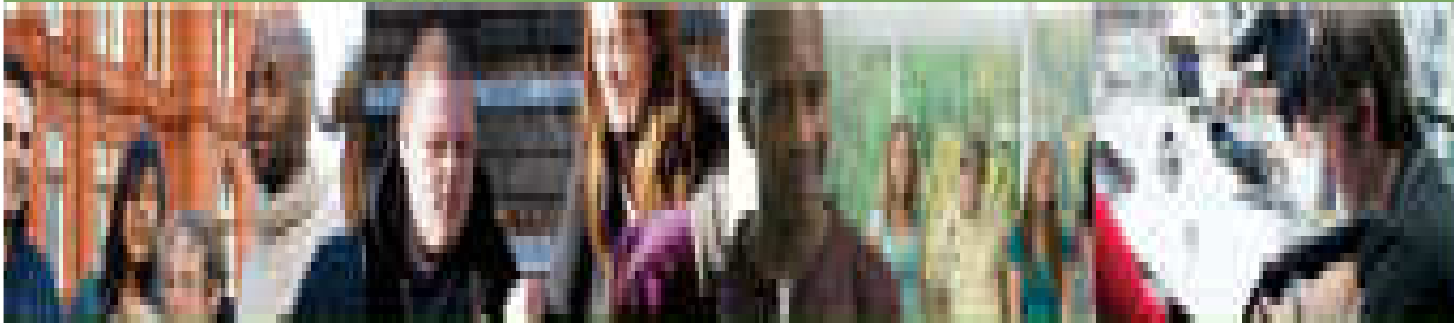


Education in a Changing Environment Conference

Critical Voices, Critical Times



**Changing practice in HE:
national policies,
enhancement cultures and
personal impetus**

**Murray Saunders
CSET
Lancaster University**



The brave claim:

“I will argue that there are types of cultural environments and the practices they embody, which are more able to support ‘deep change’ sponsored or engineered by those engaged in teaching itself”



Discussion

A note about me:

- Involved in evaluations for 25 years
- Policy evaluation in HE
- Development and change
- Sustainable change
- Inclusive evaluations
- European Evaluation Society

- What are change processes?**
- Theories of change embedded in national interventions into teaching and learning**
- Individual change identities and theories of enhancement**
- Organisational cultures and their capacity to use ‘change artefacts’**

Education in a Changing Environment Conference

Critical Voices, Critical Times



What are change processes?



Connections?

Changing:

- Rhetoric and discourse (texts, speeches and strategic utterances)
- Systems and procedures (reified practices or abstracted prescription)
- Practices (recurrent, rule governed behaviour)

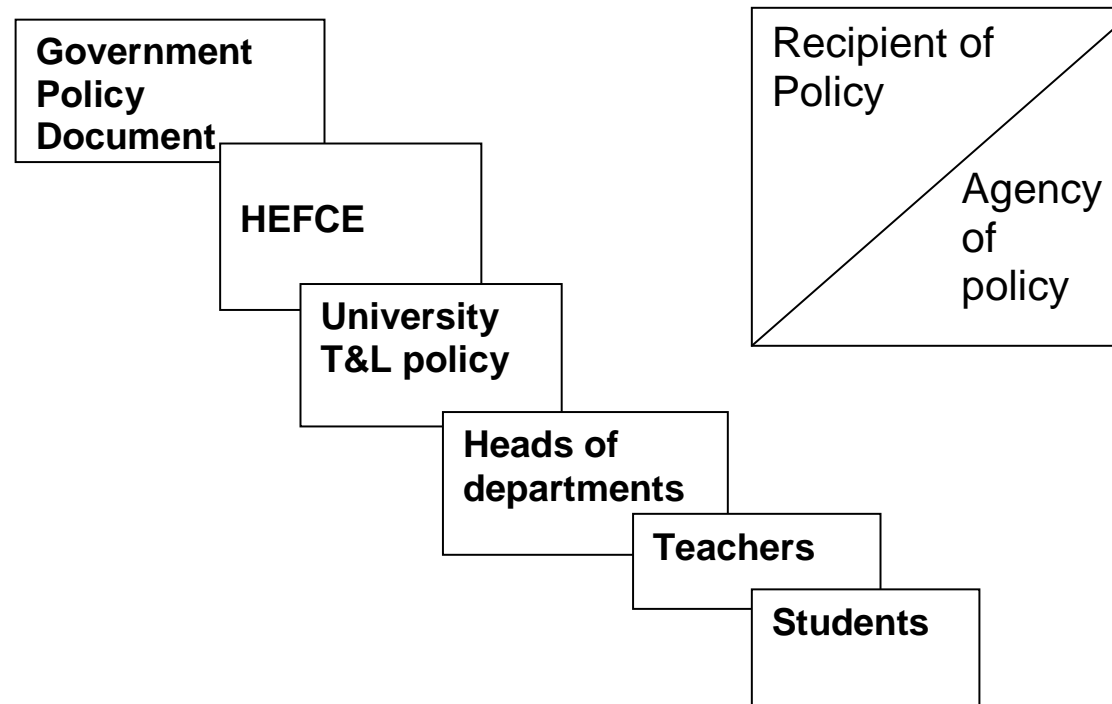


Tools for understanding

- **Adaptation, reconstruction, modification**
- **Differences between changes embodied in policies-as- texts and policies-in-action**
- **Implementation Staircases**
- **‘Stages of concern’ (from awareness to adaptation)**
- **Enclaves, bridgeheads and new embedded practice**



Example of implementation staircase





Theories of change embedded in policy texts

“A theory of change is the tacit or underlying assumptions or rationale which underpin an approach taken in a policy, action, initiative or intervention, designed to bring about a change or an improvement”

Education in a Changing Environment Conference

Critical Voices, Critical Times



Theories of change embedded in policy texts and practice

Subject Centre Network

Quality Enhancement Framework in Scotland

**Centres for Excellence in Teaching and
Learning**



Subject Centre Network

- Based on the view that teaching and learning development is best supported by a responsive approach to professional development needs *expressed by subject departments*.
- Incremental and evolutionary perspective which gradually builds change around responsive, creative and collaborative problem solving rooted in disciplines
- The mechanism of network is the preferred theory: change in HE should defer to academic autonomy and be lightly managed from the Centre

Education in a Changing Environment Conference

So, the most obvious strategy or theory theme within the QEF was to use the expertise in Scotland, informed by international experience, to create a Scottish solution. We term this a theory of *'consensual development'*.



Quality Enhancement Framework in Scotland

- Scottish consciousness
 - Home grown
 - Consensus
 - Lightly managed
 - Dispersed ownership
-
- External review
 - Internal review
 - Student engagement
 - Public information
 - Themes

“the most obvious strategy or theory theme within the QEF was to use the expertise in Scotland

informed by international experience, to create a Scottish solution.

enabled a familiarity, an ownership and a legitimation that other forms of implementation strategy might find hard to emulate. We term this a theory of *'consensual development'*”



Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

“Excellent teaching produces excellent learning”

“Recognising individual and institutional excellence in teaching and learning *promotes* excellence across the sector”

“The relatively ‘light’ steer on specific designs for excellence”

*“the purpose of CETLs is to reward excellent teaching practice and to invest in that practice further **in order to increase and deepen its impact across a wider teaching and learning community**”*

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2004/04_05/#exec



Enhancement or change theories within institutions

- Practice based exemplar
- Resource driven/dependent
- Institutional rhetorical support
- Professional imperative
- Technological determinism

Education in a Changing Environment Conference

Critical Voices, Critical Times



Enhancement or change identities

The Prophet

Has a strong vision and self image as a visionary interested in achieving changes in practice according to own vision of good practice. This identity type may not be susceptible to a strong awareness of the change process or have an idea of change theory beyond the 'exemplar' model.

What you need is a collaborative learning platform!!



The Expert

Has a strong sense of own expertise in the area of pedagogic change [could be use of ICTs or collaborative learning, key skills]. This identity type may not be susceptible to a strong awareness of the change process or have an idea of change theory beyond the 'exemplar' model.

Now, what I need is a collaborative learning suite supported by Lotus notes and an on-line discussion space!



The Democratic Collaborator

Has a strong sense of working in a collegiate environment and wishes to work with colleagues for cooperatively derived goals. May not have a clear vision of desired or best practice but is more interested in the process of collaborative change which will throw up examples of good practice.



The Campaigner

Has a continuing sense of strategic positioning in order to create departmental and institutional change. Is institutionally adept, looking for resources and opportunities but might not work closely with colleagues or consult with them



The Practitioner Experimenter

Promotes low key, small scale changes in order to satisfy professional curiosity, enrich student learning or to create exemplars of change. Might not always be known as an expert or as a proponent of good practice. Undeveloped in terms of institutional tactics but works closely with like minded colleagues





Organisational cultures and the propensity to change

- Embedded in decision making cycles
- Clear understanding of organisational memory
- Capacity of an organisation to respond:
 - Systemic processes (feeding into structures that are able to identify and act on implications)
 - Organisations that are lightly bureaucratised (complex adaptive systems) are better placed to respond to 'tricky' or awkward changes
 - Changes that are championed and strongly connected to power structures
 - Changes that are congruent: suggestions for change need to build on what is already in place.

We are working and learning in what social theory calls conditions of *chronic uncertainty*. These conditions can produce periods of normlessness and destructive instability.

Learning changes in HE, often prompted by new ways of learning linked to the introduction of ICTs, can produce such instabilities as a *transition* is made across a *boundary* from one culture of practice to another and, for learners, from HE into new work practices. Learners and teachers in HE can be supported by constructing *provisional stabilities as* they seek creative solutions to problems produced by change.

Formative evaluation or small scale research can provide the resources for such reflections and act as a *bridging tool for planning and innovation.*”