THE FRACTIOUS, INTEMPERATE AND NON-COOPERATIVE ACADEMIC?

IMPLEMENTING A QUALITY TEACHING STRATEGY IN A UK BUSINESS SCHOOL

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The Fractious, Intemperate and Non-Cooperative Academic: Implementing a Quality Teaching Strategy in a UK Business School

by

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With the May 1991 White Paper and the recent activities of the Academic Audit Unit, Higher Education in the UK is itself currently undertaking an examination - in teaching quality. Many institutions are addressing the need for a strategy to enhance the quality of teaching. Approaches vary from establishing internal working parties for exploring quality issues, to seeking registration under BS 5750, the British Standard Institution's specification of service quality. However, for any Quality Teaching Strategy to be successful, the painstaking formulation of plans is not enough. Implementation needs to be carefully thought out, if it is to avoid the Left-on-the-shelf syndrome. Despite increased attention being devoted to the problems of organisational culture in strategy, however, few methodological tools have been developed to aid the culture-conscious practitioner. This paper outlines Doctoral work-in-progress aimed at developing both a conceptual framework and a methodology for analysing organisational cultures and subcultures. Although highlighting current Total Quality developments in higher education, the paper's emphasis is upon the methods employed in the study. They combine approaches from political sociology, social psychology and strategic marketing to provide insight into implementing a Quality Teaching Strategy. These approaches are currently being piloted in a UK Business School to assess their validity and an interim report on the techniques used will be made. More importantly, it is hoped, that the Conference will provide feedback on the methodology currently being tested, to guide the PhD project at this critical stage. Once testing is completed, it is envisaged that a series of in-depth longitudinal studies of other Business School cultures can occur to provide comparative data. Guidance on this stage of the study will also be sought.

1. Introducing the Academic Profession

Academics have long been daubed by brushes of differing hues. For as long as teachers in Higher Education have been an identifiable profession, they have had their supporters and opponents. Samuel Johnson, for example, held the Eighteenth Century professorial establishment in particularly high esteem, believing that, "He that
teaches us anything which we knew not before is undoubtedly to be revered as a master". [1] George Bernard Shaw, on the other hand, took a more critical view, explaining that, "A learned man is an idler who kills time with study." [2] To this day, even the academic profession itself cannot agree on a favourable self-image. Labelling his colleagues in an Australian University, one senior psychology professor was reported as saying that they were, "A fractious, intemperate, self-willed, autonomous, independent and non-cooperative lot who come together in a University mainly because they can't manage separately". [3] With so much disagreement about the efficacy of those trusted to educate the world's elites, it is not surprising that reforming eyes turn periodically to scroun the academic profession.

Whatever the truth, academics in various forms and guises will always be here. Just as certainly, there will always be critics who will attempt to improve, influence or even impose their own standards upon the profession. The Government's 1991 White Paper on Higher Education is the latest in a series of proposals for reform in the sector, which include the Jarrett Report of 1985 and the 1987 Educational White Paper. [4] Whether the White Paper will survive the impending election remains to be seen; but it has once again placed teaching quality high upon the education policy agenda.

Strategy formulation, however, does not - or rather, should not - exist in a vacuum. If issues of strategy implementation are not considered at an early stage and throughout the planning process, good intentions will remain only that. Yet, little attention has so far been given in how to implement a quality teaching strategy at the institutional level. This paper presents a methodology aimed at addressing this issue, focussing upon the so-called "soft", people-based internal organisational factors in successful strategic planning. These include those formal and informal political and interpersonal relationships and shared meanings and assumptions, sometimes aggregated in the term "organisational culture". More specific components of this amorphous concept will be described in Section 4, and the consequences of this approach will be discussed in the last part of this paper. Meanwhile, it is necessary to begin with an overview of developments in strategic planning that have implications for this study; before moving on to examine the application of quality concepts to teaching in higher education. So, why is this paper so preoccupied with implementation, rather than strategy formulation? If we are only just beginning to explore ways of providing a general direction for quality improvements in teaching; why is it necessary now to focus on the specifics of actually achieving them?

2. The Challenge to Rational Strategic Planning

The answer lies in the lessons learnt from the ongoing reappraisal of rational strategic planning. Since the 1960s, organisational strategy has mutated into a variety of forms - including long-range planning, corporate planning, business policy and strategic management. An emphasis has been placed upon rational frameworks for
strategy formulation, including SWOT Analysis, Management By Objectives, Boston Consultancy Group matrices and Porter's Structural Industry Analysis. [5] Various challenges to the rationalist orthodoxy have come from the "Excellence" movement, initiated by Peters and Waterman; [6] strategic contingencies theorists, such as Hickson [7]; and strategic pluralists, including Pfeffer. [8] Despite these efforts, the rationalistic paradigm in strategy has proven difficult to modify. Witness the status still conferred upon Kotler whose marketing and strategy textbooks remain amongst the most influential in the field. [9] The result is the tendency to present strategic management as the largely linear process represented in Fig 1.

**Fig. 1: THE RATIONAL VIEW**

**THE BUSINESS STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

- **BUSINESS MISSION**
  - **EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS**
  - **INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT ANALYSIS**
  - **GOAL FORMULATION**
  - **STRATEGY FORMULATION**
  - **PROGRAMME FORMULATION**
  - **IMPLEMENTATION**
  - **FEEDBACK AND CONTROL**

*SOURCE: KOTLER (1988)*

However, the challenge to rationalistic strategic management is taking shape, if rather embryonically at present. Stainsby has recently chronicled the emergence in the UK of two distinct groupings of strategy academics: one adhering to tradional rationalistic marketing planning, such as MacDonald; the other around more politically-oriented writers, including Piercy, who argues that the
planning is not linear but can begin from any point in Kotler's representation. He also argues that politics plays a far greater role in planning than the rationalists would allow. [10] Whether there is a genuine paradigmatic struggle taking place is debatable. However, it is evidence that some dissatisfaction is being articulated against the rationalist school.

One reason for this might be Peters' assertion that the rate of change in markets is accelerating faster than rational strategic planning can cope with. [11] Business organisations are, according to this thesis, finding their decision-making horizons shortening dramatically and their once-reliable analytical tools for market planning, developed in more stable environments, are becoming less tenable. More simply, perhaps, difficulties with implementing elaborately-devised plans in practice might be forcing a refocussing on 'softer' intra-organisational factors, such as organisational power and politics. Pfeffer's "Law of Political Entropy" notes that:

"Once politics are introduced into a situation, it is very difficult to restore rationality. Once consensus is lost, once disagreements about preferences, technology, and management philosophy emerge, it is very hard to restore the kind of shared perspective and solidarity which is necessary to operate under the rational model". [12]

Whilst it is true that introducing such concepts into organisations may change the nature of those entities, it is unlikely that factors such as politics and culture have been absent from organisational life during the evolution of strategic management. Pfeffer's observation might then, instead, be applied to the academic strategic management discipline - or at least some parts of it - in explaining some of the renewed emphasis upon 'soft' factors. Put quite simply, the profession may well have understated the importance of intra-organisational factors like power, politics and culture in strategic planning. If we fail to focus adequately on such realities, in implementing as well as formulating strategies, the successful introduction and maintenance of any strategy - including that of teaching quality - will be infinitely harder.

3. Developments in Total Teaching Quality (TTQ)

Review of Recent Developments

Before defining concepts like "quality" and "culture" and constructing a methodology for studying them in an organisational context, it is useful to provide a brief overview of developments in the field of teaching quality: or, modifying an acronym borrowed from
the related area of Total Quality Management, TTQ - Total Teaching Quality.

Current Government policy on higher education is summarised in the White Paper published in May 1991. Three of the seven main proposals in the White Paper explicitly relate to quality issues: the establishment of a national quality audit unit, developed by the educational institutions themselves, but acting as an external control upon standards; units within each of the separate Higher Education Funding Councils for England, Scotland and Wales to provide advice on relative quality across the institutions; and a rather vaguer "Co-operation among the Councils to maintain a common approach to quality assessment". [13]

Yet, despite emphasising the desirability of establishing a quality assurance mechanism for Britain's Universities and mutating Polytechnics, little is said in the White Paper about how a quality teaching strategy will be implemented. After consultation with educational interest groups and institutions, the emphasis is upon "Self-regulation" and the "Self-interest which institutions will have in demonstrating that internal quality controls continue to be rigorous". [14]

Self-regulation is a principle that has guided the higher education sector since its inception in Medieval times, and forms the basis in the UK of the University Charter system. As Moodie and Eustace emphasise, "The formal limitations upon institutional autonomy are minimal. There is a tradition of non-interference by the State in the affairs of universities and a widespread belief in the merits of autonomy". [15] Informal means of influence will, of course, always provide an alternative channel for the exercise of power, as Kogan clearly illustrates. [16] In addition, more direct financial pressures from centralised funding bodies have become more critical in guiding the strategic direction of universities and polytechnics in recent years. [17] In 1990 the movement began away from a formula-based means of funding institutions towards a more market-based model, involving competitive bidding for student places on the basis of price competition. [18] This has increased the external pressures upon the higher education sector. Indeed, the 1985 Jarratt Report from the institutions' own policy steering group, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP), noted that, "Despite the constitutional autonomy of universities, their freedom of action is significantly limited in practice". Their accountability to Parliament for public money; planning limits imposed by the Government and University Grants Committee (UGC); and fees income and external research funding were all identified as ensuring some degree of outside control. [19] Similar forces prevail in the Polytechnic and Colleges sector. Moreover, demands from students and employers for course provision are deemed to influence institutions' strategic direction. Although Jarrett made recommendations for broad policy guidelines from Government, the emphasis was on developing efficiency indicators, structures and strategic planning mechanisms within and by each institution.

The 1987 and 1991 White Papers have continued this tradition of allowing each institution to develop their own control and planning devices, and both documents have drawn short of recommending a radical departure from the principle of self-regulation. [20] The 1991 White Paper has now also established the principle of quality in teaching and research in official higher education policy. However, the
"hands-off" approach also applies here. Although the document proposes the establishment of a national quality audit unit and three quality assessment units within the new Funding Councils for England, Scotland and Wales; the onus will reside with the institutions themselves to develop systems for ensuring quality. [21] Indeed, the proposed national audit unit seems destined to fulfil much the same role as the existing Academic Audit Unit (AAU) of the CVCP, but combining the AAU's operations in the University sector with the quality functions of the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), the polytechnics' and colleges' centralised degree-awarding body being wound up.

The AAU was established in December 1989 to consider and review universities' mechanisms for monitoring and promoting academic standards. It subsequently began a series of quality audits of selected institutions. However, as Stuart Sutherland, Chairman of the Working Group responsible for the Academic Audit Unit, noted, "Final responsibility [for quality] will be with the universities themselves as Chartered Institutions", and "Universities are responsible for defining quality through the explicit statement of their aims and objectives". [22] Certainly, the timely establishment of the AAU has ensured that the momentum for quality systems continues to reside in the institutions themselves - although quite what the effect will be of merging the AAU with the CNAA quality functions remains to be seen.

Given such continued adherence to self-direction, educational institutions are currently seeking various paths to teaching quality. Some, like Sandwell College of Further and Higher Education are pursuing a path of registration with a modified form of the quality assurance standard developed for British industry, BS5750 (see below). [23] Others, like Cardiff Business School, are developing a more self-generated model of teaching quality concepts, diagnostic instruments and monitoring mechanisms. [24]

The other main explanation for this diversity of approaches lies in the difficulties of adequately defining what "quality" in higher education actually is. This paper is concerned primarily with teaching quality, so no attempt will be made to include research in a summary definition. However, even restricting the term to teaching remains problematic. If this is the case, deciding how to implement quality will inevitably result in differing institutional systems.

Towards a Definition of TTQ

Total Quality Management (TQM) is now very much in vogue. Until recently limited to the private sector, the notion is now being applied to the public sector as well - including higher education. Interest in TQM is increasing in British Universities, following the establishment of the AAU. Meanwhile, Glasser [25] has developed the theoretical side of TQM in relation to higher education and Saunders and Walker [26] have provided a valuable insight into TQM in Australian University education.

The term "Total Teaching Quality" (TTQ) has been chosen to highlight the origins of current thinking in educational quality. Its roots are traceable directly back to the import of industry-based ideas about quality from American theorists Juran and Deming into Japan in the 1950s. [27] As Oliver and Wilkinson relate, these were developed further and transferred to the UK with the explosion of
Japanese inward investment in the 1980s. [28] Such concepts are output-based, aimed at the prevention of errors in the manufacturing process through the performance measurement of relatively autonomous groups of workers. Such cost-containment has at its core a customer-oriented philosophy, whether the customer is the actor in the subsequent stage of the value-adding chain or the final consumer. [29] As Oliver subsequently emphasises, this involves not only establishing cell-like organisational structures to accommodate output monitoring, but, using Child's definition, a political management system based upon output control. [30]

TQM has now evolved into a certification system for ensuring the achievement of nationally- and internationally-defined quality specifications. The emphasis is again production-oriented: how to establish quality assurance systems for minimising waste and ensuring continuous process improvement. There are modifications for service-oriented organisations. Nevertheless, the majority of clauses in the original standards refer to such concepts as design control, purchasing, production, material control, product safety and liability. The British Standards Institution (BSI) will award a quality kitemark indicating compliance with all or part of the national (BS 5750) or international (ISO 9000 series) quality assurance standards. The underlying efficiency motive is well illustrated by the BSI's own guide to the standards, which highlights that "The benefits of applying BS 5750 are real; it will save you money - because your procedures will be more soundly based and more efficient.. it will reduce waste and time consuming re-working of designs and procedures". [31]

In the strategic management literature, writers have not been slow in taking up the quality banner. Beer (1979), Crosby (1979), Tribus (1983), Albrecht (1985, 1988), Wheaton (1989), Gilks (1990) and others have explored TQM and concluded that it provides a powerful vehicle for strategic organisational change. [32] Both the traditional TQM writers and the newer strategic management theorists share the same ultimate focus: the user of the organisation's output. It is notable, however, that such theorists downplay a purely production-based solution and emphasise instead the more directly consumerist notion of anticipating, identifying and satisfying customer wants. Albrecht (1985) represents this marketing stance, arguing that "The quality of a service represents the balance between the customer's expectations and perceptions of the service provided. Quality means meeting or exceeding the customer's expectations." A service strategy, he argues, will become increasingly important in the 1990s. [33] Parasuraman develops this consumer-oriented view further, arguing that in service organisations it is necessary to examine the gap between expected or perceived service and that actually delivered. A quality strategy should then be formulated aimed at closing that gap. [34]

When the concept of TQM is imported into higher education problems of definition are magnified still further. One such difficulty is the question of whose interests are being served: the stakeholder argument. Whereas in industry, TQM has largely been driven either by the production-based or customer-orientated philosophy above; in education there are a number of possible customers. The student, parents, the State (including those Departments directly concerned with education and industry, the research and funding councils, as well as politicians), potential employers and society in general are amongst those with arguable stakes in the higher education
system. Private and public service organisations may also be clients of institutions' teaching activities - such as short courses, Diplomas and MBAs. In addition, a more process- and less output-oriented view would hold that teachers themselves, as part of a mutual learning process with students, are as much customers as any other interest group; with teachers also having responsibilities to the academic community at large, through the need to maintain professional standards and interact with existing and potential bodies of knowledge. Fig 2 represents this multi-stakeholder perspective.

**Fig. 2.: A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER VIEW**

The question then becomes one of deciding which stakeholder's viewpoint to take before deciding upon a satisfactory definition of teaching quality. Taken to extremes, if one adopts a view that the teacher is the 'expert' in the learning process, quality can be defined as anything the teacher decides is appropriate. Alternatively, if the student as customer is deemed wholly sovereign, the teacher's only purpose would be to provide whatever the class demands.

A second major difficulty in defining what teaching quality actually means is one of deciding what exactly one expects from the act of 'teaching'. In fact, as Burgoyne and Stuart detail, which of
eight basic learning theories one accepts as a first principle determines what one expects from education. From Pavlovian conditioning, through ascending degrees of complexity, to pure pragmatism; the teacher can operate consciously or unconsciously according to adherence to a particular school of thought. Listed in Fig. 3, each of these schools of learning theory assumes a unique model of humanity - viewing recipients of teaching as pure creatures of habit, cybernauts, socially-defined entities and so on. Each also has underlying principles, which help define how teaching and learning occurs in each situation. In essence, the pragmatic school is, as Burgoyne and Stuart reveal, almost an anti-school; since it infers that teaching really can't be taught anyway.

### Fig 3. TTQ and Learning Theories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School of Thought</th>
<th>Model of Humanity</th>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>IMPLICATIONS FOR TTQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONDITIONING</td>
<td>HABIT SYSTEM</td>
<td>REINFORCEMENT</td>
<td>RECALL OF PROGRAMMED LEARNING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAIT MODIFICATION</td>
<td>SET OF CHARACTERISTICS</td>
<td>FIXED AND LEARNABLE ATTRIBUTES</td>
<td>OPERATIONALISATION OF DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION TRANSFER</td>
<td>INFORMATION STORE</td>
<td>ORGANISING, SEQUENCING, REINFORCING</td>
<td>RECALL AND ORGANISATION OF IDEAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYBERNETIC</td>
<td>INFORMATION PROCESSING, DECISION MAKING, CONTROLLING MECHANISM</td>
<td>FEEDBACK, DISCOVERY, PROGRAMMING</td>
<td>ADAPTATION OF TECHNIQUES TO SOLVE PROBLEMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COGNITIVE</td>
<td>EXPERIENCING PERSON</td>
<td>ASSIMILATION, ACCOMMODATION, REFLECTION &amp; INSIGHT</td>
<td>ABILITY TO EXTEND AND REVISE PERSONAL COGNITIVE MAPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENTIAL</td>
<td>'WHOLE PERSON' AGENT NOT PATIENT</td>
<td>AUTONOMY, SELF ACTUALISATION, REMOVAL OF BLOCK, AFFECTIVE FEEDBACK</td>
<td>ARTICULATION OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL INFLUENCE</td>
<td>PERSON AS SOCIALLY-DEFINED ENTITY</td>
<td>IDENTIFICATION, MODELLING, DISCONNECT, SUGGESTION, AFFIRMATION</td>
<td>DEFINITION OF A POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRAGMATIC</td>
<td>LEARNING IS COMMON SENSE</td>
<td>USE OF COMMON SENSE</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

When one extends this framework to TTQ, certain implications can be deduced, as in the final column. These can act as criteria for evaluating the impact - hence 'quality' - of teaching. However, as should be plain, such judgements depend on which particular school one is a member of. If conditioning drives one's teaching objectives, then students' ability to recall programmed facts might be a valid criteria for appraising teaching success. Alternatively, adherents to the social influence school might wish to be judged on whether they've successfully aided a student to form a positive self-image. Such criteria become more qualitative, and more difficult to use, as one progresses down the table. Ultimately, how does one, for example objectively measure how well common sense is being used? Unless a teacher and his or her assessor share the same perspective, agreement
on performance is far from guaranteed.

As indicated, Sandwell College of Further and Higher Education decided to follow the more production-oriented, off-the-shelf BS 5750 definition and implementation of TTQ. Perhaps this is more akin to one or more of the first three schools of thought in implying that there are outputs measurable by a standardised quality assurance system imported from industry. Sandwell College's modification of BS 5750 involved translating Part 2 of BS 5750 into requirements seen as appropriate for educational establishments. The outcome was a Quality Assurance Manual detailing compulsory standardised procedures to be followed in eighteen areas. Amongst others, this includes rules for the admission, assessment and testing of students (or "Clients"); curriculum design, development and delivery; staff training; and diagnostic and corrective procedures for students' failures. [36]

In contrast to Sandwell, the definition used in the Business School being investigated owes its formulation to the outcome of discussions in the internal working party on teaching quality. Recognising the conceptual difficulties above, the working party has adopted a multi-stakeholder perspective, arguing that quality should be defined as the achievement of acceptable levels of variables in the input, process and output stages of the learning process. What levels are 'acceptable' are to be determined by senior members of the faculty themselves, using data obtained from student evaluation questionnaires, staff/student panel meetings, attendance records, peer reviews, results lists, resource utilisation measures, standards being established in other institutions and the assessment of external examiners.

Whilst a purely production/output dominated definition is avoided by such widely-drawn parameters, the main objective is still seen as establishing a quality assurance system. Some form of quality manual is viewed as a useful, if not central, element in the system; and definite, if less formal, procedures for the measurement, feedback and control of teaching quality will be put in place. Students are not defined as the most important determinant of teaching quality, as in Sandwell; but are nevertheless viewed as an influential stakeholder. All in all, it seems that the Business School is aiming to implement an internally-generated version of TTQ different to that of Sandwell, but still in the quality assurance tradition. Given this emphasis, it will be interesting to attempt to assess the likely reaction of the Business School culture to these proposals.

The third major conceptual difficulty in defining TTQ relates to the question of who exactly are those deemed responsible for pursuing in in their everyday activities. If we can't diagnose and predict the assumptions, motivations and social interactions of higher education teachers themselves, we stand little chance of persuading them to embrace quality concepts. Implementation importantly includes ownership of strategy. In marketing terms, this is knowing exactly who your 'internal customer', read 'employee', is. Targeting a TTQ strategy toward those who will actually carry it out must be considered at this stage. Involving teaching staff in the definition of TTQ might not only result in a more successfully tailored version for the institution; but might also allow for particular contingencies peculiar to the situation; and 'sell' such ideas to staff. This identification of academic culture forms the main impetus to the methodology outlined below; and will have important implications for the implementation of TTQ strategies in other academic institutions.
First, however, it is essential to explore the conceptual underpinnings to the methodology: to explain how organisational culture may be linked with teaching quality strategy.

4. Organisational Culture and TTQ

Conceptual Models

Organisational culture has been defined in various ways. Indeed much of the current debate around culture is related as much to what it is as to how or whether it can be changed. Deal and Kennedy view it rather euphemistically as, "The way things are done around here". [37] Handy describes it as, "A pervasive way of life, or set of norms"; [38] whilst to Hickman and Silva it is simply, "Careful attention to organisational and people needs". [39] In the strategy literature, Johnson and Scholes define it as "A deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs in an organisation" [40] - a view echoed by Schein in organisational behaviour, who also concentrates upon shared meanings and values in organisations. [41] Robbins, in contrast, draws his cultural net wider, identifying ten "components of culture", which he claims include both structural and behavioural factors. [42]

Certainly, it is easy to become drawn into a discussion on the relative merits of each definition. However, as Green so adroitly states, "It is pointless to argue about whether corporate culture is social structure, ideology, assumptions, values and beliefs, webs of shared meanings, or symbolic processes/artifacts - it can be one, some, none, or all of these things, depending on one's frame of reference." [43] It depends on which set of Allison's "conceptual lenses" one decides to wear. [44] However, it is necessary to accept some starting point; and one can begin with the critique of the current state of strategic management thinking initiated in section 2 above.

Conventional strategic management literature, whilst generally accepting the existence of politico-cultural processes in strategic planning, still regards them as secondary. [45] Even strategic contingencies theory downplay the role of so-called 'soft' factors in strategic management. [46] Whilst Pfeffer adopts a pluralistic view of organisations, [47] in contrast to the unitary perspective of others in strategic management, this thesis will submit that little consideration has so far been given in current strategy theory to intra-organisational assumptions and interrelationships in strategic implementation. Even Leppard and McDonald's recent attempt at examining the linkages between marketing planning and corporate culture still assumes that planning is an incremental, staged process. [48]

Schein, in contrast, proposed that a successful interpretation of organisational culture should involve the penetration of successive layers of the organisation's cultural processes. [49] Morgan further hinted that using metaphors might be useful in this. Regarding culture as an onion with different layers may enable one to, "Recognize that one can penetrate beneath the rituals, ceremonies and symbolic
routines to discover inner layers of mythology, folklore, hopes and dreams that eventually lead to the innermost values and assumptions that lend meaning to the outward aspects of the culture". [50]

Accepting the idea that an organisational culture may be made up of layers provides the metaphorical basis and definition for the conceptual model which follows. In order to arrive at a more holistic understanding of the role of organisational culture in strategic management and change, it is argued, culture must be analysed in four dimensions: the overt, covert, latent, and temporal. Lukes proposed that power processes occur in three dimensions: overt (observable, behavioural, authority relations); covert (hidden exercise of interests, sustained by a mobilisation of bias); and latent (the contextual influence of organisational and environmental assumptions, where actors are unaware of their own intentions). [51] This is a wider definition of power than that of De Crespigny, for example; which just deals with the intended use of power. [52] Lukes' basic model has been challenged by Knights and Willmott and by Clegg [53] amongst others; but it does present a conceptual advance on Pfeffer's pluralism and has never been applied in a strategic culture setting. In addition, if it is reformulated to include not only power relationships, but "shared meanings" and assumptions within the third dimension - the essence of Johnson and Scholes and Schein's approach to corporate culture [54] - it becomes far more useful as an instrument for interpreting 'soft' processes in general within organisations. If one also adds a fourth dimension - time - to permit a dynamic interpretation of culture change in organisations; organisational culture becomes a concept more readily linked with long-term strategic planning

To these concepts are added others from social psychology, which postulate a separation, following Rokeach, of individuals' belief systems into superficial, transient 'attitudes' and deeper-seated, intransigent 'values'. [55] Relating these to the four-dimensional model, it is arguable that current attempts at 'culture change' in organisations at best only succeed in altering overt attitudes and short-term behavioural patterns. Covert behaviour, and certainly latent values, are not affected. In the model below, aggregated individuals' beliefs are represented as a three-dimensional continuum between superficial attitudes and deep-seated values. This is extended into the temporal dimension to avoid a static conception of organisational culture. Conventional culture change programmes, it is argued, rarely penetrate beyond the first (overt) dimension.

Analysing organisational culture in terms of the overt dimension is largely unproblematic and, as the research outline below details, can be conducted using interpretation of available secondary data and formal strategic plans; in conjunction with participant observation. Evaluating the covert dimension requires access to data on informal processes and will be sought from a series of personal interviews in conjunction with attitudinal measures. Identifying latent cultural processes necessitates the application of specially-designed projective techniques aimed at revealing underlying organisational assumptions. The time dynamic will be applied using archive secondary data (historical records) and personal interviews with actors perceived as having an influence in the development of the organisation (including ex-staff, ex-students and external bodies). More details are contained below.
To this layered approach needs to be added a conceptual qualifier. Salaman criticises much of management theory for assuming that organisations consist of an integrated team, united by common purposes. [56] Even Pfeffer's pluralistic view, though stressing conflict between interest groups, does not pronounce upon the existence of fundamental contradictions between individuals' and organisations' underlying goals or values. [57] Recent contributors to the social psychology literature have emphasised that there may be severe discongruence between personal and organisational values [58] and even between personal values and work-related values in general. [59] Posner et al discuss how managers can facilitate the alignment of personal and organisational values, [60] but - short of complete
'brainwashing' - it is arguable that some discongruence will always exist. Fig. 5 depicts this situation, which adds a further degree of complexity to the 4-D Model. It should not be assumed that individuals' values lie completely within organisational boundaries. This implies that organisational culture is inextricably linked to individuals' lives outside work. It also means that the organisation's influence upon the individual is inevitably limited, which makes culture change a far more difficult objective.

Fig. 5: Individual and Organisational Values

The third element in the conceptual model relates to service organisations in general. It is hypothesised that there exist identifiable clusters of values within organisations, related to groupings of individuals who share distinctly similar orientations towards work. These orientations, comprised of shared assumptions and values are termed "value sets". They may be formed and influenced by personality, experience and the wider environment; but they distinguish one group of individuals from another within an organisation. In service organisations in general, there may appear the three basic value sets in Fig. 6: based on different orientations towards their work by those employed in a professional capacity, in contrast to those with clerical or administrative jobs and those who represent the customers of that organisation. In institutions of higher education, for example, the professionals are teaching and research staff; clerics are administrative support staff; and customers are students and corporate clients. Clustering of values may not of course stop here: as we have already seen, "customers" may include a number of distinct stakeholders. Research staff may be distinguishable from teaching staff. Further, segmentation may also occur according to hierarchical position, discipline, age, sex and other factors. In addition, there may be organisational members that share some of the orientations of two or more groups. However, if a
basic clustering of values around these sets is revealed by empirical data obtained from the educational institutions studied; the model could very usefully be transferred to other types of service organisations does occur.

Fig. 6: Value Sets in Service Organisations

Of more directly relevance to this exploration, if distinct clusters of individuals can be identified within an organisation, this may provide insight into how each group is liable to respond to the introduction of a TTQ strategy. Together with data obtained on the organisation's political and interpersonal processes from the second dimension, and more overt data from the first dimension; the 'people-based' opportunities and constraints to strategy implementation are capable of being analysed.

Piloting a New Methodology

This four-dimensional conceptual framework gives rise to the methodology outlined below, which is currently being piloted in a UK Business School to assess its relevance to the implementation of a TTQ strategy. Data collection in Phases 1-4 is already well underway. Once analysis has been accomplished and Phase 7 concluded, the decision will be made whether to undertake a full study using this methodology.
Pilot Overview

PHASE 1: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION (THROUGHOUT STUDY)

PHASE 2: ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY DATA

PHASE 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS/ATTITUDINAL SURVEYS WITH CULTURAL ACTORS

PHASE 4: PROJECTIVE DATA GATHERING (SIMULTANEOUS WITH PHASE 3)

PHASE 5: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH EX-ACTORS

PHASE 6: FINAL ANALYSIS AND DRAFT REPORT

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Outline Methodology

PHASE 1: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

In keeping with Merton's concept of action research, the Author concludes that only by immersing oneself in the social processes of an organisation as a bona fide employee accepted by fellow employees, can one obtain an adequate interpretation of that organisation's culture. [61] Rejection of the purely functionalist paradigm in favour of an interpretive stance allows one to analyse culture from an insider's perspective. [62] Such participant observation has been ongoing since the Author joined the organisation, with observations of initial reactions and interpretations of the Business School culture already recorded. This includes observing and recording the process of TTQ strategy formulation within the internal working party on quality, to provide greater insight into the aims, assumptions and group dynamics of the strategists themselves. Diaries are also being kept by selected new entrants to the organisation concerning their initial experiences and perceptions of the Business School. This Phase will continue to provide depth to other project data and is being run simultaneously with Phases 2-7.

PHASE 2: ANALYSIS OF SECONDARY DATA

To forge an early link with business strategy, it is important that existing strategic plans for the Business School are analysed. This provides part of the overt aspect of the model. In addition, written documents relating to formal management mechanisms (committee minutes, personnel procedures, formal rules, organisational structure etc.) and publicity material in the School are being assessed. Historical archives are being examined in keeping with the temporal dimension of the study. Furthermore, any available data relating to strategy and policy derivation and implementation, staff turnover, research contracts, roles and any other information deemed relevant, will be viewed. Contact is being maintained throughout the study with the working party currently investigating the area of internal quality assurance to complement and assist their work.
PHASE 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS/ATTITUDINAL SURVEYS WITH CULTURAL ACTORS

Arising from this material, and perceptions obtained through Phase 1, according to the principle of Grounded Theory, there will emerge a series of cultural/strategic issues to be explored via a series of face-to-face interview sessions with organisational members. [63] A representative quota sample has been drawn to include both academic and non-academic staff at all levels in the organisation. It is important that all potential sub-cultures are included in this stage, to obtain an holistic view of cultural processes. This also includes actors such as students, a selected number of which are being interviewed. The questionnaire consists of three sections; the first dealing with overt cultural facets, the second with covert factors experienced by the subject, the third exploring latent values. Interviews are taped, transcribed and will be analysed, using techniques derived from discourse analysis. [64] The second section includes an attitudinal study using conventional Likert-type techniques to be analysed using SPSS. The third will employ a tailored values analysis based upon the ranking techniques of Rokeach and Alwin & Krosnick. [65] Academic values used for this exercise have been derived from a literature review of available research on academic cultures. This includes the work of Clark, Becher, Harman, Dill, Halpin and Croft, Bell and Shieff [66]

PHASE 4: PROJECTIVE DATA GATHERING

In addition to the three sections above, each interview contains a fourth applying specially-designed projective techniques to discern latent organisational values. Ornstein's studies of bi-hemispherical cognitive processes underlined the importance of using intuitive, spatial thinking to complement linear, verbal communication. [67] Such spatial thought processes are physiologically related to the right hemisphere of the brain, which Mintzberg emphasised as important in the creative side of strategy formulation. [68] By stimulating subjects to explore such 'right-brained' perceptions, it will be ascertained whether this will lead to a more holistic interpretation of organisational culture. Unlike conventional projective techniques used in personality studies, it is not intended to attempt to project the subjects' own personalities onto paper, but to provide a vehicle to enable them to express in visual form what may be difficult to communicate in a verbal form. [69] These techniques include modified versions of

* a constitutive drawing exercise enabling subjects to represent their personal views on the School's culture [70]

* a card exercise stimulating subjects to represent the School as organic metaphors

PHASE 5: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH EX-ACTORS

Invaluable insights into culture - especially from an historical perspective - can also be obtained from data derived from former members of that culture. In revealing cultural clashes (perhaps reasons for leaving) and in allowing former members time to compare the culture they have left with their new culture, it is anticipated
that such perspectives will provide a means of triangulating shared meanings. [71] Similar semi-structured interviews and attitude analyses to those in Phase 3 will be conducted, with the number limited to around 10 - since difficulty in contacting subjects may be anticipated. Information from existing members of CARBS, the Author's own personal contacts and records of ex-students from CARBS files will provide the sampling frame.

PHASE 6: FINAL ANALYSIS AND DRAFT REPORT

It is anticipated that, although analysis of the above data will occur at the end of each phase to allow the Grounded Theory principle to operate, comparison and theme analysis of Phases 1-5 should occur in a separate exercise. This will result in a draft report examining:

* the culture of the Business School in Four-Dimensions (the descriptive element)
* the strategic implications of the project findings for the Business School
* wider implications for strategic planning (including initial conclusions concerning the efficacy of the approach and, where appropriate, suggested modifications and implications for the larger, applied study).

PHASE 7: FEEDBACK DELPHI GROUPS AND FINAL REPORT

In accordance with the Delphi feedback principle, the draft findings will be presented to discussion groups consisting of members of the Business School for their evaluation and suggestions. [72] This may occur sequentially until a consensus is reached that the findings adequately represent a majority view of the organisation's culture.

5. Areas for Further Exploration

As already indicated, assessment of the methodology represents the project's most pressing current concern. At this stage it would be useful to solicit feedback on this aspect from the academic community before the full study commences. Comments could be provided during the Workshop or to the author at the address/telephone number listed on the inside front page of this document. Any conceptual comments would also be welcomed. In addition, since it is intended to undertake a comparative analysis of cultural opportunities and constraints to the implementation of TtQ strategies in management education; suggestions for further academic organisations to study would be gratefully accepted.
Notes and References

22. Internal memo concerning the Mid-Term Conference of Registrars, 28th September, (1990).
24. This process is ongoing and form the basis for the pilot study of this Doctoral project.
29. Oliver, N., (Forthcoming), op cit.
36. Sandwell (1990), op cit.
42. Robbins, S.P., "Managing Organisational Culture", Ch. 16. in

