as less than helpful in portraying the relationship between teaching and research (Blackmore and Fraser, 2003). The term 'research-led teaching' may be interpreted in differing ways. The first implies the inclusion of research evidence related to the topic or discipline, possibly undertaken by the lecturers themselves, within the curricula content and the second implies the teaching methods themselves should be research-led (Blackmore and Fraser, 2003). In order for this term to be clear and unambiguous, there needs to be a clear statement or definition of what is meant by the term if the intention is to publicise how the teaching research relationship is working in practice. According to Locke (2004), research led universities are more likely to experience such a separation than non-research led institutions.

There may disciplinary differences within organisations with regards to the degree of alignment between teaching and research. Neuman et al (2002) and Taylor (2008) state that subjects such as physics may not foster an integration of the two activities whereas subjects such as humanities may employ a more integrated approach. Blackmore and Fraser (2003) add to the discussion on possible variation between the disciplines in relation to the strength of the teaching research relationship by highlighting that the stage of academic study may also differ. They state that in science subjects, the tendency is for the relationship to be close towards the end of the degree programme, whereas in humanities the links with research may be apparent at the beginning of the programme of study (Blackmore and Fraser, 2003).

Alternatively, Healey (2006) proposes that student participation in the process of research as opposed to being recipients of research findings might be a better approach to constructing a meaningful link between teaching and research. He offers three ways in which curricula design could promote an effective teaching research nexus which consist of an emphasis on research processes and problems, seeing students as participants rather than a passive audience and ensuring the teaching is student focused. This model of the teaching research nexus shifts the discussion away from the corporate strategy, departmental and individual academic activity in teaching and research, towards the application and student centred participation and engagement in research through the learning experience. Higher education institutions are inclined to manage the teaching research nexus in two ways. The first, a more passive approach, is where the responsibility for interpreting and implementing the teaching research nexus is left to individual academic staff and departments and the other is more interventionist and proactive whereby the institution fosters and develops the relationship between teaching and research (Taylor,2007).

However, a passive approach is reliant on an assumption that individual academics are instinctively motivated to safeguard a positive, effective affiliation between teaching and research activities. This assumption underestimates the challenges faced by academic staff to manage the

demands, conflicting priorities and tensions of both teaching and research activities.

In contrast, an institutional led approach is more aligned with the description proposed by Shattock (2010) of a managerial culture. This approach is driven by external factors such as the need for greater institutional accountability, increased competition and market forces leading to universities deciding on which disciplines to focus and develop their research reputation (Taylor, 2008). Universities may decide to manage their core business in several ways which include the separation of teaching and research within the organisation. These may include an approach to manage and articulate the inter-relationship between teaching and research, concentrate on teaching with limited research or concentrate on research with limited or no teaching. Prioritising their focus on either research or education may be how some universities manage future challenges (Melville-Ross, 2010). However, others believe that it is fundamental that higher education maintains the symbiotic relationship between research and education (Taylor, 2007; 2008).

It may be argued that the discrete nature of teaching and research is reinforced through separation in funding streams, external quality assessment processes and senior posts at executive level, namely at pro vice chancellor level (Taylor, 2008). Some efforts have been and continue to be made by universities to narrow the gap between teaching and research through promotion criteria which aim to foster and reward both teaching and research achievements. It is less clear how current practice reflects these aspirations. If reward and recognition processes are not perceived to reflect achievements in teaching then academic staff who are active in research may be seen as superior to those academic staff who are not (Hughes, 2006; Ramsden and Moses, 1992). This impression may only strengthen the divide between teaching and research activities.

However, the narrative that a reduced teaching load equates to quality and high output research performance still pervades influential reports which have an impact on academic attitudes and behaviour (Manville et al, 2015).

This report identifies such a reduction as one of the incentives to reward high performance in research. Such public statements may lead to the impression that achieving research excellence may be rewarded by a reduced teaching load which is not conducive to a more balanced value between both these activities.

Responding to the drivers of change, in particular those affecting learning and teaching in a research intensive institution, requires leadership and management of organisational change. This in turn requires further exploration of the facets which contribute to the concept of leadership as a process.

2.4. Leadership in Higher Education

Recent literature on leadership indicates that it is probably timely to understand leadership in higher education institutions differently, not as a process enacted by an individual or by groups of individuals but more related to the relationships and engagement of others in concerted action to achieve common goals (Lumby, 2003; Spillane et al, 2004; Petrov et al, 2006).

There is some evidence to suggest that leadership is perceived as absent or not overt enough in higher education and that greater effort is needed to identify the competencies of leadership if the sector is to be better prepared to meet the challenges of the immediate and long term future (Deem, 2006; Dearlove, 2002). There is little empirical evidence on effective leadership in higher education (Bryman, 2008).

The complexity of the higher education environment is one of the main factors which makes the issue and study of leadership potentially challenging. This is because there are varying layers of leadership in higher education institutions. There is the corporate level of leadership which is responsible for strategy, middle management which is responsible for operationalising the strategy, individual and communities of academics who traditionally manage themselves and their work and finally, professional services staff that are often managed separately from the academic structures. The driving force relative to universities achieving their goals is the combination of energy, self-belief and achievements of individual

academics that are not always drawn naturally to the corporate agenda. Leadership is not traditionally seen by academics as either a permanent or valued career in a culture where research, and to a lesser extent, teaching are the accepted routes to career progression (Deem, 2006).

Leadership skills and structures, which institutions will require to steer this complexity may vary according to which elements discrete organisations believe are important and a priority. Watson (2013) describes the inevitable tensions to be found in what governments state they want higher education to deliver and what these same institutions need to prioritise in preparation for their position in world university-ranking league tables. These tensions are based on government policy drivers on teaching quality, social mobility and services to business and the community. The ever pressing criteria underpinning national and international league tables which include assessment of research outputs, graduate employability statistics and student achievement (Watson, 2013). This apparent disconnect between government expectations and the published statistics on which the reputation of institutions are formed presents a challenge to the leadership agenda and prioritisation.

Leadership is a contested concept and is not necessarily seen as a natural choice of career option by the academic community (Bolden et al, 2012). According to Bolden et al (2015), a more profitable discussion is to concentrate on the components of leadership as opposed to the inherent qualities for leaders in order to achieve optimum quality and effectiveness of academic performance in higher education institutions.

This might suggest that leadership is perceived as a different concept in an academic environment than in other organisations. There seems to be limited research on the influence of academic disciplinary focus on the effectiveness, or otherwise, of leadership practice. Blackmore (2007) highlights this paucity of evidence from the literature on the potential impact of discipline-based differences on leadership and management in higher education. It is curious that in a sector where discipline specific success and achievement in learning, teaching and research are accepted and

celebrated, that little investigation seems to have been focused on exploring the strengths and weaknesses of discipline practice and values of leadership potential. If higher education institutions need to pay more attention to effective leadership approaches in order to manage the pace of sector change, then perhaps attention needs to move away from generic principles of leadership to consider the value of discipline specific drivers; or at least foster a genuine appreciation and awareness of disciplinarity (Blackmore, 2007).

The question as to whether leadership in higher education is any different to that in any other organisation is pursued by Bryman (2009) and later Lumby (2012). Bryman (2009) states that leadership in the traditional sense of being very directional and highly supervisory may be unreceptive to academics and therefore have an adverse effect on motivation and responsiveness of academic staff to be effective. While there may be an institutional need for able individuals to assume leadership roles, such roles are not seen as high status by parts of the academic community (Blackmore, 2016).

The various and sometimes convergent cultures and practices of numerous disciplines, the characteristics of academic work and the academic community itself, create a distinctive setting in relation to other non-education organisations (Lumby, 2012). Previous research studies on leadership in higher education identified the key desirable attributes of establishing a strategic direction, effective communication and academic credibility (Spendlove, 2007; Bryman, 2009). The attribute of academic credibility is of particular significance in a research intensive institution which may favour credibility in research achievement as opposed to leadership credibility or indeed in relation to education leadership.

The skills and attributes of management and leadership are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature but management is essentially about providing suitable processes to solve problems, perhaps with a linear solution which is contrast to leadership, which is more concerned with dealing with uncertainty, where there is not likely to be linear solution (Grint,

2005b). Effective leadership requires that the right questions are asked rather than the provision of the right answers (Grint, 2005b).

2.5. Defining the Term leadership

While the evidence from the literature on leadership seems to suggest that definitions of leadership as both a concept and practice are varied and diverse, the overriding consistent message is that research studies have focused on what leaders do and their characteristics which enable them to lead as opposed to the how of leadership. According to Grint (2005a), organisations which need to be mobile and responsive to change and challenges need a blend of both vertical and horizontal leadership. The complexity of what is understood by the term leadership is due to a combination of who is involved in leadership (collective action), what is achieved, how a goal is achieved (the process) and where the leadership takes place, which could be at either a horizontal or vertical position in an organisation (Grint, 2005a).

Although there is some lack of consistency in the literature on an actual definition of the term leadership, there is greater agreement on the lack of research on leadership as an activity and the practice of leadership in higher education institutions (Bolden et al, 2008; Gibbs et al, 2008; Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2004).

The main components of leadership as suggested by Northouse (2004) are as a process, involving influence, occurring within a group context and involving goal attainment offer a workable definition of leadership and aligns closely with Bryman's (2009) working definition.

The use of the word 'process' in this definition highlights leadership as an activity of interaction between an identified leader and other individuals who will work as a collective in achieving an agreed goal. While such a definition retains the notion of an identified leader it highlights the role played by others and challenges the assumption that leadership is restricted or confined to a delegated individual (Northouse, 2004).

Agreed definitions of leadership are unlikely according to Grint (2005a), however, he does add two further components to those proposed by Northouse (2004) which include leadership as expressed in an individual and their position in the organisation.

The concept of leadership as a combination of the ability of leaders to be insightful, the context or any given situation and an astute analysis of how others might perceive that context indicates that openness, fairness and transparency on decisions and judgements are crucial to effective leadership outcomes. Tyler et al (2005) believe that a dimension often neglected in leadership literature and research is that of 'procedural justice' or fair and transparent behaviour on the part of leaders. Procedural justice is seen as an effective leadership tool that may help in motivating individuals to identify with a new organisational structure and therefore cooperate with the planned changes. The significance of procedural justice is twofold: firstly, leaders can gain support for their vision through motivation based on fair procedures. The second is that if leaders behave in this way, their integrity can positively encourage individuals to identify with an organisation initiating the change(s), which leads to a more willing cooperation (Tyler et al, 2005). The concept of procedural justice is linked to the credibility and legitimacy of the leader and the degree to which others trust the lead individual (Tyler et al, 2005).

The two processes of change and leadership are crucial elements of this research and are often inextricably linked when seen in the context of organisational design and redesign. Effective leadership in ensuring organisational change, is achieved through timely, planned interventions which are fundamental to a successful and satisfactory outcome (Carnall, 2003; McRoy and Gibbs, 2009).

2.6. Leadership of Change in Higher Education

In changing and unpredictable environments, higher education institutions need to adapt their models of leadership, structures and processes to ensure sustainability and continued development (Bolden et al, 2012).

According to several sources, as much as 60% - 70% of organisational change initiatives fail (Kotter, 2007; Higgs and Rowland, 2001). Higgs and

Rowland (2005) refer to the concept of complexity theory in proposing that many change initiatives fail due to an assumption by some leaders and managers that problems are complicated, as opposed to complex. This differentiation between complicated and complex is related to the thinking that complicated systems are rich in detail and complex systems are rich in structure. If organisational change is seen as complicated as opposed to complex, then the approach could be to analyse problems and resolve them in a linear, sequential manner.

However, if the process of change is viewed as complex then leaders and managers are required to assess and cope with dilemmas, processes and uncertainty, rather than produce definitive solutions. It might be argued that assessing and coping with dilemmas, uncertainty and the unknown is a pre-requisite for academic practice and therefore not a particular challenge to institutional-level academic leadership.

However, the element of complexity also requires an understanding of an organisation's culture as a pre-requisite to leading organisational change. This understanding of an organisation's culture underpins the historic practices and behaviours of individuals which are almost always the main object of such change (Kotter, 1996; Senior, 2002)

While it may be prudent for higher education institutions to review their models and structures of management and leadership, it is less clear as to where they might seek guidance, advice or evidence on the optimum models or structures which are available. While there is evidence in the literature highlighting that higher education institutions should consider a number of interventions in order to prepare for the 'perfect storm' there is a scarcity of examples of best practice on effective leadership approaches to lead these interventions.

The literature on managing change successfully is not restricted to higher education environments and is seen as an essential capability for organisational success in current environments (By, 2005). The roles and effectiveness of leaders, together with the degree to which their behaviours can either contribute to, or detract from, leadership of change are highlighted

by Rowland and Higgs (2008). The leadership of change is a critical issue in complex environments (Rowland and Higgs, 2008).

Leadership models and leadership theory are often associated with the process of change. Significant change within organisations presents considerable challenges for leaders who need to implement change through motivating others to work in new ways or new situations (Tyler et al, 2005). Organisational change may present a threat to valued identities which are likely to change. This, in turn, indicates that leaders need to have the skills and attributes to enable individuals to transform from one situation to another (Tyler et al, 2005; Reicher, 2005).

The challenges of leading and managing change in higher education institutions are highlighted by McRoy and Gibbs (2009) who recognised three principle categories of organisation change in UK universities which they identify as context, substance and stewardship.

It is the aspect of stewardship which is of special interest to this study. While the concept of stewardship, as proposed by McRoy and Gibbs (2009) is pertinent to this research, it fails to capture the value and influence of individuals in the process of managing change and does not convey the importance of the level to which individuals feel a sense of being an integral part of, as opposed to the recipients of the process of change.

A recurring theme emerging from Carnall (2003) and McRoy and Gibbs (2009) is the value of relationship building and how communities or groups of individuals shape and are shaped by the leadership process. It is the activity of shaping which is central to this research. Transforming an organisation is not merely a task or activity but rather a series of activities; a process which, according to Kotter (2007), will work best if specific stages are implemented that can build on each other. Effective leadership involves understanding and expediting the right interventions at the right time which include establishing a sense of urgency, forming a powerful coalition, creating and communicating a vision, empowering others to act on the vision, planning for and creating short term wins, consolidating improvements and producing more change and institutionalising new approaches (Kotter, 2007).

While these interventions provide a useful framework to consider the elements of managing change they should not be seen as a linear process. Each of Kotter's (2007) interventions may require varying degrees of emphasis during major organisational change. If leading change is seen within the context of complexity then such interventions should be viewed as a guide and not a definitive approach to leading change. The role of others involved in the process of change, together with their relationships and interactions is understated in Kotter's (1997) interventions.

Buchanan and Badham (1999) state that more enlightened leadership and management practices emphasise participative, empowering, coaching and facilitative styles. This implies that 'new' leaders may need to consider atypical leadership approaches and will rely less on traditional, formal authority and more on informal influencing strategies to motivate and inspire others.

2.7. Leadership Approaches

Three key approaches to leadership emerge from the literature review, namely transformational, instructional and distributed leadership. The three most commonly analysed approaches of transformational, instructional and distributed leadership warrant further clarification in order to set the context for this case study. Some definitions of these key approaches are ill defined, as the terms used to describe one approach by one source, may overlap with others. This is particularly true in the case of understanding the term devolved leadership, which is the term given to the model of leadership and management used in this research case study. There are elements of what is generally accepted as devolved leadership to be found in both the transformational and distributed definitions.

While the detailed explanations of these three approaches provide a constructive theoretical background to the different forms of leadership, it was not easy or even desirable to attempt to make a direct comparison with the leadership approach or model implemented in the case study.

2.7.1. Transformational Leadership

The current literature on leadership approaches indicates that transformational leadership involves a significant degree of influence by one individual which mobilises others, often referred to as followers in this context, to achieve goals which are not normally perceived to be within their grasp. According to Bass (1985) and Bass and Avoli (1990) transformational leaders stimulate new perspectives amongst their colleagues, to higher levels of potential and aspiration in order to achieve set goals. The key element in transformational leadership is regarded as an ability to encourage others to excel or surpass their expected level of achievement. The emphasis is on the individual who provides the drive and inspiration.

There are divided opinions as to whether transformational leadership is more concerned with organisational transformation rather than the transformation of people (Bryman, 2009). Different situations are likely to demand different leadership styles and transformational leadership not may be appropriate in some contexts so should not be seen as the panacea for higher education leadership challenges (Bryman, 2009; Bass and Avolio, 1990; Bolden et al, 2008; Northouse, 2004).

2.7.2. Instructional leadership

The literature on leadership approaches highlights instructional leadership as an optional model for education focused organisations to consider. However, it appears to be a more prevalent model in secondary education institutions other than those concerned with higher education. The dimensions associated with instructional leadership as identified by Hallinger (2003) include defining an organisation's mission, managing the curriculum and promoting a positive learning culture. However, instructional leadership is characterised as highly directive, following a top-down approach to education leadership with a charismatic and seemingly, controlling leader (Hallinger, 2003).

The popularity of this model, according to Hallinger (2003), is due to the research evidence indicating that there was a direct positive correlation

between implementing this model and achieving improvements in an organisation's performance. The leader's role in this model is to ensure the organisation has clear goals and these are communicated effectively. The leader plays an active, 'hands on' role and is directly immersed in the day to day activity of improving teaching standards.

Instructional leadership is likely to be most effective in small organisations where there is a need to shift the performance of both the organisation and individuals from a relatively low level standard of performance to a more optimal level. Although it may be suitable for short term, dramatic change it may prove less effective in situations requiring the management of sustainable change. The culture of higher education institutions, which promotes independent thinking, analysis, synthesis, curiosity, invention and a search for new knowledge, is unlikely to respond positively to, or accept willingly, an instructional model of leadership.

Studies undertaken on change management and organisational effectiveness consistently highlight the skills and attributes of senior leaders as key contributing factors to securing successful change, improvement and overall organisational effectiveness (Hallinger, 2003). These same skills and attributes such as having a clear sense of direction, personal and professional credibility and effective communication and vision are also associated with effective departmental leadership in higher education (Bryman, 2009). While there is evidence identifying these as key leadership attributes there is little reference how these are implemented or make an impact in the practice of leadership.

It could be argued that attempting to establish a single definition of leadership is less than helpful. Understanding the different facets of leadership as an activity which incorporates a complex set of attributes, actions, collaborations, relationships and agreed direction may be of more value in supporting efforts to gain a deeper understanding of the practice of leadership in higher education.

In addition to the literature referring to instructional and transformational leadership approaches, a third approach, that of distributed leadership is the

subject of academic comment and research and possibly the closest in description to the model of leadership and management in this research.

2.7.3. Distributed and Devolved leadership

The increase in complexity of structures and processes designed to ensure higher education institutions respond successfully and effectively to external drivers, as described previously, dictates a new mode of leadership-thinking which is described by various commentators as shared, collective or distributed leadership (Bolden et al, 2008).

While the literature on what constitutes distributed and devolved leadership is divided as to the model's validity and worth (Lumby, 2013; Bolden et al, 2009), it is seen as an alternate to the traditional, leader-centric approach in that leadership responsibilities are dispersed throughout the organisation (Bolden et al, 2009).

Devolved leadership might be best understood as the distribution of strategic, operational and decision making roles and responsibilities to individuals and teams which are not part of the normal institutional hierarchy. It is a form of emergent leadership which refers to a 'bottom up' process of collaborative and informal leadership. This enables individuals and teams to assume responsibility for the generation of new ideas and initiatives (Bolden et al, 2009).

The recurrent theme in studies of leadership of the strong, all-encompassing role of a leader is challenged by Gronn (2002) who refers to distributed leadership as a new unit of analysis. As organisations such as higher education institutions become more complex, responsive to priorities and customer focused in order to retain their competitive position, they are likely to adopt new ways of managing the coordination of competing agendas, the necessary divisions in labour and allocation of responsibilities (Gronn, 2002; Bolden, 2007).

While distributed leadership as a concept is not necessarily new, the literature seems focused on analysing the deficiencies in the 'stand- alone

leader' paradigm, rather than accentuate the possibilities of distributed leadership (Yukl, 1999; Gronn, 2002). This omission might account for the perception of the perceived newness of distributed leadership as an approach.

However, not all commentators see distributed leadership and management as a positive model. Shattock (2010) advises that devolved decision making can diminish flexibility, constrain opportunism and actually render decision making more time-consuming regarding major, significant institutional issues. A similar view of devolution is highlighted by Taylor (2007) who advises that devolution may lead to tensions between the need for strong authoritative, central, direction and the drive for devolved responsibilities and incentives within the higher education sector. Neither Taylor (2007) nor Shattock (2010) seem to support the devolution of organisational business and yet both acknowledge that this is a time when organisations need to be flexible and agile in their decision making and responsive to external drivers. A devolved model may be the preferred approach to ensure this flexibility and agility.

Distributed leadership may be seen as more an analytical framework rather than a specific leadership approach according to Bolden et al (2009). While other commentators believe there is little robust evidence to suggest or support the perceived efficacy of distributed leadership and are dubious about the apparent widespread enthusiasm for this approach in higher education (Lumby, 2013).

The apparent widespread nature and domination of the concept of distributed leadership as a new and empowering model of leadership, is according to Lumby (2013) used 'largely to create a mirage, an apolitical workplace' (Lumby, 2013, p.582). Further, it is suggested that there is a danger that distributed leadership is being seen as a form of leadership ideal.

Bolden et al (2009) are less sceptical than Lumby (2013) on the value of distributed leadership and believe the value of such a model is in the concept rather than the practice. This may well help to shape greater participation and ownership at a broader layer within a given community but that there is a danger that devolution of responsibility may give the illusion of a shift in

power when in reality the underlying dynamics of power and control remain unchanged. Current literature is divided on the sustainability of a distributed and devolved model as a successful leadership approach and the prevailing view is that at worst it is a rebranding exercise which does little to change the status quo in an organisation. However, somewhat dangerously according to Lumby (2013), a devolved model may give the impression of a new wave of leadership and at best, provides individuals with newly discovered authority which may lead to greater control of their activities.

In contrast to Lumby's (2013) analysis of the apparent promotion of devolved leadership, there is a view that if organisations are to adapt to the complexity of thriving in a global market then new ways of leadership which involves decision making by teams of individuals and shared leadership as opposed to the more traditional practice of one leader, are essential to success and survival (Harris and Spillane, 2008). A devolved model of leadership centres on the interactions between individuals rather than the actions of those in formal leadership roles and its principal focus is on how leadership practice may influence organisational improvement and achievement (Harris and Spillane, 2008).

Distributed leadership, as the preferred approach in complex organisational environments, is also supported by Harris and Spillane (2008) who caution against perceiving distributed leadership as a 'panacea' but suggest that it stimulates interest and focus on leadership as practice, rather than leadership as a role. This practice is centred on the interactions and not the actions of individuals in formal and informal roles (Spillane, 2006). This leadership approach relies on various degrees of expertise, knowledge and skills from several individuals. Such individuals may not typically be engaged in leadership roles but have a value in contributing to how an organisation is managed and organised.

This differentiation between role and practice is significant because of the change of focus of leadership involving how relationships work with the practice of leadership rather than responsibility, success and achievement being attributed to a specific individual.

In summary, distributed or devolved leadership relies on individuals working as an interactive network with a combination of initiative and expertise, dependent on open or seamless boundaries of leadership. It is predicated on the variations of expertise that exist in an organisation and not just reliant on 'the few'. The variety of expertise is actively used as an advantage in progressing the organisation's overall strategy and not perceived as an obstacle which needs to be unified (Bennett et al, 2003).

It is perhaps too simplistic to view the leadership approaches of instructional, transformational and distributed leadership as contrasting paradigms. An alternative approach to seeing instructional, transformational and distributed leadership practices as competing or alternative models might be to see these as part of a continuum of possibilities or options (Gronn, 2002). A polarisation of support for one or the other is unhelpful, according to Gronn (2008) who suggests it is more desirable and practical to have an accepted list of principles of leadership which accommodates a range of possibilities related to the specific context. The guiding constant aspect of leadership, cited by a large number of scholars in this area, is the source of influence, which can at times be focused and at other times distributed. Similarly, the agents of influence may be individuals or, in different circumstances, groups of individuals.

Leadership of change cannot be seen in isolation from the environment which hosts not only the process itself but most importantly, individuals who will either be part of the driving force or recipients of the outcomes.

2.8. The Nature of Organisations and Process of Organisational Change

Organisational change is associated closely with shifts in organisational culture (McNay, 1995). The organisation at the centre of this research is a higher education institution, a university. It seems an impossible and almost meaningless task to attempt to capsule a university culture in one or two themes or domains. The complexity and even super complexity of universities makes defining one overall culture of an institution very problematic (Barnett, 2003).

Barnett (2011) suggests that universities are in a permanent process of dynamic, evolving state to ensure they manage the everyday pace of uncertainty and the unexpected. It is when institutions look to the future and plan what it is they need to be and how they achieve this vision which presents major challenges to the status quo. It is at this stage that the dynamic, evolving state becomes more hectic and in line with what is seen as major organisational change (Barnett, 2011).

Defining what is generally understood by the term 'university' is far from a simple exercise. According to Barnett (2003; 2011;) it is a mistake to conflate the notion of 'higher education' with the term 'university' as it does a disservice to both entities. His proposition is that a university is more than a place to experience 'higher' learning but that a university is composed of knowledge generation, knowledge sharing, questioning of existing knowledge and the other activities of consultancy, teaching and learning, enterprise, scholarship, public and community engagement, all of which exhibit differing sets of values, beliefs and practices. These features imply that identification of a single, institutional culture is questionable (Barnett, 2011). However, in spite of the limited definition of culture, the term is used in the literature on organisational change and for the purpose of this research is understood as the values, beliefs and behaviours of a particular group of individuals which distinguishes them from others.

Identifying a single, agreed definition of what is understood by the word culture is problematic and remains highly contested and the notion of discrete cultures is flawed (Lumby and Foskett, 2015). However, the process of organisational change is sometimes aligned with changing a particular culture in preference of an alternative, whereas the real focus of change is on the thinking, acceptance or otherwise, of new ways of working and networking of individuals. The four models of organisational cultures as identified by McNay (1995), namely a collegial, bureaucratic, corporate and entrepreneurial culture, offer a useful framework to gain a deeper understanding of the environment and working practices of both an institution as a whole and the constituent communities. There is a clear indication by

McNay (1995) that no one institution will conform entirely to a specific model, but that all four coexist with differing balances.

Organisational change needs to be viewed in light of incremental progress and according to Clark (2004), for organisations to be successful, they need to engage in 'cumulative incrementalism' and that 'cumulative change propels a university forward' (Clark, 2004, p. 92). This perspective does not favour large-scale, strategic change but supports an approach which concentrates on maintaining the momentum of change through small, cumulative steps with the emphasis on momentum.

Despite the lack of an agreed understanding of what constitutes the concept of culture, the link between organisational change and the shifting patterns of values, beliefs, behaviours and symbolic artefacts remains a useful framework with which to explore the effects and impact of change. While consensus from the literature is that the culture of an organisation should not be viewed as homogeneous, there is a view that a dominant culture in an organisation is identifiable and that culture may be seen as a 'management means of coalescing values and behaviour' (Lumby and Foskett, 2015, p.98).

The link between an organisation's culture and its response to change is described by McNay (1995) as representing different ways individuals work together with their corresponding ideological assumptions and working practices. An alternative proposition for this link between culture and organisational change from Barnett (2011) is that universities respond to the external policy, economic and global drivers by shaping, adjusting and adapting their cultures to accommodate the changes successfully.

The impact of significant, continuous changes in funding for higher education has presented universities with financial constraints and challenges which, according to Shattock (2010), have restricted or reduced the collegial approach in favour of a more managerial style. Using Shattock's (2010) observations on the two polarised higher education cultural approaches, the collegial and managerial, perhaps it is worth considering whether it is feasible for a single organisation to have elements of both cultures within its internal environment.

He states that during the 1980s and 1990s, the pre 1992, more research intensive universities were shifting, in cultural terms, from a collegial culture towards bureaucratic and corporate cultures and that post 1992 universities were moving from a bureaucratic to corporate culture.

Blackmore (2016) adds a further dimension to an organisation's performance and reputation, namely that of prestige. Implementing a process of major organisational change may present a risk to both the reputation and prestige of an organisation. As the higher education landscape, both nationally and globally, becomes more competitive, an organisation's prestige becomes important in achieving distinctiveness and academic standing within the sector.

Blackmore (2016) refers to Brewer et al (2002) in suggesting that there is a subtle distinction between reputation and prestige in that an institution's reputation may improve quickly and just as fleetingly diminish, if not sustained, whereas prestige is more enduring and generally likely to reduce at a more gradual or slower rate. It is possible that higher education institutions make an informed decision to build prestige rather than reputation because it is considered more sustainable and enduring. However, as the higher education sector becomes more market-driven and student fees become a major income stream for universities, the priority for institutions may be to develop and establish a strong and positive reputation in one aspect of its business and focus on prestige in another. An aspiration for prestige by an organisation may impede the need or appetite for change and this situation may lead to divisions of power and politics in organisational communities and established holders of power.

The co-existence of power and politics in understanding the complexity of change may not always be acknowledged by leaders and managers in their desire to implement organisational change. While Hughes (2010) and Lukes (2005) refer to the challenges of providing a definition of power in organisational change, it may be helpful to clarify an understanding of the concept of power and politics as part of the process of change for the purpose of this and future research.

2.9. Power and Politics in Organisational Change.

The part played by the use and even abuse of power in organisational change, according to Hughes (2010), remains a highly contested concept with limited consensus amongst academic commentators. While Lukes (2005) seems to support this view by stating that there is no apparent agreement on how to define, study or measure power used in organisational change, he does offer an explanation of the part played by power. The link between power and how decisions are made during organisational change is evident in the process of decision making when there are conflicting interests, impact of those decisions when there are conflicting interests and the political systems which are set in place to prevent any demands or contestations becoming political issues (Lukes, 2005).

The current and anticipated drivers for change present a challenge to higher education institutions as to how they create and embed a sense of shared purpose and collective effort within the organisation in order to meet uncertain, often competing and divergent demands, rather than merely rely on the personnel occupying senior posts in the organisation. A distributed or devolved model of leadership might facilitate a sense of shared purpose but is also likely to dilute or distribute the existing locus of power. This situation may of course be a desirable one. However, as there is a shift in power so will there need to be some attention within an organisation to the governance process and effective communication channels in order to avoid the potential of duplication of purpose and effort, confusion and fragmentation of activities.

Leading major organisational change within a devolved model of leadership and management is likely to present more opportunity for political manoeuvring (Mintzberg et al, 1998). This implies that leaders of organisational change need to be prepared for this manoeuvring and this preparation may include managing through hierarchical authority, the development of a shared vision and organisational culture and the use of power and authority (Pfeffer, 1992). The combination of managing through hierarchical authority and implementation of a devolved model seems at first

glance to be contradictory and supports the view by Lumby (2013) that the organisational reality is that there will be little change in the locus of power with a devolved model, merely the perception that there is a shift.

Power relations and change relate to whether individuals consider the specific proposed change and reforms are likely to present them with greater benefits and satisfaction or whether they act out of duty or an awareness of what one is supposed to do which is a more corporate - led approach (Mahoney et al, 2010). There may be third element to consider which involves those individuals who fail to analyse the potential impact of proposed changes at the early stages of the change process. These individuals may not be aware of the benefits or otherwise of the planned change or inclined to a more corporate-led approach of acceptance of the planned change, until the changes have commenced and implementation is in progress. It is this group of individuals who may well be the late adopters or active objectors of the proposed changes.

Identifying a definition of power in such situations is problematic but one explanation might be that 'power is the capacity of individuals to exert their will over others' (Buchanan and Badham, 1999, p.611). An alternative explanation is that power is the force that affects outcomes (Hardy, 1996). It is probable that a combination of both these explanations is more useful than a concentration on one over the other.

The presence of politics in organisational life according to Buchanan and Badham (1999) is commonly associated with underhand tactics, manipulation, deviousness and cunning, all of which are inclined to be viewed as negative attributes or behaviour. However, alternative views of politics and organisational change suggest that political behaviour is not only unavoidable in organisational change but necessary in fostering debate, analysis and creativity and therefore to be seen in a positive light but not always recognised as an important aspect of leadership (Buchanan and Bedlam, 1999).

Whereas there are clearly dysfunctional effects of politics in organisations there are, in contrast, situations such as implementation of major

organisational change where politics can serve a functional role (Mintzberg et al, 1998). Implementing organisational change may well involve the political behaviours of negotiation, bargaining, ability to compromise in a timely manner and the tactics of influence. It might be argued that leading organisational change without these political skills will lead to failure and that political behaviour can be effective and positive in the process of managing major organisational change (Buchanan and Badham, 2008).

Perhaps it is the duality of power and politics which needs to be seen as underpinning organisational change as opposed to perceiving these two elements as independent. Organisational power as a political tool and the importance of hierarchical authority in the influence of both power and political behaviour in organisational change may be used by senior staff to achieve specific actions and in doing so, may override the interests of other individuals (Soulsby and Clark, 2013). One approach adopted by individuals in organisational change to both support and challenge organisational change is to form coalitions or alliances to ensure greater strength of argument and counter argument.

2.10. The Role of Individuals and their Impact on the Process of Change.

The relative position of individuals in the institution's hierarchy is likely to have an influence on the strength or degree of power held by those for whom the benefits of the change will be minimal. In other words, the power relations might be reversed if individuals whose situation will be worse off by the change not being achieved are considered more senior and out-number those who are less likely to be benefit from the change. The rationale and strategy for the change might require less effort if the motivational drive for the change is perceived by the majority to be advantageous (Dorrado, 2005; Lockett, 2014).

It is important to question whether any of the accepted theories of institutional change can or should be applied universally to institutions as conventional models. Institutions and especially the higher education sector, are not uniform structures but rather a complex collection of sub cultures, each with their own links to the wider, corporate structure. So while there

may be an overall, macro institutional perspective to change, the internal sub cultures may hold a different perspective and therefore one theory may not explain the nuances of how the process of change happens, or not as the case may be. In universities these sub cultures may be identified through different discipline interests and expertise, institutional roles, teaching or research focused, academic and administrative groups and academic hierarchies.

The virtual power of individuals is an important factor in their ability to form coalitions to enact or obstruct specific change (Mahoney et al, 2010; Hall, 2010). The existence of coalitions is not just important to the study of how institutional change takes place but an integral part of organisational politics (Mintzberg et al, 1998). Coalitions can significantly impact on shifts in power and influence and represent a source of strength as a part of organisational change. However, they can just as easily become divided with internal tensions and consequently less compelling, less secure and more unstable which once again is likely to lead to shifts in power from one coalition to another (Ocasio, 1994)

While coalitions can either support or oppose a particular shift in direction, individual identities and key players within such coalitions may also have their separate goals and ambitions. This means that although a coalition indicates an alliance of individuals, there is likely to be variation of individual advantages and disadvantages within that same coalition. Individuals who are likely to benefit least from the proposed change are likely to require more effort to persuade and therefore in a stronger position to resist the change. In contrast, when the situation for individuals will be worse off if the change is not achieved then political strategies are likely to be deployed which will both formulate a feasible strategy for change and enlist a constituency in support of that strategy (Hall, 2010)

A crucial element to leading organisational change is the ability to create social power through the development of a common social identity; the ability to direct this power to overcome identified resistance and finally, the

effectiveness or otherwise, of opposing views, especially the degree to which this contrasting resistance is organised (Reicher et al, 2005).

2.11. The Social Positions and Identity of Individuals in Organisational Change.

During a period of organisational change, the social and professional positions occupied by individuals have an important influence on the process as a whole. Individuals whose social positions are on the fringe or periphery of an organisation during this period are more likely to initiate change that departs from current practice but may lack the power to drive the change. In contrast, individuals whose social positions are at the core of an organisation are less likely to promote a change which deviates in any way. However, they have, according to Lockett et al (2014), more leverage and power to implement the change if they are persuaded or wish to do so.

Lockett et al (2014) suggest that as a decision is made to instigate major organisational change, there needs to be serious consideration to the social positions of individuals who are to be the agents of change. It may prove less fruitful to engage individuals in existing, high status positions to lead the process of change. The reason for this is that their sense-making approach to organisational change is likely to perpetuate the existing pattern of behaviour. One conclusion from this view is that it is therefore prudent to identify and engage change agents in positions not at the apex of the organisation. This approach is liable to have its risks, challenges and protestations but these individuals are likely to be less inclined to defend or protect their personal preferences.

The Social position and identity of individuals in organisational change are often portrayed in the literature in two aspects, that of leaders and followers. The perception of followers playing the passive partner in the leader and the led relationship is challenged by Van Vugt et al (2008), who suggest that followers have more control than may be first perceived. This control is exercised through their ability to assess situations and calculate what the optimum approach is likely to be and who shall lead, in order to secure the best result for any given situation. Leadership is not simply a matter of

focusing on leaders or the relationship between leaders and followers, but is more to do with the dynamics within a social group (Reicher et al, 2005).

According to Reicher et al (2005), it is therefore the followers, in the form of a group, which have the power to transform social relations. The sustainability and viability of a leader's vision is only as effective and successful as the ability of followers to make it a reality. However, in times of organisational change, the means by which individuals work through a process of interpretation and explanation of the information they receive in order to form a plausible narrative which will guide their actions and decisions is an important aspect related to this research (Lockett et al, 2014).

2.12. Summary of Main Issues.

Key policy, economic and market forces are seen as the drivers for major organisation change in the higher education sector. These drivers are compelling higher education institutions to review their current models of delivering high quality education and research. The literature suggests that universities are likely to select specific leadership approaches to manage the policy initiatives and drivers for change which in turn, will need to consider a managerial or collegial approach, or a combination of both approaches, in order to meet the challenges. Managerial or business-like models may not always fit easily with the wider academic community who may feel the true purpose of higher education is being diluted and their working environment becoming more controlled and constrained.

The challenges related to managing major institutional change are likely to be concerned with managing uncertainty and unpredictability and will therefore require a more collaborative approach to leadership. There are contested views in the literature as to whether devolution of responsibilities and accountabilities is a useful approach to foster such collaboration. However, there is greater consensus that organisations will need to adopt more flexibility and agility in their decision making practice in order to be responsive to current and external drivers.

Teaching and learning in higher education is a prime example of the current drivers for change arising from the policy arena. This focus on teaching and

learning highlights the relationship between research and teaching which is especially pronounced in research intensive institutions. While there is no empirical evidence that the activities of teaching and research are inseparable or symbiotic, the belief and perception that both activities are mutually beneficial and complimentary remains within the academic environment.

The main themes from the literature relating to organisational change highlight the influence on leadership of this process from organisational culture, the role of political alliances and shifts in power and control. Leadership of major organisational change is complex with relationships and social positions of individuals having a significant impact on the progress of change.

Major organisational change will be accompanied by shifts in power and influence with some stakeholders experiencing limited or diminished authority while others will gain an increase in potential impact and influence. The politics of skilled negotiation, proposing compromises and ability to use influence and persuasion are all crucial elements of leading and managing organisational change.

The following chapter outlines the methodology and methods used to explore the research question while identifying the ethical process and limitations of the study.

Chapter 3

Research Design, Methodology and Methods

3.1. Introduction

While the previous chapter discusses the relevant literature which underpins and sets the context of this research, this chapter describes the research design, selection of methodology, choice and rationale of methods.

The first part of this chapter outlines the wider context of previous research approaches on leadership management and in particular, education leadership in higher education institutions; it then proceeds to describe the selected research design theoretical framework, methods and alternative research paradigms which were considered.

3.2. Initiating the Research Process

While I was confident in identifying the broad area of research that I wanted to investigate, the process of formulating a specific, clear and focused research question proved to be more challenging than anticipated. The aim of this research is to critically examine a specific model of organisational change in enhancing the learning and teaching agenda in a research intensive higher education institution, through addressing the following research question:

How does a devolved model of organisation leadership and management impact on the education agenda in a research intensive university?

Travers (2001) refers to communities for researchers who share similar epistemological and methodological assumptions. The advice from Travers (2001) is that it is important to develop a theoretically informed approach to a research project and that the best studies which are both useful and persuasive have a well-defined theoretical focus. The rationale for a theoretical perspective as stated by Travers (2001) underpinned my choice of methodology which would increase my understanding of the research topic.

My world under exploration was the reality of leadership of education in a research intensive higher education institution. Such institutions are complex organisations with strong, competing agendas. According to Musson (2004), understanding how organisations function involves understanding the ambiguities, uncertainties and problems which individuals experience and resolve on a daily basis. I wanted to use a research approach which would allow individuals to express their experiences of the contradictions, indecisions, confusions and milestones, all of which would help to illuminate how a particular situation of major organisational change is implemented.

The complexity of leadership as a process does not lend itself to a quantitative methodology, especially as I wanted to understand the process in a defined situation from the perspective of key participants in the education leadership process. Conger (1998) explains in some detail why qualitative studies in leadership research are relatively rare. One of the reasons given is that traditionally, qualitative research has a role in the exploratory phases of a research study but then the tendency is to use quantitative analysis to examine the data which has been generated by the qualitative exploration (Conger 1998).

One of my aims was to understand the interactions and relationships between individuals who are directly engaged with the education leadership agenda, therefore it was important to use qualitative methods which would capture the interpretive elements of the leadership process.

I was aware that the choice of an epistemological approach which best suited the research topic would also need to be compatible with my own personal set of epistemological assumptions which I would bring to the research process, as these would have an effect on the way I would understand and interpret the data. Neuman (1997) explains an interpretive approach / paradigm as

Holds that social life is based on social interactions and socially constructed meaning systems

(Neuman, 1997, p.69).

My research question were well suited to this interpretive paradigm in that I wanted to learn what specific individuals in the organisation believed to be happening; why they did what they did and their views of the experience of the process of change. In addition, interpretive practice according to Lincoln and Denzin (2003), engages institutional frameworks, both formal and informal categories, in order to help gain a deeper understanding of what is taking place and why.

3.3. Research Design

The selected research design is an exploratory case study. This is generally applied in situations where a researcher wishes to understand complex social phenomena; it is therefore well suited for investigators who wish to identify meaningful elements which contribute to real life events (Yin, 2003). The exploratory case study paradigm is promoted by Lee et al (2007) as the optimum method to obtain a detailed understanding of a particular phenomenon. Yin (2003) refutes the argument that case studies are mainly a useful preliminary research strategy, only suitable for the exploratory phase of the research process, stating that case studies can be a valid research method for exploratory, descriptive or exploratory purposes.

Cohen et al (2004) advocated that exploratory case studies investigate and report the complex, dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance. They state that case study: 'provides a unique example of real people in real situations' (Cohen et al, 2004, p.181). This definition portrays as well as justifies the purpose of this research.

Exploratory case studies strive to portray what it is like to be in a particular situation. Stake (1995) describes case study as 'the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances' (Stake, 1995, p.11). The process of change impacting on the education agenda in a specific organisation, and how individuals have managed and steered that change, constitute the 'particularity' which is well suited to a case study approach for educational enquiry. Case study is my preferred choice to undertake an in-depth

exploration of a 'singularity' in its natural setting (Bassey, 2006). Therefore, in summary, the research design is an exploratory case study within an interpretivist paradigm.

3.4. Theoretical Framework and Approach

The theoretical approach chosen for this research is Activity Theory (Engestrom, 1999a). There are three main reasons for my choice of this theoretical approach. The first is that the literature highlights the dynamic nature of leadership in organisational change. Secondly, that previous studies on leadership practice in universities have used this theoretical approach and finally, as a new researcher it provided a clear framework with which to study my chosen topic.

Selected literature on leadership (Gronn, 2000; Spillane et al, 2004; Kotter, 1990; Kotter, 2007) combined with my own personal experience over an extended period of time, highlighted the dynamic aspect of leadership. The dynamic aspect of leadership is considered as a process of formation of relationships between individuals and groups, historical legacies and tangible processes and structures to achieve agreed goals and strategy.

The origins of Activity Theory can be traced to Vygotsky (1896-1934). The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of knowledge acquisition. A model of Vygotsky's theory is depicted as a triangulation of subject + object + mediating artefact, referred to as 'first generation Activity Theory' as illustrated in figure 3.1 (Bakhurst 2009). This first stage in the evolution of Activity Theory is centred on the concept of human behaviour and actions are mediated by artefacts whose purpose is to prompt action.

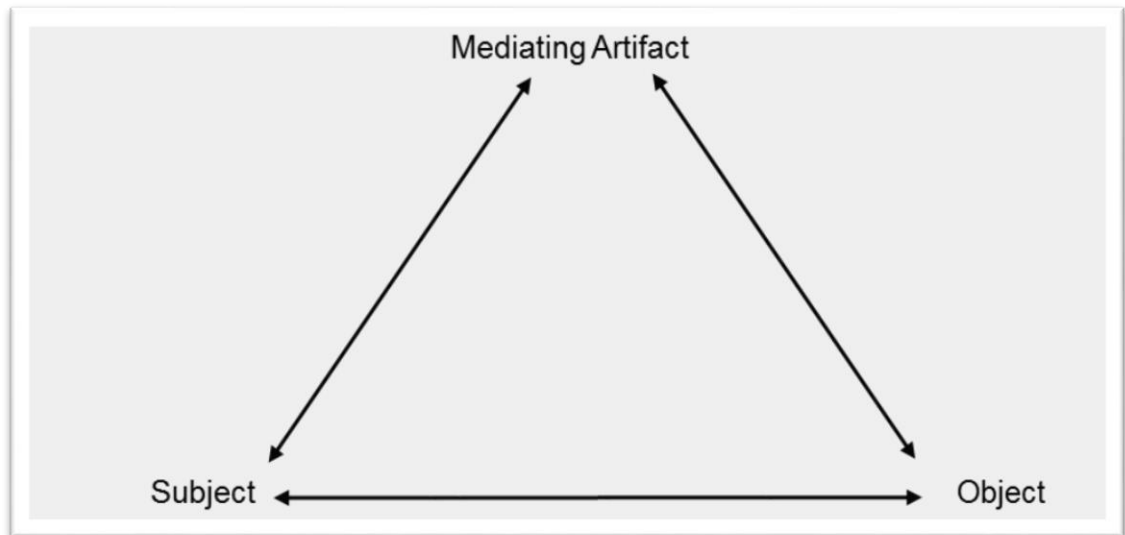


Figure 3.1. Vygotsky's model of mediation (adapted from Bakhurst 2009).

A second generation of this theory emerged through the work of Leontiev, who defines the difference between the meaning of activity and action. Leontiev described an action, in this context, as something undertaken by an individual or individuals to achieve a goal; whereas an activity involves individuals working together, a community, who work in a structured way with allocated roles and tasks towards a common goal and with a common motive. Bakhurst (2009) translates this as explaining that the term 'action' is applied to the individual and the term activity is applied to a collective. The collective in this research forms an important element in the process of major organisational change where there are a numerous roles working towards the institution's strategic goal.

Engestrom (1999a) builds on Leontiev's position and diagrammatically describes an Activity System which emphasises the dynamics and relationships between the various elements. Figure 3.2 illustrates the complexity of these dynamics

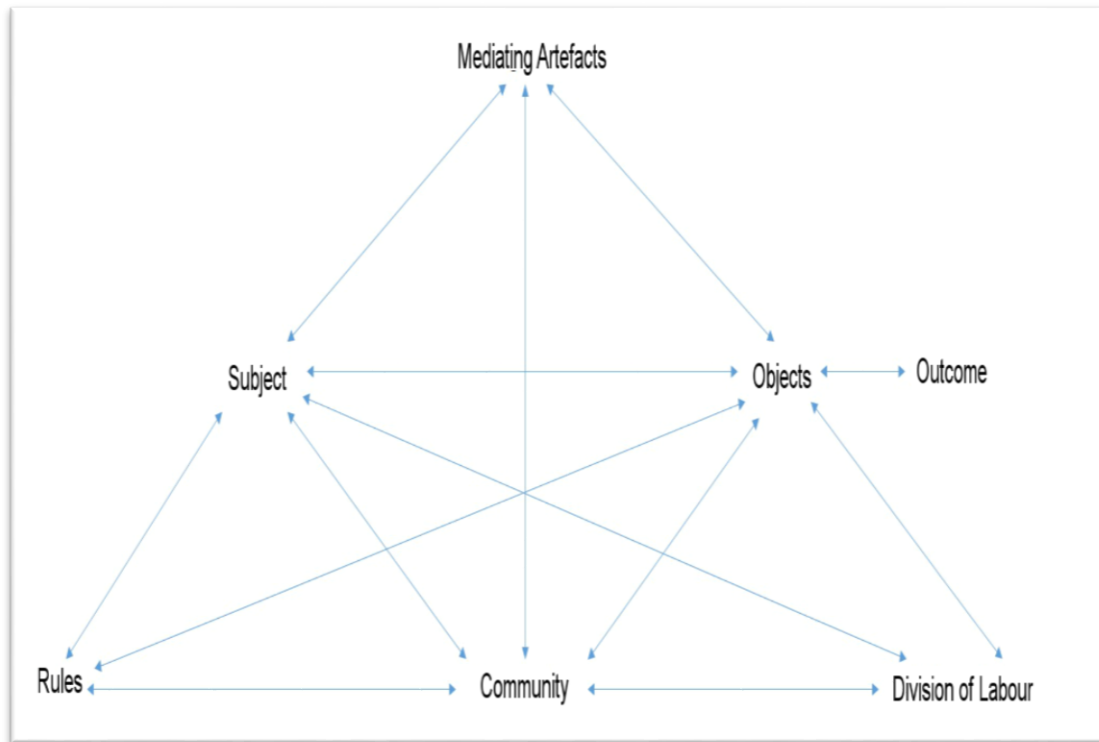


Figure 3.2. Second-generation Activity Theory - A complex model of an activity system adapted from Engestrom (1999a).

Engestrom (1999a) expands Vygotsky’s model (figure 3.1) to explain the ‘societal and collaborative nature’ of actions. It might be appropriate to define these terms in more detail. The subject refers to the element which initiates or constructs the object. The object is the motivating influence or focus of the activity which is transformed into eventual outcomes. Objects are not goals, as goals are attached to specific actions. Mediating artefacts or tools are the terms describing what are used to achieve the outcomes and mediate the activity between the subject and the object. Division of labour defines how tasks and responsibilities are shared or divided between the communities as they engage in the activity. Rules refer to the conventions or norms which constrain or surround the actions and interactions within the activity. These conventions are not static but subject to continuous movement through renewal and development.

Engestrom (1999b) describes four types of mediating artefacts which include (a) ‘what’ artefacts which identify and describe objects, (b) ‘how’ artefacts which guide and direct processes within or between objects, (c) ‘why’

artefacts which diagnose or explain the behaviour of objects and (d) 'where to' artefacts which envision the future state or potential development of objects.

A community may not only be constrained by rules but can actually mould and formulate them. According to Engestrom (1996) activity systems are characterised by their inner contradictions. That is to say that at one point a community will be leading change and at another implementing and experiencing it.

There are cogent arguments which raise an element of doubt as to whether Activity Theory is in fact a theory in the strictest philosophical sense, but rather more of model, a framework (Bakhurst, 2009). Bakhurst (2009) explains why Activity Theory might be attractive to those researchers who want to explore a specific phenomenon which itself is part of a complex process or system, but is limited to certain situations. This reflects my choice of topic which is one of those 'certain situations'.

According to Daniels (2004), Engestrom did this to facilitate an examination of the part played by a community, as opposed to shining a spot light on the individual. This research studies a collective of academic staff who were placed in a certain situation bounded by time and context, with roles to lead a major aspect of organisational change within a context of shifting the education leadership to more of an academic responsibility. Activity Theory, according to Engestrom (2000), has evolved into a widely accepted research approach which is suited to the study of work as an activity. Further, Engestrom (2000) believes that topics such as learning organisations and organisational change lack robust detail on what constitutes the specific elements of the learning or change processes. Activity Theory provides a framework with which to understand the complexity of interactions and relationships which take place in the world of work; in this case, education leadership through organisational change.

Engestrom (1999a) proposes that Activity Theory may be summarised against five essential principles. Against each principle, I highlight its relevance to this study.

The first principle is that while it is useful to understand this concept through its constituent parts of subject, mediating artefacts, objects, outcomes, the main unit of analysis is the collective activity system as a whole and its relations to others activity systems. Education leadership, as a process and practice central to a programme of organisational change, is the core of this research, including its relationship and alignment to the research agenda in the institution.

The second principle is the 'multi-voicedness' of activity systems. This relates to the complexity of multiple opinions, backgrounds and personal significances of a given community, as well as the history of previous practice and behaviour. The relevance of this principle is that in this research the aim is to capture the views of participants in the organisational change process from different levels. The assumption is that their previous experiences will have an impact not only on their responses to the interview questions but their perception of the overall model of change.

The third principle is what Engestrom refers to as 'historicity'. This indicates the value in this case study, of studying activities in the context of the institution's previous history as it this which has shaped and influenced the current position. An important facet in understanding the process of implementation and impact of the devolved model of leadership and management at the centre of this research, is to gain an appreciation of the origins of this change and the predecessor of this new model.

The fourth principle is the 'centrality of contradictions and tensions' as the drivers and sources of change. While such contradictions may create a sense of instability which may be uncomfortable to experience, any contradictions and tensions may also initiate change the activity system. The assumption is that, as part of the inevitable shifts in power and control of the education agenda, whether perceived or real, tensions and contradictions will emerge and form an important lever for the success, or otherwise, of the change.

The fifth principle relates to the possibility of significant transformations in activity systems. Contradictions may lead participants to question the

accepted position and subsequently lead to a collective visioning of a radical, different perspective. This principle correlates with what might emerge from the research process. The aim of the implementation of a devolved model is to challenge the established structures and academic processes, in anticipation that there would be a transformation in the existing model of educational leadership. The original motivation of the organisational change was to initiate and instil a refreshed sense of ownership and responsibility for education practice in the academic community. Therefore, the aim of my research is to investigate the outcome and process of this goal. Leadership, as both a practice and process, is the focus of my study and this underpins the choice of Activity Theory as the preferred research approach.

Engestrom (1999a) describes Activity Theory's relevance to the challenge of facing situations where a new culture is to be formulated. This study examines the features which are part of the process of transformation. He further proposes that such a methodology is best employed when the researcher enters the activity systems undergoing such transformations.

Leadership relative to the shifting relationship of power and control, which in turn leads to contradictions and tensions within a community or organisation, lends itself well to Activity Theory. My intention in using this paradigm was to highlight the elements which constitute the micro world of a particular situation, in this case organisational change. Arnseth (2008) states that with Activity Theory, the element of focus is the activity system itself. Therefore an analysis of activity involves the individuals who take part in that activity, the rules of engagement, the roles undertaken by those individuals and finally the tensions, disturbances and contradictions in the activity system as a whole (Engestrom, 2000).

Peim (2009) highlights the object-oriented nature of activity in Activity Theory in that the object is the element which motivates the activity which finally leads to the outcomes.

3.5. Activity Theory's Contribution to the Research Process

Activity Theory was used in similar studies on leadership practice by both Gronn (2002) and Spillane et al (2004), and formed the basis of a systematic inquiry into distributed leadership in higher education by Bolden et al (2009). This previous use of Activity Theory in studies which are aligned to the topic of this research provided an opportunity to see the theory in practice. As my understanding and appreciation of how Activity Theory contributes to an exploration of organisational change, it became apparent that it would be suitable for my study. Activity Theory has the potential to provide a framework with which to study the various components which, when combined, become part of the whole process of leadership of a particular point in time of major institutional change.

The focus in Bolden's (2004) study is the activity or practice of leadership which involves a number of elements such as historical context, numerous interactions and contradictions, all of which constitute a unit or system of activity which needs to be understood in its totality. Such a unit or system should not be reduced to individual actions, which in themselves are only part of the larger, richer, more complex picture. Engestrom (1996) describes this concept as:

An activity system integrates the subject, the object and the instruments (material tools as well as signs and symbols) into a unified whole. (Engestrom, 1996, p.67).

Activity Theory is closely associated with studying organisational change. Bakhurst (2009) suggests that as a framework to understand the structure and complexity of leadership as a practice, Activity Theory is an attractive and practical choice.

There are several ways in which using Activity Theory supported my research. As a novice researcher it was reassuring to identify a theoretical framework which had been used in previous research studying the multi-dimensional, complex process of leadership in higher education institutions. Activity Theory directed my thinking on how to formulate key questions which acted as a guide for a structured exploration of leadership as a process, as

well as an activity. The main elements of the model, namely subject, object, mediating artefacts or tools, division of labour and rules provided a structured, systematic framework with which to study the dynamics, relationships, processes and tensions incorporated in leadership of change. I used Activity Theory to identify and deconstruct these various elements of the research topic while maintaining an awareness of the interconnectivity of these elements which formed the activity of leadership.

However, as previously mentioned, the value of these elements is not in their individual interpretation alone but as integral parts of the dynamics of the overall activity.

Using Activity Theory, as described by Engestrom (1996;1999a), would provide an opportunity to identify key issues which would form the framework for subsidiary questions to the main research question and direct the process of carrying out an ongoing review of the literature. These issues would underpin the questions in the semi structured interviews and are identified in the following text.

3.5.1. Historical Context

What are the policy drivers and obstacles of this institution's model of change? How does the external higher education climate affect the leadership of an institution's education processes? How does the current leadership process compare with previous practice? What are the differences and similarities?

3.5.2. Activity of Leadership

What leadership style and approaches emerge from this model of education leadership? How do individuals involved in the education agenda view their involvement in, and influence on, the leadership process?

3.5.3. Communities of Education Practice in a Research Intensive Institution

How do groups of individuals experience and interpret this change in educational leadership? Are there inter-relationships between these groups? What is the relationship between the institution's education and research structures, culture and goals? How does the relationship between education and research inhibit or enhance the education portfolio? What factors affect individuals' motivation and commitment to engage with the process of change in educational leadership?

3.5.4. Cultural Influences and Leadership Process

What institutional and cultural factors inhibit or enhance the implementation of a model of change in the leadership of education? What are the commonly held assumptions on leadership by academic staff?

3.5.5. Desired outcomes from effective leadership

How is the student experience affected by this change in education leadership? How are changes in the education processes identified, observed and analysed for effectiveness? What structures and processes have become associated with this leadership activity? How have these structures and processes enhanced or inhibited the leadership process?

These questions formed the basis for the semi structured interview prompts and questions. I use the word 'prompts' because my aim was to encourage the participants to be as open and natural as possible in such circumstances, so I was therefore keen not to inhibit the flow of discourse through stilted, closed-type questions.

Understanding the complexities, ambiguities and ever changing landscape of organisations, in particular that of a large and diverse higher education institution, requires specific attention to a research approach which will optimise the discovery of valid and useful information.

3.6. Alternative Research Paradigms for this Study

In keeping with guidance from Cohen et al (2004), it was important that the selection of my research paradigm matched the purpose of this particular research and its question. As the research question became more defined so did the realisation that a positivist approach to this study would be inappropriate. The purpose of my research would not be best served with a formal hypothesis, linked to variables and focused on cause and effect relationships. The central focus on this study is to achieve an understanding of phenomena rather than to test it in some way.

Musson's (2004) description and experience of the Life History approach to qualitative research in organisations is both pertinent and potentially applicable to this topic. Life History is firmly rooted in the interpretive perspective. It would provide a basis upon which to discover the in-depth detail of why and how individuals accounted for, and analysed their experiences of the impact of organisational change in their specific field of educational activity in the organisation.

Musson (2004) describes how stories and narratives from individuals on past experiences, attitudes and values deliver a rich interpretation of their history. Such past experiences inevitably impact on their interpretation of their current social experiences. In itself, this fact is not new, but if used as a framework to understand the current interpretation of events and experiences, it has the potential to add depth to any emerging data.

As this research is examining a specific activity, leadership of change and the outcome of that change, Life History was not considered the most appropriate approach for this study.

Action research was also considered as an alternative to Case Study for this research. However, the timing of this study would not match the criteria for Action Research as described by Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Cohen et al (2004). Action research combines diagnosis with reflection and a focus on practical issues in which participants are engaged from the outset, in trying to resolve or change. Participants act as change agents and the research process captures the activity, problems and achievements as a central part

of its implementation. The time had passed for this to be a realistic and valid approach for this study, as the aim was to gain an understanding of the experience of change through the reality of those who had lived it, rather than for me to work collaboratively with individuals in designing solutions or the process of direction of change.

3.7. Methods of Data Collection

Exploratory Case Study research is associated with three main methods of data collection (Bassey, 2006). These are (i) asking questions or more importantly, eliciting the answers, (ii) observation and (iii) studying documents. I decided to use two of these methods, namely asking questions (interviews) and studying documents (documentary analysis). In addition, I used two methods of interviewing: the first method was semi structured interviews; the second was focus group interview.

Semi structured interviews allowed participants, from various layers and constituent groups in the organisation, to tell their stories as they perceived their experiences and thereby provide a richness of data which contributed to the outcomes resulting from an overall analysis of all data

My research is based on the experiences and narratives of individuals in order to gain a deeper understanding of how relationships were formed and how groups of individuals worked in collaboration, or whether adverse tensions prohibited effective team work.

Focus group interview, as a method of data collection, is a pragmatic and efficient way of generating data on group meanings; it provides an effective complement to other methods (Bloor et al, 2001). The intention of using a focus group interview in addition to the individual interviews was to encourage a purposeful group of participants to engage in a conversation with each other in response to the pre-determined questions. The questions were framed around the key issues of Activity Theory, as identified by Engestrom (1996; 1999a) and aimed at promoting a discussion from participants on the institution's historical context and their various perspectives on the activity of leadership, the education research interface, cultural influences and what they perceived to be the outcomes from

effective leadership and implementation of a devolved model of leadership and management.

3.8. Documentary Analysis

A further source of evidence as part of the data collection process is textual analysis of key institutional documents. These documents are related to the institution's education strategies and quality assurance evidence which was produced in the time frame relevant to the topic of this study. The documentary analysis includes the following institutional documents which are pertinent to the research topic. The Learning and Teaching Strategy (2002-2005), the Quality Assurance Agency's Institutional Audit Report of 2003, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2006-2009), the institution's Statement on Student Centred, Research Led Learning (2007), Student Entitlement Declaration (2007), Student Guidance Document (2007), Widening Participation Strategy and Access Agreement (2006-2010), Internal Preparation Document for Institutional Audit (2008), Institutional Briefing Paper in Support of the Institutional Audit 2007-2008 and the Quality Assurance Agency's Institutional Audit Report of 2008. This documentary evidence was viewed critically with each artefact being analysed in relation to other documents, the authors, origins, timings, audiences, purpose and anticipated outcomes as described by Flick (1998).

The Learning and Teaching Strategy (2002-2005) was produced prior to the implementation of the devolved model and largely constructed by members of the then institution's Quality Assurance Committee. It did not involve the broad constituency of academic staff other than members of the then established Quality Assurance Committee. This strategy would provide the context for the institution's plans and ambitions as the organisational change was being discussed and agreed but as yet, not fully implemented.

The Quality Assurance Agency's Institutional Audit Report (2003) is an external assessment of and commentary on these plans and provides a perspective on progress of the institution's implementation.

In contrast and with a change of Pro Vice Chancellor Education, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2006-2009) was produced as part of

the implementation of the devolved model of leadership and management. The creation of this strategy was through an iterative, institutional wide, consultation process. The newly appointed Deputy Heads of School Education (n 21), whose roles are indicative of the new structure as a result of the devolved model, were the appointed coordinators of the numerous academic-wide consultation events to capture the views and comments of academic staff in the production of the final content and style of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2006-2009).

Individual topics which emerged as fundamental to the overall Enhancement Strategy benefitted from organised task and finish groups, normally led by one of the Deputy Heads of School Education, with membership drawn from the larger academic community, to construct specific annexes to the Strategy. An example of such annexes include the institution's Statement on Student Centred, Research Led Learning (2007), Student Entitlement Declaration (2007), Student Guidance Document (2007), Widening Participation Strategy and Access Agreement (2006-2010).

The Institutional Briefing Paper (2008), in support for the Institutional Audit (2007-2008) is included in the documentary analysis because it represents the institution's self-analysis of progress since the last QAA audit. The Quality Assurance Agency's Institutional Report (2008) is the subsequent external judgement on this self-analysis and as implementation of the devolved model had impacted on the leadership process and organisational structures surrounding the education element of the institution's business at the time of the QAA visit would provide some objective, external observation of this impact.

3.9. Engaging the Participants

Participants for the study are drawn from individuals working at various but specific levels in the organisation. These include senior executive staff such as the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor and senior academic staff with education leadership roles, such as Associate Deans and Directors of Education. Senior administrative staff in professional services leadership

roles and experienced academic staff with roles in educational leadership at 'school' level were also interviewed.

The sample of senior academic and administrative staff was purposeful and included those who have a direct or indirect role in the institution's educational agenda. Participants who were senior academic staff were individuals who had previous research and educational experience but whose academic and professional focus had largely shifted more to educational activity than research. The participants were not only responsible in a variety of roles for implementing the change but were embedded in the overall experience of the change process.

The premise underpinning the research question was to explore *how* the devolved model had impacted on the education agenda and identifying a purposeful sample of participants who were intimately involved with the process of change was judged the best approach to capture the detail of the experience. I wanted to capture the perceptions of those who were directly responsible for implementation of the devolved model. Therefore other individuals in the organisation not closely involved in the implementation process were not included as participants in this research.

A detailed plan was designed to enable the planning process for the timing and implementation of all individual interviews. This was important to achieve optimum attendance. It was possible to offer times and venues around the normal busy academic timetable so that individuals would potentially be more available to participate in my research. Each participant was contacted and offered a menu of times and dates to suit their time table and when I had a complete list I began the interview process. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was recorded and transcribed. All transcriptions were subsequently returned to the participants for them to read and make any changes. No changes were requested to any of the texts from any of the interviewees.

The methods of data collection were considered and finalised through a three stage process of identifying assumptions, which emerged and stemmed from the research question , articulating key questions against

these and finally, identifying appropriate methods of data collection against each assumption. This process is illustrated in table 3.1. This structured process was an important aspect of managing the whole insider researcher element, as highlighted earlier in this chapter.

The literature search highlighted further assumptions to be explored during the research and these have been added to the table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Assumptions, key questions and methods of data collection

Assumptions, key questions and methods of data collection <u>before</u> the literature search		
Assumptions/ lines of inquiry	Key questions based on assumptions	Methods of data collection
1. The institution selected a specific model of organisational change to create greater academic ownership, autonomy and responsibility of the education agenda	How did the institution plan and initiate the organisational change processes to create a devolved structure?	Documentary evidence & interview senior executive roles in the organisation:
2. The institution selected three main elements for strategic focus – research, education & enterprise. These core business activities would be affected by the organisational process of change.	How did the impact of the devolved model of leadership and management on the education agenda differ from the other strategic elements?	Interview senior executive roles in the organisation:
3. An increase in ownership by academic staff of the education agenda is transferable to other elements of the institution's strategy	How do the experiences of academic staff with education leadership roles have the potential to transfer to other key aspects of institution's activities?	Focus group interviews:
4. Academic staff involved in education leadership are able to articulate the key characteristics of the organisational change process	What is the understanding of academic staff involved in education leadership of key characteristics of the organisational change process on the education agenda?	Focus group interviews: Individual interviews:
5. The number of academic staff achieving promotion through the education pathway has gradually increased from 2003/2004 and beyond	What is the data on education focused promotions during this period?	Institutional data on promotion statistics:

Assumptions/ lines of inquiry	Key questions based on assumptions	Methods of data collection
6. The leadership model introduced within the institution has made a difference to the education enhancement process.	Has the newly introduced model of education leadership made a difference to the education enhancement process? If so, how?	Focus group interviews:
7. The institution's Learning & Teaching Enhancement Strategy set the direction of change for Education	How did the institution's Learning & Teaching Enhancement Strategy affect the education agenda?	Focus group interviews: Documentary analysis:
8. The interface between education and institution's administration will experience significant disruption during the process of organisational change	What are the effects on the education administration interface during the implementation of the devolved model of leadership and management?	Focus group interviews: Individual interviews:
Assumptions, key questions and methods of data collection added <u>after</u> the literature search		
Followers, in the form of a group, have the power to transform social relations	How is the power utilised?	Focus group and individual interviews
As part of the implementation process of the devolved model social positions in the organisation are likely to change and those who are at the periphery of the organisations' decision-making become key to the implementation strategy process.	Did social positions in the organisation change? If so, how did they change?	Focus group and individual interviews

A more detailed reflection on the effectiveness of using these assumptions and key questions is addressed in the concluding chapter.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations included the formal submission which required detailed information and was approved by the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee (appendix 1). This included an introduction and description of the purpose, methods, analysis of the research. The section on participants included an example of the information sheet, explanation on the purpose of the study and confidentiality clause and sample of the interview questions. Copies of these documents are included in the appendices of the thesis. The faculty research ethics and governance committee issued formal approval for the submission and the research commenced.

Apart from the formal approval process it was important to reflect on the ethical implications throughout the whole process. This reflection process developed into an almost a continuous cycle of reflection and questioning to ensure that an awareness of the ethical issues involved in preparation for interviews, conducting the interviews, managing the transcripts and storage of the data in this mobile, digital environment was sustained. It was therefore important to not only have a clear and unambiguous ethical process set out at the start of my research but to maintain an acute ethical awareness throughout the duration of the study.

3.10.1. Engagement and Access to the Field of Research

It was important to engage the most senior management level in the institution, namely the Vice Chancellor, with my ideas for my research at an early stage. This was important because in using the institution as a case study to look at a particular element of organisational change and activity, I wanted to establish not only his consent to proceed but more importantly, to create an environment of mutual trust, openness and confidence in the research process as a whole. Initially the reception was cautious and the best way forward was to invest time in face to face meetings as well as written text on my research aim, approach, anticipated outcomes, methods and time frame. Time invested at this point was significant because it was going to be more practical for me to undertake this research in my own institution with the consent of the Vice Chancellor and to obtain his tacit agreement to ask questions of the institution's implementation process without

incurring his mistrust or nervousness at the possible findings. This agreement to proceed meant that I could concentrate on the research process and not on any tensions which might occur as a result of the research outcomes.

The institution was in the process of yet another major review reflecting on its profile and future direction. A new Vice Chancellor was due to be appointed soon after the commencement of this research, so some decisions were taking longer than others to finalise.

The approach of allowing as much time as possible for the senior team to consider the research in the context of a case study resulted in full support for me to proceed. This approval was significant for me personally, professionally and as an insider researcher, as it provided a sense of confidence in undertaking the study.

As this is a case study approach, access to the institution through the right channels was essential to the integrity of my research. The first step was to approach the Vice Chancellor personally to explain verbally my ideas, aims and methods. Once I was confident that there were no immediate difficulties, I followed this up with a written request, explaining the purpose of my research, time frame, likely participants and the need for confidentiality and anonymity of research data and findings (appendix 2).

This was then further discussed by the Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellors at university executive group with other senior leaders of the chancellery team. The reason for this was that there was about to be a change in Vice Chancellor and as my research was likely to extend beyond the governance of the current Vice Chancellor, he wanted approval and agreement from others in the senior management team. This was subsequently given and I received written confirmation of their decision.

Participants in the research were contacted by a personal letter with information on the purpose of my research, time frame, method of data collection, confidentiality of data and anonymity for participants and institution, the right of withdrawal from the study at any time and ratification of transcribed interview responses (appendix 3).

Ethical considerations relating to participants involved construction of an information sheet to be sent to all interviewees once the interview schedule was

confirmed, (appendix 4). Creating a schedule was more time consuming than anticipated but finally I was able to agree dates and venues for all individual interviews within a three month time frame.

A consent form was provided for participants to sign at the beginning of each interview session and it was clearly stated that participants could withdraw their consent at any time during the study, (appendix 5).

A pilot of the interview questions produced some changes and enhancements which were implemented into the final version. Each interview was conducted in the individual's personal environment and was recorded. The interview questions were derived from a combination of the key issues identified from Engestrom's Activity Theory framework (1996; 1999a ;) and the table identifying specific assumptions (table 3.1), (see also appendix 6). Each interview was transcribed, rendered anonymous, coded and stored securely.

3.10.2. Insider Research – a Personal Perspective

I was aware that using my own institution as a case study to explore the process of educational leadership, as well as the effects of a devolved model of organisational leadership and management presented both potential advantages and disadvantages. This related to my role as a new researcher while also a member of the academic community in the organisation at the centre of my research who was highly likely to revert to my usual role once my research was completed.

My role in the institution at the time of this research was as one of the newly created Directors of Education (n21). These roles were established as part of the implementation of the devolved model of leadership and management and new to the institution's refreshed academic structure. There was a Director of Education in each of the academic schools (n21). I was an external appointment to the role of Director of Education and started my new role one year after the start of the implementation of the devolved model. All participants in the study were employed by the institution at least five years prior to the implementation of the devolved model. The organisation's structure was comprised a Pro Vice Chancellor for research and education, three Deans who reported directly to the Vice Chancellor and were responsible for the three Faculties. Each Faculty had an Associate Dean

Research (n3) and Associate Dean Education (n3) who each had a formal link with the respective Pro Vice Chancellors. Each Faculty hosted a number of Schools, 21 across the all three faculties, and the Head of School reported to the Dean. Each School had a Director of Research (total n21) and a Director of Education (total n21). The Directors of Education had a formal link to the relevant Associate Deans Education. This organisational structure is illustrated in figure 3.3.

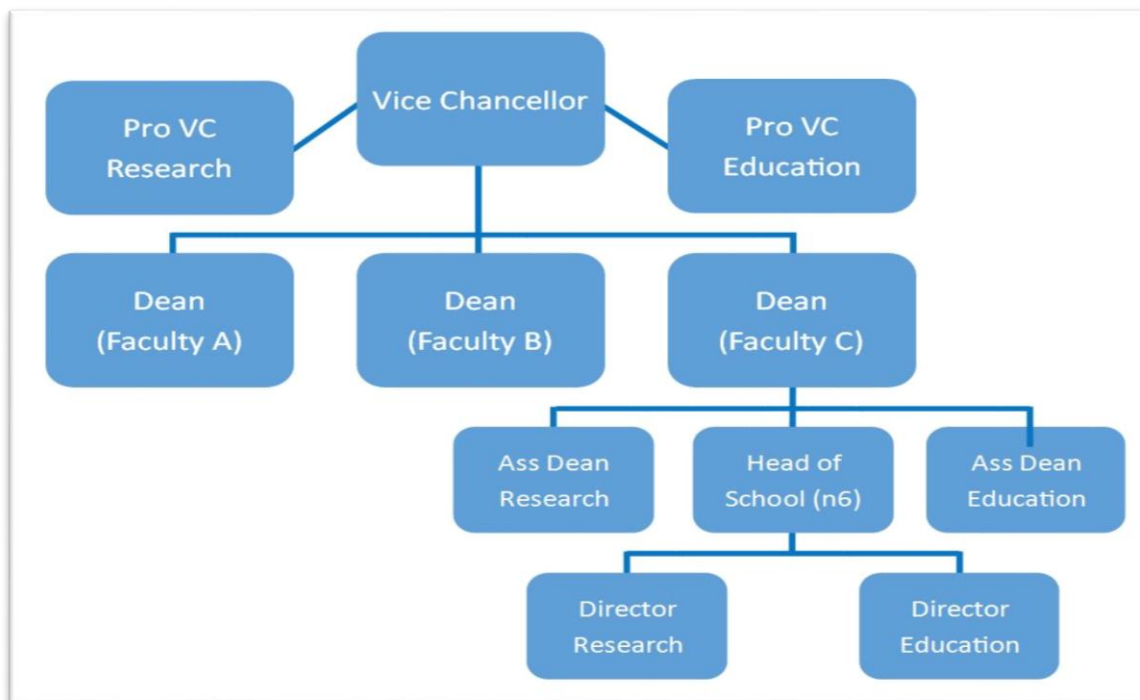


Figure 3.3. Diagrammatic view of a section of the institution's organisational structure with a focus on educational leadership roles.

As one of the Directors of Education, I was a peer and academic colleague of some of the participants, with a slightly more detached relationship with other participants. However, I knew and was known to all the participants in one form or another. These relationships made me both aware and appreciative of the delicate balance between researcher and work colleague and the need to maintain clear boundaries between both roles as far as possible.

Stake and Heath (2008) explore the concept of insider researcher as part of an in depth study to explore the experience of professional doctoral students who had undertaken research within their own environments. They reported that it was not unusual for such students to undertake part time study and that their work environment would be the locus of their research. However, McDermid et al (2014) describe the contentious issue of managing objectivity as an 'insider researcher'

and highlight the potential challenges of pre-existing working relationships prior to instigating research in one's own working and professional environment. One of the advantages of researching within my own working environment was that I was aware of and familiar with the organisation's minutiae, structure and processes which helped the identification of key issues worthy of research which might otherwise pass unnoticed.

Capturing the views and perceptions of the participants through both individual and focus group interviews required a degree of close involvement with the participants if they were to relax and feel able to disclose and describe their experiences. This desired outcome was likely to be more achievable through an interview approach, as opposed to trying to capture their experiences through a questionnaire. Interviews would enable more of a rapport to take place between myself and the interviewees and allow me to pursue certain aspects of their responses in a spontaneous way which would not be possible with a questionnaire.

Access to the institution and to key individuals required sensitive, clear and timely communication skills, which necessitated no less preparation and planning than if I were unknown to the organisation or individuals. I was mindful that my enthusiasm and preoccupation with the research process might be seen as disruptive or intrusive to individuals, however willing and empathetic they may be to my request for participation.

I recognised the views of Flick (1998) who states that research within an institution can be unsettling without any obvious benefit to individuals or the organisation itself. I was careful not to offer or suggest that there would be any immediate, tangible benefits to individuals or the institution as a result of my research, but concentrated on developing a relationship of trust with participants which, in turn, would create a working alliance to enable the research to progress.

The dynamics of being an insider researcher were very different from those associated with an outsider who is unknown to the organisation in that my detailed knowledge of the working environment and activities could present both advantages and disadvantages.

The advantageous dynamics included a detailed level of knowledge of the organisation's everyday life, colloquialisms, common language and communication

networks. As an insider researcher I was cognisant of history and critical events and could therefore draw on my own experience when interviewing.

However, there were aspects which are potentially disadvantageous in being familiar to the research subject. There was a risk that my personal experience with the topic during the interviewing process could result in a diminished rigour in asking probing questions and that the interviews could become too casual and lacking in focus. I was very aware of this potential as I began the research process and still working in my organisational role that some relationships might prove awkward and difficult. I was acutely aware that potentially there could be a role conflict which would require a consciousness on my part to manage role duality as both a work colleague and a researcher.

While it was difficult to predict the effect on my relationships with work colleagues because of this role duality, I remained attentive that there were likely to be some effects on these relationships both during and after the study was concluded. My approach was to acknowledge this fact from the outset, remain aware of such variables and as be as objective as possible. One method of achieving this awareness was to maintain an effective and open dialogue with my supervisors and to ask them for advice when necessary.

My relationship with the Vice Chancellor of the institution was also the subject of considerable reflection for possible consequences for the following reasons. Firstly, in relation to gaining his trust and consent to use the organisation as a case study. Secondly, his consent to actively participate in my research by being interviewed and finally, my continued working relationship with him once the research was completed and submitted.

As an insider researcher I concentrated on remaining as open-minded as possible, following the advice of Coghlan (2006) in 'making the familiar strange' and focusing on retaining a highly critical approach to the data as it emerged.

In recognition of the implications of my role as a researcher whose working life was in close proximity to the topic, potential participants and organisation, I selected a theoretical approach which provided a structure and framework for the study. This helped to maintain a balance between the value of being close to the subject under study, while at the same time ensuring the influence from my views, perceptions and assumptions were kept to a minimum. It would be unrealistic to

state that there was no researcher bias, but it was possible to reduce any negative aspects of researcher subjectivity through several interventions.

According to Stake and Heath (2008), inside researchers often select their projects as a result of many years of experience in working with particular issues. This, in turn, may lead to the researcher having assumptions and ideas on what they might expect to expose or discover. To help minimise too much preconception, I decided to identify and acknowledge my assumptions before and during the research process, optimising the supervision opportunities available, participant engagement in ensuring the rigour and robustness of the interview transcripts, together with the presentation of research progress and process to other academic colleagues.

My relationship to the topic of this research is different from that at the time of submitting this thesis. At the time of my research I was immersed in the implementation of change in the educational agenda. However, more recently I have been able to 'step back' from this pace of activity as a researcher, because my institutional role has changed.

One of the advantages of being known to the research participants was that they were aware of my role during the period under study and knew that I had nothing to gain from the outcomes of the study, apart from academic recognition for the research process through successfully completing my EdD programme. I selected a variety of methods, namely individual interviews, focus group interview and document analysis, to triangulate the emerging data and therefore reduce any potential bias that my relationship with the organisation, participants and topic might have engendered.

My main intention was to remain critical of what seemed familiar and to investigate the processes, relationships and paradoxes underpinning the leadership processes within the institution.

3.11. Process of Analysis

Sarantakos (1993) described the interpretive perspective on reality as that which is experienced internally and interpreted through 'the actors', in this case individuals who are immersed in the organisation under study. The distinctiveness of this study on organisational change and its impact on the learning and teaching agenda was based on explaining the experience of change from the insiders'

perspective and how those insiders made sense of their worlds in the working environment.

The statement by Strauss and Corbin (1998) that 'analysis is the interplay between researchers and data' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.13) described my experience of studying, listening to and interpreting the data from both the interview transcripts and relevant institutional documentation.

I used two distinct approaches in optimising the rich data I had collected. The first was to identify a structured framework with which to highlight key sections of the text; the second was to use a grounded theory approach to coding the highlighted sections to enable key categories to emerge. The interplay between my role in the organisation, the researcher and the data, according to Strauss and Corbin (1998), was a careful balance between being as objective as possible while at the same time using my knowledge of the subject matter in the analysis process to enrich the interpretation, rather than to direct the analysis. This careful balance was further influenced by my self-awareness of my actions and thought processes.

3.12. Coding: Identifying Themes and Categories

I employed Charmaz's (2006) grounded theory approach and not grounded theory itself, to coding and memo-writing. Charmaz's (2006) approach to data analysis describes coding as defining what the data are expressing. It involved highlighting and naming segments of the data which also categorised, summarised and captured the essence of the data. This process reflected the development of the emergent theory.

The analysis process is best understood through the following stages. Firstly, I became familiar with the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts and documents to gain an understanding of the text, in order to aid deeper analysis and interpretation, while making notes of key features which relate to the research question.

Secondly, highlighting sections of the text which had a possible relation to the research question and identifying similarities, contradictions and key phrases within the transcripts. Thirdly and finally, the process of systematically coding the data.

The process of coding, according to Charmaz (2006), involves initial inductive coding which highlights segments of the data that categorised and summarised emerging themes. This is followed by focused coding, whereby the early codes were refined through repeated readings and comparison with the master list of core conceptual categories.

Simultaneously, I wrote memos as ideas and issues become apparent, so that I could weave these ideas into my findings. The purpose of these memos was to: maintain a record of how I defined a specific category, explain the category properties describe the context from which the categories emerge, show how the emerging categories relate to other categories, provide an 'in the moment' record for me as I studied the data for nuances or issues perhaps not immediately obvious in the categories and develop my analysis to a more conceptual, theoretical and critical level.

3.12.1. Developing Familiarity with the Data

This stage in the analysis requires careful reading and re-reading of the transcripts and the various documents to ensure I became familiar with the text and gained a sense of what the data would suggest. This process of familiarity is crucial to the next stages in the data analysis as I soon became aware of key sections of the text and it became easier to locate certain words or phrases when I realised that links or contradictions were emerging.

3.12.2. The Process of Coding

Initial inductive coding required broad labelling of segments of the data with provisional codes which would capture the essence of the segment. This summary would reflect the language used and I gradually followed this process with all the transcripts, line by line. This process produced a large number of emerging categories, which in some cases were duplicated in later transcripts and contradicted in others. I maintained a record of the specific text which underpinned these early categories and the source of the text: that is, which transcript owned the text. This ensured a robust link between emerging categories and the voices of the various participants. An example of this process with one of the transcripts is provided in appendix 7.

The next phase in the coding process is 'focused coding' as suggested by Charmaz (2006). At this point, more directed, selective and broader conceptual categories were produced than from the initial coding but the focus on the language used was maintained so that these focused codes retained their authenticity in and from the original text. I continued to ensure there was a record of which elements of the transcript text linked to the initial codes which, in turn, were linked to the focused codes and emergent categories, to ensure the original text could be retrieved to provide evidence for a specific category. This process enabled the emerging categories to remain close to the views and perceptions of the participants. During this stage in the analysis I began to look for patterns, themes and contradictions emerging from the text through the codes.

The third stage in the coding process, according to Charmaz (2006) is theoretical coding. Charmaz (2006) refers to Glaser (1978) in describing this phase as specifying the possible relationships between the focused categories. I looked for properties in the focus coding which could be shared and grouped into core conceptual categories. The aim of this stage in the coding process is to enable a coherent narrative to emerge, which will provide a sharp analytical focus to the study. The following diagram illustrates the development of conceptual categories from the process of coding.

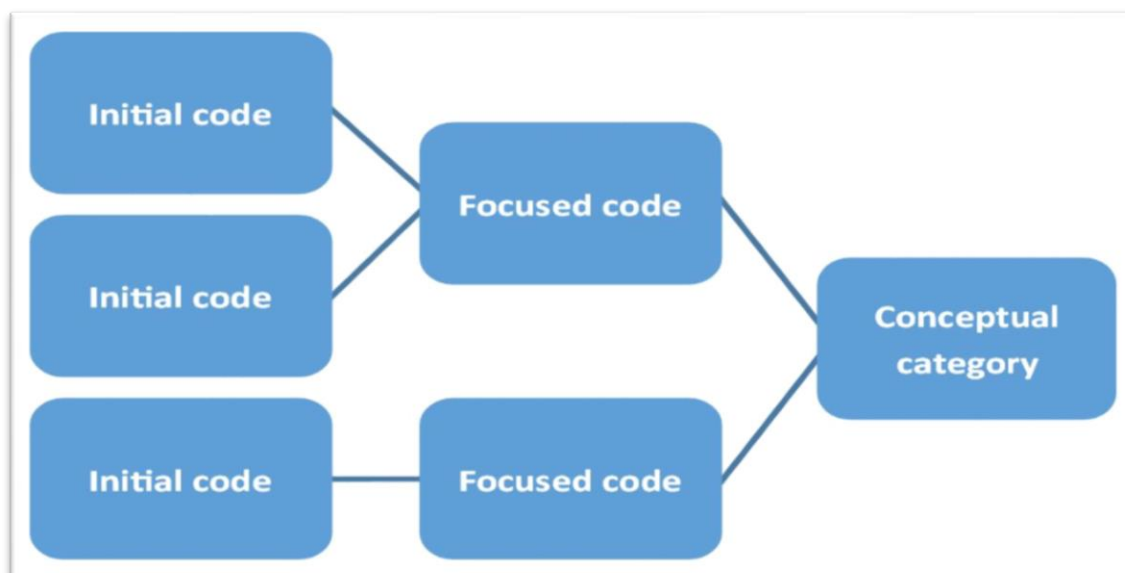


Figure 3.4 Diagram to illustrate process of developing conceptual categories from initial and focused coding

An example of focused codes and emergent conceptual categories from this study following the model described by Charmaz (2006) is provided in appendix 7.

The diagram in figure 3.4. demonstrates the process of flow and extraction which will allow the first draft of emergent themes to emerge from key pieces of text (initial codes) through to more selective focused codes and then after further scrutiny to form major themes (conceptual categories) which will form the basis of the detailed analysis in the following chapter.

An example of this process is illustrated Figure 3.5. This figure highlights a sample of the initial codes from the transcripts which contributed to the focus coding of one of the emerging themes, education and research interface, which are then collated into finally into a core category. This process was repeated for all the conceptual categories (emerging themes) to safeguard that the final themes were derived from the original data.

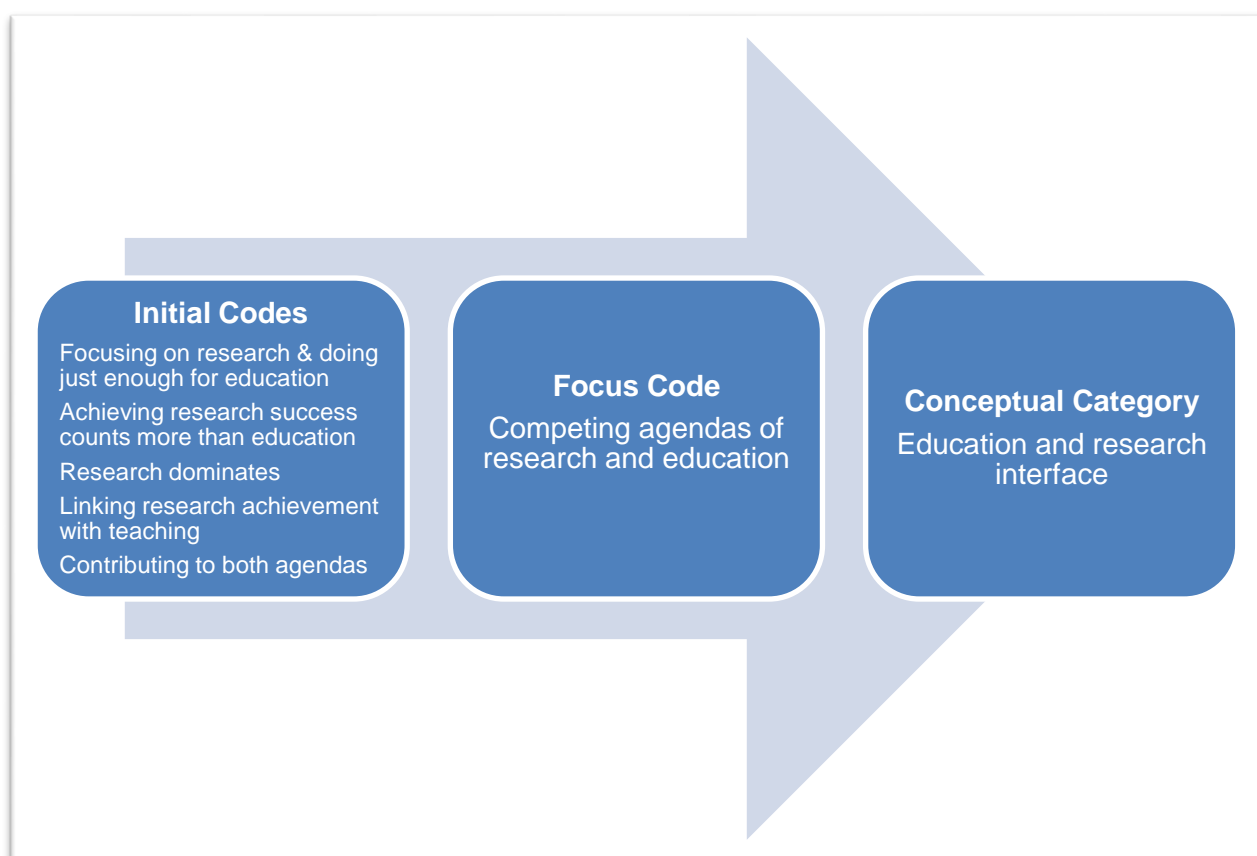


Figure 3.5. Example of the process of identifying the emerging themes

3.13. Employing Activity Theory to Critically Study the Data

My aim was to use Activity Theory in the deconstruction of the various elements in this research in the following mode. The five components of Activity Theory, as

described by Engeström (1999a), namely subject, object, artefacts / tools, division of labour and rules would be used to identify specific elements of the overall activity of my research topic in order to explore the research question.

As mentioned previously, Activity Theory is referred to as a framework and as such is described as a flexible and evolving theoretical approach with which to study a specific activity involving different roles and responsibilities enacted by the individuals and collective (Kaptelinin, 2005; Roth and Lee, 2007).

In line with Engeström's model, the subject in this research referred to the senior management's intention and direction for the planned changes to leadership of the institution's education agenda. Therefore evidence of this intention and direction will be explored in both the interviews and the key documents.

One of the main goals of the organisation's major process of change was to transform the leadership and academic practice of education quality and enhancement and represents the object element of this theory. The process of analysis will focus on the objective of the activity to discover if it was met and the progress. The artefacts / tools in this theoretical model would be the methods and processes used to achieve this goal. The division of labour would relate to any shifts in power or authority associated with the activity of leadership of change and the tasks that were distributed within the institution's community. Finally, the element of rules in the model would correlate with existing and perhaps new conventions which would be associated with the interactions which formed part of the process of change.

3.14. Employing Discourse Analysis to Critically Study the Data

In addition to Activity Theory to analyse the data, Discourse Analysis was used for the documentary analysis. Several forms were considered. Formal linguistic analysis is one form which involves a structured analysis of text, in order to discover underlying rules of linguistic function behind the text. This is considered inappropriate for this study as the aim is to explore the lived experiences of a sociological process, rather than examine the detail of words and sentences. Conversational analysis, as described by Hodges et al (2008), with broad themes and how language is used in individual conversations to convey meaning and initiate specific actions in others.

Hodges et al (2008) describes critical discourse analysis as a method concerned with studying sources of power in situations and how these power sources are linked to the roles of individuals. This description further confirms critical discourse analysis as the most appropriate choice for this research.

The value of using of discourse analysis as a method of gaining a better understanding of assumptions about particular phenomena, such as palliative care, is explored in some detail by O'Connor and Payne (2006). Discourse analysis highlights the theoretical position that language is used to direct and shape the world in which we live as opposed to merely describing it.

Foucault's writings have significantly influenced the work on discourse analysis with a focus on how discourse can provide a valuable insight into the sources of power and influence within a particular culture (O'Connor & Payne, 2006; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). My intention in this research is to use discourse analysis to analyse how language is used, study the meanings behind the words and the values implied. O'Connor and Payne (2006) highlight the role of discourse analysis in understanding the relationship between the knowledge possessed by a specific group of individuals, with its associated influence and power, in relation to those other individuals who do not have that knowledge.

My interest in and final choice of discourse analysis as a method to bring meaning to my data is to gain a deeper understanding of how a particular social reality is created, together with how it functions, rather than what that social reality actually is. In reading relevant research studies such as Copeland (2001), O'Connor and Payne (2006) and Dick (2004), I was able to formulate a number of questions which would help in searching for key words and themes, looking for variations in a text and between texts, emphasis and detail. These questions are highlighted below against the specifics of text, discursive practice and social practice.

Fairclough (2005) states that his interest in discourse is directly connected to the processes of social change, and that social change is an inherent element of organisational change. This current study is also concerned with the process of change in a large, complex organisation and therefore Fairclough's model of discourse analysis is well suited to my research. According to Fairclough (2005), the ways individuals conceptualise their lived experiences and their actions contribute to the changing nature of those experiences and that these phenomena

are constructed in discourse. Therefore, to study the discourse is a valid method of studying a process of change within an organisation.

Potter (1997) defined discourse analysis as 'an analytical commitment to studying discourse as texts and talk in social practices' (Potter, 1997, p.46). The focus, according to Potter (1997) is not on language alone but rather as a medium for interaction and therefore analysis of discourse becomes an analysis of what individuals do. As the intention of this study was to explore the social practice of educational leadership in a research intensive university with a devolved model of management and leadership, discourse analysis was considered best suited to this study.

Dick (2004) describes using a particular form of discourse analysis, namely of critical discourse analysis in organisational research. Critical discourse analysis examines how individuals use language to produce explanations of themselves, their relationships, social practice and world of reality. Fairclough's (1992) work on critical analysis sees language as not merely reflecting the nature of individuals and relationships but as constructing these elements. The key focus of critical analysis does not only understand how individuals use language to construct themselves and the world around them but understanding why the construction is as it is. The method of discourse analysis I used was based on Fairclough's (1992) approach, as used by Dick (2004) in her organisational research and Coupland (2001) in his higher education research.

Fairclough (1992) recommends a three dimensional analytical framework to analyse the three domains of identity, relational and ideational functions of discourse, in which both text and verbal data are analysed through the dimension of text, discursive practice and social practice. It is useful at this point to elaborate a little further on how each of these three elements is defined and how I used this framework in analysis of the data.

3.14.1. The Dimension of Text

Using Fairclough's (1992) approach this level of analysis relates to how the written or spoken text is constructed. The first stage assessed what the text is trying to achieve. I employed the model by Fairclough (1992) very closely in that the text was examined to see if the aim was to persuade, assert, justify, accuse, defend

and / or explain? Fairclough (1992) refers to this aspect as the force of the text. The next stage explored how the text achieved its aims. What words, phrases and propositions were used?

An example of the broad questions used to focus the reading of the various texts under this level is:

How accessible is the text? Is it part of a wider narrative or message? What seems to be missing from the text? What is the style and tone of the text? What is the purpose of the text?

3.14.2. The Dimension of Discursive Practice

Fairclough (1992) suggests that this level examines the context of the text. In order to do this I asked the following questions:

Who is the author of the text? Who is the audience? How might the text be perceived? Are there differing perceptions of the meaning depending on the readers' position in the organisation?

3.14.3. The Dimension of Social Practice

At this level of analysis the focus is on the propositions that are made. However, there may be propositions which are challenged or defended and Fairclough (1992) refers to these as examples of the influence of power or control, whereby contentious or contested views of reality are managed or structured in such a way as to achieve an ideological acceptance. Typical questions I used with this level of analysis include:

What is the emphasis of the text? Are there any recurrent themes in the words used? Are there any tensions in the general message of the text or contradictions? Are power, influence or control evident in the text and if so, how? What is the position of the author in the organisation and what are their interests?

In addition, Fairclough (2005) states that social practices mediate the relationship between structures and processes. This study of organisational change and education leadership aims to identify the elements which constitute the interface between organisational structures and the process of leadership.

Dick (2004) suggests that in addition to the three dimensional framework (Fairclough, 1992), in some cases it is worth considering the use of 'interpretive repertoires' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) that are being used to construct accounts of reality. Dick (2004) expands the concept of 'interpretive repertoires' as a situation when a dominant discourse is identified in several texts, which in turn is replicated in a form of social practice it becomes a reality.

I worked with the three dimensional framework of text, discursive practice and social practice to analyse what belief systems and /or dominating influence were embedded in the discourse, and therefore the message itself.

This chapter has described the research design, methodology, methods and has included a description of the ethical issues. My role in the organisation and as the researcher for this study has merited specific attention and this has been addressed in this chapter. The following chapter will present an analysis of the data.

Chapter 4

Findings: Presenting the Data and Initial Analysis

4.1. Introduction

This chapter organises and presents an interpretation of the findings from analysis of the research data, resulting from the process of coding, Activity Theory and discourse analysis as described in the previous chapter. The research question, namely *how does a devolved model of organisation leadership and management impact on the education agenda in a research intensive university* remained at the forefront of my thinking throughout the process of analysis.

The final key themes emerged from the data through a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning. Inductive because the categories are not pre-determined but became clear as the research progressed. The deductive element is based on the material from the literature search which guided my thinking as I studied the documentary evidence and transcripts.

Employing Activity Theory, Discourse Analysis and also drawing on Charmaz's (2006) grounded theory approach to coding, the findings are presented as emergent themes originating from information in the interview transcripts and relevant documentary evidence. The theoretical codes are not pre-determined in any way but are developed through the focus and initial codes from the original evidence.

Each theme is discussed separately and evidenced by direct quotes for the transcripts and the documentary evidence. An analysis and synthesis of the findings will be addressed in the following discussion chapter.

4.2. Using Activity Theory in Analysis of Transcripts.

By applying Activity Theory in analysis of interview data it was possible to identify and deconstruct the key components of the activity of leadership in implementing the process of major organisational change so that specific themes emerged as the findings from this study.

The first component of the activity of organisational change was the identification of the instigators of the change, their position in the organisation's structure and the driving force for the need for change. The 'subject' feature of Activity Theory included more than one element in that it was the institution's strategic leadership

team who decided to implement the organisational change and the Pro Vice Chancellor for Education who, on behalf of the senior strategic team, led the implementation. The main influence in implementation of the devolved model was the newly formed role of Director of Education. A sense of ownership and empowerment emerged from the data which became a powerful aspect in the new leadership approach. However, this shift in accountability and responsibility did not always progress smoothly. A change in the leadership approach became apparent from the analysis which in some cases was more inclusive and engaging of the wider academic community than previous practice and in other respects, preparation for the new roles was underestimated by some participants.

The motivating focus of the activity of organisational change was twofold. Firstly, to re-locate and shift the responsibility and accountability for education enhancement and quality assurance from a largely committee and administrative led structure and practice to one which was owned and acknowledged by the institution's academic community. Secondly, to re-balance the perceived inequity in value between the two activities of teaching and research within the institution. This shift in power, control and organisational influence held by previously established roles to others who hitherto had not been part of the organisation's leadership processes became the object of the activity. The culture of the organisation would have an impact on the process of transfer of accountability and responsibility. In particular, the education research interface emerged as a significant area of tension and challenge in relation to how both activities are valued, recognised and rewarded as part of the institution's promotion process.

The gradual acknowledgement that the main source of institutional income would be forthcoming from the education business of the organisation highlighted the perceived inequity of value, recognition and reward processes afforded to education efforts and achievement through established institutional process and practices. Specific tensions emerged between the competing agendas of education and research which might have always existed but implementation of a devolved model made this tension more visible.

The process or mediating artefacts through which the change is instigated included informal networks which provided opportunities for the sharing and discussion of emerging problems and corresponding solutions for the newly established roles of education leadership. The narrative in some institutional

documents, such as the two institutional Learning and Teaching strategies served, on occasions, as reinforcement of the key messages and therefore may be considered as mediating the process of change.

The distribution of labour during this activity of organisational change identified new ways of working. Academic staff that had previously been on the periphery of the organisation's leadership structure became instrumental in implementing the devolved model. Some of the newly distributed tasks and responsibilities were successful such as the network forum, while others were more problematic, such as the task and finish working groups, which according to some participants, lacked direction and purpose.

The institution's previous concentration on achieving a reputation for research excellence had established a culture of high importance and value on research time, activity and achievement. This fact emerged as a direct contrast due to the relatively low esteem felt by academic staff who were teaching focused. This tension became more evident during implementation of the devolved model. The 'rules' element of Activity Theory highlighted the established conventions within the institution which became more apparent as the activity of organisational change progressed.

The themes which emerged from using the Activity Theory framework were triangulated through analysis of key institutional documents and discussed in more detail in this chapter.

4.3. Triangulation of Findings from Documentary Analysis

In addition to the interpretation of the interview data, supplementary analysis was undertaken with key institutional documents which had a relevance to the education activity. Discourse Analysis was used with the documentary evidence in addition to Activity Theory and enabled a deeper scrutiny of the written text. Documentary evidence directly related to the research topic was analysed through a three dimensional analytical framework of text, discursive practice and social practice, as adopted by Fairclough (1992).

Fairclough (1992) suggests each of three dimensions provide a focal point to analyse the text in order to determine the tone, style, intended audience, emphasis, contradictions and how power and influence is evident in the general message. .

As I compared the results of the focused coding with the data, the emerging categories were re-organised and refined until nine key categories became evident. These categories are composed of: making a personal difference; personal experiences; context and culture; shifts in power and control; process of change and behaviours; competing agendas of research and education; understanding the leadership process; new ways of working; working with a devolved model. These key categories were defined further through the process of focus coding to produce the emergent themes. The relationship between the focus codes and emergent themes are identified in table 4.1.

Table 4 1. An example of the alignment between the focus codes and emergent themes

Focus Codes	Emergent Themes
1. Making a personal difference 2. Personal Experiences	Sense of Ownership & Empowerment
3. Context and Culture 4. Shift in Power and Control 5. Process of Change and Behaviours	Shift in Power and Influence
6. Competing Agendas of Education & Research	Education & Research Interface
7. Understanding the Leadership Process 8. New Ways of Working 9. Working with a Devolved Model	Dynamics of Leadership

The emergent theoretical codes are analysed individually in the following order:

Sense of ownership and empowerment

Shifts in power & influence

Education and research interface

Dynamics of leadership

The structured process of identifying and highlighting specific text from the transcripts, the process of coding, using key words from the text itself and the memo writing helped to ensure the emergent themes remained faithful to the views of the participants and relevant documentation.

The key themes are not prioritised in any particular order because no single theme emerged as the crucial, uncontested answer to the research question. Each theme is discussed in more detail in the following text.

4.4. Sense of Ownership and Empowerment

4.4.1. The Need for Change

There was a clear statement of intent relating to the institution's most senior lead in the institution's submission to the Quality Assurance Agency as part of the sector's education quality review, which made the ambition and rationale for organisational change transparent and public. The inequity of profiles for education and research within the institution was highlighted very early in the institution's submission. The subject element of Activity Theory as described by Engestrom (1999a) identified the ambition and rationale for the organisational change.

The Vice Chancellor, on his appointment in 2002 was surprised at the gap between the relative profiles of research and education in the University. He committed to raising the profile of education and to nurturing the necessary cultural change.....His preferred strategy was to enable appropriate leadership and organisational structure

(Institutional Briefing paper, 2007/08, p 1)

This section of the institution's submission represented a public commitment and political statement which highlighted the need for change and greater focus on the education activity of the organisation.

There was a view from the Vice Chancellor that a deficit of academic ownership existed within the academic community. Interpretation of the term academic in this sense essentially relates to education rather than research activity. The perceived gap referred to in the Institutional briefing (2007/08) was reinforced by the negative impression of the existing university structures:

So if Senate was the leadership forum it was a complete and utter failure in my view. This flummery and that's what passed for educational leadership, that very body. It had a whole bunch of committees but it was all a box ticking bureaucracy to satisfy the quality agenda (S2).

Clarity of intention and purpose for the organisational change was highlighted in the Institutional Briefing Paper (2007/2008) and could be seen as the institution's definition of a devolved model without actually using the term:

To shift from a top-down approach to education quality based on compliance with nationally-driven assurance practices, towards an education enhancement agenda aimed at wider engagement of the academic community.

(Institutional Briefing Paper, 2007/08, p. 1).

A sense of ownership and empowerment of the education agenda in progressing the education vision and changes in the organisation became evident from the data. Achieving ownership of the education agenda was a clear goal of the senior executive leadership group in the institution, as an important rationale for the implementation of devolved model.

4.4.2. A Sense of Ownership

Analysis of the institution's early Learning and Teaching Strategy (2002-2005) illustrated a subtle change in shifting the institution's discourse from a traditional, corporate narrative towards a more inclusive tone and text, which illustrated a gradual transfer to foster greater ownership of the learning and teaching agenda.

The majority of text uses the third person singular or plural in stating its objectives but occasionally there are references to a more inclusive narrative such as:

The impact of the first Learning and Teaching strategy has been to heighten awareness of the importance of quality in learning, assessment and teaching: however, the challenge in the next three years is to build a culture that encourages a more active engagement in the management of change by those who are affected

(Learning and Teaching Strategy, 2002-2005, p.14)

and

The need to manage change positively and integrate our strategic directions in education

(Learning and Teaching Strategy, 2002-2005, p.2)

The main audience for this strategic document was members of the university community. However, this strategy would play an important external role and highlighted the philosophy and ambition of the university in relation to its education aspirations and goals. The Learning and Teaching Strategy document (2002-2005) was published at the very early stages of the introduction of the devolved model of leadership and management. This initial stage in the organisation's change process was evident within the text. In the first few pages of this document the text was written in the third person using the words 'the university' with a gradual shift towards the middle and end of the document with the words 'we' as the document highlighted the planned institutional changes.

This strategy also referred to progress by Schools and Departments in responding to the quality assurance agenda in a creative way. The word 'progress' implied that there was development towards this shift in responsibilities through a change in the academic structures in the institution.

Progress made by our own Schools and Departments in responding creatively to the quality assurance agenda

(Learning and Teaching Strategy, 2002-2005, p.2)

The text mentioned a local responsibility model which was congruent with the rational for implementation of a devolved model. This document represented a clear statement in the early stages of planning the process of organisational change that the institution's restructuring process was a central part in re-locating areas of what had previously been centre-led responsibility. This progress and finding is indicative of the object component of Activity Theory (Engestrom 1999a):

As part of the University's restructuring into three Faculties and twenty Schools, the local responsibility for quality assurance will rest with Schools
(Learning and Teaching Strategy, 2002-2005, p.4)

However, while there is recognition of an institutional shift in responsibility for learning and teaching responsibilities, this same document made reference to the need to for the 'local responsibility model' to work closely with the established governance structures:

The University will reorganise its committee structures for learning and teaching and quality assurance so that complementarity of role and accountability are maintained within a 'local responsibility' model.

(Learning and Teaching Strategy, 2002-2005, p.4).

This text highlighted a potential conflict between the need to sustain a robust governance model in relation to a central institutional oversight of quality assurance with the drive for more local responsibility and authority through a devolved approach.

This document also referred to a greater emphasis on team work and established partnerships which were in line with the theme of a sense of ownership with in the academic community. This finding emerged from the component of Activity Theory referred to as distribution of labour (Engestrom 1999a) which identified the changes involved in the leadership of change resulting from implementation of the devolved model. This strategic document highlighted that the institution was in the midst of structural change and that this was seen as an opportunity for change. Use of the word 'opportunities' at this stage of the planning process indicated that precise details may not have been agreed or discussed at the point of publication of this strategy:

Opportunities for change afforded by School and Faculty restructuring

(Learning and Teaching Strategy, 2002-2005, p.3).

The institution's aim to encourage greater ownership for the education activity amongst its academic community was evidenced in a published, external audit of the institution's education quality performance. This represented a public, transparent reinforcement of the institution's commitment to the process of change and would have been based on the auditors' assessment during their visit to the institution and the text in the institution's strategic document:

The University aims to enhance ownership of the process among practitioners as it moves from an 'imposed compliance' model of quality assurance towards one which is enhancement-driven and grounded in a culture of 'local responsibility'

(QAA Institutional Audit Report, 2003, para 24, p.7).

While there was external verification of the institution's theme of establishing greater ownership for education quality and enhancement which was as a crucial aspect of the institution's restructuring process (QAA Audit Report 2003) and evidence of the institution's intention and rationale for change, use of the words 'aims to' implies acknowledgement of resolve rather than confirmation of achievement.

The words 'bottom-up approach' and 'compliant culture' were quoted in the QAA Report and taken from the institution's own documentation. The fact that these phrases were repeated in the report without any contradicting text suggested an implicit approval of the intended shift:

The new structure represented a more 'bottom-up approach facilitating greater local ownership and a move away from a more 'compliant culture'

(QAA Institutional Audit Report, 2003, para 35, p.8)

An implicit appreciation of the value of a culture of engagement as part of managing change transpired from the data, with the intention to use persuasion and explanation as part of the process of change. Encouraging ownership as opposed to enforcing it was seen as key to a successful outcome:

Well, I think the most important thing in getting change to happen is to convince other people of the importance of what you're doing so that they adopt it as almost their own agenda, rather than it being an agenda which is foisted upon them from outside (S1).

The data provided an insight into how this feeling of ownership and empowerment was developed and established. One example of this development was the activity used to create and construct the organisation's second Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2006-2010) within the time frame of this research. The approach adopted in the production of this document was identified by participants as an important element in establishing a consultative approach in agreeing set of educational principles, vision, strategic aims and objectives. Such an approach required an investment of time especially if the consultation was to be more than merely rhetoric:

I think I did feel very much part of developing that vision. I have to admit there were times when it was sort of frustrating perhaps when everything didn't go my way and discussions perhaps went on longer than they might have done, but I think looking back on it, it was an important thing to do to give as many people as possible the space and the time to put forward their ideas so that we came up with something we could all collectively agree on and felt that we were, as an institution, all committed to the same view of the future (S1).

There was a strong indication of wider academic consultancy of the more recent education strategy, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2006-2010) compared to the previous strategy of 2002-2005. The Pro Vice Chancellor Education, the institution's executive lead for education, played a significant role in ensuring the academic community contributed to the design and construction of the text of this strategic document and organised and chaired the open sessions, including editing the final version. Comments from the participants specified that key administrators who had constructed the previous strategy (2002-2005) were not involved in this later strategy (2006-2010). The strategic document of 2006-2010 was written in the present tense which gives the impression of immediacy and action and the frequent use of the words 'our', 'we' and 'this community' implied a sense of ownership and co-authorship.

The intended audience as stated in the text was expressed as 'potential users are all colleagues engaged in learning and teaching and assessment throughout the institution' (Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy, 2006-2010, p.1). This appeared to be a strongly inclusive in its intent. As this document was accessible via the web site, the intended audience included individuals external to the institution. This would be particularly relevant for any external bodies that had a vested interest in the institution's education philosophy and vision, such as the Quality Assurance Agency, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, external examiners, institutional staff and potential new staff to the organisation.

While contributing to the discussions on the style and context of the Learning and teaching Enhancement Strategy (2006-2010) was an important stage in achieving broader engagement and ownership of the future strategy, individuals had tangible evidence that their contribution had been considered and noted when the final document was produced and published. This evidence of contribution to an institution's strategic document reassured individuals that their comments and time invested in such a process was valued:

I can look at the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy and see bits that I think I put in there, there might be people around who think they put those bits in there as well, but I went to a meeting and I said we should do that and there it is in there (S4).

This consultative approach to creating the institutional education strategy was different from previous practice. In line with an earlier comment relating to the 'whole quality assurance, bureaucratisation agenda' (S3), the production of a previous institutional education strategy had been the responsibility of education-focused, administrative colleagues. However, accompanying this new found style of producing a major institutional strategy was a concern that the drive for enhancement and innovative thinking may override the required quality assurance processes. An example of the newly found sense of ownership was the positive declaration that there was a break with previous practice with regards who was involved with completing the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement (2006-2010):

Z wrote the last document...nobody understood it, I don't think anybody understood it. Whereas in the second one, we wrote it. Z thought it was dreadful I think really, although she never actually said so – she kind of

absented herself from it – but we did write it ourselves and we wrote in a quite different way, and I guess that is the change. I mean what we said in terms of what was going on was that we were moving away from assurance to enhancement. The danger now is that we don't do any assurance at all (S6).

The significance of the connection between feelings of being valued and ownership as part of the process of major institutional change emerged from the data. Participants stated that tangible evidence that their contributions were not only considered but acted upon was a significant source of motivation.

4.4.3. Sense of Empowerment

An important motivating factor for implementing a devolved model was the ambition to not only foster greater responsibility and authority with additional layers within the institution than the traditional senior executive group, but also to orchestrate a shift in power and control from the existing location within the institution. There was a purposeful intent to identify a pro vice chancellor with leadership responsibility for education with the skills and attributes to enable this shift to happen:

I wanted somebody who would not disempower, who would empower the academic community and I use these emotional words 'at the expense of the administrators'. C offered a consultative engaging approach which would disempower the administrators by giving the academic community more power (S2).

The previous focus on quality assurance was cited as a potential reason for why the academic community seemed to have let the accountability and leadership of education activity slip from their focus. The activity surrounding and including the education business of the institution was perceived as overly bureaucratic and the prime cause for the apparent lack of real engagement from academic colleagues:

The thing about education as you know is there's a whole quality assurance, bureaucratisation agenda, which quickly distracts academics (S3).

The word empower was actually used to describe what needed to be the focus of the change process. The current situation is seen, as untenable and there needs to be a change:

We've got to do something about this; we've got to empower academics in a way that will help them to have more of a profile within the institution (S6).

The sense of empowerment seems to have been based on a process of collaboration and ownership. The style and tone on the first page of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2006-2010 was direct and positive and established a tone of collaboration:

We are an integrated learning community in which staff and students work together to facilitate active and deep learning, within a culture which recognises individual rights, responsibilities and diverse needs

(Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy, 2006-2010, p1).

There was a stated assumption that there was an integrated community and the repeatedly used term in the text of the first person plural corroborates the suggestion by Dick (2004) that when a dominant discourse is replicated in a form of social practice then it becomes reality.

The phrase 'feeling valued' emerged on several occasions in the transcripts and individuals believed their efforts and time made a difference. Through feeling valued, individual and group confidence seemed to develop and the feeling of ownership, influence and empowerment. A sense of confidence and involvement in that achievement was evident from the participants:

There are lots of things that we've achieved and as I look back over 5 years, the relationship now with the Schools in this Faculty is hugely improved from what it was. It has been transformed; I mean that is our doing I think (S6).

There were several references to how some of the participants felt genuinely involved in the process of change and this, in turn, made them feel empowered. An example of such involvement was being sought after for opinions and ideas in advancing various initiatives within the organisation and a belief that this request was genuine:

The senior management was asking us for ideas and we felt that we were contributing to it and owning parts of it and I thought that was very positive (FG).

Some participants observed that not only as individuals had they felt more valued but that this change led to the education activity of the institution being more valued. There was acknowledgement that the institution's promotion process better reflected educational performance as part of the formal process of assessing professional progression, although this was in contrast to other views addressed later in this chapter:

Well what I think I saw, I certainly saw a growth in the academic leadership through people being appointed into Directors of Education. And I also saw people and education being more valued or educational performance being more valued in the promotions process and the university actually delivering on that (S3).

4.4.4. The Process of Fostering a Sense of Ownership in Others

The approach of taking the time to consult and discuss important issues with a wider group of individuals was recognised as a successful strategy by some participants. Participants reflected on this approach and decided to adjust their style of working and leadership approach in order to create a culture of ownership within their own area of responsibility:

So that was when I first became aware of this approach and I think, I tried, more or less successfully to try and do this in my own role as Associate Dean. I may not have the people skills that perhaps C had (S1).

Participants described other approaches they used as part of the activity of education leadership which were in keeping with higher education practice of using evidence to underpin an argument or rationale. These included taking the time to listen to and establishing dialogue with colleagues, drawing on evidence to support new initiatives and examples of good practice. There was recognition that their new roles may distance them from the reality of the effects of change. They believed it was important to remain close to the issues of implementation as part of their leadership role:

I go and talk to people, I mean it's important who they know and who they've talked to and that they'd talk to people at different levels because the more you become part of the Senior Management the less you become part of the system in some ways (S4).

Specific measures on how best to reduce resistance to potentially contentious ideas included having advanced knowledge of what were the likely challenges and having examples of best practice from other situations:

I do a lot of informal talking to people, and have learnt from others that there should never be a surprise at a meeting, you might have had a row with people outside the meeting but at the meeting you've got to the point where you knew what you could and couldn't do (S4).

An important artefact emerged from the Activity Theory analysis of the data which was used to achieve the intended outcomes of the implementation of the devolved model, which was referred to as the Directors' network.

A significant number of references from the participants related to the establishment and functionality of this forum for the newly created roles of Deputy Heads of School, Directors of Education. This forum contributed significantly to the feeling of empowerment by the Directors of Education. These Director roles (n21) represented each of the institution's academic schools. The forum was referred to as the 'network' and was a new, semi- formal structure.

This network was perceived to be genuinely influential and recognised for its value and potential:

It did become a powerhouse. There had been nothing like that before in the university and in terms of leadership and management (S5).

This network was seen as an opportunity to discuss various issues, share current problems and discuss possible solutions and represented a collective, consensus approach to the leadership process of education. The forum provided an opportunity for these new posts of Directors of Education to analyse and resolve the emergent issues themselves and therefore assume ownership for the outcome:

Well, I think it worked very well to get the Deputy Heads to initiate things – first of all to ask them what they thought was going on – and secondly not to say ‘right I’ve written you a solution, here’s what we’ll do’ but to get them to chair their own working parties. (S4).

However, there were also concerns that this collective approach of working through consensus was time consuming and that at some time, a definitive leadership stance was needed to ensure there was a conclusive decision. It proved challenging to achieve an effective balance between encouraging broad consultation to take place and timely decision making. Nevertheless, participants believed that time taken to reach a decision may strengthen the sustainability of that decision:

I think we’ve made some real achievements, some people might not think we’ve moved as fast but I think there’s a difference between real achievements that are sustainable and achievements that are made that don’t last (S5).

and

There is a balance between frustration and endless consultation and making sure that there comes a point – because there was a point when eventually the DVC Education, as the title was then and maybe a small group said “right now we are going to produce something” and I think there was a cut-off point where as many comments as possible were included (S1).

The Learning and Teaching Enhancement strategy (2006-2010) was a more concise document than the previous strategy, consisting of four pages of text with the detailed, supporting policy documents underpinning the strategy contained in several appendices (n17). Each of these supporting documents was compiled by groups of individuals with a combined membership of academic and administrative staff to ensure the eventual policies were informed by people who would be engaged in their implementation. Gradually each policy was discussed and approved by the institution’s revised education policy committee. This activity of engagement fostered a consensus approach of achieving agreement and decision making.

The style and tone of these supporting documents were reflective of the main strategic document of 2006-2010, namely use of the words 'our' 'we' and 'you' when referring to the student community. The dimension of discursive practice (Fairlough 1992) highlights the emphasis here of a collective, a personalised approach which is designed for the attention of institutional staff and implied a sense of ownership with the strategy.

The institution's aim to embed a sense of ownership and responsibility within its academic community for education strategy and quality was predicated on establishing a culture of commitment for education processes at a broader level within the institution. The QAA Institutional Report (2008) commented on the institution's progress with working through consensus and the final judgement includes the sentence:

In the view of the audit team, the University is succeeding through a consensus-building approach in establishing a culture in which enhancement is an integral part of institutional processes for managing learning and teaching.

(QAA Institutional Report, 2008, p.3).

This statement recognised the institution's shift to a more enhancement model of learning and teaching.

However, the report also raised queries regarding the extent of devolution of authority for educational issues and the need for institutional oversight and assurance of quality for teaching and learning activities. The level of delegated power to the role of Associate Deans Education was queried in the report and a recommendation to the institution to review its newly established processes. The use of the words 'delegated power' reinforced one of the significant changes as part of the implementation of the devolved model and implied that the process of devolution might have exceeded its boundaries, if indeed any had been set by the institution:

Review whether the powers delegated to and exercised by, the Associate Deans (Education) are accompanied by suitable checks and balances
(QAA Institutional Review, 2008, p.4).

Activity Theory's division of labour highlighted the cautionary text in the same QAA Review (2008) that this new empowerment and devolution of responsibility might threaten the institution's quality assurance agenda and processes:

Where university-level policy or procedural guidance is issued to schools, to make more explicit the degree of observance expected, so that it is clear whether local variation is appropriate (QAA Institutional Report, 2008, p.4)

4.4.5. Student Engagement and Participation

The sense of empowerment and ownership extended from the academic community to an ambition for greater engagement with the student community. One of the major shifts in constructing the revised Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2006-2010) was the intention to place the student at the centre of education practice and facilitating them to have a sense of ownership of the broader education process. This shift in emphasis represented a change in how students were regarded within the institution. The aim was to consider students as active participants in the education agenda rather than merely recipients of education content which presented a different dimension to the relationship between students and functionalities of the institution:

I think when I first started it was very much about identifying the common themes across the university, identifying the direction of travel, and getting as many part so of the university as possible to buy in to that vision and I think that vision was that students would be very much at the centre of what we do rather than they were simply consumers of a product which we developed and basically said take it or leave it (S1).

Relations are much better now in all the committees. The students are genuinely engaged in discussions in their education and academic quality standards committee that wasn't the case years ago. They came along, they were the token presence and they were asked sometimes what their view was but there wasn't the same interaction (S6).

The words 'student centred education' played a prominent role in the text of the university's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2006-2010). However the drive for a stronger student centred culture was not just an altruistic, academic aim, it was based on an appreciation of future changes related to institution

income from the education agenda. There was a gradual perception that students were important customers and consumers of the higher education experience who were becoming more selective in what they wanted from a higher education institution. Their eventual choice would have an impact on a significant income stream to the institution, so attracting them would be a competitive process.

This review of student engagement was evident in the text of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2006-2010, whereas it was not as visible in the previous strategic document of 2002-2005. This detail does not necessarily mean that student engagement was not part of the institution's practice prior to 2006 but more that it was not seen as an important fact to make explicit. The opening statement of the 2006-2010 strategy states:

The student learning experience will be enhanced by a focus on student-centred, research-led learning

(Learning and Teaching & Enhancement Strategy, 2006-2010, p.1)

This statement established the student as the heart of the strategy from the beginning. However, there is no clear statement which explains how this will be achieved. This was quickly followed by reference to the benefits for the learning experience of a research intensive environment, which is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

4.5. Shifts in Power and Influence

As the process of change is initiated, implemented and gained momentum there were shifts in power and influence as new roles and structures were established and previous ones replaced. This led to some individuals feeling more empowered and a parallel situation of a loss of power and influence from others.

Underpinning these shifts was a belief that a transfer of institutional emphasis on its education performance and practice was necessary, in contrast to the previous attention on research performance and outputs. The anticipated income from education sources was an additional lever for the loss and in some cases, a gain of influence for some individuals and a change in emphasis from research to education practice. The emotional feelings and reality of coping with internal shifts in power and control became apparent in the responses of some participants.

The first written mention of a shift in responsibility and power towards the academic role in quality of learning and teaching was mentioned in the earlier Learning and Teaching Strategy document (2002-2005). Here the word 'professional' referred to the institution's academic community:

The University will assure the quality of its education provision by identifying clear lines of responsibility within its revised management structure and by creating the expectation that excellent and innovative teaching is a highly valued professional responsibility

(Learning and Teaching Strategy, 2002-2005, p.1)

This text aligned with the theme of shifts in power and influence and anticipated the process of change. The document clearly highlighted the existence of a revised management structure and the anticipation that excellence in teaching was an academic responsibility rather than an imposed standard advocated by committees or administrative structures. Reference of the need to re-organise and reconfigure academic services was an indication of the shift of power and influence from one institutional community to another.

The first of the two Learning and Teaching Strategies underpinning this research provided the first indication that the institution's education goal was to shift the ownership and accountability for education to a more local responsibility model:

The impact of this Learning and Teaching Strategy has been to heighten awareness of the importance of quality in learning, assessment and teaching: however the challenge in the next three years is to build a culture that encourages a more active engagement in the management of change by those who are affected.

(Learning and Teaching Strategy, 2002-2005, p.14)

While this earlier learning and teaching strategy referred to 'engagement in the management of change' it does not include any mention of education leadership. The subsequent Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2006-2010) introduced the concept more directly of the institutional shift to a more local responsibility approach and referred to the term 'horizontal networks' which indicates a shift away from the previous hierarchical model:

Strengthen education leadership within and across the Schools by further embedding the supportive horizontal networks of change agents e.g. Associate Deans and Deputy Heads of School

(Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy, 2006-2010, p.4)

This document also referred to the part played by key individuals in the major change process and referred to the new roles of Deputy Heads of School, Education as change agents. This reference is repeated on several occasions in this strategy and provided a clear message to academic and administrative staff as to which group of institutional staff were expected to provide the educational leadership of change:

An important element in this restructuring will be identifying the role of key change agents: they include the Deputy Heads of School, Education

(Learning and Teaching Strategy, 2002-2005, p.4).

The transfer of power was initially highlighted in the institution's earlier QAA Audit Report (2003). The discourse in the QAA Audit Report (2003) on the institution's transference of power from its established position to one of more local accountability and authority provided an important reaffirmation of the institution's aims and intention. This affirmation was neither overtly approving nor disapproving but factually recording the institution's intention without any cautionary commentary:

The team found that the University strategy was shifting the quality agenda from one based primarily on compliance to one giving greater emphasis to quality enhancement

(QAA Institutional Audit Report, 2003, para 23, p.6)

Significant detailed text was included in the QAA Institutional Audit (2003) which described the reviewers' assessment of the implementation process which was generally positive. However, the organisational tensions which emerged as part of the process of change in shifts of power and control were highlighted in the report in that the text refers to 'perceived concerns' from academic staff who felt that the new structure was 'top heavy'.

The significance of the QAA Institutional Audit Report (2003) on the organisation's process of change was that the report appeared to validate the process and approach by the institution in its implementation of major change without any adverse comment on the potential of jeopardising the quality of its academic provision:

It {the audit team} noted the care with which the transition was being managed and had confidence that the new structure was likely to continue to embed rigorous and effective monitoring procedures while enabling the focus to be placed more on enhancement-facilitating processes.

(QAA Institutional Audit Report 2003, para 162, p.29).

The momentum to shift the power and influence within the institution was maintained in the institution's self- assessment submission to the QAA as part of the Quality Assurance Institutional Review of 2007/2008.

There was clear reference to the difference in style and approach to education leadership since the previous QAA visit in 2003 which reinforces the views of the participants in relation to the change in during the period covered by this research:

This contrasts with the situation at the time of the last Audit, when the limited education leadership was focused on quality assurance

(Institutional Briefing Paper, 2007/08, p.3).

If the feeling of ownership was developed through a change in approach in establishing an agreed education strategy there was, in contrast, another group of institutional staff who will feel disempowered and not an integral part of the new strategic direction.

A radical shift from previous practice was required if the institution's education performance was to improve and this involved not just a change and shift in emphasis from research to education but also a tangible move from a largely administrative led, education quality assurance system to more an academic led education enhancement process. This was seen as a significant shift in accountability:

None of the academic staff anywhere owned the issue of the quality of their education, it had all been passed to the administrators and of course they dealt with it (S2).

The aim was to shift the locus of authority, influence and power, away from a committee centric practice to individuals and the new education leadership roles. The institution's structures and process for managing education as opposed to education leadership were identified as a priority for change. The aim was for education activity and achievement to emerge in equal measures as research was regarded, or at least for the education component to be significantly more visible than in previous times. Some believed that committees and formal meetings were inefficient in fostering greater academic responsibility, as they were not conducive to encouraging individual responsibility for educational progress:

Let me just step back to one other thing... the other thing that matters is that the institutional structures for discussing education matters were archaic and antediluvian. They were formal; nobody understood them really (S2).

The aim of introducing this new model of leadership and management was to strengthen the education presence and impact while ensuring the responsibility and authority shifts from essentially administrative control to a more academic led activity.

Comments from participants were explicit when referring to the difficulties when there was a shift in location of control and established practice of managing internal processes:

So the first thing was to kind of clear out the old and bring in the new and that was not a happy process either and in that process too there were a lot of casualties, because moving people out of assurance... administrators out of assurance, into enhancement is not as easy as you might think (S6).

A second strand to the theme of shift in power and influence involved an awareness that established income streams were likely to change in emphasis. The knowledge and acceptance that education income was going to be the main external resource over which the institution could exercise some influence, was one of the motivators for establishing greater academic authority and leadership.

I could see then that there wasn't going to be an infinite source of money for research every going upwards it was going to be bigger but not much bigger and if the institution wanted to be in the top 10 by 2010 the agenda that was going to dominate that and the source of money would be education – and thus it has proved and thus it is going to continue to prove I think (S2).

The institution had an established reputation for quality research outputs with a corresponding drive for increased research funding. The anticipated changes in emphasis from research to education income are likely to present a change in priority of importance to the institution. As education income sources were perceived as potentially more stable than research income and possibly the main source of income in the future, education was seen as the potential growth area for the institution. This factor was a powerful lever in the change of institutional focus and strategy from the previous concentration on increasing and strengthening the organisation's reputation and prestige in research performance towards the aim of an equally strong education reputation.

However, despite this clear indication that education activity and therefore individuals involved in that activity would prove to be essential for the institution's development and expansion, participants were unconvinced that as an activity it would be valued by the organisation:

It {education} is the most stable earner and it is the only area where potentially into the future we can actually grow income in the current climate but in spite of that it is not valued broadly within the institution (S5).

It was apparent to some participants that the previously highly sought after research income was going to be less available and this fact reinforced their view that it was appropriate and judicious that the institution realigned its balance for research and education activities and performance:

There's also the change, I think in the university that suddenly realised that actually education brings in quite a lot of money and if they don't deliver on education, students will go somewhere else (FG).

Interestingly some of the participants were conscious of the transfer process of internal power and forceful words were used to describe their view of the effects of

this shift. Implementation of the devolved model not only had an impact on individual roles but also on conventional, internal structures which had normally managed the main decisions. This finding is indicative of the distribution of labour in Activity Theory (Engestrom 1999a) and represents new ways of working as an outcome of implementation of the devolved model.

I think it was at a Senior Managers drop-in lunch where somebody said something about the role of Senate and how neutered it had become, well I think that the diminution of the role of the professoriate institutionally and the diminution of the powers of Senate all hang together (S7).

There was an acceptance that a shift in leadership of the education agenda was desirable and that administrative influence in matters educational was too strong but that it was the institution's senior leadership which was allowing this to happen:

What I perceived was that directors of service were making decisions without governance, and were becoming over powerful and academics in senior positions, were letting them (S7).

However, when responsibilities shifted from one community to another and the 'new' group felt valued, there was a contrasting view from others who felt the opposite. Individuals knew there was a process of shifting responsibilities and although some appreciated the purpose and aim of the transfer of leadership responsibilities, their responses indicated that they were sceptical of the wisdom of the shift of responsibility from administrative leadership to the academic community:

I think that a message went out that certain key individuals in administrative roles were being too engaged, too involved and that was allowing the academics off the hook but also academics needed to take ownership of it and the way that was responded to was to keep them (administrators) out, I don't think that needed to happen but it did. So for me the downside was that I knew less about what was happening in education during this period than I had in the previous 5 years. I was definitely excluded; there was no two ways about that (S7).

The decision to appoint a new senior executive leader for the education portfolio who would emphasise the importance of education in an organisation which had

previously focused on achieving world renowned research achievements, was to play a crucial role in the success or otherwise of the implementation of the devolved model. To create and establish the optimum context for this re balance required the right environment to be created. This represented a major institutional cultural shift which resulted in a review of the education research relationship.

4.6. Education and Research Interface

The interface between education and research emerged as a distinct theme from the interviews. This theme has several sub themes which include the institution's shift in emphasis from strongly research centric to a position where the aim was to re balance the emphasis on education and research, the participants' perception on the reward and recognition processes for both research and education achievement, the perceived benefit to student learning from a research intensive environment and the institution's culture regarding education and research.

4.6.1. Re-Balancing the Emphasis for Education and Research.

As part of implementing a change in the institutional culture, senior managers commenced a process of substituting the previous concentration on research as a priority with a more balanced approach between research and education. This balance started with an articulated vision that included a renewed clear commitment to emphasising the institution's value of its education business:

I started talking about education in what is now the Senior Managers meetings – because it took me two years to put the whole structure and everything else in place, and it wasn't about structure, it was the vision and part of the vision, if you look at the vision statement' it has education right up there - which it was never before, because what H used to say, so I'm told' was "watch my lips, research, research, research" and you ask anybody who was around then that's what they'll say (S2).

The institution was trying to redress the previous determination to achieve excellence in research which appeared to have circumnavigated a similar progress for education. There was a perceived difference in social status of research and education in the institution and the sector as a whole, which was highlighted from the interviews:

Well I think there is a hierarchy of social status attached to all activity in a university. What research conveys is social status to the organisation and we can use that in branding. But because teaching has, in terms of its status, been eroded over decades, centuries, there is now – and this is the disadvantage – is that if you are highly research led, teaching will always be perceived as of less social status, and that status then attached itself to the individuals who do it (S7).

This observation was clear in its statement that the activity of teaching in a research intensive institution was perceived as a lesser social status than research and that this lower status reflected those who were engaged in teaching. This conviction provided some insight into the nature and depth of change which was being implemented. This particular theme implied that implementing a devolved model of leadership and management was not only about encouraging greater authority and responsibility amongst academic for the education business of the institution but a change in culture of the organisation. This culture had been seen as channelling all its efforts and resources into achieving a reputation for research excellence, which some believed was at the expense of excellence in education.

However, some participants had a different perspective on the status issue between education and research. There was an indication that perhaps the intellectual capacity of those academics who focused on research was not the same as those who focused on education:

I think it's a very difficult, I mean it's my observation at the moment is that the leadership in education has developed a lot actually, certainly under CT, because she was an intellectual leader and she engaged with the community of educational leaders who weren't quite of that character by and large, if I'm being entirely honest, and actually engaging with those, if you like, our top thought leaders, research stars, is an extremely difficult thing to do, and I think therefore if the agenda isn't set by the people of the character of CT it's a non-starter frankly (S3).

One explanation for the challenges facing the institution in its efforts to rebalance the activities for research and education was the perception that the education agenda was too focused on quality assurance and that this perception, when

combined with the parallel bureaucracy, was a deterrent for academics to become engaged with the education business of the institution:

The thing about education as you know is there's a whole quality assurance, bureaucratisation agenda, which quickly distracts academics – it either distracts them or it repels them (S3).

The impression that education was a distraction from what academics really want to do was evident from the interviews but these sentiments were often associated with the quality assurance processes affiliated to education as opposed to the actual activity of teaching:

Education and everything that goes with it, – is just a distraction from what I'm really here about and it's a shame because most academics actually – again it's a huge generalisation – are concerned to teach and educate as part of what they do but a lot of the QA agenda, sorry to keep going on about it, has set all that back and so people do what they have to do because they have to do it rather than actually engage in the real issues (S4).

The rejuvenated focus on the education business of the institution and education leadership was accompanied by attention to the organisation's reward and recognition processes for education and research achievements which did not always meet the projected narrative.

4.6.2. Perceptions on Institutional Reward and Recognition Process for Education and Research

The institution's earlier Learning and Teaching Strategy (2002-2005) identified the value of implementing a policy for professional development for staff which recognised academic leadership and education management through a structured process of reward and promotion opportunities. However, this ambition was not seen by the participants to have been realised and underpinned the theme of an uneasy relationship between education and research in the institution. This is illustrative of an institution's intent failing to be seen as translating into practice.

Fairclough (1992) refers to the force of the text when assessing what the text is trying to achieve. The text in the opening paragraphs of the Learning and

Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2006-2010) indicated that the document's aim was to justify and assert the tactical approach of this strategy. The purpose seemed to be assert from the beginning that that the institution's education mission was at the heart of the organisation's corporate strategy.

The term 'we aspire' in the second paragraph, implied a collective intent to aim for international recognition in research, education and enterprise. The use of the word aspire implied a desire, a wish, a direction of travel rather than an objective which had already been realised. There was no indication in this part of the strategy that education performance or activity was any less valued than research within the organisation. However, this fact was in contrast to the perception of the majority view of the participants in this research. This intention to value the efforts of education achievement was highlighted in the strategic document:

The University will build on its achievement in the reward and recognition of all staff engaged in supporting learning by further refining job family level descriptors

(Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy, 2006 -2010, p3)

The inference was that the organisation had already achieved progress in ensuring reward and recognition for education effort. This ambition was in contrast to the lived experience of the participants who doubted the text which stated that the institution was committed to reward 'top quality staff' because they did not believe the institution regarded them as 'top quality staff' at the time of this research.

An uneasy relationship between education and research was perceived by some participants. Educational endeavour and achievement were not considered to be valued as much as research. The promotion process was seen as the prime indicator of reward and recognition for academic achievement and considered to favour the research route as opposed to education pathway. In addition, individuals in new leadership roles believed that to ensure a successful route to promotion, it was preferable to focus on the achievement of personal research objectives, probably at the expense of time on education.

Well although there's been a lot of progress in developing criteria for people to achieve career advancement on their educational achievements I still

think there is no doubt whatsoever that your achievements as a researcher count much, much more highly and that can mean that people who have dedicated a lot of time to education at the expense of their research so the people we see getting their promotion to higher grades are almost invariably top researchers (S1).

Although there was recognition that the institution was making some progress in addressing the promotion criteria and guidance to facilitate a genuine route for academics who have made a significant difference in education, the impression was that it remained unrealistic to expect to achieve promotion for education achievements. At the time of this research there was no robust evidence at institutional level to demonstrate the number of promotion cases which had progressed with the revised criteria. This impression served as a disincentive for individuals to invest their time in developing an education portfolio and encouraged a return to the research pathway while limiting the education input to a minimum:

So if you want to get ahead then basically the reality of the situation is that you are better off focussing towards your research and doing enough towards your education just to get by (S2).

This tension was openly acknowledged by some participants in that this imbalance between the values attached to education and research was due, in part, because of a previous management initiative, which promoted research performance through publically acclaimed reward and recognition with a corresponding absence of emphasis or focus on education.

The imbalance in perceived value between research and education activity was perpetuated through a system of reward and promotion for good research by facilitating time out of education, which portrayed an image that excellence in research would release individuals from the perceived burden of education. This also led to the perception that those who engaged in research were in some way better academics than those who concentrated on teaching. In addition, teaching may be regarded as a form of punishment for not succeeding in research:

If people weren't research active or that research successful then teaching would be increased so there was a sort of... then at that time... if you were no good at research then you would therefore be given more teaching (FG).

and

I know a Head of School who can talk about the teaching and administration burden. I think there has been a culture that good... the good people do research and... you know, everybody else has to pick up the teaching or you haven't really done what you're supposed to do so could you do a bit of this teaching nonsense (S4).

The words 'burden' and 'teaching nonsense' depicted a lack of value for teaching as a genuine part of academic activity and in contrast a belief that absorption in teaching activities was a useful method of avoiding research:

Though of course the other behaviour you see in education is, from academic staff and doubtless I'm unpopular to say it, is that it's – for some people it's a convenient diversion to justify not doing research (S3).

In spite of the discourse by senior managers that committed and sustained engagement in education was a key goal of the organisation and that this engagement will be acknowledged through the organisation's promotion process, serious doubt remained in the minds of individuals as to the reality of this aim. The institution's previous determination to focus on research excellence was seen to have had a detrimental effect on promoting education excellence and achievement as a genuine route for professional promotion:

In order to be promoted, to get senior lectureships, professorships and so on, to be engaged in educational activity is probably very foolish, because there is no strongly identified track for promotion via the educational route. The evidence is that people who have majored in research have got promotion and those who have majored in education have not got promotion (FG).

There was concern that the incentive for personal promotion via research excellence would be a disincentive for individuals to have a commitment to education. This could in turn, jeopardise the flow of main income stream of specific disciplines which relied significantly on external education contracts as consistent source of growth and income:

So I think that's a very dangerous situation to be in, in a sense because it means that the majority of our income at our school does come from

educational contracts and yet people are increasingly disengaged from that process and finding ways in which they minimise the amount of input that they put to educational programmes in order to have personal promotion (FG).

Individuals were aware that regardless of the institution's intention, the actual lived reality was that promotion prospects were still more realistic with a research portfolio as opposed to one in education. As the future balance in the institution's income was likely to shift from research to education sources, this trend in successful promotion applications was seen as an unhelpful disincentive to promoting educational excellence.

The institution's submission to the QAA (Institution Briefing Paper 2007/2008) mentioned its efforts to strengthen the previous imbalance in the reward and recognition processes for research and education achievements. The institution referred to itself as 'progressive amongst research-led institutions' (Institution Briefing Paper 2007/2008, p5) in reference to the development of career pathways relevant to the delivery of the education mission. In contrast, evidence from participants did not support this anticipated development, nor did they seem to have too much faith in its future implementation:

But there's still, if you like, the sub-text that research does get preference but there has been a very strong effort to try and equalise things but I don't think to be honest that's been completely achieved. I feel that we still need to go some way towards recognising people who have contributed a lot on the education front should be treated equally to people who have contributed a lot on the research front (FG).

If the institutional message, political drive and culture signals promotion and personal success was through research achievements then the ensuing behaviour might be to avoid or divert time and effort from education activity in order to succeed in research

Well, there are schools in our Faculty where the reward for doing good research is that you get out of teaching (S4).

Although there were potential differing held positions on the balance between education and research activity and the desired recognition processes for

significant achievements in both portfolios, there were similar differentiated views on the value of research activity on the student learning experience within the institution.

4.6.3. Perceived Benefits to Student Experience from a Research Intensive Environment

One of the supporting documents underpinning the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2006-2010 was the Statement on Student-Centred, Research-Led learning at the University of X (2007). This supporting document illustrated the institution's intention to combine the two main elements of its education enhancement strategy, namely that its focus was (a) student-centred and (b) research led learning.

This document stated the institution's definition of research-led learning. This included the use of subject-based research to inform learning and teaching and that students could expect to be taught and supervised by researchers at the cutting-edge of their discipline, the use of pedagogic research and engaging students in research and scholarship methods. This statement presented clear guidance to the institution's academic community on a variety of ways that research-led learning may be defined and delivered.

The institution's approach to research-led learning was identified as a feature of good practice in the QAA Institutional Report (2008) as was the institution's staffing policy for raising the profile of teaching relative to research. However, the written declaration for this goal by the institution and the appreciation of this aspiration in the QAA's Institutional report (2008) was not reflected in the views of the participants at the time of conducting my research.

In contrast to the view that education endeavours were not recognised by the institution to the same degree as research achievements were, there was evidence that academic staff were motivated to succeed in both agendas and uncomfortable in feeling obliged to focus only on either research or education. There was a belief that the education experience in research intensive institutions was different, even distinctive, because of the perceived symbiotic relationship between education and research, the student experience and curriculum content:

Well, there's no doubt that, particularly when you get to teaching higher level courses, the fact that you are engaged in top level research means that you are exposing students to new ideas, new developments in the field and gives them a tremendous advantage and makes for a more exciting experience for the students.....and I think it prepares them much better if they are going to go on to a job which utilises their subject (S1).

This statement assumed that research active academics were engaged in teaching, which was in contrast to other evidence from this research which highlighted that research active staff were not as engaged in teaching as non-research active staff. The expectation was that the research activity and outputs from individuals informed and enhanced their teaching and the student experience. However, this may have been an aspiration rather than a reality:

They know that when they teach they bring things to it that come from their research, so sometimes when we look at education enhancement we look at the people doing the really fancy innovative stuff but a lot of our teaching is good dedicated people giving good clear lectures on interesting topics that interest the students and a lot of that is just basically informed by the research they do. So the baseline quality that we offer is this integration of the teaching and research and that's something that we do here particularly well (S4).

Disparity between the way education and research were valued via the institution's reward and recognition processes was highlighted. It was apparently challenging to encourage research active individuals to engage with all that is encompassed with the activity of teaching. However, there was a conviction that this situation should be rectified and improved rather than a definitive choice made to concentrate exclusively on either research or education:

I really don't like the idea that you do research or you do education I think that they can't be separate and it's not interesting if they're separate (S4).

I actually think the advantages in a research intensive institution is that if you can get it right, we have these great intellects and you have the potential to be able to unlock that within the educational arena, which I don't think they have it at these other places (S3).

The fact that successful research-active academics had developed institution's research reputation was seen and assumed to be, a distinctive and a desirable facet of the organisation. However, there was also some recognition that that these 'intellects' were not currently evident in the education delivery or business of the organisation. So the perceived challenge was how to ensure those engaged in all teaching activities are engaging, stimulating and challenging:

So the trick for us as a research intensive university is to be able to deliver that level of service by people who are intellectually engaging, stimulating and challenging and we have those people but bringing those two things together is very hard and is part of a big trick, or thing that worries me at the moment about the university going forward (S3).

However, not all students studying some of institution's subjects were, according to the participants, able to experience the benefits of exposure to individual researchers and their research.

There are very few professors in X who teach students – they {students} would go through the whole thing without knowing - even meeting the research excellence people, except for one or two who are committed to education (FG).

And that would be true for Y. For example, there are pockets in there somewhere, where senior research active staff don't do any undergraduate teaching - bits of Y have no idea about the curriculum (FG).

Conversely, the fact that the institution had a good reputation for research was seen as attractive to students and an enticement to them selecting the institution as their preferred place to study:

It is the research impact out there that attracts the students, it's a fact well known to do X research or whatever, that makes people think is a good place to come (FG).

If we were crap at research nobody would come here (FG).

Discipline differences emerged from the focus group participants regarding how effective or otherwise education and research were integrated in everyday academic practice. The science subjects tended to see teaching and research as closely aligned with the research activity informing the teaching. The words

'moulded together' were used to describe the practice in two of the science subjects which were located in the same Faculty. Whereas others reported that the practice from the health, social sciences and humanities disciplines was that researchers in applied research in these disciplines were seen more likely to engage with the students' learning experience but those engaged in empirical research were less so.

Some of the tension related to the education research interface was due to individuals feeling pressurised in managing their time between the competing agendas of education and research. However, it was felt that the staff themselves needed to manage their own time and how it was allocated to education and research. It was felt that the institution's reward and recognition procedures and processes should incentivise this behaviour and reward those who managed an effective balance between the two activities:

You're going to have to incentivise people to do it and you're going to have to help them manage their own personal conflict in time – if there is such a thing, and then you're going to have to reward them for getting their balancing of their activity right (S2).

Research was seen as an individual, independent activity and education activity as more collegiate. It was this collegiality which was likely to make individual achievement a challenge to recognise and reward through the promotion process.

Nevertheless, there was a recognition that the institution needed to redress the balance between the perceived value of research and education and that this process had begun. Others felt that although efforts were being made to rebalance the value between both agendas that a 'sub text' still remained and there was scepticism that in reality, nothing had really changed. There was some evidence that a modification in the institution's approach was recognisable in that education was now a genuine focus of academic debate within the institution:

The fact that staff are talking about education, they are engaging in it and they are not actively avoiding it. I am aware of several people who got promotion very quickly to Chairs on the basis of deliberately doing a bad job at teaching so they would not be asked to do it again, to give them time to concentrate on their research and the behaviour that was being seen, and rewarded, was do a bad job of education (S5).

In contrast, individuals stated that there was a change in the attitude described above and that the devolved model and new education leadership roles had played their part in this change:

It has got us to the position where we are now, where academic staff in Schools are no longer afraid to talk about education (S5).

The statement 'academic staff are no longer afraid to talk about education' portrays a powerful change in culture where, according to this participant, it is as academically legitimate to discuss educational topics as it is research issues and some of this change is attributed to the revised leadership approach.

4.7. Dynamics of Leadership

The theme dynamics of leadership incorporates features of the leadership process which participants either observed or believed should have been part of implementing major change in a higher education institution. Three main elements directly related to the dynamics of leadership emerged from the data through the initial and focus coding process. These included understanding the leadership process, new ways of working and working with a devolved model.

There is limited mention of education leadership in both of the learning and teaching strategies and formal submissions to the QAA prior to the Audit in 2003 or the Review in 2008. Consequently, the related QAA Reports refer to the institution's management processes but neglect the leadership process in their commentaries. However, there is mention in the QAA Audit Report 2003 in the 'features of good practice' section which would have indicated that the chosen approach was working positively:

The Audit team identified the following areas as being of good practice: The University's approach to managing and implementing the current restructuring of the University

(QAA Audit Report, 2003, p.1)

This report was constructed during the early stages of the major change initiative and was based on documentary evidence provided by the institution and meetings with key, selected individuals. This means that the report may not represent the views of the main body of academic staff. Nevertheless, as a public record of the

institution's performance at a specific time, the report does indicate that the institution was managing the process of change effectively:

The team {audit} learned that the University had planned carefully for the implementation of a new structure.

(QAA Audit Report, 2003, p.8)

The later QAA Audit Review of 2008 also fails to reference the leadership process but there is commentary in this public report on the consensual nature of the leadership and management process:

In view of the audit team, the University is succeeding through a consensual-building approach in establishing a culture in which enhancement is an integral part of institutional processes for managing learning and teaching

(QAA Audit Report, 2008, p.23).

4.7.1. Understanding the Leadership process

While enacting a number of new leadership roles as part of implementing the major organisational change, individuals expressed their increased understanding of what constituted a positive and negative leadership process.

It was difficult to discriminate whether the comments were made in relation to reflecting on aspects of their own leadership process or as part of their expectation of the leadership process in others. However, the comments provided a valuable insight into what constituted education leadership in a higher education environment from the participants' perspective.

A personal view included the value of following a particular style of leadership which involved working with consensus rather than waiting for a majority agreement.

I think when I first started it was very much about identifying the common themes across the university, identifying the direction of travel, and getting as many as part of the university as possible to buy in to that vision (S1).

and

Yes, I think in an institution of, I don't know, 5,000 employees you're never going to get all 5,000 to sign up, but on the other hand you do want it to be something that is carried forward by overwhelming consensus rather than a simple majority (S1).

Identifying a specific theme on which to focus and motivate individuals was highlighted as an important element of leadership as a process, as was finding the time, space and opportunity to celebrate a successful task and then building on this to energise colleagues for future tasks. It was felt that personal credibility was more important than a significant knowledge of education theory in engaging others to achieve specific goals. In a research intensive institution, an established research performance was considered an important element to personal credibility:

I think one of the things that give me a lot of credibility is that I have got a very strong research record (S1).

An appreciation and understanding of the process of the leadership was seen as more important than specific expert knowledge was quoted by some participants. This fact was seen as an advantage in that this situation would ensure leaders invited input from others who were more knowledgeable, which in turn, resulted in a relationship of interdependence between leader and individuals. It was seen as important for leaders to be effective in establishing a vision, enabling and communicating.

Some believed that understanding the power and source of motivation for individuals and recognition that there were likely to be differing sources of motivation for individuals depending on their position and role in the institution represented an important element of the process of leadership:

What motivates the academic community varies slightly, depending where they are in the hierarchy and their career – and then the administrative side of it you also need has a completely different motivation and that does vary dramatically between just turning up because it's a job and being on a crusade (S2).

Participants recognised the value of engaging others in order to achieve a specific aim or goal and that the skill of persuasion was a crucial element of effective

education leadership implementation. There was a sense that facilitating time and 'space' to allow individuals to work through any new proposals was a useful strategy if the ultimate aim was to implement a difference in academic practice and behaviour. This implied that allowing for time to talk through emerging issues and to engage with the community of individuals who were to play a central role in implementing any changes was an important factor in the process of change:

But I think looking back on it, it was an important thing to do to give as many people as possible the space and the time to put forward their ideas so that we came up with something we could all collectively agree on and felt that we were, as an institution, all committed to the same view of the future (S1).

4.7.2. Developing a Culture of Trust and Establishing Allies

There was an appreciation that developing a culture of trust was crucial to implementing major change in the organisation and that this required developing and establishing relationships which involved investment of time:

I think trust is implicit – again it comes back down to values, it comes back down to the human qualities the whole time. There are different ways and at different levels people can build up trust and if you say you will do something you follow through, to say you'll do something and then nothing happens and if that is a repeated pattern, people will no longer trust what you're saying. It takes time to build those trust relationships (S5).

In addition to developing and establishing a culture of trust as part of the leadership process, the political aspect of leadership was acknowledged by the participants. Establishing allies was recognised as an effective method of introducing change, as was the use of rationale argument with an evidence base. Both of these approaches were seen as a practical method to persuade individuals to change their position and opinions. The evidence based approach was seen as particularly relevant in a research intensive environment:

Build a political ally base, develop some rational arguments, and develop strong evidence. We are a research based university and I think the one thing I've seen in this university that sways opinion more than anything else is if you can evidence what it is you're saying (S5).

Some participants highlighted that winning allies and identifying champions to mitigate the potential of opposition and lack of motivation to change was an important element in successful leadership. In addition, personal nerve to drive through ideas and plans when individuals were reluctant to engage with the change process was seen as an asset for effective leadership:

I win allies in the business so that if I find myself in the situation where with my peer group I'm being opposed, I've then got another constituency that I can appeal to, to come into alliance with me and I've used both the governance and the methodology to keep certain forces at bay. Of course, at the end of the day, a lot of this is about your own personal nerve (S7).

A level of self-awareness emerged from participants who reflected on their own style of leadership as time progressed and that engaging staff as part of the leadership process was going to prove a more constructive leadership style:

I think I realised very early on that a 'directorial style' would not work and I realised that it had to be done in a more engaging style so I adapted my way of operating to do that (S1).

While there were frequent references to the importance of engaging individuals to foster an environment of trust as part of advancing the process of change, other observations described a more technical description of optimal leadership. These included terms such as 'hierarchical' and 'lateral' in describing how strategic decisions were agreed (hierarchical) and then how plans were operationalised (lateral) in large and complex organisations:

So I think it's very important that the leadership aspect, irrespective of whether it's education, or research or enterprise, understands how you run a complex organisation where inevitably you've got a mixture of approaches which need to be hierarchical for planning resource allocation, strategic development and then lateral for the actual delivery of services and in my experience universities are only now just waking up to the need for that (S7).

Specific characteristics required at senior level to initiate a new style of education leadership included an ability to listen to the views of others while having a clear

view and vision of their own, to be enabling and to exercise effective communication skills:

So they have to be enabling...well they have to espouse the vision and speak it out there, but in a way that people at the grass roots understand and one of the key pieces to that is the ability to communicate in plain English, as oppose to either 'education speak' or 'management speak' (S2).

Other expectations of effective education leaders included comments that they should be knowledgeable, strategic and informed. An almost selfless attribute emerged in that an effective leader should be focused on developing a positive reputation for the institution as opposed to building a personal, individual reputation, as suggested by a participant's reference to a senior leader:

So 'charisma's' the wrong word but she wasn't trying to make a reputation for herself she was trying to make a reputation for the institution (S4).

Further comments on what was required for effective education leadership included the phrase 'identifying the intellectual dimension of education':

The starting point has to be the intellectual dimension of education and you have to keep it solely on that track so it's about... it's partly, although I don't like to say this, it's partly about the curriculum, the link to research and it's partly about... well the key thing about effective education it seems to me is that it has to be inspirational (S3).

4.7.3. New Ways of Working- New Roles and Networks

An important part of the restructuring process of identification of key change agents was stated in the earlier Learning and Teaching strategy of 2002-2005 and that these roles would be developed as part of an organisation re-structure. Some of these key change agents were participants in this research and their views on the effectiveness of this development varied, with some feeling the roles and responsibilities were not always thought through sufficiently. References to a shift to a 'local responsibility model' in key institutional documents are important in that in that they reiterate in print that the previous ways of working with the education quality agenda were going to change.

Further references to the organisation's devolved model of leadership and management were evident in the institution's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2006-2010. Although the word devolved was not used specifically the implication of working with a devolved model was clearly stated:

Within this community, leadership and management are distributed across twenty Schoolsa local responsibility model is employed for quality assurance and enhancement within Schools

(Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy, 2006-2010, p1).

The strategy referred to core responsibilities at School level, horizontal networks, and partnership working which were key components of the devolved model. There was specific mention of the value of leadership roles in education and embedding the supportive horizontal networks of change agents and the institution's efforts to provide strong leadership. This discourse closely reflected the corporate leadership's intention to introduce a change in the leadership and management culture from one of committee adherence to one of individual and academic community responsibility.

Developing and forging relationships and networks were mentioned as effective methods of fostering group cohesion. Two ways of achieving this were proposed by participants. The first of which was to use research based methods to persuade others to achieve a common aim and the second, to use a narrative approach to develop a story from experience which would inspire confidence in others:

We are a research based university and I think the one thing I've seen in this university that sways opinion more than anything else is if you can evidence what it is you're saying, and you can evidence that in a number of ways – hard numerical data at some times – but this is where the narrative comes in either your experience, experience of a student and experience of a colleague and whether the evidence is qualitative or quantitative, you can then work with your political allies (S5).

An important element of this shift in academic ownership and responsibility was the creation of new leadership roles, such as the role of Deputy Head of School, Education. Participants referred to the creating of these roles as one of the positive experiences of this new devolved model. These new roles were the senior

school level leads for education and there was a post for each school (a total of 21). As a group or community of education leaders, they formed a significant network with a strong, combined voice. It was felt that a devolved model had enabled an unlocking of intellectual capacity and the advent of effective formal and informal networks.

It is unclear as to whether these networks would have emerged with or without a devolved model of management and leadership but most of the participants attributed this change in working practice to the devolved model.

These networks were primarily focused around the education agenda and enabled specific topics to be discussed openly, providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and potential solutions to current and past problems. Such fora seemed to positively change individuals' motivation to become engaged in the change process

It was a place where you could go, whinge, get it out of your system, come up with a constructive solution and then go public with it (S4).

The positive outcome of working through networks in the devolved model was highlighted on several occasions during the interviews. These networks were seen as substitutes for the institution's apparent lack of planning for new roles such as the Deputy Head of School, Education role. A role which was to prove crucial to the change process.

However, in contrast, some comments reflected the potential negative effects of such networks in that the more effective they became the more they were seen as exclusive and had the potential to lead to structured group activities which were not linked or aligned in any way. These activity groups were usually given a specific subject to explore and resolve within a limited time line, with the aim of reporting on progress. However, if these groups were not managed effectively could be seen as lacking direction or focus:

Nothing ever happens. I mean there are working parties that are still working and there are working parties where people say we need to revive that one it hasn't finished after all. I mean, it is slow but then this is an evolutionary process, there isn't an end point where you can say project

over and we can just do it. So some of these things will go on and on and on (S4).

As the Deputy Head of School, Education network developed and became effective, those who were not part of the network could have felt excluded, on the 'outside' and unconnected to where information and decisions were being made:

But I'd been quite annoyed, you know if C had said 'no you can't come to the dinners and you can't come to the meetings, you're not part of this. I'd have been quite... felt quite left out I think (S4).

Accompanying these structures was a sense of authority, a means of energising and engaging others effectively and managing diverse information. This was described by one participant when referring to their established network at School level:

I think it's about involving them and talking to them and getting their perspective and picking up very often the national strategies that feed into it and can help you then see that they need to be involved in this or else they are going to get left behind (FG).

Individuals believed that time invested in talking and explaining to others about the vision, strategy and rationale for any changes was an essential ingredient for a successful outcome, as well as understanding the perspective of differing positions of individuals:

There's a certain amount of leg work that you have to do, in my experience and obviously sometimes things don't work well and you have to do a lot of leg work, but if things work reasonably well you can devolve some work to colleagues who are also enthusiastic about the same direction that you want to move in and you can then share the work and it tends to be catalytic because other people join you (FG).

The new education leadership roles in themselves were seen as a positive move and the individuals in these roles as making the education agenda more visible.

However, it was uncertain whether the change in focus on education was due to the new roles alone or the personal attributes and abilities of individuals in those roles.

New roles and structures are sometimes an inevitable part of most approaches to organisational change. The new education leadership roles established as part a devolved model of leadership and management evoked a variety of responses. Some individuals believed the new roles proved to be a rewarding experience but that titles may have benefited from more planning time before implementation.

There were however, aspects of this change process which could have been improved. Participants commented that there was an apparent lack of preparation for these roles and some confusion with the purpose and function of specific posts.

Views were expressed that roles and responsibilities were not always thought through and this led to confusion, inefficient use of time, disappointment and disillusionment for the post holders. It was suggested that more time and focus on clarifying the responsibilities of the new roles and their alignment with each other would have improved the structure:

I think the first thing you need to do it put in place some generic work that actually gets people recognising what the role is really about, and that's been missing. If we want to strengthen it, what needs further to be done, is being clear about roles and responsibilities (S7).

4.7.4. Working with a Devolved Model

The institution's Learning and Teaching Strategy 2002-2005 contained some of the first indications of the organisation's plans to introduce a devolved structure. The document refers to 'review', 'reorganise', 'reconfigure' and 're-think' which, when combined, illustrated the intended process of change through implementation of the devolved model of leadership and management. The words review and re-think present a less radical perspective to the organisational change than re-organise and reconfigure but the internal audience for this document might well have asked themselves who would be involved in these four activities, which would affect the working and professional lives of the institution's community.

The word restructuring was mentioned in relation to several aspects. The first referred to the idea that the changes involved in restructuring may present opportunities rather than negative outcomes. One such opportunity was mentioned further in the text in that the restructuring would mean that quality assurance was

now the responsibility of Schools and Faculties as opposed to a central professional administration role.

The culture which underpinned the education agenda in this particular institution, prior to introducing a devolved model, was seen as a 'decisions by committee' orientated environment. There was significant central control of the institution's education assurance processes and limited perceived academic authority and responsibility for the strategy or delivery of the education agenda. Individuals felt they were working in a heavily compliant culture which had the potential to restrain education innovation and enhancement:

Well, the nineteenth century is what it felt like, particularly the processes felt nineteenth century with a superimposed QAA policeman from outside and the quality police was a phrase used everywhere (S2).

The aim of a devolved model of leadership and management was to replace this highly monitored and constrained environment to one with more local responsibility and direction. This aim is specifically mentioned in the Learning and Teaching Enhancement strategy 2006-2010 and establishes the context for the rationale for the devolved model:

Within this community, leadership and management are distributed across 20 schools and several Professional Services. A local responsibility model is employed for quality assurance and enhancement within schools

(Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy, 2006-2010, p.2).

The devolved model was attributed with creating a different culture, different working environment and a primary force for initiating change. This change in approach to the education agenda was compared to the previous the culture:

In the meantime – well the whole ethos was we must move away from this, we must get academics to think about how we enhance the student experience, there was all that stuff about fees coming down the line, are we giving something that the students will feel is appropriate. And it was just gradually eroded, and then C took the bull by the horns and said we've got to create something different (S6).

In comparison with the previous model of management and leadership, participants indicated that the devolved model appeared to motivate academic staff to an increased level of active participation and empowerment in implementing a more academically owned educational strategy. One example which illustrated this increased participation in moulding different academic practice related to the institution's annual quality assurance process of monitoring educational performance:

I mean from the start, the Annual Operating Statement was something we filled in every year, but then we realised that this could be managed differently and used to our advantage to actually involve people in the department and not be quite so heavy handed and top down and you know, ideas came in from the group and suddenly there was some ownership (FG).

There was a feeling that this new model enabled more agreement, greater consensus, a sharing of experiences and an improved understanding of institutional issues:

Partly one of the reasons for being in the group is that even if you don't agree with the final output you at least understand why the decision has been reached and what the arguments are that have been marshalled, but I think generally, we're all pretty rational in this situation and I don't feel that things have been irrationally foisted on us, or issues inappropriately highlighted, and I think the decisions which have been taken have pretty much been sensible ones, for good reasons, so I've never had a problem feeling that I'm being sat on or unduly pushed in an inappropriate direction (FG).

The previous model of organisational management represented a 'top down' approach which is in contrast to the feeling of a greater contribution and influence with the devolved model, thereby providing individuals with an opportunity to experience greater empowerment.

Some felt the devolved model allowed for exemplars of creative thinking and imaginative education practice at School level to emerge and be considered for dissemination across the institution:

It's difficult to know whether it was always there or whether it was just more visible, exemplars of people who were doing more imaginative and creative things in terms of how they were delivering their own education in their schools (S3).

In contrast, others were more sceptical as to the messages been given and their alignment with certain behaviours. There was a feeling that the behaviour of some senior leaders did not align with the two espoused values related to the rationale for change, which was expressed as two main strands - a greater focus on education practice and less central control:

I think this comes back down to messages from the highest level as to what is perceived are the values of the organisation and that only comes from the highest level in any institution and if certain activities are seen and the behaviours that follow reinforce a certain value set, that values some activities as being more important than others then no matter how good an individual might be as a leader it actually inhibits the agenda for that area. There was quite a turnaround when our current VC came in that he was talking, and does talk in public meetings, that education is as important as research (S5).

There was reference in the institution's submission to the QAA for the Institutional Audit 2007/2008 on how the implementation of a devolved model was managed and the anticipated changes to the education portfolio within the organisation. This action placed the institution's management of the major change initiative and progress in the QAA's domain of scrutiny.

Although a devolved model had its positive potential there were tensions associated with the implementation and working with a devolved model had its risks.

As the implementation process gathered momentum, individuals suggested that devolution of authority and responsibility required a process of monitoring in order to avoid duplication of effort. There was an indication that for the process of devolution to be effective, communication channels needed to be effective and efficient if there was to be a cohesiveness of effort and activity:

You have a devolved model and you can have a very directive model. With a directive model you know what everybody's doing because you told them on Thursday you will do this and that's how it will be, but people grumble because it wasn't their idea and they didn't want to do it. At the other extreme you can have a very devolved model, everybody does their own thing and that bothers people who work on the basis of leadership because they don't know what people are doing and then they start to suspect people aren't doing anything and it makes them nervous. In the more devolved model everybody believes that they're doing a great thing for themselves but you've got to work on the communication so that people do know what's going on elsewhere (S4).

While the devolved model was seen as providing leadership and management at the point of delivery it was also considered to foster a degree of parochialism which was a cause of concern for some individuals who were troubled about a lack of uniformity in the student experience:

Actually, I must say I get more and more concerned about the devolved model the further it goes. I mean clearly the benefits are the ability to get the leadership and the management close to the chalk face where the business is actually happening but on the educational front what I see is quite a lot of insularity, a lot of people not really addressing the real issues that we talked about, about the changes of pedagogical needs of their students. You see a lot of non-uniformity in the student experience. I think despite the devolved model there isn't enough creativity in it – I think that's my point – I think the devolved model actually is not challenging academic staff enough because they are too far away (S3).

As the changes were implemented, participants expressed that in addition to a perceived lack of planning there was a lack of progress monitoring. It was felt devolution without oversight meant that academic units were in danger of focusing primarily on their specific areas, which led to too much duplication. Individuals recognised this lack of monitoring, overview and co-ordination:

I think it's now too sloppy, personally, so where we need to be is in the middle and it had this disastrous administrative consequence of everybody reproducing, or generating, their own way of doing things (S2).

Participants felt there should have been a more robust overview of the effects and impact on academic practice of greater empowerment at the smallest unit of resource management, i.e. at academic School level. Some senior leaders in the organisation were honest enough to admit that may be monitoring of the devolved model had not been as robust as it might have been:

The balance between establishing a culture of overtly strong leadership and one which fostered a less controlling approach was perceived as a real challenge with the devolved model:

Strong leadership can actually stifle creativity and actually it's getting the right balance of allowing some creativity but not everything that is so creative that you end up with anarchy... and that is the real tension (S5).

Some believed that the change process required individuals to work with uncertainty, to look externally for different leadership styles and acknowledged that it was important to use different leadership approaches to suit the environment and culture.

The revised focus by the institution on education required more effective leadership and management of the education portfolio. Leadership in such an environment required abilities and skills to manage differing and diverse opinions.

The devolved model was seen as a positive change but that it suffered from a lack of overview and coordination. There was acknowledgment that a change of approach was needed and that enabling new academic ideas to emerge from the subject disciplines was a positive move. However, this required a coordinated approach from somewhere in the system and structure. If this was absent, there were likely to be unintended consequences. Whether it was coincidental or as a result of the devolved model, the period of implementation in this research was associated with an apparent new found innovation in learning and teaching provision which seemed to be uncoordinated and potentially unstructured in marketing and planning terms.

Yes, it's about diversification of our offer. Lots of new programmes have sprung up to meet market needs, which is what this university needed at the time I think, but its' probably gone too far. It needs to come back (FG).

The overarching theme from participants was related to the process of change and corresponding behaviours. There was considerable acceptance that the process of change was challenging and observations that the behaviours at most senior levels in the organisation were inconsistent with espoused values. A devolved model could potentially create a silo style of behaviour with a corresponding lack of cross institutional working:

What I have seen happen over the time since we restructured, is that there are fewer cross-school, cross-disciplinary educational opportunities (S5).

The comments 'too far away' and 'non-uniformity' indicated that some regret existed that the shift from central, administrative control to a more local, academic-led environment was less about encouraging greater academic responsibility for the education delivery but more about loss of overview and control:

The trouble with a devolved model is there are too many places to hide actually and be comfortable (S3).

In contrast to a view that working with a devolved model was establishing uncoordinated academic practice and a lack of structure, there was a feeling of influence and impact when individuals compared their current experience to the previous institutional culture. Individuals appreciated the increased level of engagement which accompanied the devolved model:

So a completely different experience for me the last five years - and it is very different now. Now it is more of a 'we' and 'we' are very much not the minority pupil and the sorts of things that we've had to do are now beginning to become influences in the university so everything now has changed. The dynamics of leadership, the dynamics of our relationship between the various levels of senior management have all changes (FG).

External ratification that the institution was managing the process of change effectively was evident in the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) final audit report on the institution in 2003. The audience of this report is the institution itself and the wider external environment. The institution's management of organisational change and restructuring was highlighted as one of the features of best practice in the audit report. This mention in the QAA Audit Report (2003) provided an external

validation and form of endorsement for the implementation of the devolved model and accompanying process of change.

The team formed the view that the University's approach to managing and implementing the current restructuring is a feature of good practice.

(QAA Institutional Audit report, 2003, Para 39, p.9).

The report highlighted the range of developments at the university since the last audit report in 1998 and used the word 'significant' to mention the appointment of the vice chancellor and the word 'progressive implementation' in the description of the restructuring process within the university. The general perception from the assessment of the auditors, whose purpose was to make an informed judgement on how the institution manages the academic aspects of its provision, was that the implementation of the organisational restructuring received their tacit approval.

However, the audit team also emphasised that it was the process of implementation of the major change that they were proposing as a feature of good practice with some caution as to the final outcome:

At the time of the audit the University's new structure had not been fully tested and it is too early to judge its operational effectiveness

(QAA Institutional Audit Report, 2003, para 36, p.9).

None of the participants referred to this document or the statements contained in the report on the implementation process during the interviews.

A shift in style and message was noticeable in the subsequent Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy of 2006-2010 which included a further update progression of implementation of the devolved model. The purpose of this document was stated in the second paragraph and use of the word 'our' depicted a greater sense of collaboration and shared responsibility for the education strategy:

To offer succinct, accessible statement of the direction of our learning and teaching over the period 2006-2010

(Learning & Teaching Enhancement Strategy, 2006-2010, p.1).

The text in this strategy (2006-2010) was concise and stated that it was to be read in conjunction with several supporting documents. These supporting documents contained the underpinning details of the strategic message, including such documents as the corporate strategy, relevant human resource policies and numerous institutional statements on relevant issues to the overall education business. These appendices were directed towards key policies, which at that point in time, were fundamental to delivery of the education strategy and were highlighted on the last page of the document (Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy, 2006-2010).

Construction of this document coincided with the change in leadership and management model of the institution which aimed at ensuring a more collegiate approach to education leadership and management across the whole institution. In this respect, the text reinforced the view that partnership, collaboration and integration were an intended integral element of the institution's academic environment.

All three Associate Deans Education led the internal dissemination of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2006-2010) to academic and administrative staff across the academic Schools. This process was in contrast to the institution's previous practice of responsibility for dissemination which was led by senior administrative staff.

There were both positive and more cautious statements from participants on the effects of working with a devolved model and the tone remained cautiously optimistic in the institution's briefing paper in preparation for the QAA Institutional Review of 2007/2008. The new institutional structure was highlighted in this document and a specific section was allocated to describing progress with the organisational change since the last QAA visit in 2003.

The text in the institution's briefing paper (2007/2008) was positive in tone and indicated that the process of change was progressing well. However, there was mention that the 'devolved structure still poses significant challenges, for example ensuring consistency of approach across Schools' (Institutional Briefing paper 2007/08, p3). This document employed phrases such as 'further improvement', 'we are continuing', 'develop our structures', all of which indicate an

acknowledgement of ongoing development as opposed to complete implementation.

There was recognition in the briefing paper (2007/2008) that the organisation was attempting to address these 'significant challenges' through a specific section on leadership, in particular education leadership. The new leadership roles with particular responsibilities for education leadership were highlighted in this submission to the QAA. These new roles were described as 'change agents' and became established members of an informal network or forum. The purpose of this network was stated in the Briefing Paper (2007/2008) as facilitating communication and developing ideas.

While there was a sense of commitment from the documentary analysis to work with the devolved model, there was also evidence of a realistic appraisal of the challenges involved in such major change which, by the institution's own admission, were significant. This institution's briefing paper made several references to the implementation of the devolved model and the rationale for change. However, the discourse highlighted several challenges with this shift to devolution which included the lack of experience by some academics to manage the quality agenda for education, confusion re the boundaries for decision making at school level and the fact that as schools actively embrace the devolved approach that there was a need for some form of coordination to avoid fragmentation of approach.

The text in this document highlighted the reality of introducing major organisational change which signalled a form of acceptance that the implementation process was challenging and not complete at the time of the submission of the briefing paper or the planned visit by the QAA reviewers.

As in any large complex institution, cultural change takes time. Student feedback indicates that we are moving in the right direction and we are realistic in our expectations regarding the rate and breadth of change.

(Institution Briefing Paper, 2007/2008, p.8).

The subsequent QAA Institutional Report (2008) in response to the institution's briefing paper (2007/2008) recognised the institution's shift to a more enhancement model of learning and teaching and therefore acknowledged

progress in the implementation of the major organisational change. However, the report also raised some queries regarding the extent of devolution of authority for educational issues and the need for institutional oversight and assurance of quality for teaching and learning activities.

The views from some of the participants reflected the QAA commentary that there needed to be a monitoring role on behalf of the institution to ensure the devolved model did not foster too much inconsistency of education performance across the disciplines and schools. The level of delegated power to the role of Associate Deans Education was queried in the report and a recommendation to the institution to review its newly established processes. The use of the words 'delegated power' reinforced one of the significant changes as part of the implementation of the devolved model and implied that the process of devolution might have exceeded its boundaries, if indeed any had been set by the institution.

Evidence of local variability as part of a devolved model was also highlighted in the QAA report (2008) as an area for attention from the institution, with a statement that the institution should be explicit about the degree of variation in education activity which was both appropriate and did not present a risk to the institution's quality agenda. So while a consensus-building approach was positively specified in the report, a measure of caution was also highlighted regarding the boundaries for variation and alternative academic practice. This caution is also evident from the data emerging from the participants' interviews.

4.8. Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the findings from an analysis of the data using Activity Theory (Engestrom 1999a) and Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1992) which originated from the interviews and documentary evidence.

The emergent themes represented a response to the research question of *how does a devolved model of organisation leadership and management impact on the education agenda in a research intensive university*. The findings identify the main elements of the impact of a devolved model of leadership and management on the education business of a research intensive higher education institution with evidence drawn from participants in the research and the documentary evidence. Activity Theory identified significant emergent themes from the data against the elements of subject, object, mediating artefacts or tools, division of labour and

rules which are highlighted in figure 5.1. in chapter five. These themes are triangulated in the documentary analysis through use of Discourse Analysis which highlights where the documentary text is part of the wider message, the anticipated audience for the narrative and the emphasis of the text.

The themes, namely a sense of ownership and empowerment, shifts in power & influence, the education and research interface and dynamics of leadership embody the elements of the impact of a specific model of leadership and management within a research intensive higher education institution. The decision to implement a devolved model as part of major structural change within the institution may have had unintended consequences, which had not been foreseen by organisation's strategic leadership.

One of the impacts of the devolved model was the empowerment of some individuals with education leadership roles in an organisation, an organisation which had previously concentrated its efforts on research achievements. However, this empowerment is accompanied by tension from an apparent lack of coordination and over sight of education activity which is evident in the findings and has the potential to lead to too much diversity and duplication of effort.

One of the aims of introducing a devolved model was to orchestrate a shift from mainly an administrative led, education quality focus to a more academically led, culture of education enhancement. The findings indicated that to a large extent this was achieved. However, this shift resulted in a concern that the processes associated with education quality might become less efficient and that the renewed enthusiasm from new academic leadership roles, while assuming responsibility for the education agenda and strategy, might render the previous concentration of education quality more opaque. This transference represented a cultural shift and this was reinforced in the external commentary from the QAA Audit review (2003) which mentioned the shift from 'imposed compliance' to a culture of 'local responsibility'.

The education research nexus within the institution became more evident as a result of the devolved model. Tensions emerged between the perceived value of a strong research culture to the learning and teaching agenda and the lack of trust that education efforts and achievement would be acknowledged and valued in a research intensive environment. The evidence demonstrated a perception of

inequity of reward and recognition between education and research achievements in the promotion process which in turn, was seen as a disincentive for engagement with education leadership and achievement. As the sense of ownership developed amongst the academic leadership roles, so too did an awareness that the organisation's promotion processes had not appeared to have kept pace with this newly found contribution to the institution's performance and reputation. However, in contrast, it was generally felt that the student learning experience in a research intensive institution was a very positive one, although this varied between disciplines.

In addition to the perceived inequities in the promotion process between education and research, the findings highlighted a difference in the social status between both activities. Participants were acutely aware of this difference and did not believe that 'top quality' education-focused staff were as valued in the institution as they should have been in relation to promotion.

The allocation of academic work in a research intensive institution emerged as problematic. Diminishing success in research achievement attracted the threat of increased allocation of education work. This was seen as incomprehensible in light of the projected increase in income from education, the contribution to the institution's reputation and not a practical approach to establishing a culture where both education and research activities are equally valued.

However, such tensions highlighted issues which may have previously remained covert within an academic community which appeared to accept the status quo. There was now an opportunity for the organisation to engage in a meaningful attempt to design a feasible resolution to establish a workable model which recognises the value of both activities.

The findings illustrated that the devolved model engaged a wider range of individuals in the process of leadership across the organisation. Some of whom were new to such positions and the implementation process did not offer any tangible preparation process for such roles.

Implementing a devolved model did not eliminate the influence of an effective, strategic leader. Their effectiveness and influence was apparent not only in developing an environment whereby individuals could discuss and agree policies as opposed to too much reliance on committee decisions, but also through the

consultative approach they adopted. It became clear that other education leadership roles observed the leadership approach of this strategic lead and adopted some the tactics as their own.

One aspect of the impact of the devolved model was an interesting contrast between an increase in academic leadership confidence in some individuals and a sense that the newly introduced devolution lacked monitoring and was in danger of developing a fragmented approach to the education agenda.

The informal network of Directors of Education (n21) proved to be crucial to the development of confidence in these new education leaders and established a collaborative working culture across the institution's academic disciplines. However, the findings showed that gaining consensus was time consuming and gave the impression that no one was prepared to make a definitive decision.

Implementation of a devolved model was more extensive than just its effect on the education agenda in a research intensive institution. The findings indicated that it prompted individuals to think differently about how they managed the leadership process and how to work across disciplinary and structural boundaries to achieve agreed goals. However, there were concerns that devolution without coordination, an overview or monitoring may lead to an absence of a cohesive direction.

A further discussion on the implications of the findings within the context of the relevant literature will be addressed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Analysis, discussion and implications

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a critical analysis and discussion of the findings from the research and their significance in light of the relevant literature on the subject as outlined in chapter two of this thesis. The findings emerge from employing Activity Theory and Discourse analysis in examining and scrutinising the data. Potential implications from this research for future situations of leadership practice of institutional change and the identification of possible areas for further research will also be addressed in this chapter with acknowledgement of the strengths and limitations of this research. The following analysis and discussion is directly related to exploring answer to the research question: *How does a devolved model of organisation leadership and management impact on the education agenda in a research intensive university?*

Analysis of the data highlighted the impact of major organisational change on the leadership activity of the process of change. The devolved model was the catalyst for change and recognising and managing the tensions which ensued became a crucial element of the leadership process. A key contribution from this study to the existing evidence-base on the activity of leadership of change in higher education is that while these tensions may not be unavoidable they do need to be managed. A framework for leadership of change is proposed, based on the research findings, as a means of managing such tensions. The findings indicate it is the management of the combination and interconnectivity of these tensions which underpins a positive momentum for the leadership process of change. The proposed framework suggests that these stages are not to be seen as linear in any way but rather a combination of processes which, when blended together, form a structured approach to the leadership process in a rapidly changing environment, in a research intensive institution. This framework is discussed in more detail towards the end of this chapter.

This study of the impact of a devolved model of leadership and management in a specific university, at a specific time in addressing the external drivers for change, draws attention to a number of strands which include a reduction in authority and power of experienced administrators, transfer of that authority and power to a new

community of academic staff and emerging tensions as a result of this activity of leadership change, especially in the area of the teaching research relationship. These findings are summarised towards the end of the previous chapter and emerged through the employment of Activity Theory and Discourse analysis. The process of how Activity Theory was used in analysis of data is identified in table 5.1.

Table 5.1 The relationship between the elements of Activity Theory and data analysis

Process of Using Activity Theory in Analysis		
Activity Theory Elements	Description	Related Data Analysis
Subject	Initiates or constructs the object	(i) The Vice Chancellor and executive team (ii) External policy drivers
Object	The motivating influence or focus of the activity	(i) Establish a culture of greater accountability and responsibility for the institution's education agenda (ii) Relocate and shift the accountability and responsibility for education enhancement and quality assurance
Mediating Artefacts or Tools	Used to achieve the outcomes & mediate between subject and object	(i) Informal networks (ii) Task groups (iii) Narrative in key institutional documents
Division Labour	How the tasks and responsibilities are shared between communities	(i) Strategic academic lead (ii) New leadership roles established at School level (iii) New leadership roles established at Faculty level
Rules	Conventions or norms which constrain or surround the interactions	(i) Committee-led decision making (ii) Institutional hierarchy (iii) The relationship between teaching and research activities (iv) Reward and recognition processes for both teaching and research

Introduction of a devolved model presented the organisation with the challenge of working with the inevitable hierarchy of a higher education environment, while introducing a more lateral approach to leadership and management of the educational agenda. This lateral approach caused a shift from a largely administratively driven and agenda setting of education activities, to greater academic responsibility and ownership of educational strategy, quality and

delivery. This shift required the application of the political skills of negotiation, persuasion, convincing and knowing when to compromise, as echoed by Buchanan and Badham (2008) in their assertion that such political behaviours are an intrinsic element to successful organisational change.

5.2. Analysis and Discussion of the Findings

The summary of findings from the analysis of the data highlighted in the previous chapter are not necessarily equally weighted and there are some important overarching topics which will be addressed in more detail in this chapter.

Previous studies on the topic of leadership in higher education suggest a gap in the evidence base concerning the process of implementation of a specific model. Bryman (2007) in his review of leadership effectiveness in higher education states that there is surprisingly limited empirical research addressing the question of which styles or approaches of leadership are aligned to effective leadership in higher education. These research findings offer an insight into a particular situation of major organisational change with a specific model of leadership, in a specific higher education environment, at a particular time in its history and expansion as an organisation.

Bolden et al (2008) make reference to the fact that the majority of earlier studies on leadership concentrate on the attributes and role of the leader with followers who have the potential to influence the implementation process, being perceived as passive or dormant players in the leadership process. However, the findings from the research reported here indicate that when individuals are positively encouraged to contribute to the leadership activity and are aware and engaged in the overall context of the major change process, they played an important active role in the leadership process and activity.

5.2.1. A Culture of Empowerment Fostering Local Academic Responsibility and Authority for Education Activity

According to Marshall et al (2013), current literature is limited on the impact and value of the role of transient, informal leaders who find themselves immersed in an organisation's change process through leadership of short term working parties or working groups. While the participants in this research may not be described as transient, they did occupy new roles of leadership which were an integral part of

the change process with limited previous experience as formal leaders in the institution. It is their direct experience of an organisation's process of major change, with some in the newly established leadership roles, which has the potential to add value to the existing knowledge on implementation of large scale, organisational change in higher education.

One of the outcomes of the implementation of a devolved model in this case study was to establish greater responsibility and authority for the education agenda in the institution amongst the academic community. The aim was that a devolved model of leadership would empower key academic individuals involved in leadership of the education agenda in the institution which had previously been assigned to capable and enthusiastic administrative staff. Participants reported feeling a sense of self-worth, value and ownership of elements of the leadership process of change. This reflects the observation of Harris and Spillane (2008) who refer to a distributed model of leadership as having a focus on leadership as a practice rather than as specific leadership role. While it was difficult to locate a precise definition of a devolved model of leadership and management within the literature, the interpretation of the model used by the institution in the case study was closest to the literature's description of distributed leadership. It became apparent that both the terms of devolved and distributed leadership, were used interchangeably in the literature.

Commitment to a devolved model was formally endorsed by the vice chancellor and reported in key documents which acted as public reinforcement of the intent and rationale of the major organisational change. This endorsement was based on the rationale that the institution's education profile needed to be raised in line with that already established for the institution's research activity. Adopting a devolved model of leadership and management was considered the preferred approach to transfer the discussion and decision making for education issues away from committee level processes to key individuals responsible for the oversight and delivery of the learning and teaching activity.

The lived experiences of the participants as captured through both individual and focus group interviews suggest that the devolved model of leadership and management did make a difference to the way specific individuals perceived their influence and value to the organisation's approach to change on education leadership. This finding indicates that academic staff in this study gained a sense

of purpose and direction in relation to the education agenda which they had not experienced prior the implementation of the devolved model. While this finding does not contradict the assertion by Bolden et al (2008) that a devolved model of leadership is a 'political concept', it does indicate that while such a model may be political, it may be more than a concept.

Participants suggested that their greater engagement and influence in the implementation of the renewed education strategy was aligned to the introduction of a new model of leadership and management, the devolved model. They reported that they felt an important part of the institution's vision for change and that their views were considered, if not always accommodated. This process of consultation leading to collective decision-making was an important element of the sense of empowerment and ownership experienced by the participants, even though there was some frustration at the time it took to achieve consensus. This finding is in contrast to the views of Lumby (2013) and Gronn (2008), who remain sceptical of the link of real individual empowerment to a model of distributed or devolved leadership. Lumby (2013) provides a comprehensive argument for the relationship between leadership and distribution of power and states that distributed or devolved leadership rather than facilitating empowerment, merely gave the illusion of distributed authority and responsibility. However, the findings from this research offer a challenge to the observations of Lumby (2013) and suggest that a devolved model, in this particular context, was more than an illusion.

While Gronn (2008) analysed the empirical evidence and conceptual significance of distributed or devolved model of leadership, this research studied the reality of how key individuals experienced and perceived the implementation of this model of leadership in the context of a research intensive university in the UK. Their experiences as reported in this research, may legitimately question Gronn's (2008) statement that 'distributed leadership is largely unremarkable' (Gronn 2008, p141).

5.2.2. Shift in Power and Influence

Organisational change aimed at re-distributing the established lines and processes of responsibility and authority will inevitably lead to shifts in power and influence within an organisation's community. There is limited evidence on the process of leadership in authentic situations and the impact of working relationships during a

process of major change where there is strategic shift in power and authority. A further key finding from the research was that while some individuals gained a position of influence and empowerment, others saw their impact and influence diminish. This shift in power and influence was an intended outcome of the introduction of a devolved model and a result of an institutional self-review of its historical and current strategy in line with the organisation's aspirations. This finding correlates closely with the statement by Watson (2010) that effective institutional leaders will need to plan new directions from a robust understanding of the past and present conditions of their organisations. Watson (2010) referred to the importance of institutional self-awareness in managing higher educational strategic change. The institutional self-awareness centred on the need to adapt to the changing agenda for teaching and learning while maintaining its momentum on research. This required a shift in the locus of power and influence in the education activity of the institution.

The emergence of formal and informal networks provided an effective platform for this shift to happen and for this new found feeling of empowerment to develop and thrive. The origin of this empowerment was that individuals felt responsible for creating something different. One of the impacts of the devolved model was that individuals participating in the networks were able to contextualise the issues under discussion, propose options and ideas which led to incremental progress.

Subsequent task groups were established to design the implementation detail and while these task groups were not consistently commended by all participants, they seemed to enable cumulative steps to be achieved in the process of change. This incremental approach affirms the statement by Clark (2004) that this method of engagement is effective in organisational change.

The apparent success of networks and task groups to discuss challenging issues, propose solutions for consideration and embed a sense of responsibility in making the changes happen, seemed to support the observations of Bolden et al (2008) who suggest that influence, value and the positive effects of social capital and social identity are intrinsically linked to the degree of effectiveness of the leadership process in higher education.

Specific mention of the new roles of Deputy Heads Education (n21) as 'key change agents' in formal, institutional documentation accentuated the reality that

these positions were now a central part of the process of change. These new roles reinforced the desired shift away from a culture of previous compliance and focus on quality assurance to one of quality enhancement. The mention of the purpose of these new roles as 'key change agents' was in line with the description of the part played by power-shifts in organisational change by Lukes (2005), in that these roles were established to represent the shift in authority, responsibility and accountability for the institution's education agenda.

A shift in locus of power and control was welcomed by some individuals who found themselves with higher profile, greater visibility and more influence. However, those from whom power was removed were left feeling less involved, less engaged and overlooked:

I think that a message went out that certain key individuals in MSA roles were being too engaged, too involved and that was allowing the academics off the hook but also academics needed to take ownership of it and the way that was responded to was to keep them (professional services) out, I don't think that needed to happen but it did. So for me the downside was that I knew less about what was happening in education (S7).

This comment reaffirmed one of the main aims of the major process of change to redistribute the perceived power base of educational strategy from largely an administrative focus to one of academic ownership.

However, alongside this shift from compliance to enhancement was the possibility of diminishing governance or oversight of the requisite quality assurance processes required to maintain profession specific, institutional and regulatory standards. The previous administrative-led agenda ensured that that governance processes were met to the required standard. The risk that this newly found academic autonomy might result in a corresponding reduction in the standard of academic quality assurance was highlighted by an external review of the education business of the institution. While there was no direct recommendation from this review that the direction of the process of change should be altered in any way, the comment did represent a cautionary note regarding the need to maintain due governance processes.

Implementation of a devolved model of leadership and management meant the new educational leadership roles at school and faculty level were in contrast to the previous practice of centrally-led leadership. The ambition of the institution's senior leadership group was to move away from what was seen as a mechanistic approach to education enhancement to a more collegiate focus on deciding the future direction of the institution's education strategy. This ambition is supported by Collini (2010) as the preferred approach to managing higher education institutional change, with an increased likelihood of a successful outcome.

Those individuals who were losing their influence were unhappy and felt excluded but they were outnumbered by those who believed the process of change was best for the organisation, its future and possibly their own standing in the institution. According to Dorrado (2005) and Lockett (2014) such a situation is expected to require less of an effort to mobilise, support and sustain the momentum for change and attract less opposition to the process of change.

Participants described how this shift in power and responsibility required dedicated time on the issues of coordination and monitoring of progress and emerging, unintended consequences. Neglect of these activities tended to result in the devolution process adopting a life and direction of its own, with a tendency for duplication, fragmentation and to quote one participant: "anarchy".

5.2.3. Tensions Relating to the Education Research Nexus

One of the underpinning aims of implementing a devolved model of leadership and management was to redress the institution's previous concentration on achieving a high level of success and reputation in research and to establish a comparable position for education. This research highlighted a difference in social status between the two activities of education and research, the professional standing of academic staff that majored in either education or research and the promotion prospects between these two groups of academic staff. According to Locke (2004), such differences are more likely to exist in research intensive institutions.

Tensions between the different activities in the research and education nexus in a research intensive university which emerged from this research correlate with the findings in other studies, such as that by Turner and Gosling (2012). They reported that while policy makers and institutions themselves had stated their support and

intent to ensure a more balanced recognition for educational achievement with that of research excellence, only limited progress had been achieved.

In introducing a fresh perspective to the education purpose and leadership with a devolved model in an institution which was traditionally research intensive, a number of underlying tensions were exposed. One aspect of these tensions related to how academic staff directed their time and efforts as part of their academic identity, career progression and self-worth. If the apparent division between education and research focused academics is to be reduced significantly, then in addition to establishing a better balance of worth and value between the two activities there needs to be an acceptance by the research active community that being engaged in education is a legitimate pursuit.

It can be argued from the outcomes of this research that two key factors emerged from the teaching research nexus theme. Firstly, that in this particular case study, it was important that the strategic, senior leadership role for education at Pro Vice Chancellor level, had a credible research record. This was seen as important in engaging the 'top thought leaders, research stars' (S3). Secondly, that the education quality assurance agenda was seen as a deterrent and distraction from individuals' research goals. This suggests if research focused academic staff are to be more engaged with the teaching activity, then more creative ways of managing or simplifying the quality assurance process may require consideration. Both of these factors confirm the research findings of Marsh and Hattie (2002) who state that the pressures of achieving a level of research which is internationally credible and adding value to an institution's reputation are a contributory factor to some research active academic staff engaging less with the institution's teaching activity.

The education agenda was seen as being the main source of current and future income. A strong belief emerging from this research was that the current and future reward and recognition procedures and practice needed to recognise this fact. While the institution's formal documentation and intent was to ensure there were clear, achievable promotion criteria which would recognise significant education achievement, a healthy scepticism existed as to this becoming a reality. There was acknowledgement in some of the institution's formal documentation that there was an imbalance in how education and research activities were valued. While there was a serious intention to rectify this situation, this research identified

a number of aspects which indicated that such an ambition was a challenge in establishing a change in academic attitudes, academic practice and a different discourse in the institution's agreed promotion criteria. The research findings highlighted the nature and size of such a challenge that included the practice of individuals being given 'time out' of education to undertake research, education activity seen as a burden, a view that 'good people do research' (S4), that individuals who failed to deliver high quality research were designated to undertake more teaching and that the reward for good research was less teaching. Such evidence illustrates the divide between the two activities in this research. These indications of the existing divisions in the research education nexus align with the findings of Smith and Smith (2012) who state that such a division is likely to remain while the activity of research is given precedence over teaching commitments.

In contrast to this divide which emerged from the findings, was the view that it was not an easy task to capture the required evidence from the education activity for an assessment to be made regarding an individual's level of national or international quality of impact of their education contribution. This requirement to capture robust evidence from education activities reflects the challenge confronting the process of implementation of the Teaching Excellence Framework (BIS 2016).

In spite of the findings illustrating the division between the two agendas of teaching and research, there was evidence that a research intensive institution had something extra to offer students studying the various disciplines. The institution's definition of its model of research-led teaching attracted positive comments from the QAA Institutional Review in that the organisation provided two modes of this concept. The first was that curricula content would include discipline-related research and the second was that individuals would utilise an evidence-based teaching approach.

Although participants acknowledged that there were discipline differences in the way research was included in various curricula, there was a belief or at least an assumption by some participants that teaching and research were integrated and indivisible in a research intensive environment. This finding is not compatible with the research by Marsh and Hattie (2002) who state that there is no empirical evidence supporting the theory that teaching and research are indivisible but

rather that active researchers are likely to incorporate their research findings into their teaching. This is assuming they are engaged in the institution's teaching delivery.

The institution's requirement in the revised promotion criteria of evidence of significant impact in both teaching and research for career progression in the research pathway and evidence of significant impact in both teaching and scholarship for career progression in the education pathway was viewed with considerable scepticism from participants in the research. Inclusion of the teaching element for promotion in the research pathway was the institution's way of incentivising greater engagement by research individuals in the education agenda and might be seen in contrast to the assumption that institutions tend to be seen as weak in their management of this important relationship (Taylor 2008).

This research highlighted that an uneasy partnership existed between the teaching research nexus in this case study and that implementation of devolved model alone was unlikely to result in a satisfactory resolution.

5.2.4. Implications of Working with a Devolved Model of Leadership and Management.

The institution's decision to change its leadership and management model is in line with the recommendation by Bolden et al (2012) that in rapidly changing and less predictable environments, higher education institutions need to become more flexible and adaptable in their models of leadership, structures and processes to ensure continued development and sustained success. The drivers for this change included the changing emphasis within and external to the higher education sector of the growth in student numbers and an increase in student fees with a global competitive environment.

One of the themes to emerge from the research findings is the dynamics of leadership. Implementation of the devolved model resulted in a significant change in the institution's approach to leadership.

There was external verification of the institution's method of implementation of the model of choice with reference to the consensual nature of the leadership and management process. This focus on gaining consensus was evident in the leadership approach of the new roles of Deputy Heads of School who described

their style of allowing time for colleagues to question and adjust to the changes they articulated and to draw attention to incremental successes which they used to as a basis on which to set new agendas.

Successful leadership of change of the institution's education activity was seen as dependent on effective leadership skills as opposed to specific knowledge of the education portfolio. However, credible research experience by those individuals in the leadership roles was seen as an advantage in an institution which was research intensive. The key components of successful leadership of major institutional change as perceived by the participants were personal credibility, integrity and gaining the trust of others. These components were in addition to possessing a degree of political acumen in establishing political allies and the skills of persuasion through evidence to explain the rationale for change. These tactics were seen as effective and productive as part of the process of change.

A devolved model shifted the communication and key stages in the activity of leadership of change to a broader level in the institution, in comparison to the previous practice of principal responsibility of the senior, leadership role at strategic level. This shift resulted in greater local responsibility for discussion, agreement and decisions-making. The formation of formal and informal networks resulted in an important structure and process in making this local responsibility happen. The establishment of the formal networks could be interpreted as a form of political manoeuvring as part of the driving force for change (Mintzberg et al, 1998). However, there was no indication of this from the participants who of course may not have recognised this as such, or as Mahoney et al (2010) stated, even if they were aware of the politics of these networks, they may have recognised that such arrangements worked to their benefit.

However, the formation of networks was not always perceived as a positive system. A lack of oversight of the pace and process of such devolution can result in networks being seen by some individuals as exclusive, disengaged from the decision making process, lacking in effective management and without a clear purpose.

A devolved model of leadership and management had the potential to expose creative and innovative education practice close to the point of delivery and implementation. This fact was not apparent with the institution's previous practice

of decisions and discussions within a committee structure which might symbolise a more passive reaction to proposals, suggestions and guidance from a centrally organised source. However, without the relatively tight committee structure there is the risk of a lack of cohesion, with duplication of effort and resources. A tension emerged from the findings between creative, innovative thinking and practice as a result of devolution and almost anarchic, unchecked academic practice across the academic schools.

One of the requisites for leadership success identified through the research was collaborative working amongst academic staff and the use of informal networks. These provided a structure to acknowledge and identify relevant challenges for discussion and agreement of possible solutions. The description of professional capital as a combination of human capital (the talent of individuals), social capital (the collaborative power of the group) and decisional capital (the wisdom and expertise to make sound judgements) by Hargreaves and Fullan (2013) provides some insight into why and how these informal networks functioned.

In contrast to some cautionary comments from participants about the networks being exclusive and lacking in purpose, in general it was felt they were an effective tool in the leadership activity. The functionality of the networks seem to mirror the description by Higgs and Roland (2000) of not only dealing with the challenges and problems of change incrementally but avoiding definitive, rapid solutions. However frustrating that might have been for some, it indicated that the issues were viewed as complex instead of complicated.

Three leadership values identified by participants as significant were integrity, authenticity and honesty. Comments from this study on the importance of personal credibility, openness and trustworthiness as elements of effective leadership aligned closely with the observations of Jameson (2012) in her analysis of the characteristics of a value-orientated leadership approach.

5.3. Significance and Contribution to Existing Knowledge.

This research offers a deeper understanding on the process and practice of leadership of change in one large, research intensive university which is predicated on leadership as an activity, relationship building and empowerment of key individuals. The findings from this research therefore contribute to the developing evidence on the effectiveness of leadership approaches in

implementing large scale change in the high education sector where there is an acknowledged gap in current research (Bolden et al, 2008; Gibbs et al, 2008; Spillane, 2004).

The future of higher education in the UK indicates that the process of leading and managing change is likely to be a permanent feature of university life. Shattock (2003) maintains that there is an absence of research evidence emerging from the majority of organisational change initiatives in higher education institutions with which to analyse effectiveness of a specific approach to leadership of change. He also states that a successful model of organisational change associated with one institution is often transferred to another, without reliable evaluative data.

This research does not suggest that a devolved model in itself is a panacea for effective large institutional change. Nevertheless, the findings do suggest that such a model has the potential to liberate new ways of thinking about leadership of change and new ways of working. Several areas of tension emerged from the analysis of the findings which included tensions between the loss of power and authority from one community of institutional staff to another, between the activities of teaching and research, between fostering a culture of empowerment and ownership and a lack of coordination and oversight and finally, between cultivating collaborative relationships and encouraging a culture of individual, self-determination.

A framework based on the findings from this research is proposed as an approach with which to manage such tensions when implementing major organisational change within a devolved or distributed model of leadership and management (figure 5.2).

This framework could also contribute to the identification of desirable leadership attributes of a leader who is going to lead the process of change. The framework is represented diagrammatically in figure 5.2 and consists of the following components:

Foster a culture of empowerment & ownership; actively manage a shift in power and influence; embed reward and recognition processes which provide parity of value for teaching and research and transcend organisational boundaries to cultivate collaborative relationships



Figure 5.2. A framework for the leadership process in a rapidly changing environment in a research intensive higher education institution.

Although this study was concerned with the practice of leadership of change on the educational element of a higher education institution, key principles emerged which have the potential for application to other situations of major change in the higher education sector.

5.4. Recommendations for Change and Further Study.

Specific recommendations from this research for leadership of change in high education are proposed for consideration.

5.4.1. Recommendations for Change

There was a clear message from participants in this study of the value of time invested in preparing the culture and working environment prior and during the process for major change. This observation suggests that leaders need to foster a positive internal culture and environment as a basis for change. The findings from this research suggest a strong values-based leadership approach which espouses integrity, an openness to listen and to build trust in others will be valued by those who are an integral part of the process of change

The research findings from this study implied that adequate preparation for the implementation of major change should not be underestimated. Respondents reported that as time passed it became clear to them that the preparation process had been deficient and this, in turn, eroded confidence and trust in those leading the change.

The inevitable new roles which emerge during any process of change need detailed planning and thinking regarding their responsibilities and accountabilities, in order to avoid duplication and confusion during implementation. This research indicates that higher education institutions should give serious consideration as to how new roles will interface with each other and how they may contribute to career progression pathways.

The balance of teaching and research activity expected of academic staff in a higher education institution needs to be transparent, realistic and reflect the strategic aims of the institution in its drive towards teaching and research excellence. Such strategies are likely to vary between individual institutions and individual academic staff. Clarity and rationale of the anticipated contribution from academic staff to each of these activities would ease the confused and often negative attitude which is evidenced from this research.

5.4.2. Recommendations for Further Research.

The findings of this research provided an in depth study of one institution's experience of implementing a particular model of organisational change and may provide timely information on the practice of education leadership in higher education. However, a broader inquiry across a larger sample of other higher education institutions, to discover differences and similarities to these findings,

would further develop the emergent themes and contribute to a growing evidence base dealing with the intricacies and challenges of leadership as a practice and a process in action.

This research involved a single site, purposeful selection of a research intensive higher education institution. A comparative study using a similar research question and aims, which included a mixture of both research and less research intensive institutions would further enhance these findings and strengthen the evidence base for the practice of education leadership.

5.5. Limitations of this study.

A potential limitation of this research is that participants in this study are drawn from the senior and middle management layers of the institution's academic and administrative community. The rationale for this sample was to gain an insight from their direct experience of implementing the organisational change. However, further research on this subject with inclusion of other academic staff as participants, such as those who are not directly involved in the leadership process, including research focused staff, would provide a broader view of the effects of the leadership of major institutional change.

Capturing the student voice on the impact of the process of major change will enhance future research in this area of higher education activity. Students were not invited to participate in this study and this fact limits the potential to capture any data in relation to the specific impact on the student experience which relates to one of the research aims, namely: *to trace the development of the education leadership process by identifying effects on educational practice.*

Therefore this research aim was not met fully in that while the findings contribute to an aspect of education practice, the leadership of education, they do not address the element of any influence or impact on the institution's teaching and learning activity as an outcome of implementation of major organisational change.

5.6. Observations on the Case Study Environment since the Commencement of the Research

Since the commencement of my research the institution has had a significant change of executive leadership, including a change of Vice Chancellor, which has been accompanied by the inevitable process of further restructuring. The institution shifted towards a more entrepreneurial model while aiming to maintain a

commitment to its excellence in teaching and research with an increased global presence.

The determination to raise the presence, performance and perception of the institution's education portfolio through a specific model of leadership and management, which is the subject of my research, has been extended to include a number of thematic areas. These include an aim to increase student numbers to include more diverse student population e.g. part time and mature students; a more globalised presence with greater efforts on international recruitment and an increase in the pace of development of technology enhanced education.

These aspirations have resulted in a dilution of the established devolved model of leadership and education. While this model has not dissipated completely, a less devolved leadership and management model has been established within the institution.

At the time of finalising this research, the organisation's leadership and management model had changed once more, before any evidence had been captured on the effectiveness or otherwise of the devolved model. However, some of the roles which were developed as part of the implementation of the devolved model are still in place.

5.7. Concluding Remarks

Since the commencement of this research the government's policy publications on the Teaching Excellence Framework (BIS, 2016) and Lord Stern's review on the Research Excellence Framework (BEIS, 2016) are both likely to have significant impact on the education research nexus. It is therefore highly probable that both reports will increase the pace of change on higher education institutions, both research and less research institutions. Therefore the leadership activity of the process of change will continue to require focus, scrutiny and skilful judgement as to the most appropriate leadership approach or model to adopt.

The contextual nature of education leadership in higher education is a complex process. This complexity requires ongoing systematic inquiry within institutions to identify, evaluate and disseminate effective approaches to the practice of leadership across the institutional layers.

This research aims to offer some insights into the implementation process of one model of leadership, in one research intensive institution, at a particular point in time. These insights suggest that the act of leadership in higher education is demanding and requires a variety of skills, not least the ability to cope with uncertainty and an acknowledgement of how and where to best invest time and focus. The process of organisational change involves an awareness of and preparation for the shifts in balance of power and influence and the importance of managing the subsequent tensions and changing nature of working relationships.

A university is a complex organisation and education is more complex than any other part of the university. It is not the type of endeavour where you can say I want to do this pull a lever and you will get direct connection and what you want to happen, happens. All you can do is establish relationships, you can establish networks, you can establish an environment where people understand change is needed and they understand that change is going to happen but as a leader you cannot always predict exactly what those changes will be (S5).

Chapter 6

On Reflection

6.1. Introduction

At the commencement of this research I believed that the process of major organisational change which had taken place in my institution was worthy of closer scrutiny before time progressed and other priorities became the focal point of the institution's attention and energies. My reflections include the research process, the research experience and the research outcome.

6.2. The Research Process

While I was comfortable with my chosen topic for the research, identifying a methodology which matched the topic appropriately was less straightforward. Apart from the detailed discussions with my supervisors, I found studying the work of other researchers on the topic of leadership of change, specifically in relation to the higher education environment, constructive and thought provoking. Although I recognised the challenges of studying specific issues in large, complex organisations, I was less certain on how to frame my chosen topic into a manageable activity which would remain a justifiable research opportunity for my Doctorate in Education (EdD) thesis.

The work of Yin (2003) was instrumental in my choice of an exploratory case study as the research design. This choice was further supported by the work of Stake (1995) and Bassey (2006). Deciding on the research design was an important point of clarity in what seemed a period of uncertainty in the research process. I realised in time that this stage in the research process involved important decisions as the research approach, design and methodology needed to align with the research question and that time invested in this phase would influence the overall research experience and outcome. One of the shortcomings of using case study is the difficulty of generalisation from one organisation to another (Neale, 2006). However, according to Cronin (2014), it also provides a structure for exploratory research in real life settings. In this research, it proved to be appropriate because the aim was to study a particular organisation-wide intervention which was considered to be distinctive and had the potential to generate knowledge and practice of interest for other situations in higher education institutions.

Comparable studies in the literature led me to consider Engestrom's Activity Theory as a conceptual framework with which to study the detail of my research question. Activity Theory is a particularly suited approach towards institutional improvement according to Avis (2009) and its association with and use in exploring the socially situated practice of progressive and transformative change meant it was effective in this research.

Engestrom (1999) claims that it is useful to view society as several layers of networks composed of interrelated activity systems, as opposed to structures which are rigid and dependant on a single focal point of power. Activity Theory provided an effective, critical lens with which to explore how the process of organisational change developed in its objective to instigate a more devolved culture of responsibility and authority for the education agenda.

It was also interesting to note that other researchers such as Gronn (2002) and Spillane et al (2004) had used Activity Theory in their studies on leadership in higher education. As part of the research process, I explored the work of Engestrom to gain a better understanding of the origins of Activity Theory and how it might help me frame my research question and process. The time taken to understand Activity Theory exceeded my original plan. It became clear that the emphasis on appreciating the complexities of interactions and relationships in a given situation, as an integral part of Activity Theory, was the right choice for my research. As an early researcher, it provided a framework to study the topic and analyse the findings and enabled a process of deconstruction of the main elements while remaining focused on the overall activity of the leadership process.

The institution's documents relating to education strategy, governance and quality assurance provided additional data on the rationale and implementation process of the devolved model of leadership and management. Additional documentary evidence from external organisations such as the Quality Assurance Agency contributed to the overall available data. They provided critical data to the research and proved to be more informative to understanding the process of preparation for and influence on the leadership of change activity than first perceived. Discourse analysis based on the model proposed by Fairclough (2005) enabled the nuances of meaning, emphasis and force of the text to be analysed systematically.

The interviews were difficult to organise but satisfying to implement. Identifying my assumptions and key questions on the research topic as part of designing suitable methods of data collection, ensured I used the most appropriate method to capture the relevant information.

The sample of participants was purposeful due to their proximity to the leadership activity of change. Their accounts of the experience therefore represent a particular perspective. This perspective offers a sense of authenticity to the experience of leadership. However, it is nevertheless one perspective and it would be interesting to repeat the study with a wider group of participants who experienced the consequences of the leadership process.

6.3. The Research Experience

I was very aware that it would be challenging to undertake this research journey while pursuing a full time senior leadership role but underestimated the need for rigorous time management in order to successfully control the commitments of work, study and family life. I soon discovered the importance of flexible time management and found a pattern of working through these competing agendas which seemed to accommodate both my professional and personal life.

The personal journey has been both rewarding and challenging. In the introductory chapter I explain my background in the National Health Service and higher education, in roles of management and leadership, but the pace of work and change inevitably means that there is little time to pause and evaluate the experience. The value of such evaluation is that leadership behaviours and approaches may be analysed for elements worthy of replication, adoption or discontinuation.

The professional doctorate afforded me the opportunity to engage in a formal, structured process of inquiry into an experience of specific major change. This opportunity offered a period of objectivity and distance from the normal pace of working life to critically examine the experience through the voices and perceptions of others. While I was not entirely new to the world and language of research, it was a new experience to become so personally engaged in a specific research activity.

It is anticipated that the future landscape of higher education will continue to reflect a constant environment of dynamic development and innovation which requires

creative and agile leadership processes (Middlehurst, 2014). A devolved model of leadership and management might be a realistic approach to adopt for universities to meet the challenges of these dynamics. However, the model alone may not be the key to a successful outcome but rather the process of execution.

The research findings relating to the education research nexus were particularly interesting as the drive for high quality research outputs and their relationship to institutional reputation is unlikely to diminish over the next decade. The publication of Lord Stern's review of the research excellence framework (BEIS, 2016) is in the process of being discussed within the higher education sector but it seems likely that this review will change the research agenda and behaviours within universities. This change will need to be addressed alongside institutional plans for managing the teaching excellence framework, so there is strong possibility that the education research nexus will continue to remain a topic of interest, debate and analysis. As the research progressed I became more interested in the research agenda in my own organisation, which traditionally is managed and led separately from the education portfolio. This separation is manifested through different roles, meetings, networks and strategy. My role as Associate Dean Education corresponded with the role of Associate Dean Research at faculty level by an Associate Dean Research and, whether by coincidence or design, over the period of my personal research, we began to see the value of our respective portfolios working in closer alignment.

In parallel to my own personal research, I discovered that I was using aspects of the research process in my day time work activities. These included taking more time to define the difficult issues which emerge as part of daily working life in senior leadership roles, searching and consulting relevant literature to underpin decisions and using a combination of all of these to consult and engage with others in finding possible solutions.

There were times when undertaking this research, as a part time student, became very intense and it was a challenge to organise the required space and time for thinking, planning and writing. The need for efficient and effective time management, so that I controlled both my professional work and life as a researcher equally well, was more difficult than I had anticipated. In addition, my personal life required more of my time and energy and at times, became a priority over all else.

However, the feeling of satisfaction, self-esteem and achievement as the various steps in the research process were accomplished became a suitable reward for the time and challenges of balancing work, research and my personal life.

It seemed the more I discovered new information through reading the literature and analysis of the interview transcripts, the less definitive and confident my understanding of the research topic became. I began the research journey confident that I knew what it was I was exploring but gradually it became apparent that I knew only one part of the story. This period of uncertainty was both unfamiliar and uncomfortable. There was a contradiction between my confidence in my substantive role in the organisation and the lack of experience and unfamiliarity of being a researcher. I compensated for the sense of vulnerability and wavering self-confidence by discussing my feelings with research colleagues at work and also my supervisors. Gradually I accepted that this experience was part of the normal research process for an early researcher.

There is reference to the concept of insider research in earlier chapters but the subject is worthy of further mention in this chapter, as part of the reflective process. McDermid (2014) describes the concept of the continuum between the insider and outsider researcher as opposed to perceiving them as definitive opposites. This suggested that it was important for me to be concerned less about the insider/outsider element but to concentrate on my ability to be open, authentic and remaining insightful of my role in accurately representing the views of the participants.

The experience, advantages and challenges of insider research are discussed in comparison to that of the outsider research process by Dwyer and Buckle (2009), through their own personal narratives which resonated in some respects with my own experience. I was aware from the beginning that researching my chosen topic in my own organisation would need sensitive and careful management. On reflection, this involved political, social, and professional awareness.

I considered the internal politics of undertaking a formal inquiry into the organisation's change process, the outcomes of which may not be welcomed by some individuals. I decided to speak to the Vice Chancellor as soon as the idea and question was defined enough for me to explain the purpose and aims of the study. The response was not immediately negative or positive but there was a

request for submission an outline of the research aims and methods for the senior executive to discuss and consider. As I was known to the senior executive layer I remember feeling a sense of awkwardness as they discussed my proposal with the inevitable spotlight on one element of the organisation's business. However, it was satisfying when I was informed that there was no obvious objection to be proceeding with my study and furthermore, they would be interested in my findings.

It was important to approach work colleagues with an explanation of why I was undertaking this research and provide them with details of the research outline and a request for their participation. This I did both informally and formally. All the participants were known to me or more importantly, I was known to them. I felt comfortable with all them socially and professionally and had worked with them in various capacities for least the last six years.

In this sense I had a shared identity and experience with them and felt at ease in framing the discourse as part of the interviews. This meant the interviews could be directed quite rapidly towards the key questions; the benefit was acceptance by participants accompanied by their trust and openness that I would record their stories and that these would contribute to my research.

In contrast to this benefit, I was conscious of avoiding too much familiarity and that the line between my role in the organisation and as a colleague could become too blurred with my role as a researcher.

My personal experience as a new researcher, who had decided on a topic in my normal work environment, where the participants were known to me seemed to be an advantage as I was able to establish a rapport relatively smoothly.

Nevertheless, I remained cognisant of the possibility of personal and professional conflict if my perception of my existing relationships with the participants was mistaken or misguided. On reflection, my membership of the same organisation at the centre of this research was an advantage. This experience resonated closely with the observations of Stake and Heath (2008), that professional doctoral students are inclined to find effective ways of negotiating and re-negotiating relationships with colleagues as they investigated topics within their own place of work.

Managing my time efficiently was not by chance and required careful advance planning. A fact also noted by Stake and Heath (2008) in their study of professional doctoral students. My reflection is that I did not encounter any awkwardness or excessive challenges as described by McDermid et al (2014) as an 'insider researcher' but I was acutely aware throughout the process that I needed to see myself and be seen as a researcher pursuing a systematic inquiry.

My re-engagement into the social networks, upon completion of my research, required as much attention as did the commencement and preparation stage. Individuals have remained interested in both my personal progress with the research as well as progress of the study itself. Although participants have had sight of their own transcripts, with the opportunity to comment, they have not as yet seen the completed work with my interpretation and analysis of all the data. I am aware that I will need to be mindful of how the participants might feel and react when and if they read the final thesis. I have decided that the best approach is to be open and transparent on this issue and will advise them on completion and be willing to meet and discuss both findings and recommendations.

6.4. The Research Outcome

I believe the research findings reveal an insight into how a devolved model of leadership and management impacts on the education agenda in a research intensive university, which is not addressed in current literature on leadership as a process in higher education.

As a result of the research findings, I have more of an objective view of the process of organisational change in this particular organisation, a large, research focused higher education institution. In particular, the strengths and challenges of a devolved model approach to leadership and management and the inherent tensions surrounding this model which needed to be managed. I have subsequently used the framework for leadership of change which emerged from this research in a different environment and organisation but it is too premature at this point to evaluate its contribution to the overall process.

This research highlights the degree to which politics and power relationships are an integral part of major organisational change and the part played by these facets as part of the leadership activity. This was both illuminating and a personal learning experience to enhance my professional practice.

6.5. Future Aspirations

I chose the Doctorate of Education (EdD) programme because it is intended for experienced, practising professionals and I wanted to enhance my professional development as a researching practitioner with a critical and interrogative approach to understanding my professional practice, which is as a senior academic leader in higher education.

I now see myself as an early researcher. I found the research process difficult at times, rewarding, illuminating and exciting but importantly, academically enhancing. As a result of this research experience, I feel motivated to undertake further research. On completion of this study, I aim to disseminate my findings through publications and conference presentations to a wider community for discussion and debate.

I have started to implement some of the findings in my own leadership practice and am integrating the knowledge gained into my academic practice.

As part of the research experience I have become more mindful of my personal skills and deficits of which I was previously unaware, while simultaneously discovering facts and information which have the potential to contribute to a growing body of evidence on leadership as a process

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Exert from the minutes of a meeting of the Faculty Research Ethics and Governance Committee, held on Wednesday 29th October 2008

The Committee received a research proposal, 'Understanding the practice of education leadership in higher education'.

The Committee considered the proposal and the following recommendations were made:

* To further elucidate in your proposal how your research design and methodology has been influenced by your understanding of;

- the potential for 'researcher bias' and the ethical issues associated with 'insider research';

o-the relationship between your own professional position and status within your institution and the leadership/management model under investigation (i.e. do you stand to gain from your involvement in the research project, is there potential for the outcomes of the research to be unduly influenced by the relationship you have with the University and the participants;

o the possible personal and other consequences of negative research outcomes;

* To provide further details of the location, length and proposed content of the interview in addition to any other aspects of the interview process that you think relevant to those participating;

* To provide contact details for yourself, other key colleagues and an independent person who can be contacted by participants in the event they wish to raise any issues in relation to the conduct of the research.

Subject to appropriate revisions being made to the proposal, in accordance with the recommendations outlined above, and subject to the formal approval of the Chair of FREGC, the Committee was pleased to grant ethical approval for the proposed research. It was confirmed that the principal investigator and supervisor would be contacted and informed of the decision of the Committee. [Action: MW]

Appendix 2

Letter to the Vice Chancellor

Dear

Topic for Doctoral Thesis

As part of my Professional Doctorate, we are encouraged to select a topic for the final thesis stage which will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in professional practice within our fields of education responsibility. My current professional practice is in senior education leadership and my choice of topic for an in depth education enquiry is the education leadership process in a research intensive institution with an organisational model of devolved leadership and management. My personal experience and relevant literature both indicate that there are specific challenges and tensions for the education agenda in research intensive environments.

Current literature on leadership in higher education explores issues such as collective leadership in Higher Education, the role of departmental leadership, defining effective leadership in higher education and senior management team structures in higher education. There seems to be a paucity of evidence on how leadership works, the elements of the relationship between leader and groups of individuals with a shared set of goals and how the activity of leadership becomes a positive force for sustainable change.

I believe there are significant lessons to be learnt for other higher education agendas from the education leadership process and outcomes.

I am therefore writing to seek your permission to use the University of XX as a Case Study for this research. All participants, data and references to University of XX will be anonymised and individual and institutional confidentiality will be respected. I attach my draft thesis outline which will be scrutinised by the University awarding the doctorate and I hope it explains in more detail the research question, aims and background.

I hope the attached document gives you enough information on which to make a decision and if there are any queries I would be happy to discuss them with you.

I look forward to hearing from you

With Best wishes

Appendix 3

Letter of invitation to participate

Dear

Invitation to participate in a research study to investigate the process of education leadership in a research intensive institution with a devolved organisational model of leadership and management.

I am researching the process of education leadership in research intensive institutions, with an organisational model of devolved leadership and management. Personal experience and relevant literature both indicate that there are specific challenges and tensions for the education agenda in research intensive environments.

Over the last five years, the education agenda in the University of has strengthened in its mission and strategy. The aim of this research is to:

To identify and understand the working relationships between individuals which underpin the education leadership process in a research intensive university adopting a model of devolved organisational leadership and management.

To trace the development of the education leadership process by identifying effects on institutional education practice.

To identify key factors in the educational leadership approach(es) which have the potential to transfer to other higher institutional fields

I am therefore writing to ask if you would participate in this study by agreeing to be interviewed by me. I anticipate the interview will last approximately one hour and would like to offer the following dates and times for your consideration. I will be interviewing other colleagues, so it would be very helpful if you could identify two or three options from the proposed timetable below, when you would be available and return this information via e mail to me on (email address).

Date	Time	Availability (yes or no)	Suitable time (identify a time suitable to you)
12th May	(pm) – a time to suit you		
14th May	(am) – a time to suit you		
15th May	(am) – a time to suit you (pm) - a time to suit you		
1st June	(pm) – a time to suit you		
5th June	(am) – a time to suit you (pm) – a time to suit you		
8th June	(am) – a time to suit you (pm) - a time to suit you		
10th June	(pm) – a time to suit you		

12th June	(am) – a time to suit you (pm) – a time to suit you		
19th June	(am) – a time to suit you (pm) – a time to suit you		
25th June	(am) a time to suit you (pm) a time to suit you		
26th June	(am) a time to suit you (pm) a time to suit you		
29th June	(pm) a time to suit you		
30th June	(am) a time to suit you (pm) a time to suit you		
1st July	(am) a time to suit you (pm) a time to suit you		

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If any of these dates and times are not possible, please contact me on my mobile, no.0000000000 so that an alternative date may be arranged.

As soon as I hear from you, I will confirm the date, time and venue for the interview.

I would like to tape the interview and will send you the transcript for comment before the data is analysed. All participants, data and references to University of will be anonymous and individual and institutional confidentiality will be respected and maintained throughout the study.

I am enclosing some relevant documentation for your information as follows:

1. Participant information sheet
2. Consent form

I hope the attached document provides sufficient information on which to make a decision and if there are any queries I would be happy to discuss them with you.

My contact details are as follows: e mail (email address) and phone 000000000(mob) or 0000000000 (office no.). In addition, if you wish to raise any concerns about the conduct of the research please do not hesitate to contact me or if you prefer, Professor at e mail address

yours sincerely

Rosalynd

Rosalynd Jowett

Appendix 4

Participant information sheet

Research Study title

Leadership of Major Organisational Change in a Research Intensive Institution: implementation of a devolved leadership and management model.

Purpose of the research

In such changing and unpredictable environments, higher education institutions need to adapt their models of leadership, structures and processes to ensure sustainability and continued development.

Recent literature on leadership indicates that it is probably timely to understand leadership differently, not as a process enacted by an individual or by groups of individuals but more related to the relationships and engagement of others in concertive action to achieve common goals.

This study intends to explore the process of implementation of a specific model of education leadership, from the experience of individuals who were intimately engaged with the process. The intention is to highlight the key components which were effective and which have the potential to be transferable to other higher education agendas.

Methods of collecting the data

One of the research methods of collecting data is through focus group interviews with a sample of education leaders in the University. You have been invited to participate in this study because you play a significant role in leading the University's education agenda or have a significant influence on this agenda.

Confidentiality of data and anonymity for participants and institution

If you agree to participate in the study you will be asked to sign a consent form and will be able to withdraw from the study at any time.

All data offered by participants will be considered as confidential.

Transcripts of the interviews will be sent to relevant participants for ratification before the data is analysed. Participants will not be identified during the transcript process and the information obtained will not be ascribed to any individual. All data will be stored securely and only accessible through a password protected system.

Details of the University will also be anonymous.

Copies of the final report will be available to participants on completion of the study.

Rosalynd Jowett

Appendix 5

Consent form

Research Title

Leadership of Major Organisational Change in a Research Intensive Institution: implementation of a devolved leadership and management model

Please record your answers to the following questions in the spaces provided.

I have understood the information in the participant information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask any questions about the study

Yes

No

I agree to take part in the study and for the interview to be taped

Yes

No

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time

Yes

No

Name of Participant(s)

Signature

Date

Appendix 6

Interview Schedule

Research Title

Leadership of Major Organisational Change in a Research Intensive Institution: implementation of a devolved leadership and management model

Interview Questions

In your experience, what do you consider to be the important aspects of education leadership?

How do you see the relationship between the education and research agendas in the University?

How do think this relationship inhibits or enhances the education agenda?

What do you think are the main achievements of the education leadership process over the last 5 years?

How would you describe the education leadership style and approach during the last 5 years?

What do you think are the main changes in the education leadership process over the last 5 years?

How were these changes planned and organized? How were these changes implemented?

In what ways do you feel you have had an influence in the education agenda and the leadership process over the last 5 years?

How do you think the student experience has been affected by the process of education leadership?

In what ways does the institution know that the changes made in the education agenda are effective?

The University operates within a devolved model of leadership and management, what do you think were the effects on the education portfolio of this devolved model of leadership?

How does the current leadership process compare with your previous experience of education leadership?

What aspects of the education leadership process do you think could be applied to other University strategic portfolios?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience of the education leadership process?

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Well I think one thing – and this goes back to what I said in the beginning about advances in education and research, is that this is a research led university and research does dominate. I think one of the things that gives me a lot of credibility is that I have got a very strong research record there are – I'm not sure how this works in other disciplines – but in science there is a citation index...

Commented [r1]: Research dominates

Interviewer:

Yes?,...

Interviewee (S1):

...and there is a list which about 2,500 people signed just in the world who have got the most highly cited scientist in the world and there are six in Southampton and I'm one of them and so I can come at them, not as an educational theorist whose going to say "Oh you've got to put more and more time into education and your research is going to have to suffer" but someone who's got an extremely strong research record and actually says "I'm not going to ask you to do things which are going to compromise in order to do research". So I think that I had time, at least I was granted time – people would listen to what I was going to say...

Commented [r2]: Feeling of credibility because they had achieved in research

Interviewer:

Without switching off?

Interviewee (S1):

...yes that's right – "oh here's another educational theorist coming to tell us what to do". I had that credibility to start off with. There was also conscious coming from the science background as well, that evidence is critical to get people to adopt things and so was very careful to try and do that and I think was helped also that the DVC at the time, C Thomas, said "create an environment where people were prepared to engage in it" I think without her creating that environment I don't think anything I would have done would have helped.

Commented [r3]: Credibility and not education theory

Commented [r4]: Creating conducive environments

Interviewer:

Did you feel confident and competent enough to speak out when you thought things were going in the wrong direction?

Interviewee (S1):

I think so and I think I also was sort of...the more time I spent in the role I also became more realistic as well about my expectations and more comfortable about compromising – not the right word – but adjusting my views to make sure that we had a more inclusive agenda that it didn't just have to be my view but that it had to be a

Commented [r5]:
Compromising as part of working with others

50 consensus view, but I was never – I don't think I was ever afraid of
51 saying what I thought if I felt things weren't going...

Commented [r6]: Recognising need for consensus

52
53 **Interviewer:**

54 Well I don't remember that either which is good. I mean if you look
55 back, because you did do two distinct roles really – although one
56 feeds into the other was there a particular one you enjoyed more
57 than the other?

58
59 **Interviewee (S1):**

60 You mean being Deputy Head or...

61
62 **Interviewer:**

63 Associate Dean

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65 **Interviewee (S1):**

66 ...Associate Dean. Well the real difficulty with the Associate Dean
67 role, for me doing it, is that being on a remote campus did make it
68 much more difficult because it wasn't just a question of walking 10
69 minutes down the road to you know...

Commented [r7]: Coping with new role in different locations