An Examination of the Role and Experiences of Middle Level Academic Managers in Higher Education when Implementing Organisational Change: A case study utilising Appreciative Inquiry

A thesis submitted for the award of EdD

Mary E. Carter, BSc (Hons), MA(Ed), PGCE(FE)
January 2013
DECLARATION
This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed ................................................................. (candidate)

Date ........................................................................

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed ................................................................. (candidate)

Date ........................................................................

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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Date ........................................................................
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my granddaughters, Lauren Jayne Carter and Amelia Mary Pascoe for keeping Grandma’s feet firmly on the ground.
Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Professor Jan Laugharne and Professor John Gunson for their unfailing help and support over the six years it has taken me to complete the professional doctorate. Thanks are also due to the friends and colleagues who participated in this research and gave of their time freely. I hope I have represented their views accurately and told their stories well.

A special mention must go to the ladies of the Queenswood tea group whose friendship and laughter has enriched my professional life.

And lastly but not least to my family without whose love and support none of this would have been possible.
Abstract

A qualitative case study using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was undertaken to identify the experiences of middle level academic managers in a UK university when implementing change. First a systematic study and critique of the literature relating to the theoretical framework of Appreciative Inquiry was carried out. Here AI was examined in the context of higher education; the theoretical perspectives that are applied to the management and implementation of change; and the experiences of academics working as managers. Then a series of interviews were carried out and provocative propositions, based on the AI cycle (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008) were generated and circulated for comment. Appreciative Inquiry proved to be an excellent research tool, yielding rich descriptions of the managers’ roles at a time of change. Middle level managers primarily implement change without necessarily being privy to the decision-making process which has preceded the change. Since they have no budgetary control or access to any incentives to encourage staff to embrace the change these middle managers need to cajole and persuade staff to participate. They are frequently in a difficult position, as more senior managers expect them to implement change, while their subordinates expect them to support them in their objections to it. The respondents in the study welcomed the opportunity to interact with people from different discipline areas and to try and cohere different programme teams into a department. The fact that frequently they interacted with people on a very personal level was valued, although it could be emotionally draining. Every respondent mentioned student satisfaction as a key motivator and were concerned that good quality teaching should not be compromised by changes in the university system. It is recommended that middle managers be supported by the creation of a cross-university discussion forum and a mentoring scheme.
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADU</td>
<td>Academic Delivery Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARWG</td>
<td>Academic Restructure Working Group</td>
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<td>ASB</td>
<td>Academic Standards Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>BoG</td>
<td>Board of Governors</td>
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<td>CNAA</td>
<td>Council for National Academic Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td>CUC</td>
<td>Committee of University Chairmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVCP</td>
<td>Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals</td>
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<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>Department of Education and Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>DHoD</td>
<td>Deputy Head of Department</td>
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<td>ERA</td>
<td>Education Reform Act</td>
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<td>FHE</td>
<td>Further and Higher Education Act</td>
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<td>HEFCE</td>
<td>Higher Education Funding Council England</td>
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<td>HEFCW</td>
<td>Higher Education Funding Council Wales</td>
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<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
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<td>HEIR</td>
<td>Higher Education Institutional Research</td>
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<td>HESA</td>
<td>Higher Education Statistics Agency</td>
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<td>HoD</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
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<td>KPIs</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicators</td>
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<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Authority</td>
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<td>LFHE</td>
<td>Leadership Foundation for Higher Education</td>
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<td>LTSU</td>
<td>Learning and Teaching Support Unit</td>
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<td>NCHE</td>
<td>National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education</td>
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<td>PCFC</td>
<td>Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council</td>
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<td>PD</td>
<td>Programme Director</td>
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<td>PDP</td>
<td>Professional Development Portfolio</td>
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<td>PL</td>
<td>Principal Lecturer</td>
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<td>PSMW</td>
<td>Public Service Management Wales</td>
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<td>RAE</td>
<td>Research Assessment Exercise</td>
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<td>RDAP</td>
<td>Research Degree Awarding Power</td>
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<td>SMPT</td>
<td>Senior Management and Planning Team</td>
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<td>UFC</td>
<td>Universities Funding Council</td>
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<td>UGC</td>
<td>University Grants Committee</td>
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<td>URL</td>
<td>Universal Resource Locator</td>
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<td>VCPB</td>
<td>Vice Chancellor and Principal’s Board</td>
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<td>WAG</td>
<td>Welsh Assembly Government</td>
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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction

The research described in this thesis took place over a five-year period and the research study adopted a social constructionist approach (Gergen, 1999; Burr, 2003; Gergen & Gergen, 2004) and in particular an appreciative inquiry methodology (Cooperrider, 1986; Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008) to concentrate on the positive aspects of undertaking a management role in the higher education sector. Shortly after embarking on the professional doctorate, the author was appointed as Head of the Centre for Professional Development in the newly-formed School of Education. The post was subsequently re-titled Head of Department, and it was this appointment that formed the basis for this study. The title of Head of Department for this study is defined as an individual who has line management responsibilities for a small number of staff and some limited budgetary control. Broadly the roles and responsibilities are those of a Principal Lecturer, Teaching and Scholarship (See Appendix 1). As the study progressed the initial change in structure became embedded. However, other change initiatives also occurred and thus the research examined the experiences of academic managers in times of change rather than concentrating on one single change in management structures within a higher education setting.
In this chapter the author will outline the specific aims and objectives of the study; give a commentary on the funding and management of Higher Education in the United Kingdom as a background to the project; and then a more detailed account of the Institution in which the research took place. In order to protect anonymity the names of the institution and its neighbours have been changed.

1.2 Research Aims

There appears to be little recent research specifically on the role of Head of Department in UK universities apart from Smith’s studies (Smith, 2002, 2005) and an ESRC funded project on the theme of “New Managerialism and the management of UK universities” (Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007). The former study compared the role of HoDs in chartered and statutory universities, whereas the latter:

\[
\text{centred on the accounts of practice, values, and career development provided by those who we term manager-academics, that is, academics, who, whether temporarily or permanently, have taken on managerial and leadership roles in their university.} \\
\text{Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007,p v}
\]

The researcher’s new role as Head of Department proved to be more challenging and frustrating than expected and in particular, the ability to act as a change agent was very limited. This echoes the experiences of some participants in Floyd’s (2012, p.20) study on Heads of Department, which was being carried out over the same time period:

\[
\text{…for several of the respondents in this study, changing the structures within which they worked proved more difficult than they first thought and their initial intentions and aspirations failed to materialise.}
\]
Floyd’s (2012) work suggests that Heads of Department fall into three categories, “Jugglers, Copers and Strugglers”. Jugglers successfully manage the role; copers, as the name suggests, were fully extended but able to cope; whereas strugglers felt unable to manage the difficulties associated with the “multiplicity of expectations associated with being a departmental head” (Floyd, 2011, p. 396). At the beginning of the research process, the author definitely fell into the latter category. Therefore she wondered whether her experiences were common to others in the same role at her university and what could be done to facilitate the move into a management role? This informed the aims of her study to discover “what were the perspectives and experiences of other Heads of Department within her own school and across the university; and did they match or differ from her own experience.” In particular, the author was aware that individuals react differently to change based on their personalities and previous experience and how they interpret events:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful.

Connelly and Clandinin, 2006, p. 375

The challenge then was to adopt a research approach that would encourage participants in the study to tell their stories. A literature review was carried out which considered the underlying theoretical perspectives of the research, the setting in Higher Education, the management and implementation of change and the experiences of
academics as managers. It was decided that Appreciative Inquiry provided the appropriate approach giving a “philosophy and methodology for change leadership” (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005, p.8). The conceptual framework of the thesis is illustrated below in the form of a stacked Venn diagram. At the heart of the study is the role of the academic, and how the implementation of change impacts on academics working as middle managers. The whole is seen through the lens of Appreciative Inquiry, emphasising the positive aspects of the middle manager role and positing how positive experiences can be sustained and maintained.

**Figure 1.1 Thesis conceptual framework**

AI has primarily been used as an organisation development tool, frequently involving large numbers of participants. However, Reed (2007) has advocated the use of AI as a research method. She suggests that there are a number of points that should inform AI research. There is an emphasis on the importance of the workplace setting and understanding its context. Participants share their experiences, and focus on positive
experiences in the past and present to plan for the future. Personal storytelling has become an accepted means of researching organisations (Fraser, 2004). Stories provide a mechanism whereby a number of different “truths” may emerge and a way of examining the interactions that occur between individuals in an organisation (Jackson, 1998; Plummer, 2001; Reisman, 2002). As O’ Connor (1997), states “to discover how anything happens in an organisation, we ask people to tell us stories”. Narratives are very likely to be of particular significance during times of strategic change (Dunford & Jones, 2000). It was felt that the technique of AI would be a way of generating stories in a non threatening manner; and by choosing “the positive as the focus of the inquiry” (Mohr and Watkins, 2002, p.5) respondents would be encouraged to talk about what was working well rather than concentrating on any difficulties or problems they had encountered.

The following Aims and Objectives were developed

Aim

To conduct a qualitative case study using an appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, 1986) theoretical perspective to identify key experiences of middle level academic managers when implementing organisational change.
Objectives:

To model Appreciative Inquiry as a research method in Higher Education

To clarify the roles and responsibilities of middle level academic managers during times of organisational change.

To identify what positive experiences the can bring.

To create a set of provocative propositions (Watkins & Mohr, 2001, p.141) arising from the data

To use analysis of the data to make recommendations as to how such positive experiences could be sustained and enhanced to facilitate on-going organisational change

It was hoped that the outcomes of the research would contribute in the following ways:

- Theory – to add to the body of knowledge relating to management in Higher Education, in particular the experiences of those who take on the role of Head of Department
- Practice – to improve the experiences of academics when they move into a management role
- Methodology –to use Appreciative Inquiry as a research methodology and evaluate its effectiveness in small-scale studies.
1.3 Historical context

Higher Education in the United Kingdom has undergone a series of changes since the 1960s, in particular in the areas of student funding and participation rates. Student funding has moved from being funded entirely by the tax payer to a system where students are expected to contribute to the cost of their education. Participation rates have increased from 5% to over 45% (Wyness, 2010). Key changes in funding are indicated in Table 1.1.
Table 1.1. Changes in the Funding of Higher Education in the UK (1963 onwards) (Adapted from Wyness, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Policy Change Implemented</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Robbins Report - move towards a mass system of HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Education Reform Act – Polytechnics and Colleges of HE removed from LEA control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>White paper on Student Loans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Student Loans Introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Further and Higher Education Act – Higher Education Funding Councils introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Dearing Report – proposed the charging of tuition fees, expansion of student numbers and threshold standards for degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Tuition Fees introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Scottish Devolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Divergence of Policy between the home countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Higher Education Act Variable fees introduced, funding ceded to the Welsh Assembly Government in Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Rees Review (Wales) - Review of student support and tuition fees in Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Top up fees introduced in England and Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>First top up fees introduced in Wales; Graduate Endowment abolished in Scotland; Amendments to the English system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Changes to grant system in England and Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Browne Review – Removal of cap on fees, upfront loans to be paid back after graduation when earnings reach £21000pa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The demand for places in higher education grew in post-war Britain but it was the Robbins (1963) report that triggered the move towards a mass system of higher
education. From the early sixties until the mid-nineties, growth in the sector was considerable (Theisens, 2003).

The Further and Higher Education Act (FHE) of 1992 unified the funding of Higher Education. The Universities Funding Council and Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council were replaced by two unitary Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFC), one for England; the other for Wales (a similar reform was implemented in Scotland by the 1992 Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act). In addition, the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA), which had validated the degrees of institutions of higher education other than universities, was dissolved. Polytechnics and other colleges of higher education were able to become degree awarding bodies in their own right and take the title of university. Almost all of the colleges eligible had become universities by the end of 1993 (Mackinnon, Statham & Hales, 1995). While this act did not increase actual numbers of students, the re-classification brought about a sharp increase in students counted as being in Higher Education (Greenaway and Haynes, 2003).

The changes outlined in conjunction with other socio-economic factors resulted in a major transformation in the sector. Power was centralised in the hands of the Secretary of State, efficiency was seen as the key to success rather than effectiveness and in the mid-nineties, the Conservative government felt that the sector needed a major review (Hodgson and Spours, 1999). In 1996, the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (NCIHE) was set up under the chairmanship of Sir Ron Dearing.
When published the report (NCIHE, 1997) warned that the British economy could not survive without expanding the universities, improving their teaching and broadening their students’ skills. Dearing proposed the charging of tuition fees, an unprecedented expansion of student numbers and “threshold” standards for degrees (NCIHE, 1997). The Dearing recommendations were only partially implemented. An upfront fee of £1000 was introduced but against Dearing's advice grants were cut and abolished the following year, while maintenance loans were brought in (Wyness, 2010). The next major change in UK Higher Education came about as a result of devolution of powers to a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly.

Scotland now has a completely different funding system to the rest of the UK with tuition fees having been abolished in 2001 and maintenance grants re-introduced (Wyness, 2010). In Wales, the following criteria now apply:

The Welsh Government will allow Welsh students a maximum fee loan of £3,465 plus a non-means tested tuition fee grant, of up to £5,535, to account for the balance of the actual fee charged (up to £9k) wherever they study in the UK and for EU students planning to study in Wales only. This means that the subsidy will vary dependent on what the institution charges, e.g., if an institution charges £7k, the fee grant will be £3,535. Welsh domiciled and EU students will therefore pay the same fees as other students for the course at their chosen institution, but will receive assistance from the Welsh Government towards the costs.

UCAS, 2012
1.4 The Case Study

The research study focused on a new tier of management which was created after a major reorganization of the University given the pseudonym, Cambrian University (CU). The university is based in South East Wales and was formally established in 1996 when it became one of the Colleges of the University of Wales (CU, 2009a). The College had its origins in the opening of the School of Art in 1865. In 1976, the local, Art College, Food and Technology College, Teacher Training College and Technical College merged to become an Institute of Higher Education. All four colleges retained their existing locations and so the new institute had four campuses located within the city. The new college was under the control of the Local Education Authority at that time.

In April 1992 the Institute became incorporated. This created an autonomous body, no longer under local authority control (CU, 2009a). In 1993 the Institute of Higher Education was granted degree awarding powers, but these powers were not implemented as the Institute preferred to strengthen existing ties with the University of Wales. CU obtained University College status within the University of Wales in 1996 and full membership of the University in 2004 (CU, 2009a). In 2007, CU was the first UK university to be awarded the Government’s Charter Mark for excellence for the fifth time (CU, 2009a).
In 1998/99 an academic and administrative restructuring exercise was carried out following the appointment of a new Principal. This resulted in a move away from a faculty structure to the formation of nine schools. Following this change there was a period of relative stability for schools, although changes were made at senior management level. In 2003/4 in response to the Welsh Assembly Government’s (WAG) reconfiguration agenda, CU entered negotiations with a neighbouring university (referred to under the pseudonym of Valleys University, VU in this thesis) with an intent to merge into a single institution. Despite extensive and protracted negotiations at all levels of staff, CU eventually withdrew and the anticipated merger did not take place. Subsequently CU entered talks with another neighbouring university (with the pseudonym of Neighbour University, NU in this thesis) with a view to partnership but these talks also stalled.

Following this unsettled period in May 2004 a “Discussion Paper for a Revised Academic Structure” was circulated by the Vice Chancellor and Principal’s Board (VCPB). It proposed that the existing nine schools should be consolidated into a smaller number of larger academic delivery units based on critical mass and sustainability. The consultation process was conducted in two phases. Between May and June of 2004, the ARWG undertook an informal consultation. This phase was to gather views on the “academic coherence and critical mass of CU’s current academic structures” (CU, 2004, p.4). Following this consultation, proposals were drawn up for new academic structures. The second phase was a formal consultation process held
between September and November 2004 on the new structures proposed. Both periods of consultation are reviewed in the following sections.

1.4.1 The Informal Consultation

At the time of the informal consultation process, CU consisted of nine schools, although the author’s school (Lifelong Learning) was described in the consultation document (CU, 2004, Appendix 4) as aspiring to share full school status. Lifelong Learning had at that time some 590 students, only 80 fewer than the next smallest school (Product Design), but only two of the school management and planning team held formal posts, the Head of School and Director of Learning and Teaching. The posts of Director of Research and Director of Enterprise were not officially filled. Two members of staff covered the roles on an informal basis with no additional remuneration or hours allocated.

The average size of a school in CU was 1002 students although there was considerable variation with the Business school having 1420 students nearly three times the size of Product Design or Lifelong Learning. The key criteria for determining the future composition of schools were “academic coherence” and “critical mass and sustainability” (CU, 2004, p.35). These key criteria were based on the following principles agreed at a meeting of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Board on the 8th March 2004:
• That they should reflect the academic priorities in order to underpin CU’s future strategic development
• That there should be a smaller number of groupings with greater critical mass but of similar overall size
• That the groupings should be formed around cognate disciplines and support efficiency and effectiveness, together with interdisciplinary development
• That a grouping ideally should not have students on more than 2 campuses.

CU, 2004, p.29

The first point that the informal consultation document requires feedback on has a focus on research, although that is not mentioned explicitly in the key criteria. The author has clustered the broad themes posed in the consultation document in Table 1.2.
Table 1.2, Topics identified in Initial Informal Consultation (CU, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 6</td>
<td>Research capacity and links to teaching</td>
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<td>3, 4, 11, 12</td>
<td>Key criteria for academic re-structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Expansion/ Curtailment of programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Centres of Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Social Inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Academic Managers or Academic Leaders?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

At this time, CU was seeking to achieve Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAPS) and respondents were asked to comment on whether CU’s research culture would best be served by having dedicated research centres. It was suggested that the formation of dedicated research centres could facilitate both RDAPS and maximise ratings in the 2007 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The document (CU, 2004, pp28-35) then went on suggest six alternative structures. All had the same basic premise that the number of academic delivery units should be reduced. The report was circulated to the nine existing schools with a number of issues highlighted for discussion.

This first phase of consultation ended in June 2004, and the results were discussed at Academic Board on the 23rd June 2004. In the final report of the ARWG it was stated that
Academic Board gave “cautious support” for the restructure process, and that this was tempered with qualifications. The ARWG and VCPB interpreted the Board as being in broad agreement with the rationale for change. Accordingly VPCB asked the ARWG to proceed to the second phase of consultation, notwithstanding recognition that some members of the academic community did not agree that change was necessary.

CU, 2004, p.5

However ARWG acknowledged that although it was not necessary for all members of staff to agree with the need for change it was important that there was some realisation that there was a sound basis for proposing change. In retrospect, the group (ARWG) felt that more time should have been spent between phase one and two explaining the reasons behind the perceived need for a changed academic structure. In should be reiterated here that CU had in its very recent past undergone a very long negotiation with Valleys University with a view to create a new “super” university and therefore it is not altogether surprising that staff were less likely to embrace another change initiative. As HEFCW (2005, p.12) had noted all staff were affected by “lengthy planning blight”. Therefore there was limited enthusiasm for yet another change and so when the new structure was implemented and new Heads of Department appointed; they faced a challenge initially to get academic staff to accept the new arrangements. To indicate the changes that had been undertaken and that were ongoing at this time, see the table 1.3
### Table 1.3 On going Initiatives at CU

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>New Principal and Vice chancellor</td>
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<td>Restructure from Faculties to Schools</td>
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<td>Merger talks with Valleys University</td>
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<td>Collaboration talks with NU</td>
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<td>Research Degree Awarding Powers</td>
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<td>Consultation on further re-structuring</td>
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<td>Restructure from 9 schools to 5</td>
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<td>Reconfiguration of Initial Teacher Training</td>
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<td>Voluntary Severance offers</td>
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#### 1.4.2 The Formal Consultation

The next formal phase of the consultation focused on restructuring the nine existing schools into five ADUs on the 1\textsuperscript{st} August 2005. Here both the original documents and
the summary produced by the ARWG are available. This gives a more complete picture of the events documented and enables the researcher to make more “replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorp, 2004, p.18)

The new proposed ADUs were as follows:
## Table 1.4 Proposed Academic Delivery Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of ADU</th>
<th>Schools and Programmes Included</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art and Design</td>
<td>School of Art and Design, School of Product &amp; Engineering Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business, Management, Hospitality and Tourism</td>
<td>Business School, Hospitality and Tourism programmes from School of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Humanities and Social Science</td>
<td>School of Education, School of Lifelong Learning, and Social work, Community Studies and Housing Programmes from the School of Health and Social Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>School of Applied Science (minus Sport and Exercise Science) and School of Health and Social Sciences (minus the programmes allocated to Education, Humanities and Social Science)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport and Leisure</td>
<td>School of Sport, PE and Recreation, Leisure (from the School of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure) and Sport and Exercise Science (from the School of Applied Sciences)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the document being circulated to the existing academic schools, Heads of School and their Management teams were able to meet with VCPB to discuss the proposals. As with the informal process, papers were also circulated and discussed at the Boards.

The report from ARWG started by reiterating the premise that the restructuring exercise was based on two key criteria, academic coherence and critical mass. Responses from the schools indicated that they considered academic coherence to be more important than critical mass, and therefore that some cross subsidy might still be required after reorganisation. However many of the schools prefaced their responses by stating that they did not accept the case for restructuring at all. In order to preserve the anonymity of respondents, in the discussion the existing nine schools are given the designation School A, School B etc.,

overall there was a strong feeling that the status quo should be maintained

School B, 2004, p.1

School A does not accept the argument that restructuring is necessary at this time

School A, 2004, p.1

we in (School I) would like to see the current review of academic structure resulting in weaknesses in the current structure being addressed rather than a new structure

School I, 2004, p.1

not one member of academic staff has expressed approval of the proposed merger

School E, 2004, p.1
The argument that the existing structure provided academic coherence and, in the main, critical mass was not accepted by ARWG. However, no explicit reasons for this contention were given by ARWG, apart from a statement that “parts of CU’s current structure are weak” (CU, 2004, p8). Given the lack of detail, it was difficult to make an informed judgement, as a member of School G described it:

> it was like trying to put a jigsaw together without having the picture on the box

School G, 2004, p.2

For example, when ARWG originally discussed the concept of critical mass, the only data referred to is “number of students”, yet in the discussion at Learning and Teaching Board the reference to critical mass is one of numbers of academic staff. It is clear that the view of the ARWG was that critical mass was the key consideration and that without critical mass “discussions about whether or not a group of disciplines cohere within a management structure run the risk of taking on a distinctly esoteric tone” (CU, 2004, p8).

It could be suggested that the resistance to change articulated here could be ascribed to “an unavoidable behavioural response” (King & Anderson, 2002, p.215). However in addition to the lengthy merger negotiations with the Valleys University, it was noticed that the new structures bore a striking resemblance to the old faculty structure which had been replaced in 1999. When the Vice Chancellor and Principal took up his post,
CU had four faculties; Business, Leisure and Food; Art and Design; Health Sciences; and Education and Sport. These groupings were very similar to the new ADUs with the exception of Education and Sport which were in this structure, split into two separate ADUs. Since all of the existing Schools felt that the changes implemented in 1999 were working well, it is therefore understandable that many would perceive this proposed change as a retrograde step.

Table 1.5 Final Composition of ADUs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of new ADU (Proposed title in grey, final title in black)</th>
<th>Schools and Programmes Included</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art, Design and Engineering</td>
<td>Art and Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art and Design</td>
<td>Product and Engineering Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and Science</td>
<td>Applied Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business and Management</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Hospitality, Tourism, and Leisure Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Humanities</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Lifelong Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>Sport and Physical Education</td>
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</table>
No programmes were removed from a School and placed in a different ADU to their current School. Of the nine Schools, only School D and School C did not make a case for retaining the current structures. School C was failing to meet its targets and required substantial cross subsidy. Presumably the prospect of merger would assist in both areas. School D on the other hand was very successful, perhaps the appeal of the new structure for this school was that compared to others they would be relatively unaffected by the changes proposed.

ARWG suggested the following format for the management of ADUs

- Each ADU would have a substructure of identified groups of staff, each group would comprise of no more than 10 staff.
- An appropriate number of “L&T Leaders” would be appointed under the line management of the L&T Director
- The responsibilities of L&T Leaders would include:
  - membership of the ADU’s L&T Committee
  - line management (i.e. first line supervisory responsibility, first line management for address (sic) HR issues)
  - staff review and development
  - first line contact with central administration and support services regarding academic issues
- The role of L&T Leader would be rotational and would be recognised as part of the progression route to Principal Lecturer grade
- Staff spending 80% of more of their time on research or enterprise would be line managed by the Directors of Research and Enterprise respectively.
- The Senior Administrator would line manage administrative and support staff (excepting technical staff who would be line managed by L&T Leaders)

(CU, 2004, p.15)
This section is of key importance to this research study as this is the first time that any substructures were defined. As will be seen, the “L&T Leaders” described here are the fore-runner of the Head of Department and Deputy Head of Department roles that are the focus of this thesis. ARWG concluded this section by commenting that “the sub-structure would have the added advantage of providing experiential opportunities to staff that could facilitate succession planning” (CU, 2004, p.15). Thus it suggests that the sub structure could provide a clear career development route.

There was very strong support for the creation of a Senior Administrator within each ADU. CU (2004, p.21) said

that person should form and cohere existing administrative resources, and act as a primary interface with Central Support Units. This role has generally been recognised as instrumental to bringing about a significant aspect of the cultural change advocated during the consultation process.

While the costs of the re-structuring were estimated to be in the region of £1.3 million, the aim would be that in the longer term there would be substantial benefits. However, it was noted by ARWG that CU needed to consider whether it could afford this level of expenditure. The timing of any changes would also need to take into consideration any other developments. At the time Wales was moving
towards the development of an overarching credit framework and the university was moving to align its modules with that framework.

The report acknowledges in its concluding remarks that:

A significant number of responses have implied that the problems and issues faced by CU would best be addressed through cultural change rather than by means of a restructuring process. It remains a matter of managerial judgement as to whether cultural change alone would enable CU to achieve its academic priorities.

CU, 2004, p.21

Johnson & Scholes (2005) suggest that to ignore the cultural web of an organisation is to reduce the success of any change initiatives. Certainly despite the extended consultation period there was a distinct feeling amongst academic staff that this change was being imposed and that the views of staff were not being given sufficient weight. The comparison between the actual school responses to the formal consultation process and the summary written by the ARWG would indicate that this concern was well founded.

The ARWG made a number of recommendations to the Vice Chancellor, the one pertinent to this thesis is:
• Each ADU should have a substructure of identified groups of staff, with each group line managed by either an L&T Leader, Director of Research, Director of Enterprise, or the Senior Administrator. L&T Leaders would be line managed by the Director of Learning and Teaching.

In addition, the group recommended that the Vice-Chancellor deferred implementation until the new credit framework had been introduced. It proposed a date of implementation of 1st August 2006. It was suggested that changes to other central support units should not be made at this time other than the formation of a central WAP unit. Further recommendations were that the Vice-Chancellor and Principal’s Board (VCPB) undertake a detailed cost/benefit analysis and produce a plan for the financing of the restructure.

VCPB agreed a project plan for the implementation of the new academic structure in April 2005 (Academic Board, 2006). This was revised in the summer of 2005 and disseminated to Academic Board during the autumn term. The project plan set out three phases to the implementation process:

• Stage 1 (October 2005 to February 2006) – appointing School M&PTs
• Stage 2 (February 2006 to April 2006) – School planning and actions
• Stage 3 (February 2006 to August 2006) – Support Unit planning and actions

Academic Board (2006, p.1)
Deans of School for four of the five Schools were appointed on 3 January 2006. The post of Dean of the School of Management remained vacant and the post was advertised externally. Other School Directors were appointed on the 1st February 2006. The appointment of Business Support managers for each School was brought forward. Interviews were held in January 2006 and all were in post by April 2006 so that they could contribute to the forward planning process for each School. The setting up of the substructures in each School was moved from Stage 1 to Stage 2 (Academic Board, 2006, p.2)

In September 2006 the new structure was implemented, although not all schools had appointed staff to the responsibility roles identified in their substructures. The School of Sport decided not to create substructures instead dividing responsibilities between undergraduate and post graduate programmes. This move does indicate that the new units did have a degree of autonomy.

The change outlined has been examined in detail. Not only to examine the change that had taken place but also to illustrate the mechanism for organisational change in the university. The change was presented as a problem that had to be solved, but, as can be seen by the responses given, many did not acknowledge that there was a problem
and felt additionally that if there was a problem it was never fully articulated. Barge and Oliver (2003, p.128) state:

deficit language and problem-solving approaches increase levels of defensiveness among organizational members. Problem-solving approaches are based on the "blame game" and can rapidly create defensiveness because they must attach blame, responsibility, and accountability to someone or something that has created the problem. Defensiveness, in the form of blame shifting, "It is not my problem but yours," is commonplace.

An Appreciative Inquiry model seeks to discover what is working well in an organisation and disseminate that information.

AI involves, at its core, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to comprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential.

(Chapman , 2011 para 5)

When Chapman (2011) wanted to develop an inclusive curriculum in her institution, she and her team adopted the AI approach. The team concluded that using this approach had succeeded in supporting academic staff to review and further improve their inclusive practice without alienating them or making them feel that their previous work had been inadequate.
The author was appointed to the post of Head of Department for Professional Development at the time of restructure and it is this role that provides the focus for the thesis. It was a three-year appointment, after which the author reapplied and was reappointed. Deem et al. (2001) suggest that although temporary managers experience a steep learning curve, they are able to try out management roles with less risk to their academic careers. The formation of a new academic delivery unit was a challenging and exciting time. Still, staff were unsure how their particular courses fitted in to the overall structure. The new academic management structures were designed to identify areas of common development and to integrate more fully courses and their associated teaching teams into coherent groups that bridged the old school structures. The courses that made up the Department for Professional Development had a number of key features in common. The majority of students were mature and studying part-time, there was a strong vocational focus, and continuing professional endorsement by the relevant bodies governing youth work and teacher training in the post compulsory sector, was an essential feature. These courses have traditionally recruited well but retention of students was more of a problem. There were a number of course specific issues that required careful management. Both the Post-Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) and Community Education programmes were professionally endorsed; such endorsement required a substantial number of workplace visits and thorough fieldwork supervision. Both teaching teams were small and the visits took up a great deal of time that is not fully acknowledged in individual timetables. Apart from the programme director of the Foundation Degree in Learning Support, all of the staff had been in the former School of Lifelong Learning.
The development of the role of Head of Department was also a pragmatic reaction to the increase in size of the new School. It would be unrealistic for the Dean and Directors to carry out annual performance reviews on upwards of forty or fifty staff and therefore these line management duties were devolved to the Heads of Department and their deputies. However although the task of conducting reviews fell to the new Heads of Department, the actual line management responsibilities still lay with the Dean of the School. Smith (2005) suggests that the optimum size for an efficient department is about 15 academic staff and that a way to attain that is for the duties of the Dean to be delegated as was done in this instance.

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the origins of the study have been discussed and related to other research taking place in the sector. The research aims have been outlined, the historical context discussed, and the case study described. Chapter two will now consider a range of literature pertinent to the aims and objectives of this study.
Chapter 2: Reviewing the Literature

2.1 Introduction

This literature review represents a systematic study and critique of the literature relating to the theoretical framework of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008) applied to this study, the setting in higher education, the theoretical perspectives that are applied to the management and implementation of change; and the experiences of academics working as managers.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This research study is based on post-positivist (Ryan, 2006) research principles. The post-positivist stance

asserts the value of values, passion and politics in research. Research in this model requires an ability to see the whole picture, to take an overview

Ryan, 2006, p.18

In particular, the study is based on the themes of social constructionism and appreciative inquiry. Both these approaches are based on the premise that human beings create reality through their theories, beliefs and conversations (Gergen 1999; Burr, 2003; Gergen & Gergen, 2004; Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008).
Social constructionism is based within the post-modern movement. Lewis, Passmore and Cantore (2008) define the post-modernist position as one that rejects the notion that the world can be explained in terms of over-arching theories or metanarratives but contends that there are multiple situation-dependent ways of life. Social change is not just a matter of changing social structure through applying one grand theory; there is no existing stable reality that can be revealed by observation and analysis (Burr, 2003). Therefore, social groups will form their own constructions of reality. In the next section the emergence of social constructionism as a theoretical approach is considered; in a later section the links to organisational development will be explored.

Berger and Luckmann (1966) were two of the earliest supporters of this social constructionist approach, stating that “reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyse the process in which this occurs” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p.13). Their work was developed further by Gergen (1973) who argued that knowledge is historically and culturally specific and that research must move beyond the individual and into social, political and economic areas for a proper understanding of how people interact with one another. In the United Kingdom at the same time, Harre and Secord (1972) who were working in the field of psychology, were stating that people are “conscious social actors, capable of controlling their performances and commenting intelligently upon them” (cited in Burr, 2003, p.14). All of these researchers opposed the positivist, experimentalist tradition and felt that people, in whatever circumstances they found themselves in, were able to monitor and
comment on their own actions. In particular, all of these researchers describe the importance of language as "something other than a way of describing things – as a social resource for constructing different accounts of the world and events" (Burr, 2003, p.14).

For this study, the guiding principles will be those of social constructionism, in particular the view that:

the primary emphasis is on discourse as the vehicle through which self and world are articulated, and the way in which such discourse functions within social relationships

Gergen, 1999, p.60

As the concept of social constructionism has developed so its practitioners have placed their own interpretations on the basic tenets of the approach. However Gergen (1999) suggests that there are four basic assumptions, one or more of which will underpin any approach considered as social constructionist in stance. The first of these assumptions is that for any situation there are potentially an unlimited number of descriptions and explanations possible as each individual will interpret the same situation differently, (Gergen, 1999). What is of particular importance is that none of these explanations should be considered superior. Burr (2003, p.2) describes this as having “a critical stance toward taken-for granted knowledge”. The notion that everything that we have learned about our world and, in particular, our place in it, could be otherwise, can be deeply unsettling (Gergen, 1999). However, it is particularly important in a research study such as the one being undertaken that nothing is considered “set in stone” and
that the researcher must be prepared to question even the most basic assumptions about the organisation, her fellow managers and their role in implementing change.

The second of these social constructionist views is that the way we see the world is rooted in our own history and culture. Each culture understands the world in a way that is a product of its own history; and one explanation is not necessarily more accurate than another (Watkins and Mohr, 2001). Gergen (1999, p.50) states:

If we are to build together toward a more viable future then we must be prepared to doubt everything we have accepted as real, true, right, necessary or essential. This kind of critical reflection is not necessarily a prelude to rejecting our major traditions. It is simply to recognise them as traditions – historically and culturally situated; it is to recognise the legitimacy of other traditions within their own terms. And it is to invite the kind of dialogue that might lead to common ground.

Here it is important in the present research study to consider the culture within which the study is taking place and also to be cognisant that the researcher’s own background may influence the way that she analyses data; and to recognise that her interpretation of events is no more valid and reliable than any other individual. Her views will be integrated with those of the group participating in this study. The researcher and participants will co-construct a version of events with the aim of achieving a better understanding of the processes involved in managing a department in times of organisational change.
The third premise of social constructionism is that our knowledge is sustained by social processes. Through our daily interactions we construct our versions of knowledge (Burr, 2003). For this reason, social interaction and, in particular language, is essential to a social constructionist study. As Watkins and Mohr (2001) state: “For social constructionism, language is the essential tool for creating the world as we know it, and we construct it between us together”. This stress on the importance of language will be revisited later in the chapter when Appreciative Inquiry is considered in more detail. As Cooperrider (1995) has said: “The questions we ask, the things that we choose to focus on, the topics that we choose determine what we find” (cited in Watkins and Mohr, 2001, p.28)

The fourth premise of social constructionism is that knowledge and social action go together. “There are many possible social constructions of the world, and each one invites or impels a different kind of human action” (Watkins and Mohr, 2001, p.28). Therefore some constructions of the world will sustain some patterns of behaviour and exclude others. As Burr (2003, p.5) states “our constructions of the world are therefore bound up with power relations because they have implications for what it is permissible for different people to do, and for how they may treat others”. Gleeson and Knights (2008, p.13) in their study of programme leaders, heads of school and heads of faculty in further education state that middle level managers’ work can be infinitely more complex than their designation implies. Middle managers in education work at the interface between practitioners and senior managers. This can result in tension and
disenchantment if managers feel that their work is undervalued. This concept of valuing and feeling valued lies at the heart of appreciative inquiry and will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008) takes the theoretical framework of social constructionism and places it in a positive context. Key factors that combine both approaches are that the social order is viewed as the product of broad social agreement. Patterns of social action are not fixed by nature, but open to multiple interpretations. Any observation will be understood and categorised according to our values, beliefs and previous life experiences. The stories people tell create their worlds and reality is constructed through language. Therefore changes in the language used can hold profound implications for changes in social practice (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008). Each question asked will indicate a particular line of inquiry and therefore the direction of inquiry and the change to be initiated are inextricably linked. Cousin (2009, p.171) states that “the very framing of our questions shapes the outcome of our research”. For this study the author is seeking to identify the positive aspects of academics working as managers and therefore AI type questions with their focus on positive experiences, will be essential for the study.

It has been known for some time that positive thinking can have a positive effect on our well being. Some of the better-known theories are the placebo effect, the Pygmalion effect, positive thinking and meta-cognition: using our internal dialogue for positive
impact (Watkins and Mohr, 2001). AI draws on this linkage of mind and body to encourage participants in an AI study to envision a positive future (Cooperrider, 2001).

Evidence also suggests that learning to create positive images for ourselves will improve performance, health, well-being and our relationships with others. Sportsmen are encouraged to see themselves achieving victory in order to help them achieve their goals. Therefore, if academics can hold images of competence and success they are much more likely to achieve (Watkins and Mohr, 2001). However, Sloterdijk, (1988) cited in Cooperrider, (2001) suggests that academics are “problematists and problemaholics” who appear to have a limited capacity to look on the bright side of life. It may be considered that studies conducted in higher education need, more than most, to concentrate on the positive aspects. In the University of Worcester this approach has been used successfully to implement more inclusive curricula (Chapman & Bowen Jones, 2008; Chapman, 2011).

In 2007 the University of Worcester began a project called “Developing Inclusive Curricula in Higher Education”, which aimed to improve the learning experiences of disabled students. The project team decided on Appreciative Inquiry as a suitable methodology following a two-day residential workshop hosted by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and selected the Institute of Sport and Exercise Science (ISES) as the department to pilot the study. The project modeled the 4 stage AI cycle (described more fully in Chapter Three) and at its conclusion the project team concluded that:
The Appreciative Inquiry approach had succeeded in its aim of encouraging ISES staff to review and further improve their inclusive academic practice, and that the project had indeed supported the University to move closer towards its vision of ‘being a high quality University with an international reputation for excellent, inclusive education’

Chapman, 2011, para 18

In Canada, Jeanie Cockell and Joan McArthur-Blair have published a book on Appreciative Inquiry in Higher Education (Cockell and McArthur-Blair, 2012). Their work has focused on large scale AI summits involving faculty, administrators, students and other stakeholders. The results have been encouraging, as they state in an earlier journal article:

In gathering together to share stories and build preferred futures, the participants engage with joy and energy, leaving with a renewed sense of pride in the work they do and commitments to strengthen communication across their diversity. We have seen summits lead to institutional shifts to more positive cultures and to strengths-based approaches to their work and learning.
In higher education institutions, the opportunity to gather and to examine the force of higher education for positive change is rare, but when it does happen, the very soul of education opens up to the possibilities for learners, the institution, stakeholders and the wider communities in which they exist.

McArthur-Blair and Cockell 2012, p.43

Busche (2007) however warns against merely “focusing on the positive”; he suggests that the core of AI is generativity. This links with Gergen’s (1978) earlier work where he argued that researchers needed to devise new ways to consider social structures and institutions that can lead to new options for action. Hornstrup and Johansen (2009, p.7) even suggest changing the name of the process from Appreciative Inquiry to “inquiring
appreciatively”. Oliver (2005) argued that a traditional use of AI could be seen as a way of eliminating the possibility of talking about problems and frustrations. However Busche (2007) and Hornstrup and Johansen (2009) argue that when used effectively inquiring appreciatively is not just a positive versus problem centred approach but an approach that uses positive language to generate solutions that acknowledge the difficulties that people face. Higher education has undergone considerable change in recent times and this has resulted in staff having to adapt to new working conditions. Change can be deeply unsettling and managers need to acknowledge that the response to change is frequently emotional rather than rational. People resist being changed rather than change *per se*

### 2.3 Higher Education Context

The study is based in a higher education establishment and therefore it is important to consider the particular factors that apply in this context. Higher education in the United Kingdom has expanded considerably in the last ten years. In 2004 the participation rates for those aged 18 to 25 was in excess of 40 per cent (McCaffery, 2004, p. 9) and the White Paper (2003) reconfirmed the Labour government’s target of achieving a participation rate of 50 per cent among under 30 year olds by 2010 (in fact the participation rate in 2009/10 was 47% (Heywood, 2011)). The university system has widened to encompass a bigger and more diverse student population, and new technologies have impacted both on administration and learning and teaching (Thompson, 1997; Wyness, 2010). Grant and Sherrington (2006) suggest that the
impact of these changes has been most marked in post 92 universities such as the one considered in this research study. The emphasis on increased participation has resulted in a more diverse student population which frequently requires more support from academic staff than was the case in the past.

Universities have had to become more “business-like” as they need to generate income other than that drawn from student fees and that has led to an increase in financial accountability. A more entrepreneurial emphasis has emerged and with that a greater emphasis on management (Deem & Johnson, 2003). Academic staff have varied in their response to the changes in culture. However, it is a fact that universities are now operating in a much more competitive environment and an ability to change and to react to external factors is essential. The income derived from international students, for example, can easily alter as a result of political crises and therefore impact on the planning and delivery of courses.

There is far more emphasis nowadays on clear assessment criteria, informative feedback that facilitates student improvement and alternative methods of assessment. The increase in fees paid by home students has led to increased demands for value for money and the possibility of legal action if these demands are perceived not to have been met (Shipton, 2006). Deem et al. (2001, p.7) state that “resource constraints have led to lower per-student expenditure, increased staff-student ratios, a relative decline in salaries and conditions of work; and more fixed-term contracts”. Working in such an
environment it is perhaps not surprising that the same study found that academic staff felt that collegiality was being replaced by more overt line management and that the reward for hard work is further work (Deem et al., 2001).

In higher education one is working within a particular culture which Pennington (2003) suggests has the following properties: there is a general commitment to collegiality, lines of accountability are fuzzy, there is a lack of intrinsic rewards, there are well developed subject sub-cultures and a tradition of rotating management and leadership responsibilities. The implications of this culture for anyone anticipating change is that the ability to influence is as important as the authority to control. For middle managers in this continually-changing environment there are particular challenges - securing agreement is problematic and resistance to change is exacerbated by the fact that change initiatives tend to be top down “for a change stimulus in education usually comes in the form of an edict from a superordinate (leader) through the conduit of a subordinate (manager) on to a field worker (implementer)” (Berlach, 2011, p.1). Frequently the response to change initiatives from staff is “why?”

Working in this sort of environment it is important to acknowledge the pressure that academics feel under and to acknowledge their fears. Mortimer (1996) quoting Nias and Biott (1992) suggested that undergoing this process of disruption in the work place is analogous to the grieving process. Commenting on an institutional merger she proposed that radical change can feel like depowerment, can reduce commitment, loyalty and reduce productivity.
Another article highlighted the continuing difficulties that academics face “We’re occupying two cultures: one that is supposed to be collegiate, where everyone pitches in, but also another, where there is a set of targets and expectations, planning statements and strategies” (Mroz, 2008, p.25). In the institution studied, the merger of the two schools was accompanied by a devolving of budgets to school level which has resulted in an environment where the performance of each school against key performance indicators was compared regularly. The use of key performance indicators as a management tool will be returned to in a later section.

In addition to the features of the culture in Higher Education listed by Pennington (2003), there is also a suggestion that there are four models of culture in operation at the institutional level (JISC, 2006 p.11): Collegiate, Bureaucratic, Innovative and Enterprise. In the collegiate model there is a dual structure of administrative and academic management, this can result in parallel committee structures which can slow down decision making. There are unclear reporting lines and strong local cultures and agendas can emerge. Academic status is believed to be more important than support or administrative roles. Academics have a stronger loyalty to their subject specialisms and external networks than to their institution. All decision making occurs through committees which can result in a lack of cohesion and delays. This model is frequently found in the old universities, particularly those with a research focus.
The Bureaucratic model is characterised by strong central management and top-down decision making. The administrative and management structures clearly establish the hierarchy of control and decision making. Management roles are distinct, career progression is easily defined and Deans, Heads of Department are appointed by an interview process. Central management have control over the strategic priorities of the institution. This model is often found in the new universities and certainly has resonance with the culture in CU. In Smith’s study (2005) he found that while staff in new universities may perceive the management style to be democratic and collegial it is much closer to the bureaucratic model.

The innovative model is displayed in institutions with flexible structures that can adapt quickly to external factors and influences. There is a strong culture of change and innovation. There may be a matrix structure of responsibility which is structured around the identified strategic priorities. Activities are usually focused around projects and associated project teams. This approach is more commonly found within research and enterprise centres that may be found in both “old” and “new” universities and are externally funded.

The enterprise model is closely aligned to traditional business approaches. The organization is aware of external opportunities and processes to access finance. There are traditional management roles with a clear demarcation of responsibilities and a hierarchical decision making process. Detailed market analysis is used to formulate clear business objectives. This model is more common in American or the commercial college sector.
Alvesson (1993) suggests that, in fact, in any organisation there are multiple cultures which are dynamic and interactive

[He] assumes that organisations can be understood as shaping local versions of broader societal and locally developed cultural manifestations in a multitude of ways. Organisational cultures are then understandable not as unitary wholes or as stable sets of subcultures but as mixtures of cultural manifestations of different levels and kinds. People are connected to different degrees with organisation, suborganisational unit, profession, gender, class, ethnic group, nation, etc; cultures overlap in an organisational setting and are rarely manifested in a 'pure' form.

Alvesson, 1993, p.118

This model of the multiple cultural configuration (MCC) suggests that in any university there will be many cultures operating simultaneously. These cultures are dynamic and affect new practices, values, attitudes and conversations (Trowler, 2008).

Cultures are both enacted and constructed; that is, an organisation’s members learn and begin to play out the predominant norms, values, and attitudes in their sector of the organisation (cultural enactment through socialisation). But at the same time they have the power to question, subvert, and change them (cultural construction).

Trowler, 2008, p.13

Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) support this multiple culture view of Universities:
In a college or university there are multiple cultures – including an overarching institutional culture and subcultures such as departmental cultures- because of the many teams and groups that form and re-form over time. Different groupings within the institution construct their own realities and cultures.

Cockell and McArthur-Blair, 2012, p.17

Although every department will aspire to serve its students well, how this is to be achieved will reflect the discipline, work responsibilities, nature of students and background of staff involved. Since this study concentrates at the departmental level, it is considered that the multiple cultural configuration approach to organisational culture is the most appropriate. As Trowler (2008, p.15) describes “[he] assumes cultures in universities to be multiple, generated and sustained at the level of the workgroup within departments”. In particular, managers need to acknowledge that Higher Education is “a collection of communities rather than a homogenous group united by corporate values and goals” (Winter, 2009, p.129)

The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) (2004) identified fifteen key strategic challenges for UK HE Institutions during the time period 2005 -2010 shown in Table 2.1
Table 2.1 The Evolving Agenda, LFHE, 2004

15 key strategic challenges for UK HE Institutions 2005-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuing Expansion of Student Numbers (UK and worldwide)</th>
<th>Funding</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• variable fees&lt;br&gt;• fund-raising&lt;br&gt;• diversifying income sources&lt;br&gt;• full economic costing</td>
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<th>Widening Participation</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘fair access’/burseries</td>
<td>• positioning of HEI’s&lt;br&gt;• identity / ‘brand’ issues</td>
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<tr>
<th>Human Resources</th>
<th>Competition in UK</th>
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<tr>
<td>retirement peak&lt;br&gt;succession planning&lt;br&gt;pay framework&lt;br&gt;performance assessment</td>
<td>• alliances, collaborations, and mergers</td>
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<tr>
<th>IT e-Management / e-Learning</th>
<th>Enhancing the Student Experience</th>
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<tr>
<td>DfES e-Strategy</td>
<td>• teaching, learning and quality ‘customer service’</td>
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<tr>
<th>Resources and Estates Development</th>
<th>Management of Research</th>
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<tr>
<td>sustainable facilities and services&lt;br&gt;project and programme management</td>
<td>• evolution of RAE process&lt;br&gt;• research contracts and careers&lt;br&gt;• academic pipeline</td>
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<th>Governance</th>
<th>Internationalisation</th>
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<tr>
<td>new Code and CUC guidance</td>
<td>• competition / collaboration&lt;br&gt;• European research area&lt;br&gt;• Private universities&lt;br&gt;• Bologna process</td>
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<tr>
<th>Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility</th>
<th>Business, Regional and Community Inter-actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>serving broader political, social, ethical and cultural agendas</td>
<td>• ‘third stream’&lt;br&gt;• knowledge transfer, economic and social regeneration</td>
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| Embedding Equality and Diversity in all Institutional Activities | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
The overarching feature is embedding equality and diversity in all institutional activities. Issues directly concerned with learning and teaching are: a continuing expansion of student numbers, both home and international; the continuation of the widening access agenda; the extension of e learning and enhancing the student experience. On the wider managerial agenda concerns are raised about human resources factors such as the ageing workforce, succession planning and performance related pay. There will be an increased emphasis on sustainable facilities and services and serving the broader political, social, ethical and cultural agenda. Funding will be dependent on diversifying income sources, as fee income will be variable. Marketing will be a key factor as will issues of competition and there are likely to be alliances, collaborations and mergers.

Here in South East Wales we have already seen the merger of the Cambrian College of Medicine (pseudonym) with the Russell Group University (pseudonym) and their withdrawal from the University of Wales to form New Russell Group University which now awards its own degrees. More recently Valleys University has merged with both a Further Education College and a College of Music and Drama. As indicated in Chapter One CU has now itself withdrawn from the University of Wales and will be awarding its own degrees for the first time in the academic year 2011/12 (BoG, 2011).

Internationalisation of both the curriculum and the student body is also identified as a key concern. Research (THE, 2009) indicates that the UK is slipping down the list in world rankings, this may have a negative impact on the recruitment of international
students, with the subsequent loss of fee income. Traditionally the majority of overseas students at CU have come from the Indian sub continent but efforts are being made additionally, to increase the proportion of students from other countries.

In the more traditional area of university expertise the management of research is considered of vital importance and the role of the research assessment exercise (RAE) is widely debated (Corbyn, 2009). There are concerns about the casualisation of research staff and how this can impact on career development. This is allied with the emphasis on business, regional and community interactions with the development of knowledge transfer partnerships and other projects related to social and economic regeneration (Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE), 2004,).

In Wales, a task and finish group led by Professor Merfyn Jones (2009) has completed a review of higher education in Wales. It noted that in 2007/8, 1 full time student in 6 was over the age of 25 and 41 per cent of all enrolments at Welsh higher education institutes (HEIs) were by students studying part-time. Much of the provision is vocational, “educating and training professionals such as nurses, doctors, teachers, and social workers” (Jones, 2009, p.9). The combined turnover of the HE sector in Wales is over £1 billion per annum. However the group felt that the importance of the sector was not sufficiently acknowledged in the wider community. The report recommended the following priorities:
The report goes on to suggest that efforts to address these issues rest on three key areas: the strategic leadership of higher education in Wales, the configuration of provision, and investment (Jones, 2009). One major factor that will impact on the successful implementation of the recommendations of this report is funding. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) has estimated that the funding gap between Wales and England has risen from £12-26 million in 2003-4 to £70 million in 2005-6, reducing a little to £55-66 million in 2006-7 and decreasing slightly in 2007-8.
The cumulative effect of this shortfall has had a significant and negative effect on the performance and morale of the HE sector in Wales.

Although the previous section has concentrated on the UK, Enders (2000) suggests that similar factors apply throughout Europe. There is an emphasis on performance and quality, competition and flexibility, efficiency and accountability. These factors impact on the employment and working conditions of academic staff. More significantly changes in these working conditions is seen as an important tool in adapting to the new circumstances. Enders (2000, p. 29) has identified three major trends:

- Heterogenisation, as a reaction and withdrawal from the former idea or philosophy of legal homogeneity in higher education institutions
- Decentralisation, as a switch in government towards a system of distant steering or state supervision, in which each institution is given a higher degree of autonomy
- Marketisation, as an effort to build up a market-like resource allocation system as well as to strengthen competition between and within higher education institutions

Enders, 2000, p.29

The control of HEIs has shifted from academics to marketisation and state control. However, state control has moved away from direct intervention instead using the funding and quality mechanisms to control spending. Therefore, individual institutions
apparently have greater autonomy over the recruitment and working conditions of their
staff and salaries and workloads are organised to meet local requirements.

However, there is an impetus to improve the quality of teaching, learning, and research
while operating under conditions of tighter financial control and, frequently, increasing
staff/student ratios (Enders, 2000). In many cases, developments suggest that
universities are moving to a more “business-like” status. Each is competing with
another to identify an appropriate market strategy, staff are expected to re-organise
their work in line with new targets and aspirations. This business focus can appear to
threaten the collegiality of decision making, and individual autonomy in teaching and
research (Enders, 2000).

In their survey of academics in the UK, Bryson and Barnes (2000) identified several
emerging themes. The ones pertinent to this study are that staff worked long hours
which did not fit a 9-5 pattern; this was driven by high workloads over which staff felt
they had little control. Although there was intrinsic job satisfaction this was being
eroded by administrative work, respondents felt that the autonomy and variety that had
attracted them to the job was disappearing. Pay was not identified as a major issue but
25% felt that their salaries were insufficient and a much higher proportion felt their work
was undervalued.
A substantial number of respondents felt that the focus on output (i.e. quantity) rather than quality, the lack of funding and the increasing casualisation of the workforce were fundamental concerns. Of particular relevance to this study was the criticism of the quality of management in higher education institutions; staff felt much more loyalty to their discipline and colleagues than to their organisation. The features of work most valued were security, autonomy and contributing to society. There was an overwhelming antipathy to “management” (Bryson & Barnes, 2000, p.181).

As can be seen the higher education sector is continually evolving to meet the needs of government and the wider society. Therefore the organisational change being studied in this thesis needs to be considered in the wider perspective of sectoral change that is taking place across the country. This literature review will now move on to consider the wider context of management and organisational theory.

2.4 Organisational Theory

The key purpose of organisational theory is to assist organisations to analyse their current situation and bring about changes to achieve future goals. Over the last one hundred years a number of theories have been espoused and these have waxed and waned in popularity. Organisational theory itself is linked to a broader context of key writers of the early twentieth century such as Marx, Weber and Durkheim, (Crowther & Green, 2004). Although these writers were concerned with society in general rather
than organisations *per se*, the work they did on the future of industrial societies influenced the thinking of those considering ways of improving working practices in industry.

The rise of the factory system in the latter half of the nineteenth century required new ways of working. The need arose for a more coherent approach to structuring and running organisations (Burnes 2004). Although drawn from a number of different perspectives the classical model of management evolved. This approach is broadly based on the following assumptions:

- There is “one best way” for all organisations to be structured and operate
- This approach is founded on the rule of law and legitimate managerial authority
- Organisations are rational entities:...consistently and effectively pursuing rational goals
- People are motivated to work solely by financial reward
- Human fallibility and emotions at all levels in the organisation, should be eliminated because they threaten the consistent application of the rule of law and the efficient pursuit of goals
- For this reason, the most appropriate form of job design is achieved through the use of the hierarchical and horizontal division of labour to create narrowly focused jobs encased in tight standardised procedures and rules, which remove discretion, dictate what job holders do and how they do it, and which allow their work to be closely monitored and controlled by their direct superiors.

Burnes 2004 p 49
Clear lines of command and specific job descriptions were seen as desirable. This approach assumes that people all behave in a similar way and that organisations could develop a single effective way of working (Crowther & Green, 2004). Since it is impossible to eradicate the element of variability introduced by human behaviour it is argued that attempts to do so are counter-productive (Burnes, 2004).

Argyris (1964) maintained that the classical approach with its emphasis on systems actually restricts individuals and leads to feelings of frustration. This concurs with Weber’s own concerns about controlling elements and the restriction of creativity; Weber also felt that such systems could be inflexible and slow (Weber, 1970). Dissatisfaction with this rather simplistic approach led to an approach which focused more strongly on human relations and motivation.

Mayo was one of the key developers of what has become known as the Human Relations approach. Mayo’s research started out by looking at effect of lighting on workers and their productivity, he set up a control group and an experimental group and explained to both groups the purpose of his research. He discovered that however he varied the lighting the productivity of the workers in both groups kept on rising (Pugh & Higson, 1996). Following further investigations and a series of interviews with the subjects of the research; he developed the first principle of the Human Relations theory that people’s productivity was not just determined by objective factors like pay but that emotional factors were important as well. Workers worked more effectively when
communications were good, they became involved in the organisation and felt valued (Pugh & Higson, 1996)

Further research by Mayo led to the second principle that the informal social workgroup was important in setting work norms and standards (Crowther & Green, 2004). Therefore it is important that managers acknowledge these social groupings and work with these groups so that values and goals are shared. This precept is particularly important in this study as two disparate groups came together to form a new unit and it was important that the senior management group created a value base that could be shared by both groups. In addition, for the Heads of Department, it was essential that they created a sense of identity for the new departments they managed.

Although developed in the 1930s and 40s, Mayo’s ideas that for every social group there was a need to create for its membership: “the satisfaction of material and economic needs and the maintenance of spontaneous co-operation throughout the organization” (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980, p.124) still have resonance today. The importance of workers’ feelings and social groupings and the importance of good communications between management and staff are still considered important (Crowther & Green, 2004).
However the theory is not without its critics, economists rejected the argument that material rewards were less motivating than non-material incentives. The emphasis on social groupings was seen by some as a denial of individualism (Burnes, 2004). It has also been posited that although it appears to be employee centred it is in fact managerialist with a tacit assumption that the interests of management will always coincide with employee perceptions and interests (Crowther & Green, 2004). One further criticism is one that is shared with the classical approach, that there is “one best way” (Burnes, 2004, p.69).

Bennis (1996) argued that there needed to be an approach to organisations that acknowledged that each organisation faces a different situation and that that situation can change over time. Burnes (2004, p. 69) argues that “if jobs and work organisations are social inventions designed to meet the needs of societies at particular points in time, then there can never be a one best way for all organisations and for all times.”

Contingency theorists have adopted a different perspective, Scott (1987, p23) stated that “Organisations are not closed systems, sealed off from their environments but are open to and dependent on flows of personnel and resources from outside”. Organisations are considered to be open systems operating within a wider environment and having multiple channels of possible interaction (Mullins, 1993). This is consistent with the observation that not all organisations have the same structure and that within organisations different structures can be observed (Mintzberg, 1979).
Burnes (2004, p.71) states that “the three most important contingencies are one, environmental uncertainty and dependence; two, technology and three, size”. Certainly the first two have already been discussed as important factors to consider in the context of Higher Education. The third, size, also has resonance as CU has a very large successful neighbour, anonymised as New Russell Group University, on its doorstep.

For small organisations, centralised and personal forms of control are deemed to be appropriate but as organisations grow in size, more decentralised and impersonal structures and practices become more relevant.

Burnes, 2004, p.72

Within CU itself it may be suggested that practices appropriate at the corporate level are not necessarily right at the school or departmental level. One example of this is that the marketing department has tried a number of different approaches and themes to advertise the university. Schools would prefer that some of the monies were devolved to them so that they could target their markets more specifically. The use of animals, cartoons and leaping students is not particularly appropriate for those programmes who are recruiting for professions such as speech therapy, podiatry and teaching which require a certain amount of “gravitas” during undergraduate and post-graduate placements.

Many of the management techniques developed from industrial models such as Management by Objectives; Strategic Planning; Benchmarking; Total Quality
Management; and the Balanced Scorecard have been implemented in the university sector. Birnbaum (2001) suggests that this is due to the growth in size, complexity and costs of higher education linked to greater accountability. It was felt appropriate to follow the lead of business by adopting new ways of assessing cost effectiveness.

In CU, as in much of the Higher Education sector, the use of Key Performance Indicators has been promoted. The responsibility for producing performance indicators for the higher education sector rests with the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Statistics are gathered using the following criteria:

- The data to be used for the indicator should be robust, reliable, and fit for purpose.
- The indicator should provide information for HEIs that is suitable both for their internal use and for benchmarking themselves against other similar institutions.
- The indicator should provide information for government stakeholders that is suitable for informing policy development.
- The indicator should provide information for other stakeholders that is suitable for their purposes.
- There must be general agreement on whether high values of the indicator represent a positive or a negative outcome.
- The indicator should not lead to perverse behaviour.
- Indicators that do not come into one of the existing categories (access/widening participation; non-continuation/retention; employment; and research) should be looked at more closely than those that do, in particular to ensure that the PISG is not duplicating work that is being done by other bodies.

HEFCE, 2007
Within CU the development of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) has drawn heavily on the advice provided in a Committee of University Chairmen (CUC) report published in November 2007 (CUC, 2007). Critics of the use of KPIs suggest that it is more about benchmarking and less about improving institutional performance (Birnbaum, 2001).

2.5 Models of Change

There are many different models of change which have developed over the last one hundred years. For this thesis it is intended to concentrate on the organisational development model and critical change model which appear consistently in the literature pertaining to both higher education and appreciative inquiry. JISC (2006, p 3) defines the organisational development (OD) model as an “iterative process of diagnosis, involvement, further diagnosis, change, evaluation and reinforcement”. A diagrammatic representation is displayed in figure 2.1.
Figure 2.1. Organisational Development (JISC, 2006, p.4)
Watkins and Mohr (2001) in their book promoting Appreciative Inquiry as a tool for promoting organisation development (OD) offer the following definition:

Organization development is a system-wide and values-based collaborative process of applying behavioral science knowledge to the adaptive development, improvement, and reinforcement of such organizational features as the strategies, structures, processes, people, and cultures that lead to organization effectiveness.

Watkins and Mohr, 2001, p.xix

They stress that OD has six key features, it is a system-wide process; it is values based; it is collaborative; based on behavioural science and is concerned with the adaptive development, improvement, and reinforcement of strategies, structures, processes, people, culture and other features of organizational life. Most importantly it is about improving organisational effectiveness (Watkins and Mohr, 2001) Although Appreciative Inquiry is about using positive imaging to manage and implement change it is not just about making people happy.

The theoretical basis of OD is initially found in the work of Lewin (1958) who described organisational change as involving a move from one fixed state to another by “un-freezing – changing - re-freezing”. Unfreezing creates the motivation for change by disengagement with the present state; changing involves learning new concepts, and refreezing means that those new concepts are incorporated into the system and
become the accepted norms (JISC 2006). Senior and Fleming (2006,) offer a very positive perspective on OD

the OD approach to change is, above all an approach which cares about people and which believes that people at all levels throughout an organisation are individually and collectively, both the drivers and engines of change.

Senior and Fleming, 2006, p.343

Over the years since its first inception the theory has been further refined into three particular perspectives; the individual, group dynamics and open systems (Blackwell & Preece, 2001). The first, as its name implies, considers that change is made possible by actions upon individuals in an organisation and their responses to that action. However it is important to acknowledge that not all individuals will react in the same way to an identical stimulus. Pennington (2003, p.9) suggests that there are three ways that individuals react to change “rational adopters” who respond to new ideas by analysis, discussion and evaluation; “pragmatic sceptics” who are unconvinced that the change is better than the status quo and who need evidence to convince them; and “resisters/defenders” who are unconvinced by the change and who will work actively to prevent the changes being adopted. The author acknowledges that she is by nature a “rational adopter” and therefore finds it difficult to appreciate the reactions of other individuals. In particular, the “resisters/defenders” have frustrated the author on many occasions. Pennington (2003) suggests that there are a number of strategies that should be used to deal with this resistance:

- information giving, education and targeted communication
• creating increased opportunities for participation and involvement
• facilitation and training support to build confidence and competence
• persuasion and negotiation to establish common ground
• limited amounts of catharsis and direct encounter/challenges

Pennington, 2003, p.9

One could also add coercion and direct action to the list but Pennington (2003) suggests that in the context of Higher Education coercion is unlikely to work as individuals will find covert ways to thwart the change. Appreciative Inquiry suggests that it is important to give people a positive image of their future. For a change initiative to flourish it is essential to focus on strengths and successes and to offer a desirable future (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom, 2003; Cockell and McArthur-Blair, 2012).

Blackwell and Preece (2001 p5) state that “the group dynamics school attempts to achieve organisational change through focusing upon teams and work groups”. They continue “there is no point in concentrating upon individuals in isolation; rather the focus should be upon trying to change group norms and cultures” (Blackwell and Preece, 2001, p.5). The open systems viewpoint considers the organisation as a whole; and sees it as a complex network of interrelationships (Iles and Sutherland, 2001). Key factors in open systems thinking is that any organisation is made up of related and interdependent parts, it cannot be thought of in isolation from its environment, and
individuals within the organisation may have very different views about the organisation’s function and purpose (Iles and Sutherland, 2001).

This aspect again has resonance with the case study under scrutiny here. It is obvious that different groups of staff had different opinions about the change being implemented. Middle level managers such as those studied in this project are likely to be working at the individual and small group level but often implementing changes that have been decided at an organisational level. In addition, they often face a problem articulated by a respondent in Smith’s (2005, p.459) study “academics tend to like to be autonomous really and don’t like to feel they are being told what to do”.

In the case study, it is important to acknowledge that individuals and groups of staff will move at different paces towards acceptance of the new School structure and indeed, in the author’s experience some individuals may never fully embrace the new situation. The challenge as a manager is to work with all members of staff, however resistant or accepting of change they are.

Nadler (1989) identifies three phases in the management of change – “shaping up the political dynamics” where the vision is articulated and top level support is clear and unambiguous; “motivating constructive behaviour” by giving information about the impact and benefits of change and rewarding those who disengage from the past; and
“managing the transition”. The author’s appointment as a Head of Department with its resulting increase in pay could be described as a reward for disengaging from the old school structure and engaging with the new structure. Critics of the theory suggest that although it goes a long way in recognising the complexity of organisations and the need for a constant cycle of review it is “nonetheless based on a presumption that a cycle based on careful analysis and planning will deliver a predictable and logical outcome” (JISC 2006, p.4)

More recent research suggests that organisations need to be viewed as complex adaptive systems. The effects of change are difficult to predict no matter how thorough the planning. The emphasis in current research focuses on creating the appropriate conditions for beneficial change to occur.

Most textbooks focus heavily on techniques and procedures for long-term planning, on the needs for visions and missions, on the importance and the means of securing strongly shared cultures, on the equation of success with consensus, consistency, uniformity and order. [However, in complex environments] the real management task is that of coping with and even using unpredictability, clashing counter cultures, disensus, contention, conflict, and inconsistency. In short the tasks that justifies the existence of all managers has to do with instability, irregularity, difference and disorder.


Managing in these circumstances requires a different set of skills, it requires a high level of interaction between those implementing change. Change has to be nurtured, it
cannot be forced (JISC 2006). It is especially important that participants can envisage a benefit for themselves and or their departments. Appreciative Inquiry calls this the Anticipatory Principle i.e. “the images people hold for their future drives their actions in the present to get to that future” (Cockell and McArthur-Blair, 2012, p.19). Certainly in HE where academics enjoy a high degree of autonomy any attempts to force change are likely to be resisted and it is vital that any benefits associated with the change are explained carefully.

Research by Marshall (2007) suggests that HEIs are becoming more like the public sector as they try to expand their income streams. The Leadership Foundation Fellowship Programme evaluation reports suggest that there are three distinct approaches to managing change that work particularly well in HE. The first is to devise a structured framework for managing change, the second to incentivise the change process and the third to include capacity building to bring about change (Marshall, 2007)

In CU’s case there was a structured framework, it was very much a “top-down” approach and the new structure was devised by the Senior Management team. There was consultation with the unions and other staff were canvassed for their opinions by e-mail. The process followed the four stage model of Bullock and Batten (1985), analysis, planning, action and integration. However this process does not take into account the cultural web (Johnson and Scholes, 2005) as illustrated in Figure 2.2
In the initial merger of the School of Education and the School of Lifelong Learning there were two distinct cultures. The School of Education at that time was focused on Initial Teacher Training; therefore the staff shared a common background. All had trained as teachers, worked in schools for a number of years and then moved into teacher education. There were small subject groups based on the National Curriculum and the major division was between the Primary and Secondary programme teams. They were used to a hierarchical management structure with the Head of School occupying a similar position to a Headmaster. There was a full management team comprising of the Head of School, Director of Learning and Teaching; Director of Research and a Director of Enterprise. There was good administrative support within
the School with many tasks such as the sending out of references being coordinated and performed by administrative staff.

The School of Lifelong Learning was much smaller and had a flatter structure, the management consisted of a Head of School and a Director of Learning and Teaching. Research and Enterprise were covered by other staff on an *ad hoc* basis. The School had started with one programme in 1999 (PGCE(PCET)) but had developed new programmes over the last five years. These included Youth and Community Education programmes, Humanities programmes centred around History and Politics and a Complementary Therapies programme which had moved to Health Sciences. Administrative support was provided by the Head of School’s secretary. Staff were used to working independently and there was little cross over between the programme teams. Staff offices were in a small building away from the main building and this contributed to a feeling of independence and individual autonomy. Staff came from a variety of backgrounds with many having moved into Higher Education as mature students.

Thus when the merger came there were two quite different cultures to be combined. Since the Head of the School of Lifelong Learning moved to an academic development post and the Director of Learning and Teaching retired, it happened that although there was a competitive appointment system, the entire management team of the School of Education was appointed as the management team of the new Cambrian School of
Education. Therefore for staff of the old School of Education it was very much business as usual, but for Lifelong Learning staff it felt more like a takeover. It was difficult for staff from the School of Lifelong Learning to envisage a future where their contribution to the new Academic Delivery Unit would be valued.

Marshall (2007) suggests that the structured framework approach works best when change initiatives are based on administrative staff. For those who wish to engage with academic staff and convince them of the merits of proposed change, it is suggested that an incentivised or capacity building approach is used. Critics of the structured framework claim that it can only work in a stable unchanging environment and is insufficiently flexible to take account of emerging challenges (Marshall, 2007).

An incentivised approach to change is where incentives are offered to encourage staff to participate in the proposed initiative. In Higher Education change initiatives that used this approach, it was found that the commitment to the project moved beyond mere compliance to the gaining of a number of key champions to assist with the subsequent promotion of the change (Marshall, 2007). The types of incentives that may be used to motivate individuals are: time, for example, sabbaticals, study leave, flexi-time or the “buy out” of teaching. This approach works as the focus is on working with those who are positive about the proposed change. However the disadvantage of the approach is that not everyone can benefit from the incentives and there is a risk that those not
participating will be cynical about the motives of those who are championing the change.

Capacity building involves a five stage process, start with a clear goal, work with a small committed team, try a pilot study, disseminate the outcomes and go on the recruit more participants in the change process (Marshall, 2007). Schein (1992) suggests that this approach models the work of Lewin outlined earlier, one has to “unfreeze” by creating a motivation to change; “changing” learn new concepts and meanings and then “re-freezing” to internalise new concepts and meanings. This approach promotes teamwork and energises those engaged in the process, resulting in high levels of motivation and commitment to succeed. However in such an iterative process the pace of change may be slow, the level of resource may be higher than with other approaches and there is a risk that the emphasis switches to the process rather than the output (Marshall, 2007).

As outlined earlier CU has been through a number of change initiatives during the last few years (see Table 1.3, p.17). The two major ones related to merger with other institutions were unsuccessful and this may have led to a repetitive change syndrome as described by Fullan (2006). This leads to initiative overload, change –related chaos and perhaps most importantly employee cynicism. Abrahamson (2004) states that repetitive change syndrome affects the organisation’s ability to make further changes; staff begin “faking it” appearing to co-operate while in fact carrying on as usual, a very subtle form of sabotage; and occasionally routine tasks can be neglected as time is
spent on managing change. Certainly within CU there is anecdotal evidence that staff continue to act as they have always done on the basis that any change initiated will be superseded in time. Therefore in her role as change agent the author has met with a certain degree of cynicism in her senior academic colleagues within the school. JISC (2006) suggest that change agents need to gain commitment for the change, they have to facilitate evaluation activities. As the change process continues then they need to monitor and report on the progress of change. They have to consult on and identify bottlenecks and sources of resistance and disseminate the lessons learned. The same research suggests that the following characteristics are needed by a successful change agent:

- Has a sense of purpose
- Has the capability to act
- Sells success
- Is strategically connected
- Is critically reflective
- Builds supporting structures
- Is opportunistic

JISC,2006, p.21

Buchanan and Boddy (1992) see the key feature of the role of change agent as influencing the recipients of change to accept it. The author’s role as a change agent is closely allied to her role as a manager and this is explored in the next section of the review.
2.6 Academics as managers

The individuals who are to form part of this study are classified by CU as Level 4 managers. These are members of staff who manage academic activities and have responsibility for the day-to-day management within a particular school / unit, and are accountable for the key tasks involved (CU, 2008). Some of the posts are for short tenures, usually three years which suggests that individuals can return to a teaching or research role should they wish. This contrasts with most other public sectors where it would be unusual for a manager to return to what might be considered a less senior post. A set of parameters have been agreed as part of a Proposed Framework for Management Development (CU, 2008, p.7)

1. Task base

   a) Manage activities to meet requirements
   b) Contribute to improvements at work
   c) Develop your own resources
   d) Develop productive working relationships
   e) Provide information to support decision making
   f) Manage the use of physical resources
   g) Manage the use of financial resources
   h) Select personnel for activities
   i) Develop teams and individuals to enhance performance
   j) Manage the performance of teams and individuals
   k) Respond to poor performance in the team
I) Facilitate meetings
m) Provide advice and support for the development and implementation of quality policies
n) Implement quality assurance systems
o) Monitor compliance with quality systems
p) Carry out quality audits
q) Contribute to project planning and preparation
r) Co-ordinate the running of projects
s) Contribute to project closure

2. Knowledge base

   It is accepted that individual managers at this level will have a specialist / expertise skills and knowledge base in their field or particular discipline. In addition to this the following knowledge base is required to be an effective manager within CU

a) Understanding of financial procedures/regulations
b) Understanding of personnel procedures/policies
c) Understanding of staff development processes
d) Understanding of planning process
e) Understanding of strategic aims and objectives
f) Understanding of issues of equality
g) Understanding of issues of health, safety and well-being
3. Skills

a) Leadership skills - managing others
b) ICT skills - production of reports and utilisation of key databases / internet for research and analysis
c) Team working skills
d) Communication skills - oral, presentational and written - effective delivery of information using a variety of media including team briefing
e) Organisational and planning skills - action planning, project management, delivery within targets
f) Negotiation skills - identifying and resolving issues.
g) Interpersonal skills - recognising strengths and influencing others to deliver service and targets.
h) Innovation and creativity - being aware of new initiatives / developments / change and focusing on continuous improvements.
i) Numeracy - analysis and interpretation of statistical information and recommendations for action.
j) Responsibility on managers to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and economy.
k) Performance management.

CU, 2008, p.7

This is a very comprehensive list for what is for those participating in this study a part-time role. Heads of department have a 50% reduction in their teaching hours (275 hours) while deputy heads of department have a 200 hour reduction in their teaching hours. In particular the emphasis is on managing. The only time that the term leadership is used it is explicitly linked to managing others.
As indicated by the preceding list the role of manager carries with it expectations of leadership, effective action, and the making of “good” decisions. Academic managers operate in large organisations where it is frequently difficult to see the relationship between managerial cause and institutional effect (Birnbaum, 2001). It has already been noted that the University is made up of multiple cultures and therefore:

A recurrent managerial challenge will be how to achieve more administrative efficiency when facing a ‘demoralised workforce with a lack of trust in, and commitment to, academia as a whole’ (By Deifenbach & Klarner, 2008, p. 32). Gaining the support of the managed may not be an easy task when academics feel managers are using managerialism for their own purposes and future careers. Academics experiencing values incongruence should also think very carefully about the relationship they want with their managers and institutions and how that relationship might be achieved in an environment of resource constraints and business development. An important strategic principle for the bridging of academic identities is the recognition that neither identity can change effectively without understanding the values of the other.

Winter, 2009, p. 129

CU had been undergoing several changes; staff were weary of the constant changes in direction and therefore it was a real challenge to managers to motivate their staff.

There has been much research distinguishing between leadership and management (Young and Dulewicz, 2008) but it is possible to identify features in common
Table 2.2  Leadership and Management (Young and Dulewicz, 2008, page 18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kotter (1990); Bennis and Nanus (1997)</td>
<td>Kotter (1990); Fayol (1916)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting a direction</td>
<td>Planning and Budgeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning people</td>
<td>Organizing and staffing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating</td>
<td>Controlling and problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery of the context</td>
<td>Control of the environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Young and Dulewicz (2008, p.18) summarise these as

a) conceptualizing what needs to be done

b) aligning people and resources

c) taking an active role

d) creating success

Ramsden (2000, p.126-7) summarises this as “helping ordinary people to do extraordinary things”, helping academics to embrace change and “transforming one’s own performance”. A research study by Whitchurch identified four types of manager, bounded, cross-boundary, unbounded and blended (Newman, 2008). Bounded
managers are located within organisational and functional boundaries; cross-boundary managers use an awareness of boundaries to perform cross-institution interpretive and translational functions and to build institutional capacity; unbounded managers are most likely to be influenced by off campus networks possibly connected with research or enterprise activities; and finally blended managers who have experience that allows them to carry out mixed portfolios and to contribute in areas that straddle professional and academic domains (Newman, 2008). Work by Smith and Adam cited by Corbyn (2008) suggests that pro vice chancellors work in this blended area maintaining a complex corporate and academic role. They maintain cross institutional responsibility for core academic values and mission with a more bureaucratic function concerned with accountability. However pro vice chancellors saw and explained themselves primarily in terms of their academic credentials. The managers studied in this research project fall into the first group of bounded managers. Each manager is located within their schools and there are few opportunities to operate outside of these boundaries.

For the majority of academics the core activities of research and teaching are often in conflict with one another, relating to the “deployment of resources in higher education systems, as well as a battle for the supremacy and status of teaching versus research activity” (Deem and Lucas, 2007, p.7). However academics who act as managers have to take on these tensions as well as undertaking the management of resources for their departments. Deem and Hillyard (2002) suggest that they have to deal with the personal contradictions and tensions of trying to combine teaching, research,
management, leadership and administration. Such demands are bound to result in differing priorities and the author has found in her own experience that the managerial and leadership aspects of her role have taken priority over her research studies. This problem was also identified in Floyd and Dimmock’s (2011, p.392) study:

Eleven respondents identified a conflict between their initial reasons for entering Higher Education and the actual day-to-day reality of being a head of department. The conflict centred on an inability to do what they valued as core academic tasks, namely research and teaching; having to do too many management tasks; and being moved away from their areas of interest.

A number of studies of manager academics suggest that gender is important, Deem, Hillyard and Reed (2007) report that two thirds of their female respondents and just under half of their male respondents considered that gender was relevant to their careers, with male interviewees tending to see not being female as a distinct benefit. Women academic managers were more ambivalent seeing both advantages and disadvantages in being female. It was suggested that as a woman manager you were more visible and likely to be judged by different standards. Both in CU and in the Cambrian School of Education there are already a high proportion of female academic managers. This in part reflects the make up of the professions that are linked to the vocational degrees offered (Teaching, Speech Therapy, Dietetics) but also indicates that there is no specific impediment to women taking on managerial roles within the university.
Higher Education Institutions are integrated into the social, economic and political systems of society therefore it is not surprising that they are considered sources of technical advancement, engines of economic growth, instruments of social policy and agencies for meeting customer demands (Birnbaum, 2001). However they are fundamentally different from businesses. In the USA, for example, only one of the twelve largest business firms in existence in 1900 still existed in 2000 but each one of the twelve largest American universities in 1900 still exists and thrives today (Birnbaum, 2001). One can argue that while economic enterprises require constant change, higher education institutions thrive because their continuity of practice leads to reliable performance.

In the UK, there is more variation in the age of institutions. There are the ancient institutions of Oxford and Cambridge which were originally set up as Church universities; the Redbrick or Civic universities founded in the nineteenth century, often with an emphasis on science, medicine and engineering (McCaffery, 2004); the “New” universities set up in the nineteen sixties to accommodate the first major expansion of the university system and now the “post 1992” universities developed from Polytechnics and Colleges of Higher Education.

However for those seeking to make changes in HE then Wheatley’s (1995, p.62) challenging statement contends that “to create something new one must destroy something old. If academia is going to do what it is supposed to do, create an
environment that will prepare students for the future, it is going to have to destroy part of its past.” Salipante and Golden–Biddle (1995, p.4) argue that forcing through imposed and unwelcome change is ultimately a failing and destructive strategy that may cause an institution to change its character and identity and lose sight of its mission, core expertise, and long term perspective - the basic competitive advantages conferred by continuity. Given these strongly opposing views it is not surprising that the academic managers’ lot is not a happy one (Birnbaum, 2001). He goes on to state that

many serve at the sufferance of those they are presumed to manage, and the responsibility they bear for organisational performance is usually not matched by a comparable level of authority

Birnbaum, 2001, p.223

Questions are raised about the most fundamental concepts of academic life, are terms such as “student” or “teacher” appropriate? “Do we have students, or are they customers, clients, stakeholders, constituents, or (indeed) products?” (Birnbaum, 2001, p.226). Although this emphasis on words may seem pedantic, it is these words that form the stories that tell our lives. What is the overarching narrative of twenty-first century Higher Education? Roe (1994) suggests that dominant narratives cannot be displaced merely by presenting arguments or figures that counter them, but only by providing a different narrative that tells a better and more compelling story. As Birnbaum (2001, p. 226) states “the social construction of narratives is part of an interpretive process through which contending ideologies vie for supremacy”. However, frequently “talk” or “conversation” is undervalued. As Lewis, Passmore and Cantore
(2008, p.28) note “there is little appreciation that talk itself might change anything, rather change is something that happens after the talk.” “Doing something” or “taking action” is seen as being more valuable. Meetings are considered “talking shops”, “wasting time”. Yet, how individuals talk about the world affects how they see, experience, make sense of and understand the world, and ultimately the way they act. Both continuity and change are inherently contained and expressed in patterns of conversation (Lewis, Passmore and Cantore, 2008, p. 28). As they go on to state “it’s not so much that we talk about the world as we see it, it’s more that we see the world as we talk about it”.

Birnbaum (2001, p. 226) describes the change in the narrative of Higher Education thus:

> Our past narratives spoke of such ideals as a liberating education, the free person, critical thinking, personal growth, social justice, knowledge for its own sake, and improving society. What are the narratives that drive us now? Is meeting the needs of the customer, preparing students to strengthen the economy, or the presumed cost effectiveness of virtual institutions the stuff from which great societies are built?

In order to displace the existing narrative, a different narrative that tells a better and more compelling story needs to be created. Thus far, for many working in Higher education, that more compelling story has yet to emerge.
2.7 Conclusion

The author concurs with the views of Barry, Chandler and Clark (2001) that management is not just what managers do, not even what they think they do but instead management is a social process, constructed in the complex interplay between people. The research study will adopt a social constructionist approach and in particular an appreciative inquiry methodology to concentrate on the positive aspects of undertaking a management role in the higher education sector. The next chapter considers the underlying ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aims and objectives of this study were set out in Chapter one. This chapter describes the underlying ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives and the research methods used to obtain the data that would inform the research aims and objectives which are as follows:

To conduct a qualitative case study using an appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, 1986) theoretical perspective to identify key experiences of middle level academic managers when implementing organisational change.

Objectives:

To model Appreciative Inquiry as a research method in Higher Education

To clarify the roles and responsibilities of middle level academic managers during times of organisational change.

To identify what positive experiences the role can bring.

To create a set of provocative propositions (Watkins & Mohr, 2001, p.141) arising from the data
To use analysis of the data to make recommendations as to how such positive experiences could be sustained and enhanced to facilitate on-going organisational change

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is based on the work of David Cooperrider. While completing his PhD on organisational development he interviewed a number of doctors and asked them what they valued about their work (Cooperrider, 1986). This approach which highlighted positive aspects seemed to encourage respondents to talk freely. Further analysis of these conversations provided a way in which working practices could be improved. This approach differed from the main body of research in health care at the time which had tended to concentrate on the stresses and strains, and problems that healthcare professionals experienced (Reed, 2007).

This approach is based in the interpretive paradigm which is characterised by a concern for the individual. “The central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2007, p.21). It is important that efforts are made to understand individuals and to understand their perceptions. It is essential that the interviewer/observer does not impose their viewpoint on the participant. The data obtained will reflect the meanings and purpose of the participants.

The aim of scientific investigation for the interpretive researcher is to understand how this glossing of reality goes on at one time and in
one place and compare it with what goes on in different times and places.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007, p.22

As such it is essential that “the researcher has to adopt an empathetic stance” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007, p.107).

Criticisms of this approach centre on the fact that since it concentrates on individuals then the generalisability of results is doubtful. However “the interpretivist would argue that generalisability is not of crucial importance” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2007, p.107). Organisations are ever changing and what is important is understanding the here and now. From an Appreciative Inquiry stance it is particularly important to discover what is working well in the here and now and seek to create “attractive visions of the future” (Lewis, 2010, p 35)

While Cooperrider was completed his studies, Gergen (1982) was publishing work which suggested that existing research traditions were failing to acknowledge the interaction between research and practice. He felt that insufficient attention had been paid to the process of developing ideas as people got together to “co-construct” interpretations that could have a great influence on the way that they acted. His ideas developed into the theory of social construction whereby a phenomenon develops through social processes rather than as a natural occurrence.
as different people interpret the world, there are different stories of what is happening, existing alongside each other, and attempts to establish the “truth” by checking the factual accuracy of accounts ignore these possibilities of interpretation.

Reed, 2007, p.26

This work complemented the ideas of AI and provided a theoretical foundation to take the emerging ideas of Cooperrider forward. As the concept became more widely disseminated it evolved into “a philosophy and orientation to change that can fundamentally reshape the practice of organizational learning, design and development” (Watkins and Mohr, 2001, p.21)

3.2 Social Constructionism

As already stated AI has close links with social constructionist research based as it is on the idea that worlds are negotiated and co-constructed. Burr (1995, pp. 3-5) listed some of the key principles of social constructionism as: a critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge; historical and cultural specificity; knowledge sustained by social processes; and knowledge and social action go together. Therefore researchers need to be aware that much of an individual’s understanding of the world comes from their perceptions, and these perceptions will be based on their previous experience. The society in which an individual lives, and the cultural experience that they share will impact on their perceptions and so any research project needs to be aware of the culture of the organisation in which it is based. Social processes are key in the way that knowledge is constructed and therefore ways of acquiring information such as
interviews will impact on the knowledge generated. That knowledge will then affect the way people think, feel, act and behave (Reed, 2007). In this study it will be important that interviewees are relaxed and comfortable and have sufficient time to think about their responses. They will also need to have confidence in their interviewer. When conducting interviews within one’s own organisation it is important that participants can be sure that their confidentiality is maintained and that they can express a range of opinions without fear.

3.3 Critical Theory

The way that AI challenges assumptions of poor performance by focusing on the positive achievements of the people who work in an organisation and who may be perceived as powerless, has links to critical theory (Reed, 2007,). Critical theory draws on the work of a diverse group of thinkers (Fontana, 2004) who have in common the fact that they challenged the established social order. While critical theory is often thought of narrowly as referring to the Frankfurt School, any philosophical approach with similar practical aims is now regarded as part of the term including feminism and critical race theory (Bowman, 2005). Reed (2007) goes on to suggest that critical theory can stimulate reflection on the process of AI in the following ways.

Questions should be formulated and data interpreted to reflect on the way that participants may take for granted their organisations and the way that they participate in them. AI researchers need to be aware of issues of power, for example, who
commissioned and funded the research may have an impact on how participants respond. On a more practical level, power differences between participants in group or paired interviews may affect the responses given. As a researcher the author needs to be aware that her own position within the organisation may influence the honesty and openness of any interviewees.

3.4 Methodologies

3.4.1 Case Study

The author decided that the case study approach was appropriate for this small scale study. Bell (1993, p.8) indicates that this is particularly appropriate for individual researchers as one aspect can be studied over a relatively short time frame. As Bell (1993, p.8) states “the great strength of the case study method is that it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation and to identify…..the various interactive processes at work.” As Nisbet and Watt (1984) describe, a case study can provide a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling others to understand ideas more clearly than by simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles. In line with broad social constructivist traditions “they observe effects in real contexts, recognising that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2008, p.253). Yin (2009) suggests that there are three types of case study: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. The type used in this study is best described as descriptive as it will provide narrative accounts. A narrative account is one in which a participant talks about a particular experience and perception,
whether in a research or social setting. Responses may change depending on the context and what may be judged appropriate for the moment or the audience (Sikes and Gayle, 2007).

However as Nisbet & Watt (1984) indicate there are weaknesses in this methodology. Results may not be generalisable, they are not easily open to checking and therefore may be selective, biased, personal and subjective, and they are prone to problems of observer bias. Smith (1991) was even more critical arguing that the case study is the logically weakest method of knowing and that the study of individual cases, careers and communities is a thing of the past. The author disputes this viewpoint and it is hoped that in this instance the care taken in the collection of data, the availability of primary data for scrutiny and the author’s awareness of these possible pit falls, has ensured a reputable study.

3.4.2. Appreciative Inquiry

The Constuctionist principle is the first of five principles that underpin the concept of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008). To facilitate change in any organisation change agents must be aware that the first questions asked will set the tone for the change taking place, “the questions asked become the material out of which the future is conceived and constructed” (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008, p.8). This comment seemed particularly pertinent to this project as, in the author’s opinion,
the change in academic structure taking place was viewed differently in the two groups of staff being merged, with one group being presented with it as an opportunity while the others were presented with it as a threat. In this project the author is particularly interested in the way that participants in the change process have different stories to tell about the past, present and future and how this impacts on how they think and act in their new roles (Reed, 2007).

The second principle is termed the principle of simultaneity (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008, p.9) which recognises that inquiry and change are simultaneous, and not separate and sequential stages in development (Reed, 2007). As this study has progressed over time the new structure became embedded and the role of the middle managers evolved while the author’s inquiry took place. This dynamic is discussed in the reporting of the results and conclusions of the research.

The third principle is called the poetic principle (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008, p.9). This principle considers that organisations are “open books” which are constantly being co-authored. “people author their world continually, choosing the parts of their stories they are most interested in at the time and experimenting with different plot lines” (Reed, 2007, p.26). This link to narrative research was particularly appealing to the author who was attempting to identify how she could ask participants to tell their stories in a way that allowed comparisons between their experiences.
The fourth principle is the anticipatory principle (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008, p.9). The way that people see their future will affect the way they move towards it. If, for example, they see the future as full of possibility, they will move toward these possibilities. Conversely, if they feel that the future is bleak and hopeless, they will feel that there is no point in doing anything that will only be a waste of energy. (Reed, 2007, p.27)

In organisational life the picture of the anticipated future will guide current behaviour. In the area under investigation, a number of changes were taking place, for example, the re-configuration of Initial Teacher Training, and the attitude of participants in the study reflected how they felt these changes affected them.

The fifth principle is the positive principle, “a focus on asking positive questions engages people more deeply and for a longer time” (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008, p.9). The comment given in response to the author’s original presentation, given as part of the assessment for the “Contextualising Professional Change” module on the Professional Doctorate, that she seemed unduly pessimistic about the proposed change had led her to question her own attitude to the change under scrutiny and the technique of AI seemed an excellent way to redress any tendency to concentrate on the negative aspects of the change and her new role as manager. Research has found that the more positive the questions used to guide a group implementing change, the more long lasting and effective is the change (Busche & Coetzer, 1994). It is hoped that the
information generated from this study will lead to more effective management of change within the School under review.

Barrett and Fry (2010) have recently added a sixth principle, the narrative principle suggesting that as we co-create stories we create lasting bonds. In this study the opportunity to exchange stories should lead to improved understanding of the role of Head of Department. All of the principles are summarised in table 3.1:
Table 3.1 The Principles of Appreciative Inquiry (Wong, 2012, p.11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constructionist Principle</td>
<td>As we talk so we make real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle of simultaneity</td>
<td>As we ask questions so we become transformed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetic principle</td>
<td>As we choose topics of inquiry, so we open new horizons of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipatory Principle</td>
<td>As we anticipate, so we create the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Principle</td>
<td>As we discover moments of hope, joy and caring, so we enjoy generative experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative Principle</td>
<td>As we weave stories we create lasting bonds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the descriptions given above it can be seen that AI differs from other organisational development (OD) models in its strength-based approaches to change. It tries to build on what works as opposed to the problem-solving focus of other approaches. However it has to be acknowledged that AI is not without its critics. Rogers and Fraser (2003) stated we suspect that Appreciative Inquiry could go dangerously wrong, leading to vacuous, self-congratulatory findings (by avoiding hard issues and uncomplimentary data); even worse, Appreciative Inquiry could provide a platform for airing vengeful and destructive
sentiments by drawing implicit comparisons between ideal
performance and performance of those present [other evaluators]

pp. 80-81

Nevertheless, Watkins and Mohr (2001) stress that any organisation development tool
such as AI has to result in improving organization effectiveness:

It is not just about making people happy; it is also concerned with
meeting financial goals, improving productivity, and addressing
stakeholder satisfaction

Watkins and Mohr, 2001, p.xx

3.4.2i Links to Narrative Methodology

Narrative methodology and AI are both concerned with the perceived sequence of
events; that is “the way that participants report on the order in which events happened”
(Reed, 2007, p.62). This is not examined for accuracy but rather to determine how the
participant views the series of events. These views can affect how people view the
future as well as the past. Whether an event is viewed as succeeding or failing will
colour the participants’ responses both to the current event but also to any event that
seems similar in the future.

Both methodologies are also concerned with respondents’ feelings about what has
triggered the series of events.
These may be internal or external dynamics (the relationships with other people and organisations), and they may be deliberate or accidental. Again in AI, these ideas of causality are not examined or tested for factual accuracy, but for the way they can be evoked to develop ideas and explanations for the way things are and the way they might be.

Reed, 2007, p.63

The author has already mentioned that this case study is a descriptive one and that she has generated “thick description” (Geertz, 1973,) of the participants’ lived experiences. This links with narrative methodology which seeks to elicit stories and accounts from participants. Barthes (1966, p.14) commented “the history of narrative begins with the history of mankind; there does not exist, and has never existed, a people without narratives”. AI seeks to elicit stories and accounts from participants and applying the poetic principle, the way people author their stories reflects their interests and goals. Furthermore the anticipatory principle indicates that the way people tell their stories can open the way to future actions (Reed, 2007).

Narratives are particularly significant during times of strategic change as examined in this research project. Barry and Elmes (1997, p.432) state that “stories about directionality are variously appropriated, discounted, championed and defended”. For this project the author looked at the stories participants told about the change but also at the stories participants feel they were told about the change and how those stories might have impacted on their actions.
3.4.2ii Links to Action Research

Appreciative Inquiry is a form of action research, research conducted within our own organisations, related to our own practice. Increasingly over the last few years such research has been conducted by individuals working within an organisation but simultaneously undertaking research as part of accredited professional development as is the case with this study. The study conforms to Bartunek et al.’s (2000) experiences of manager-led action research projects. They identified a number of common themes:

1. The initial assignment to carry out the work that leads to the project comes from the manager’s superiors and forms part of their job description.

2. Other participants may be in a sub-ordinate role and need to “buy in “ to the project

3. Increased cost effectiveness is expected

4. Data gathering can be by formal and informal means

5. The manager has a personal stake in the outcome.

Couglan (2001, p.49) states that the “challenges facing such manager-researchers are that they need to combine their action research role with their regular organizational roles and this role duality can create the potential for role ambiguity and conflict” The author’s own experiences of this type of ambiguity and conflict is discussed in the PDP section of the thesis.
Action research is generally considered to have been first developed by Lewin (1946) who defined it as “a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action” that uses “a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action”. It is frequently displayed in diagrammatic form.

![Diagram of the Stages of Action Research](image)

**Figure 3.1 The Stages of Action Research (Smith, M.K., 2001)**

Appreciative Inquiry has a similar cycle. However it differs from conventional action research as its starting point is what is working well within an organisation rather than the problem solving. AI begins with the “unconditional positive question” that guides the inquiry and focuses on the best aspects of organisational culture (Ludema, Cooperrider, and Barrett, 2001). The process is termed the “Appreciative Inquiry 4D cycle”
(Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros, 2008, p.5). The stages are Discovery, Dream, Design, and Deliver, these can be seen in Figure 3.2.

![Appreciative Inquiry 4D Cycle](image)

**Figure 3.2 Appreciative Inquiry 4D Cycle (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2008. p.5)**

The start of the AI process is the initial interview where participants are invited to identify the positive aspects of their position or organisation, they then move onto the next stage where they envision the future. The third stage looks at how this might be achieved and the fourth stage seeks to implement this desirable future. This study has concentrated on the Dream and Discover phase. The concluding chapter moves on to the Design phase but the Delivery phase is outside the scope of this project.
Thus far, this chapter has addressed the underlying principles and methodologies that have formed the basis for this research project. The author discounts the positivist perspective as she believes that there is no absolute truth or reality to be discovered. Each manager will have their own story to tell. The way that managers behave in times of change is dependent on their individual perspectives. Their responses will be influenced by their backgrounds, their historical and cultural contexts. Therefore the author subscribes to the basic tenets of constructionist social science. These are summarised by Moses & Knutsen (2007, p.192) thus:

An ontology based on the precepts that women and men are malleable, and that each of us participates in the construction of our own world. An epistemology which, in addition to sense perceptions and human reason, relies on a much broader repertoire of epistemological devices (such as empathetic and dialectical approaches)  A methodology which seeks to identify the (socially constructed) patterns and regularities of the world.

The chapter will now move onto the methods that will be used to collect the data that will inform this project. The AI interview has been alluded to briefly and the technique will be discussed further. The first part of data collection was the examination of key documents which detailed the proposals for implementing the change that created the posts which form the focus of the study, and the responses to those proposals. In addition since the focus of the study is on the role of middle managers, job descriptions and person specifications were scrutinised.
3.3 Methods of Data Collection

Documents are useful in clarifying the event under research (Prior, 2003), but they must be taken in conjunction with a range of other factors that are occurring at the same time. The key factor for this study is that the documents under scrutiny were written at the time and therefore reflect the dynamic of the changing events. However, as Bailey (1994) cautions, they may be highly biased. Some documents may be highly subjective interpretations of events rather than objective accounts (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007)

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) suggest that a formidable list of questions need to be addressed when approaching documentary research. These are broken down into three categories, the context of the document, the writer of the document, and the relationship of the researcher with the document. Hammersley & Atkinson (1983) listed the following key questions:

- What does the document say about the writer?
- How are the documents written?
- How are they read?
- Who writes them?
- What is included?
- What is omitted?
• What is taken for granted about the readership?

• What do readers need to know to make sense of them?

It is particularly important that the researcher is aware that documents are “social products, located in specific contexts, and as such, have to be interrogated and interpreted rather than simply accepted” (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2008, p.203). In particular the documents may be very selective and deliberately exclude certain details or information. Access to documentation may also be an issue, as Coughlan and Brannick (2005, p 101) state “reports, memos, minutes of meetings and so on may be highly confidential”. In this study all documents were in the public domain. However the author’s background has enabled her to identify individual contributions and it has been necessary to ensure that appropriate levels of confidentiality are adhered to.

The main point of the documentary analysis was to establish what preceded the re-organisation and the rationale that accompanied the planned change and the introduction of the post of Head of Department. The analysis carried out has been in the form of a grounded theory approach to establish themes emerging from the texts. The broad principles applied have been based on the work of Charmaz (2003) as interpreted by Gibbs and Taylor (2005) and the following questions were used to guide the coding process; “What is going on? What are people doing? What is the person saying? What do these actions and statements take for granted? How do structure and
context serve to support, maintain, impede or change these actions and statements?” (Charmaz, 2003, pp94-95). This information was used to clarify the nature of the case study, described in detail in Chapter one.

The second stage of the research process was the carrying out of the Appreciative Inquiry interview. Interviews have been used extensively in research, as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.349) state “the interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard”. However interviews are time consuming, they can be led by the interviewer, the actual arrangement of a mutually convenient time can be difficult, interviewees may be distracted and it can be difficult to ensure anonymity (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

There are a number of ways of classifying interviews, Grebenik and Moser (1962, p.16) cited in Bell (1993, p.93) suggest that they are arranged along “a continuum of formality”. At one extreme is the formal interview where the interviewer plays as low key a role as possible, merely asking the questions to the completely informal interview where the course of the interview is guided by the responses given by the interviewee. Obviously the more standardised the interview procedure is then the easier it is to compare responses. The AI interview is structured in that all participants are asked the same questions. However the interviewer has some leeway in being able to explore certain responses in more depth, therefore it is a semi structured interview. A semi structured interview is one where a schedule is prepared but is sufficiently flexible to
allow for further probing to be undertaken (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Although this may make analysis of data more complex the essence of an AI interview is to get individual perceptions of the situation.

Interviews, particularly, when carried out within one’s own organisation, can be compromised by a subjectivity bias. The interviewer needs to be very careful that their responses, verbal or non-verbal, are not leading the interviewee. In addition, when the interviewer is well known to the interviewee, there may be an element of telling them what they want to hear or issues of confidentiality may lead the interviewee to be less than frank in their response. Borg (1981, p. 87) describes it thus:

Eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer, a vague antagonism that sometimes arises between interviewer and respondent, or the tendency of the interviewer to seek out the answers that support his preconceived notions are but few of the factors that may contribute to biasing of data obtained from the interview.

It is probably difficult to remove all elements of possible bias as described by Borg here but awareness of the issue can help to minimise its effects.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. This had the advantage that the interviewer could listen attentively to the response and maintain eye contact with the interviewee. Ideally the interviews should take place in a comfortable environment.
where there is little danger of interruption. In each case the interviews were carried out in the respondents’ offices. “Do not disturb” notices were placed on doors and telephones were switched off or unplugged. None of the interviewees indicated that the interviews had taken longer than expected and all indicated that they had enjoyed the opportunity to discuss their roles.

The Appreciative Inquiry interview differs from other interviews in that it has a positive focus. It also seeks to engage the respondent in story telling. It is a process that collects and celebrates the “good news” stories of an individual and an organisation. The main thrust of the questions is to identify times when the respondent was successful. Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros (2008, p.25) suggest the following as key questions that could be asked in an Appreciative Inquiry interview:

What would you describe as being a high-point experience in your organization, a time when you were most alive and engaged?

Without being modest, what do you value most about yourself, your work, and your organisation?

What are the core factors that give life to your organisation, without which the organization would cease to exist?

Imagine you have awakened from a long deep sleep. You get up to realize that everything is as you always dreamed it would be. Your ideal state has become the reality. What do you see? What is going on? How have things changed?

What three wishes do you have to enhance the health and vitality of your organisation?
These questions emphasise the difference between Appreciative Inquiry and other forms of action research. Reason and McArdle (2008, p. 127) describe how

the extent that action research maintains a problem orientated view of the world diminishes peoples’ capacity to produce innovative theory capable of inspiring the imagination, commitment, and passionate dialogue required for the consensual re-ordering of social conduct. Devoting attention to what is positive about organisations and communities, enables us to understand what gives them life and how we might sustain and enhance that life-giving potential.

In this research study the focus has been on what has worked well over the last years of organisational change and how this knowledge can help facilitate the work of middle managers in their future practice.

The data obtained from these interviews was analysed using content analysis facilitated by a software package (NVIVO 9). Computer packages in the qualitative domain rather than the quantitative domain do not actually perform the analysis but facilitate and assist it. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.489) point out “computers do not do away with the human touch as humans are still needed to decide and generate the codes and categories, to verify and interpret the data”. Richards (2005, p.87) suggests the following purposes of qualitative coding:

- to reflect on what the coded segments tell you about the category, and its meanings in the project
- to ask questions about how the category relates to other ideas from the data, and construct theories about those relations
• to gather all materials about a case, from different source, so you can apply the information about that person or site to everything from there, and compare cases on their attitudes, experiences, etc

• to make further, finer categories, from finding different dimensions in the data gathered by the first coding

• to search for blends or combinations of categories, to find patterns in attitudes on this subject, for example by gender or to compare text at different categories, seeing the category from a different viewpoint

• to compare how different researchers interpret data.

Richards (2005) goes on to suggest that it is important to distinguish between three types of coding, she classifies these as “descriptive”, “topic” and “analytical”. The first is concerned with storing information about the cases or individuals studied, gender, age, employment record. The second two are the interpretive processes. Topic coding labels text according to its subject matter; while analytical coding, as it name suggests, analyses the data to see what themes emerge. This process can see even a small amount of text being coded in a multiplicity of ways. It is this dealing with this amount of material that is facilitated by the use of a computer package. Retrieval of key passages can be much quicker than rifling through reams of paper based information. Further details on how this package was used in this study is to be found in section 3.7.
3.4 Ethical Considerations

Thus far the thesis has concentrated on the theory underpinning the chosen methodology and the methods used to generate the data. However there is one major consideration that has yet not been addressed and that is the question of ethics. Maylor & Blackmon (2005, p.281) suggest that the overriding principle in ethical research is to “treat others as you yourself would want to be treated and provide benefit to the organisation and individuals involved in your work”. There is a particular ethical challenge when, as in this case, the researcher has extensive direct involvement with the people and organisation they are studying. BERA (2011, p.4) guidelines suggest the following principles “there must be an ethic of respect for the person, knowledge, democratic values, quality of educational research and academic freedom”. BERA’s guidelines are subdivided into three categories: responsibilities to participants; responsibilities to sponsors of research; and responsibilities to the community of educational researchers. It is the first of these that has particular resonance for this project. It is important to establish a clear and equitable agreement with research participants that indicates to both parties its obligations and responsibilities. It is important not to make unrealistic promises. Care must be taken in particular with issues of anonymity. While it may be perfectly possible to disguise the identity of participants to outsiders, people within an organisation may find it easy to identify individuals particularly if job titles or descriptions are used. This has been a particular challenge for this project situated as it is within a comparatively small section of an organisation.
Minimum biographical data has been included so that the identities of individual respondents are not easily recognised.

Gaining informed consent is essential. Since this research involved colleagues rather than children or vulnerable adults it was anticipated as being a straightforward process. However although it is important that respondents understand the research that is being undertaken, it is important that there is a degree of spontaneity in the interview process that could be lost if the interview questions are known in advance. A letter was composed to seek informed consent, approved at the School ethics committee and included in Appendix 2.

It is important to consider the implications of the Data Protection Act (1998) when collecting data. Although some exceptions are permitted for education and research purposes (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005), it is important not to collect unnecessary personal data. It is also important to consider how long you need to keep data for. In this case it will be bound by the duration of the doctoral study and research protocols for data storage. However while the study is progressing one must consider whether other individuals could access your data. The data for this study has been stored a locked filing cabinet in the author’s home office. Information stored digitally has been confined to the author’s laptop computer, and CDs recorded at regular intervals to prevent loss of data. These discs have also been stored in the aforementioned filing cabinet.
Simons and Usher (2000) caution that ethics is “situated”, i.e. it is often dependent on particular situations rather than on codes and guidelines. Issues of power are particularly sensitive, “who has it, who does not, how it circulates in research situations (and with what consequences), and how it should be addressed” (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007, p.132). While conducting this research these sensitivities have been understood and factored in to the conduct of the research. The interviewer was not in a position of authority towards any of the interviewees and the research was fully explained to all those who participated.

**Table 3.2 Timeline of the Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews for the Piloting of the AI interview</td>
<td>May to October 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised AI Interviews with HoDs and DHoDs</td>
<td>October to December 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of Provocative Propositions</td>
<td>February to March 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.5 Initial AI Interviews**

The first collection of interview data piloted the AI interview. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is as already described is a form of action research that concentrates on what is working well within an organisation (Cockell, 2008). The choice of this methodology was based on two particular strands of thought; one was the author’s interest in the use of narrative
as a means of obtaining qualitative data and the second was the perception that the change in structure that had taken place had been viewed negatively by the author and her immediate circle of colleagues. AI emphasises collaborative action which develops partnerships for change across and within groups, reaching consensus by inclusive and contextual working (Reed, 2007). These attributes appeared to be particularly relevant to a change which involved the merger of nine schools into five new units (also called schools)

The focus of Appreciative Inquiry is on constructing new theory based on our experiences (Lewis, Passmore and Cantore, 2008). While traditional evaluation focuses on the past, AI focuses on valuing what might be possible in the future (McNamee, 2005). As McNamee (2005, p33) states “if colleagues know where another’s abilities are focused, the group can work together to enhance possibilities for further development and use of those interests and talents.”

As the author was an inexperienced interviewer it was decided to pilot an AI interview with four colleagues. All were deputy Heads of Department or Deputy Directors (see management structure in figure 3.3)
One had been in office since the creation of the new school, one had replaced the initial post holder and the other two were appointed at a later date when new deputy posts were created. The respondents were allocated the names Oliver, Jack, Lily and Emily. As can be deduced two were male and two female. The letters inviting participation in the project are included in appendix 2. The interview schedule was based on the classic AI questions (Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros 2008, p.25), preceded by some questions on the respondent’s job role to ease them into the more thought-provoking sections. (See Appendix 3). Ethical approval from the School Research Ethics committee had been sought and gained before the study took place.
The interviews were carried out between May and August 2008. All of the interviews were carried out in individual offices, Oliver and Emily were interviewed in their own offices while Jack and Lily were interviewed in the office of the researcher, all four interviews were recorded. The recordings were transcribed by the interviewer. The transcripts were then coded using a grounded theory approach and examined to establish themes emerging from the data.

All of the respondents stated that they had found the process interesting and that the questions were thought provoking. There was a feeling that they would have appreciated having the questions in advance of the interview. However, that would have reduced the spontaneity of their answers. The interviewer's inexperience was all too evident. Too often the interviewer commented on her own experience and unwittingly steered the conversation in a particular direction. There was an entire section of the interview with Oliver that had moved away quite significantly from the key points of the inquiry. There was also quite a lot of deviation from the interview protocol which made the comparison of responses more difficult. More importantly, there were comments that would have benefited from further examination that were not explored further; for example when Lily was asked about what she valued about the university she said “umm I like it because it fits me” but the interviewer failed to respond in a way that would have considered why and how it fitted her.
3.6 Analysis of Data from Initial Interviews

The analysis moved through the interviews identifying key themes as they emerged. Respondents were first asked to describe their current post, although all have only half their time allocated to the managerial role, for the majority this was obviously their prime focus. Each respondent identified different key aspects of their role. Some of this can be explained by the differences in the roles but some themes emerged that were continued throughout the interview. Jack in particular concentrated on the administrative aspects of the role, whereas Lily concentrated on more strategic issues.

Oliver, Jack and Emily have line management responsibilities although Oliver baulked at the term “line manager” acknowledging that although he carried out staff performance reviews he felt that the Head of School was the actual line manager. Lily’s role was more diffuse, as she supported staff while they were participating in Enterprise activities, but the staff changed with each project and she carried out no staff performance reviews.

One issue arose during the early questions, and this was influenced by the interviewer’s background knowledge, there was some confusion as to whether the management role was permanent or rotational. Both Oliver and Jack had been appointed as permanent posts, Emily had been appointed on a rotational basis but on promotion to Principal lecturer grade this had changed to a permanent post. Lily was in a rotational post and received an honorarium. Although not directly relevant to this pilot study, all the Heads
of Department were originally appointed on a rotational basis. Therefore there are some obvious inconsistencies in the School management structure.

The next part of the interview looked at why they had applied for the management post. All identified that they felt that it was time for a change:

“I needed a change, I think is probably the honest answer” (Oliver)
“I thought it was right for me to look at something like that” (Lily)
“I saw it as a sort of natural progression” (Emily)

Although Jack had a more pragmatic approach “primarily for my pension”

There were other factors as well such as the removal of a previous post “…….in terms of what I was doing before that role no longer existed.” (Emily)

Having established a rapport with the respondents the interview then moved to the AI phase and respondents were asked to identify their best experiences at work.

All respondents linked their best experiences to working with students but there were differences in emphases. Oliver also mentioned working as an Estyn Inspector.

“it’s the students and the contact with students” (Oliver)

“if a student writes you a thank you card” (Lily)

“working with colleagues, with students, and with mentors” (Emily)

“running the MA….taking that from a small and patchy course to being really quite vibrant” (Jack)
When asked about what they valued about themselves, three of the respondents indicated that they found it a difficult question to answer, with one (Lily) replying “I’m probably quite poor at valuing things about myself” and failing to give a response. Oliver considered himself “approachable and understanding”, Jack “straight forward with people, industrious……show commitment and perseverance” and Emily “a good team player……reasonably good at organising”. Both female respondents seemed to find the question more difficult to answer.

Analysis of the next section on the values of the job and the organisation was more difficult, as the ease or difficulty of response to the earlier question meant that the prompts asked by the interviewer were different in each case. In Oliver’s case the questioning moved on to the values of the university, Jack and Lily were asked about the values of the job while Emily was asked about the values of the school.

Lily valued the “free rein for creativity” but was concerned that sometimes that could compromise quality. She also valued her colleagues, a point that was echoed by Emily, “the people…it is the people with whom you work that see you through” Oliver also rated people very highly “policy documents and rationales…don’t do the job…unless you have people on the ground…It’s the people within the institution that do all of that” Jack’s response was phrased from a more personal viewpoint “It is nice now ….to be able to organise and use one’s experience to make things happen organisationally”, although there were overtones of dissatisfaction “sometimes seeing people I consider to be much more organisationally weak……seeing them get promotion”
Jack was also more negative when considering the values of the University as a whole “it is extremely diffuse, diverse not coherent” “I’m not really sure what its ethos is at times and the qualities it admires in people”. Lily discussed the “element of community” which existed despite the different campuses although this physical separation was mentioned less positively by others “not easy for U*** because we work on different campuses” (Oliver). Emily felt that the university provided opportunities to develop in many different directions and that had given her the variety needed to stay in the same organisation for many years.

The next section of the interview asked the respondents to have three wishes for the organisation. Both Jack and Lily asked for new buildings as their first wish and it is important to note here that both these respondents are based in an annex rather than the main campus building. Jack viewed this as a question of equity, this was echoed by Lily who commented “so that students had that sense of this [the existing annex] not just being a spare part.”

Jack went to request “transparency on people’s workloads because that is a major source of staff griping” and more “high quality people brought in from outside”. Jack went on to say “I think it (the university) is generally too incestuous if that is the right word. Appoints from within, people rise into positions by seniority rather than merit”. Throughout the interview this respondent did seem to have a sense of injustice – unfairness directed towards the university that was not present in other interviews.
After her request for new buildings Lily went on to request “something to do with helping me manage time”. This respondent did seem to feel that the two parts of her job were often pulling her in two directions “you have two priorities in the Programme Director role and the enterprise role and they are you know urgent, immediate…..and then you have students saying please can you help me. I find it difficult to prioritise.” Her final wish was that there was a closer connection between the senior management team based on one campus and her department based at another, “people…don’t know whether or not the very top senior managers know what the very bottom people are doing”

Oliver found the question difficult to answer and therefore was prompted by the interviewer so his first wish was for teacher education specifically and his response was “I want it to continue within CU……I wouldn’t want to see the demise of teacher education.” He then moved on to wishing that it was “easier to liaise with other people from other campuses…it’s a pity ….that staff don’t meet and talk” this led onto a final wish for a staffroom. “Daft as it sounds I think the staff room is an important area”. He felt strongly that people were isolated in their offices and that there were no opportunities for discussion.

Emily expressed a wish “not to move forward quite so quickly, to have a period of consolidation”. Her second wish was that “all staff are valued for their contribution in different ways and that there isn’t a kind of hierarchy.” Her third wish perhaps extended this thought “and the third one is ...to do with line management….as accountability is
devolved and delegated comes empowerment and that needs to be thought through …more than it has…just some thought so that they look at how they have empowered people and make sure they have empowered people to do a better job.”

The final question on the AI protocol was “What achievements are you (and/or your team) proud of?” For all four respondents there was an emphasis on their teaching role; this is not unexpected as all four had spent many years teaching but had been in managerial posts for comparatively short periods of time. Oliver stated that “when I go around schools and I see several of my past students….who are now Heads of Departments and Senior managers. I can genuinely think that I have been a part of that”. He added “mostly it centres on students and their responses to me” and “I tend not to think of what I’ve done but the effect on people of what I’ve done.”

Jack listed his achievements as being an external examiner and also being well rated by students. On a team basis he was pleased that a recent validation had gone well and felt that recent new appointments to the department had been very good. Lily also mentioned a validation but her response that “I’m not sure anybody’s noticed it” would indicate that she did not feel her contribution had been valued by others. She was also proud of a teaching pack that she had created and was pleased that students had complimented her on it. On a team basis she confided that it had been a difficult year and that she was not sure that she had done her best for the team that year.
Emily felt that her best achievement was “just getting to where I am”. She felt that her achievements changed in that “having taken on the management and strategic role” the time she was able to devote to teaching had diminished and therefore the quality of her teaching might have been affected as she didn’t have the same amount of time to prepare.

A number of broad themes emerged from the interviews. All of the respondents were very focused on students and the impact they had on them. In all cases, the management role had diminished that contact and all seemed to regret that that had happened. There was an element of suggesting that the very senior management did not always know what was happening on the ground and that left staff feeling unappreciated. There was some acknowledgement that this was perhaps exacerbated by the physical separation as senior managers are located on a different campus.

This idea was extended into a thought that respondents were not always sure what was happening at the centre, there was mention of “we seem to have a mushrooming of units…How do they feed into enhancing the quality of the degrees? Never been clear to me” (Jack). Only one respondent (Jack) seemed particularly negative about his experience and this seemed rooted in his past “that was done in spite of a senior colleague……who did his best to make life difficult for me” “……people rise up into positions by seniority rather than merit……and bullishness.”
Lily was probably the least confident of the respondents indicated by the fact that she failed to identify anything that she valued about herself and the interviewer failed to encourage her to respond at that point. She also felt that her achievements were not always valued by senior staff and that often she was asked to do things that would be better done by administrative staff.

Emily talked at length, her interview was longer than the others; often there was an element of thinking aloud as she formulated her responses to the questions. She was obviously proud of her achievements but there were times, particularly when she was talking about empowerment, where there was a sense that she felt she wasn’t always allowed to make her own decisions.

Oliver was probably the most relaxed about his achievements although he did struggle to answer some of the questions. His comments about staff rooms was probably based on his previous experience as a school teacher where colleagues do come together at break times to discuss their experiences.

The purpose of this study was to pilot the AI interview. Certainly the respondents found the questions challenging and thought provoking. However, to examine the changing management structures there needed to be some changes to the format. There also needed to be a clearer focus to the interview. This was addressed by developing more specific questions prior to entering the AI cycle (See Appendix 4). The interview technique needed to be refined, too. Often the transcripts showed the interviewer
placing her own interpretation on comments and also not following up when the respondent did not fully answer the questions. Since the researcher was keen to carry out the interviews herself, the interviewer needed to listen more and lead interviewees less. On the technical side transcription did take considerably longer than expected and given the physical difficulties that the researcher was experiencing limits the number of interviews that can be carried out\(^1\). However listening and listening again to the tapes gave her a particular insight that definitely informed the analysis of results.

The author felt that despite the issues identified, using AI would produce rich data that could be used to improve practice.

### 3.7 Data Collection

Documents pertaining to the original change in structure were collected and used to clarify the case study outlined in Chapter one. The bulk of the material came from a Head of School who moved to a different post following reorganisation. These documents had been collected at the time and occasionally were annotated which threw further light on the process. The university’s intranet was also searched and documents relevant to the study identified and downloaded. Unfortunately it was not possible to obtain all of the documents written during the consultation process but sufficient

\(^{1}\) In December 2008, the author was diagnosed with CMT, a peripheral neuropathy that affects the motor and sensory functions of the hands and feet.
contemporary documents have been accessed and examined to provide a comprehensive background to the study. The documents were analysed using the guidelines discussed earlier i.e. consideration was given to the writer of the documents, the audience it was intended for, and, where summaries were included, noting what has been included and what omitted. At all times where the background knowledge of the researcher has impacted on the analysis this has been acknowledged.

For the interview section of the data collection all of those who held the post of Head of Department or Deputy Head of Department in the CSoE were interviewed apart from those who had participated in the pilot study. It was felt that those who had participated in the pilot study would respond with a certain amount of “hindsight” as they would have heard some of the questions before and therefore their responses would not have been comparable. To balance the study, one Head or Deputy Head of Department from each of the other three schools was approached and asked to participate in the study. These names were selected randomly and fortunately no-one refused, therefore there was no need to select additional participants. The School of Sport does not have the same management structure as the other Schools. Although they have a Dean, and Directors of Learning & Teaching, Research and Enterprise, there are no Departments. Therefore it was decided to select the staff representative who sat on the Senior Management and Planning Team but was not a Dean or Director as the nearest equivalent of a Head of Department.
The interviews were carried out between October 2009 and December 2009. The interviews were all carried out in the interviewees’ offices. The interviews ranged in time from 21 minutes to 46 minutes, with an average of 30 minutes and a median value of 26.5 mins. The interviews were recorded on a small digital audio recorder that was comparatively unobtrusive. All of the respondents appeared comfortable and relaxed and participated fully in the interviews, although the length of responses to questions varied considerably as can be seen from the different times the interviews took. The author’s interview technique was better than in the pilot study with far less divergence from the interview protocol. However some respondents gave much more succinct responses than others.

The interview schedule was devised to address the first two parts of the AI cycle, Discovery and Dream. Since the beginning of the study, the author has been diagnosed with a progressive neuromuscular condition which makes typing more difficult. Therefore it was decided to get the preliminary transcript of each interview typed up by a colleague who is a qualified audio typist. She was not given the names of any of the participants but it would be unrealistic to expect her not to recognise some of the voices, therefore she was asked to recognise the confidentiality of the study. The author then reviewed the transcripts while listening to the audiotapes. This enabled her to check the transcripts and make any changes necessary. At that point both the audiotapes and the transcripts were loaded into an NVIVO 9 project file. This software package has many facilities for the analysis of data but for this project the more basic functions of identifying key themes and comparing responses to questions were used.
The package facilitates analysis by having several transcripts available at the same time to ease comparisons without having reams of paper spread across a desk. The addition of the audiotapes in the same package meant that transcripts were easy to check.

Following analysis of the data which is discussed in detail in Chapters four and five, a series of provocative propositions were devised. Provocative propositions are defined as:

A statement that bridges the best of “what is” with your own speculation or intuition of “what might be”. It stretches the status quo, challenges common assumptions or routines, helps suggest real possibilities that represent a desired image for the organisation and its people

Watkins and Mohr, 2001, p.141

These were circulated to every Head of Department and Deputy Head across the four schools that have such appointments during February and March 2011. Once again the member of staff who sits on the SMPT in the School of Sport was included as being the closest in job role to a Head of Department. 18 requests for comments on the provocative propositions were sent out (see Appendix 5) and a total of 14 responses were received. The initial contact was by e-mail, this was followed up two weeks later by a follow up e-mail. All those who had not responded at this point were then contacted by letter. All of those approached in the Schools of Education, and the School of Art and Design responded. There were three respondents from the School of
Health Studies, and one each from the Schools of Management and Sport. All of those who had contributed to the initial study responded.

3.8 Evaluation of the Methodology

The Appreciative Inquiry interview proved to be an innovative way to get staff to reflect on their practice and envision a positive future. The positive nature of the questions posed meant that staff were able to consider their experience in a non-threatening environment. All acknowledged the importance of being able to discuss their experience with another manager. The interview did not prevent reflection on the difficulties that academics faced when moved into management but allowed those to be framed in such a way that it was possible to foresee how they might be addressed and overcome in future. As Johnson, cited in Busche (2012) reflects:

> casting an appreciative eye can generate ‘negative’ experiences and how, in turn, exploring those experiences appreciatively can result in ‘positive’, generative, outcomes.

(Busche, 2012, p16)

The quality of the data obtained might have been improved by allowing participants to reflect on their original contributions. Therefore were the technique to be replicated it is suggested that transcripts be forwarded to participants some four weeks after the interview and comments sought on their original contribution. The AI questions are novel and therefore participants might have benefited from being able to reflect on their responses.
The provocative propositions when circulated to a wider audience demonstrated that there was a commonality of experience across the university. It would perhaps have been better to present the provocative propositions in a focus group with the researcher in attendance as there was some confusion as to how challenging the statements were intended to be. Provocative propositions are phrased as statements rather than questions, “the university does” rather than “does the university?” and this proved particularly contentious when applied to the question of future funding. However focus groups are not without their own problems, the researcher must act as a facilitator and not influence the discussion too much. In addition a focus group could have compromised the anonymity of the original participants. The author has had the experience of having her own quotes debated in a group discussion (Gornall, 2009) and found it a deeply unsettling experience. Perhaps School based group interviews would have provided a better environment for the collection of detailed responses without revealing the identity of the original participants.

It has to be acknowledged that the researcher’s relationship with the interviewees may impact on the responses obtained. When conducting research within one’s own organisation it is essential to consider “ongoing professional relationships, the acquisition of dangerous knowledge, and the need to protect the anonymity of respondents in the long-term future” (Floyd and Arthur, 2012, p.178). Therefore occasionally in the reporting of responses it may be inappropriate to include data that could easily identify the participant.
When evaluating the quality of qualitative research, Maylor and Blackmon (2005, p.363) suggest the following framework:

![Diagram of the quality of qualitative research framework]

**Quality of your findings**

- Credibility
- Validity
- Reliability
- Generalisability

Figure 3.4 A framework for assessing the quality of qualitative research

Qualitative studies are by their very nature difficult to repeat. When conducting interviews it is unlikely that a similar interview undertaken on a different day in different circumstances would produce identical results. Therefore reliability in this context focuses more on the robustness of the conclusions drawn. It is important that during
the analysis of the data that the researcher reflects on her own analysis and interpretation of the data. As stated earlier there is a duty of care towards the participants and it is important that the anonymity of the respondents is preserved.

Validity refers to whether the study accurately reflects the participants’ views on their job role and their wishes for the university. Therefore the analysis draws extensively on quotes from the participants and represents their views as accurately as possible. When undertaking a small scale study such as this one it is important that findings are not overstated (Maylor and Blackmon, 2005) but by reference to the wider literature and other studies (Smith, 2005; Floyd, 2012 and Floyd and Dimmock, 2011) it is possible to identify which issues are pertinent to a wider range of organisations and roles. Results will not be generalisable in the conventional sense but rather are the results relevant to academic staff working in other institutions? The analysis in the next two chapters is based on these principles and examines the Discovery and Dream phases of the AI cycle in detail.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to identify the key research paradigms that impacted on the study. It has progressed from the broad concepts of ontology and epistemology and related them to specific methodologies, research methods and sources of data. It has critically analysed the specific attributes of the research methods selected and linked
them to the study, a qualitative case study using an appreciative inquiry theoretical perspective to identify the experiences of middle level academic managers when implementing organisational change. Ethical considerations have been discussed and specific issues related to this study have been considered.

A pilot study was carried out to check the effectiveness and appropriateness of the author's interview technique. Changes made to the final project as a result were discussed. The next chapters review and analyse the results obtained by undertaking the AI interviews and circulating the Provocative Propositions generated by the interviews.
Chapter 4: The Discovery Phase

4.1 The Institutional Context

The first part of the Discovery phase will review the roles and responsibilities of the Heads and Deputy Heads of Department. There was no standard document describing these roles at the time of the study. The appointments were made at the level of Principal Lecturer (Learning and Teaching) (see Appendix 1) and had the responsibilities of a level four manager as outlined in Chapter two, pp72-3. The principal lecturer role description focuses heavily on academic leadership whereas the manager’s focuses on management and an understanding of university systems. Although it has been posited that many functions of leadership and management are similar (Young and Dulewicz, 2008) the manager’s role description highlights an uncomfortable dichotomy as to how the roles were perceived by different audiences. Subordinates expected their Head of Department to lead them and represent them at a School level, whereas senior managers expected them to get staff to comply with university systems.

Each Head of department and deputy was recruited to a specific job. This had been advertised and a person specification and job description supplied. Unfortunately it was not feasible to obtain these and therefore it was not possible to determine whether individual schools viewed these roles differently. As will be seen in the analysis of interviews, incumbents were clear about their roles and responsibilities but felt that staff
in their departments were not always so sure about what they could or could not be expected to achieve.

4.2 Background of the Middle Managers Interviewed

The following observations are based on a series of interviews carried out between October and December 2009. Eight interviews were recorded and transcribed. Four of the interviews were held with middle management staff in the School of Education and four with staff from other Schools within the university called Cambrian University (CU) in this study. The individuals were allotted the following names:

Harry – Education - Head of Department, male

Sophia – Education - Head of Department, female

Olivia – Education - Deputy Head of Department, female

Ava – Education - Deputy Head of Department, female

James – Art and Design – Head of Department, male

Isla – Health Sciences – Deputy Head of Department, female

Thomas – Sport – Member of Senior management team, male

Ethan - Management – Head of Department, male
The School of Sport does not have a standard CU departmental structure and therefore the nearest post in terms of duties was selected i.e. a member of staff who sat on the Senior Management and Planning team but did not hold one of the senior appointments such as Dean, Director of Learning and Teaching or Director of Research. The age range of participants ranged from under 40 (Sophia and Ava) to over 50 but under 60 (Harry, Olivia, Isla, Thomas and Ethan). This range reflected the mix of experience with some participants having prior management experience; for example, Olivia had held a similar post in another university, and others no experience of management in higher education.

4.2.1 Biography

Those appointed immediately after reorganisation seemed clearer about their reasons for applying for the post than those appointed later in the cycle;

I was appointed immediately following initial reorganization, natural progression from previous role (Harry).

Later appointments were triggered by the move of a previous post holder and therefore appeared more reactive than proactive

more by accident than design, had relevant experience and original post holder resigned (Thomas)

the previous post holder moved on (Isla).
All of the participants linked their move into management to career progression rather than specifically taking on a management role

No, but progression within subject discipline was becoming limited (Ava).

There was a strong feeling that to progress one had to move away from a purely teaching role to one that involved managing teams of staff,

yes, but in the context of being a principal lecturer (PL). The PL role in both institutions involved some management tasks (Olivia).

Ethan felt that the reorganization had facilitated his move into management;

before the reorganization the only management role was that of Head of School and I wasn’t ready for that.

Thomas gave the most positive response to this question as he indicated that he had always inclined towards those sorts of decision making roles and he had prior experience of managing a large budget before joining the university.

Respondents felt that the main difference between their previous experiences as programme directors was moving away from their immediate subject specialism to managing more diverse teams of staff. Harry already had experience of managing
teams from different subject disciplines and therefore felt that the line manager role was the key feature that differed from his earlier experience. Thomas and James’s responses were markedly different here reflecting their previous employment; Thomas had managed facilities in the public sector whereas James had moved from Further Education where he had held a senior management post.

The majority had been appointed as a result of an internal, competitive process, a procedure typical of post-92 universities (Farnham, 1999). The exception was James whose post had been advertised externally. It may have been difficult to fill the post internally due to the reluctance of existing academic staff to put themselves forward. Floyd (2012) suggests that academic staff may perceive that the pressures associated with the role of Head of Department overshadow the rewards of the position. In the next section James highlights the difficulties he faced trying to meld different programme teams with different ways of doing things into a single coherent department.

4.2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Each respondent identified a specific, but often different, aspect of the role. Harry selected “academic leadership”. This was also echoed in Isla’s response “to take on the Learning and Teaching because the Head of Department doesn’t have my experience of running programmes”. In this school the Head of Department was an active researcher and had never led a programme, therefore this manager’s focus was on managing the academic programme teams. Ethan also felt that leadership was
important. “I think the overall purpose is to provide leadership in a focused way for a defined subject area for a manageable group of people”. James’s more lengthy response indicated a need to create a department from disparate groups:

I can tell you that I fire-fight on a daily basis, I manage, I manage people and I manage the curriculum. We have programme areas that were used to doing it alone, we have programme areas and heads of those programme areas, programme directors, who were used to not having to have to share commentary and to work together and so actually perhaps one of the hardest things was to, and where most early time was spent, is actually to get them talking, to get them discussing and bringing it together, basically forming the department.

This response reflects the diverse cultures that can exist even within a single department. As Cockell and Mc Arthur-Blair (2012, p.17) recount, “different groupings within the institution construct their own realities and cultures”. The challenge for a Head of Department is to create a culture that all programme teams can recognise and take ownership of. S/he needs to acknowledge that all will have a desire to create the best learning experience for their students and find common ground to co-create a future direction that all can aspire to.

Sophia concentrated on the strategic role: “I think the purpose of the post is strategic, thinking into the future, developing and maintaining a healthy and happy department”. Ava’s response linked to students: “It’s about making sure that the students have the best quality experience they can have and we provide the best quality service we can
provide”. While Thomas felt that managing the finances was the crucial role, “to make sure the ship just ran financially and operationally well”

Some participants had more experience of implementing change than others (Harry, Thomas). As Thomas describes:

    at my ripe old age I have been through change which has been managed by others on a number of occasions small and large and I have also more so been the promoter and manager of change. Experience in change is a great thing; there really is no substitution for it.

There was an emphasis on both managing and leading change; Ethan stated, “Yes I think that obviously the idea of strategic leadership here (sic)…. I think it is my role to manage the change”. It was felt important to get staff “on board” to facilitate change as Sophia stated:

    I think it also needs to be “ground up” as well as from the “top down” and I think it is the speed at which things can move which can take everyone unawares and then people think they are not consulted and then that can obviously cause problems both for them as individuals but also for the smooth running of the organisation as well.

Two of the deputies who had been in post for a relatively short time were less sure of their role: “It’s seeing where we’re going to go and trying to work out and lead staff into how we are going to make that happen. I guess that’s my main role” (Ava) and “I don’t
know the answer to that, I don’t think I will have a specific role but it might be that I have a joint role with the head of department, but I am not aware of anything specific at this present time” (Olivia).

When asked what could help them in their role, the respondents gave a range of replies. Thomas’s response to this was the most succinct: “Yes, for the University to fund sport like other universities fund it”. He went on to elaborate:

CU historically has looked on sport as something that the School of Sport does and has never looked at it as a strategic part of the student experience, sport, recreation, leisure. So a changing in the funding would help greatly. As ever more money.

Although this is a particular issue for the School of Sport, funding also appeared in Ethan’s response here linked to a particular function:

I think more administrative support would certainly ease the situation. A less stringent financial climate would certainly make things easier whereas now we are down to the bone in terms of staff options on modules and so on.

One particular comment from Ava had great resonance with the researcher:

You are somebody’s manager but I don’t feel like I am anybody’s boss. There is a line management that we have got at CU, but I think if you worked in private industry you could say “do that” and somebody would do it. Whereas here you have got to cajole you have to be particularly diplomatic, you’ve got to find your way around things and you can’t make decisions because you have to go to
higher management and because of that I am not always clear about which decisions I can make on my own and which decisions I have to refer to other people.

This difference in what is expected by faculty within the department and what is expected by senior management of a Head of Department can result in particular tensions. This was expressed thus by Olivia:

I would however like to feel that there was a better or a more meaningful contribution which the school management planning team could make to what goes on at CU. At the moment I feel that communications are passed down and although there are seemingly attempts to discuss issues of current concern and there are forums provided for that purpose they are not particularly meaningful and they do not really encourage genuine dialogue, they are essentially about compliance and a reminder of the need to be compliant as managers.

Those most recently in post sought further clarification of their role. Ava stated “I think what I would find easier would be if I had a more clear cut view of what the management role is,” and Isla said “I think actually more clarification…. at the moment I don’t think I am recognised fully within the school”.

All of the participants had made a positive decision to move into a management role. The majority felt it was a natural transition from the role of programme director, which involved informally managing groups of staff, managing programme budgets and negotiating with other programme directors over the allocation of resources. Thus, they
did not fit into the role of reluctant managers as identified by Deem, Hillyard and Reed (2007). All perceived themselves to have a role when implementing or facilitating change. However the lack of, what for want of a better word, might be deemed control did not make this role an easy one. Leadership was achieved by persuasion and cajoling. Knight and Trowler (2001) describe this process as working with and through existing cultural patterns, and cultivating relationships to get things done.

There were no significant differences between the responses of those in the School of Education and those managers based in other Schools. Any differences in responses tended to be located around length of service and previous employment history. Those who had been in post longest were surer of their role. Gender did not appear to be an issue. This contrasts with the work of Deem, Hillyard and Reed (2007) which suggested that as a woman manager you are more likely to be judged by different standards. Male respondents in that study actually felt that not being female was a distinct benefit. CU has a high proportion of female academic staff (55% female, Maxwell, 2009) based in part on the professional qualifications offered such as teaching, speech therapy, podiatry and dietetics which have predominately female workforces and the respondents in the is study did not identify gender as an issue impacting on their professional development.
4.2.3 Positive Experiences

This section of the interviews started with asking what had worked well in the past by asking respondents to identify their best experiences so far in the management role.

Although Thomas’s initial response was about resourcing, “turning around the financial performance of sport”, which had been a strong theme throughout his interview, he went on to say “probably the most satisfying of all is one of the reasons I came into higher education is to see the success of the students you play a part with”. This remark was echoed by Ava, who commented “my best experiences have been those experiences where I have made a difference to the student experience”. The others also mentioned the changes they had made to other people but in this case the emphasis was on colleagues. Sophia stated that “I think for me it has been when I have spoken to a group of individuals as a team and felt that they have responded as a team and that I had their support, that was very satisfying, very fulfilling, I think as well”. Ethan mentioned the sharing of confidences:

probably the most challenging have been the people aspects of it and they have probably on the flip side have been the best experiences as well to be working very, very closely with people in their personal lives to support them through in some cases difficult circumstances to help to bring them through.
Olivia felt that:

the best experiences are that you are likely to confront more
interesting, intellectually interesting and challenging work as a
manager than you are as either a programme director or in some
respects a classroom lecturer… I think that even though some of the
experiences I had in my previous post with the organization
inspections and indeed undergoing inspections, even though some of
those experiences were not positive, they nevertheless added to my
understanding of the complex nature of universities and their
governance today… I find the interaction with individuals that I
wouldn't otherwise have [met] interesting and thought provoking as
well.

The idea that there are positive aspects to even negative experiences was echoed by
Harry: “conflict resolution is always a good one… and I think I'm seeing things flourish
and seeing things develop in terms of moving people forward […] even in difficult times”.

James was the only one of those interviewed who had undergone training to help him in
his new role. His response would seem to indicate that such training would be
beneficial to all middle managers across the university:

I was lucky enough last year, to do the leadership foundation and
that was a fabulous experience, I was on that particular programme
with … approximately 20 other people, four of whom were from […]
School of Art and Design, but 16 senior academics from other
institutions right across the UK. And the way that was structured and
the way it was run by obviously a very established organisation, was
such that the development and the way that you felt you developed
over the course of only effectively six days in total, really did help
give you an understanding of what I suppose we might say is the changing face of management within academia.

4.2.4 Values

The next section of the interview asked participants what they valued about themselves, the job and the institution. Three broad themes emerged when talking about themselves: the capacity for hard work, a willingness to relate to people and the ability to communicate clearly. There was also a strong feeling that they should set a good example and not ask people to do things that they were not prepared to do themselves.

It should be noted here that this question required more prompting by the interviewer than other questions. Interviewees appeared to find it harder to talk about themselves than the job or the Institution.

For many of the respondents the job enabled them to “make a difference” and to contribute to the development of others. This “making a difference” linked to teaching as a profession, as Ava stated, “I value the fact that I can make a difference. I am repeating myself here but I went into teaching because I wanted to make a difference.” One respondent (Ethan) felt that the departmental structure had enabled him to support staff in a way that would not have been possible under the old structure: “I think it provides a support for the other people in the department something I feel that has not really been there in the structure that existed prior to the Departmental formations”.

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When discussing the organisation Harry, Thomas and Isla concentrated initially on their Schools. They were all positive about these, finding them supportive and encouraging. Thomas was particularly enthusiastic “the School of Sport is managed in a nice way; it's managed on outcomes. So it encourages self-motivation and the need for you to drive yourself forward, that comes with a lot of trust and I tend to like working that way”.

These responses fit in with the MCC view of organisational culture where individuals identify more closely with their small work units rather than the institution as a whole.

Although there was some discussion about the lack of contact between Schools and the fact that the physical separation of the campuses made frequent meetings difficult: CU was viewed as a supportive organization which allowed individuals to flourish:

[CU] does promote and encourage and facilitate people actually putting their head out of the silo and looking across to others. It could be argued what are the tangible outcomes from that but you know at the end of the day I certainly feel more confident in having those opportunities and tangible or not I think it makes a huge difference if you feel empowered and facilitated to actually work beyond your normal comfort zone, as it were

Harry

I think that CU has been extraordinarily good to me…. I have been very well supported here which has meant a lot as well so I felt that as much as I gave in was coming back and it’s kind of a bit dizzying and it’s probably one of the few opportunities to sit down and actually think about it but I have had an extraordinary promotion and career path thus far.

Sophia
Olivia and Ethan highlighted the student experience, “I think we are always praised in validation/review type events for the way we consider and look after our students” (Ethan), and “I think it does put, and correctly, a lot of emphasis on the student experience and I think a lot of what goes on is […] organized towards that final goal of making the students’ experience good” (Olivia). Ava linked the student experience to the more general point about the people who make up CU:

I like everyone I work with and I respect everybody I work with and I feel exactly the same as well about the students and I get so much back from it. The students say the same thing. Everybody says the same thing. It is definitely the people that make CU without a doubt.

There was a certain amount of overlap in responses between this section and the next on the core values of CU. The vocational nature of the university was touched on and related to placing a value on good teaching. CU’s relatively small size was considered an asset, enabling students to be known by name. Both James and Thomas felt that CU or at least their particular Schools had a strong brand. Olivia who had moved from another university felt that CU was a very friendly institution, an opinion endorsed by Ava.

Perhaps the most interesting point about the responses in this section was that nearly all the interviewees had some reservation as to whether their ideas on what constituted the core value of CU really represented CU as a whole, or just their School or even just their department.
I am proud of the brand because the brand links with the School of Sport. I like the fact that it is in the middle of the city, the location, the physical aspects of it but I tend to associate the brand in its relationship with the School I am in.

Thomas

As Alvesson (2002, p.191) points out: “even in seemingly homogeneous and stable organizations such as universities cultural configurations are multiple, complex and shifting”. Thus it is easy to see why respondents were unsure whether the values they espoused were those of the university or just of the section of the university they were familiar with.

4.4 Discussion

The role under consideration was created as a result of an organisational change, which resulted in the formation of larger academic delivery units. Originally designated Learning and Teaching Leaders they were a pragmatic response to the larger groupings of staff. It was felt that about ten staff was an appropriate number of staff to be line managed by one individual; this concurs with Smith’s (2005) suggestions for the appropriate size for a department. It was also felt that this tier of managers could facilitate succession planning. When the restructure was finally implemented, appointees were originally given the title Head of Centre, but within a few months this was changed to Head of Department. Under the preceding structure some Schools had had centres (usually associated with vocational or research groupings) within them and therefore it was felt that the title Head of Centre could be confusing.
The title of Head of Department is a familiar one in both “old” and “new” universities. Smith’s (2002, 2005) studies examined the similarities and differences in the roles both between and within different university settings. He found that the most significant difference between the roles were the differences between the relative importance attached to teaching and research (Smith, 2002). As a post 92 university with a strong vocational basis it would be expected that in CU there would be a strong emphasis on teaching. However over the course of this study CU, like many other post 92 universities had obtained research degree awarding powers (RDAPS) and participated in the research assessment exercise (RAE). Therefore there had been much more importance attached to research outputs than in previous periods of the university’s existence.

The role of Head of Department seemed a natural progression from that of programme director. Therefore the respondents’ primary role before taking up the HoD appointment had been very focused on teaching rather than research. This is reflected in the fact that although all respondents were professionally qualified, only two held PhDs. All reported to the Director of Learning and Teaching (see organisational chart, Chapter three, p.111) rather than the Director of Research. However in their role as line manager they were required to monitor the research outputs of their staff and report on their own research outputs when undergoing performance appraisals with the Director of Learning and Teaching.
All of the respondents indicated that the move into a management role was more closely linked to career progression than a desire to become a manager. Deem et al (2001) suggested that there were three routes into management followed by academics: those who had taken an early career decision to move into management; those defined as “reluctant managers” who were coerced into the role; and those defined as “good citizens” who took on the role late in their career as a way of giving back something to their institution. These three categories did not seem particularly relevant for the participants in this study, who to a large extent viewed their progression as a natural step up, particularly from the role of programme director. Within CU the programme director’s role was defined as:

….responsible for the academic leadership, delivery, quality assurance and enhancement, management and administration of the programme(s)

CU, 2002, para 2.1

It involved managing programme teams to ensure effective delivery of a programme and therefore has elements of the departmental role albeit with smaller numbers of staff from the same discipline area.

All of the respondents felt that the main change from their previous roles was moving outside of their specific subject disciples to managing more diverse groups of staff. In addition all, with the exception of Thomas now had formal line management responsibilities. The respondents saw themselves as academic leaders, monitoring the range of programmes offered in each department and ensuring that students had the
best learning experience possible. The strong emphasis on giving students a positive experience and supporting their learning resonates with Cockell and McArthur-Blair’s (2012, p.17) work in Canada. They found that:

Each department has a common desire to serve its students well, but departments construct their realities of how to do that differently because of their mandates, perspectives, outcomes, and people.

The emphasis on leadership reflects current research that suggests that recent initiatives on university management have concentrated on leadership as a transformative mechanism “excellent leadership and management will become increasingly important” (DFES, 2003, p. 78). Relative to this, Deem (2010) states that most Vice Chancellors (VCs), Pro Vice Chancellors (PVCs) and Deans prefer to be considered academic and strategic leaders rather than managers.

However, if we compare the functions of Management and Leadership as defined by Kotter (1990, pp 3-8) points of similarity can be seen:
Table 4.4 Functions of Management and Leadership (Kotter, 1990, p3-8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Produces Order and Consistency</th>
<th>Leadership Produces Change and Movement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Budgeting</td>
<td>Establishing Direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish agendas</td>
<td>• Create a vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set Timetables</td>
<td>• Clarify big picture</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Allocate resources</td>
<td>• Set Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing and Staffing</td>
<td>Aligning People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide structure</td>
<td>• Communicate goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make job placements</td>
<td>• Seek commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish rules and procedures</td>
<td>• Build teams and coalitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling and Problem Solving</td>
<td>Motivating and Inspiring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop incentives</td>
<td>• Inspire and energise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Generate creative solutions</td>
<td>• Empower subordinates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take corrective action</td>
<td>• Satisfy unmet needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would appear that senior staff in Higher Education are as likely to be spending time on managing as they are on leading. Certainly the respondents in this study reported spending much of their time on management tasks but there was also a strong emphasis on aligning people since all were managing newly-formed departments which sought to establish a clear identity within the new academic structure.
These responses contrast with Deem’s (2010) research which indicates that although senior managers agreed that they were involved in fostering change they were more reluctant to be identified as change agents. This reluctance seemed in part to be related to being perceived as acting politically, on behalf of government policy, in implementing change. One respondent to Deem (2010) made a point which is particularly pertinent to the present study:

When I was a Head of Department, one of the reasons I got very frustrated with the job is that I didn’t seem able to act as an agent of change, that I was simply reactive and never proactive, and my hope, my expectation is that in this new role [Dean], the balance between reaction and being proactive will alter.

Certainly in the author’s experience, the Head of Department role at CU was more concerned with implementing change that had been initiated at the institutional level, rather than initiating change as part of the role of being a manager.

Deem, Hillyard and Reed (2007, p.51) stated that the prevailing view of the academics, managers and administrators that they interviewed was that “money rather than academic factors was driving many decisions, especially with the introduction of cost centres”. However Delanty (2008) points out that although institutions are coming under pressure from market and state forces, many individuals working in Higher Education still have a considerable degree of autonomy. It is this degree of autonomy which may make the task of the academic manager more difficult. Dearlove (1997, p.57) claims
that “good academics cannot be told what to do; they defy control; and the kind of
creativity required cannot be commanded by an academic master”. A defining
characteristic of university life is intellectual freedom and creative thinking, yet
frequently the middle manager will be charged with the task of seeking compliance with
university systems.

This blurring of boundaries makes for a unique management environment in Higher
Education. Jackson (1997) suggests that part of the issue is that staff have all had
similar experiences and sometimes find it hard to reconcile themselves as being in
authority with the notion that authority should always be challenged. Middlehurst (1993)
quoted a Head of Department thus:

Leadership means having the authority and status to impose one’s
views on the department and know that the department accepts you
as a leader because you are who you are….Heads of Department in
universities have no effective managerial power and operate by
inspiring or engineering consent.


An earlier study by Moses and Roe (1990) indicated another source of problems for the
academic manager, they found that staff felt that the primary role of a Head of
Department was to be an advocate for the department; secondly they should consider
staff views; and the development of a strategy for the department only came in third
place. This difference in what is expected by faculty within the department and what is
expected by senior management of a Head of Department can result in particular tensions.

There was a resonance with the work of Goffee and Jones (2009, p 3) who suggest that good leadership requires managers to become “situational sensors”, paying particular attention to the emotions and motivations of people. They should have a good “self knowledge” enabling them to work effectively with others. Managers need to “communicate with care” appreciating the message, the context, the team and their personal strengths and weaknesses as a communicator. Finally, “successful leaders manage relationships by knowing when to empathize or get personal and when to step back to keep people focused on the organization’s goals” (Goffee & Jones, 2009, p.3).

The study revealed that respondents took pride in their organization, particularly at the School level. The environment was described as supportive and encouraging. It was felt that the strong vocational bias of CU gave students a worthwhile educational experience and graduates were well prepared for future employment. This broadly agrees with the claim made on CU’s website “that CU provides education and training opportunities that are accessible, flexible and of the highest quality, and has been independently acclaimed for its high academic standards and for its high level of student satisfaction”. The respondent who had undergone training with the Leadership Foundation had found the process useful and valued the on-going mentorship.
There was some regret about the physical separation of the campuses which limited collaboration across schools. This lack of social networking spaces has been identified in other institutions:

Collegiality was also discussed in terms of the informal social networks of the university, where until relatively recently, people had been able to meet for coffee or lunch in a senior common room. This was characterized as being a fundamental aspect of university life, but one that was coming under pressure from the modernization agenda.

Waring, M., 2009, p.266

4.5 Conclusion

To summarise all of the participants had made a positive decision to move into a management role. The majority felt it was a natural transition from the role of programme director which involved informally managing groups of staff, managing programme budgets and negotiating with other programme directors over the allocation of resources. Thus they did not fit into the role of reluctant managers as identified by Deem, Hillyard and Reed (2007). All perceived themselves to have a role when implementing or facilitating change, however the lack of control did not make this role an easy one. Leadership was achieved by persuasion and cajoling. Knight and Trowler (2001) describe this process as working with and through existing cultural patterns, and cultivating relationships to get things done.
There were no significant differences between the responses of those in the School of Education and those based in other Schools. Any differences in responses tended to be based on length of service and previous employment history. Those who had been in post longest were surer of their role. Gender did not appear to be an issue.

In this chapter, the discovery phase of the Appreciative Inquiry cycle has been completed. This has identified the nature of the post; the biographies of those undertaking the role; their positive experiences and their values. In the next chapter, the dream phase of the cycle will be reviewed. Thus the research moves from “appreciating, valuing the best of what is” (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros, 2003, p.15) to “envisioning what might be”.
Chapter 5 Appreciative Inquiry Cycle: The Dream Phase

5.1 Envisioning the Future

The dream phase of the Appreciative Inquiry cycle is intended to be highly practical. It involves building on what people have discovered about the organisation and from this projecting their wishes and aspirations for the organisation’s future (Lewis, Passmore and Cantore, 2008). Cooperrider, Whiney and Stavros (2003) suggested one question in particular which illustrates how participants can be helped to envisage the future “What three wishes do you have for your organization?” (Reed, 2007, p.36). The first part of this chapter will concentrate on the responses to this question.

If you had three wishes for your organisation what would they be?

Not surprisingly, given the current financial climate there were several references to funding and a number of respondents were looking for some sort of stability, so that moving into the future would be easier to manage. Olivia stated:

I think CU in particular is struggling, (pause), and is struggling very much at the moment with the financial, (pause), credit crunch. I would like to see fewer campuses and I would like to see more, um, fairness between the facilities on the various campuses.

This was echoed by Ethan: “I think perhaps a wish would be that somehow the financial pressures would be eased within CU. If you could wave a magic wand that would be
terrific!”  Harry acknowledged that this was not just a local issue restricted to this university:

I suppose the second thing would be, I don’t know, now I don’t know where we are but, but there is a recognition, isn’t there, that higher education in Wales is generally under-funded as compared to England and given where we are with things at the moment that’s, that’s not going to get any easier. So again, realistic and appropriate funding for higher education.

James also acknowledged the issue:

the first and most obvious that anyone from any school is going to say is that we have to be able to, we have to be able to go into the future positively and one thing that follows looking with perhaps a positive outlook is that we have to get the economics sorted out, we have to gain an appropriate level of funding.

Some interviewees indicated that any additional funding needed to focus strongly on estates and buildings, although the specific nature of the wish varied between respondents. Olivia focused on the campuses as estates in general, while Ava spoke of rebuilding so as to reflect a better university ambiance:

I feel very strongly that money needs to be spent (pause) on estates where it’s not being spent and is being wasted in other areas

Olivia

a new building?  It might not seem very much but the environment is
shocking it feels like going to a 60s high school instead of a university institute so it would be really nice if they could just knock it down, close it down for a year and rebuild it and get it right.

Ava

Isla, who was based on a campus which had recently had a number of new buildings, was more concerned about capacity issues:

obviously, at the moment, we are concerned about the movement of (other school) over here and how things have maybe not been thought through properly in terms of physical capacity to take, of this site to actually take more um staff and students in terms of no increase in refectory size and that kind of thing

Thomas’s focus was more on appearance of the campuses and the effect that might have on marketing and recruitment: “I don’t think visually we do ourselves any favours; this is coming probably because I have the promotional marketing responsibility for the School. We don’t manage our campuses well.”

There was also a feeling that staff needed more spaces where they could meet and talk informally:

well probably for CU actually to do some more things for staff actually and again that’s the lack of communication certainly on this site I think is because there is nowhere for staff to actually meet, you know, informally to, you know, have a coffee or whatever and discuss things, whereas in other universities they have staff common rooms, which they seem to completely ignore, so I think that that actually could be so much more productive if people talked to each other.

Isla
Sophia expressed a similar thought, although meeting places *per se* were not mentioned:

> I would like to see more discussion, integration, development and research between the different schools, because I think there is lots of development that is similar, lots of research that is very similar in other schools.

Ethan made a similar point: “I think number one I would like to see more inter-school collaboration on projects, and not just projects but mainstream teaching.”

Another issue that featured in more than one interview was the question of branding.

> “Third thing, it is current, they need to sort out the brand, what we are, I don’t think we sell it, we write it down in font 10 on our website, but what are we? And I think we need to promote that harder” (Thomas). It is important to note here that the University was considering a name change so that the question of identity and branding was an issue that staff were considering at that time. The name change was subsequently implemented in November, 2011 following separation from the University of Wales.

Olivia, who had joined from another institution in England, felt that “it has a strong identity within South Wales but not beyond really”. Sophia was concerned that too much was made of the city location and not enough of the nearby countryside:
I think one of the first things I would do is sort of the name change which seems to be bothering everyone I think it seems extraordinary to be here out in the country looking at the hills and to be having a branding that is CU City actually, I think that needs more thought.

Ava’s concerns centred on the issue of status: “I would like to see CU more widely known and more valued I think and seen more as a University than the old Tech or the old Institute. I am definitely am pleased to see us going more down that university route and having a kind of identity”. Olivia also had concerns about status but hers were slightly different:

One wish would be to try and get a better handle on the conflict between the student-centred, teaching-driven organisation and a research, a university with a very clear research mission. I think that is, that whole issue is characteristic of all post-92 universities but I think CU in particular is struggling and is struggling very much at the moment with the financial credit crunch.

Ava also expressed concerns about the strategic direction of CU; “Another wish would be that we focus more … corporately, we focus more on learning and teaching because that is what we have based ourselves on. I would like to see that as being the first priority, but I think that is more of a personal thing because that is my priority”.

Students and the student experience was mentioned in two of the interviews although the responses were linked to earlier points discussed. “I think word of mouth is our most important promotional tool, so every year the School should add value to their students, the courses, the programmes that they offer, and that includes the estates, the
whole nine yards that service our students” (Thomas). Here there is a clear link with issues of both branding and buildings as mentioned in the earlier section.

James was concerned that a lack of funding might impact on the student experience:
“My second most personal wish and I can’t remember if you said if it was for CU or for myself or for …Yeah, I suppose um is that we are always able to continue to recruit with integrity both from a student perspective and a staff perspective.” He linked this, too, with branding, “because the brand title will grow, it’ll get stronger via our students’ reputation and what they are able to do.”

Other wishes expressed tended to concentrate on more subject specific areas, Isla wanted more inter-professional working; James was concerned that courses with high resource needs such as product design might be compromised. Harry was concerned about the future of teacher education and training. Teacher education and training in Wales was undergoing radical reform at this time following the Furlong review.

Overall, the key themes emerging from the responses can be summarised in the following points; the university needed a secure level of funding so that it could continue to deliver high quality courses on campuses that are fit for purpose. Any new buildings should incorporate more social spaces so that staff can meet regularly with colleagues. There needed to be more collaboration across campuses and schools. The university should cultivate a strong image which reflected its key attributes. Respondents thought
students have an important role to play in promoting the university.

Continuing the theme of envisaging the future, participants were asked to give examples of their positive achievements and to think about what advice they would give to anyone taking up a similar post in the future. The achievements listed all focused on the student experience. Respondents were pleased with the quality of the programmes on offer and they felt that graduates left CU with good skills appropriate for their chosen vocations. Both Harry and Ethan felt that in part the quality of the students was due to good engagement with employers, ensuring that graduates were fit for purpose. Ethan also mentioned good performance in the National Student Survey (NSS) although he added the caveat that:

"we are proud of that although cautious as well, as it is a double edged sword as the only way is down and sometimes with the way these surveys go you can rapidly drop down, but we are proud that at least last year felt that they were 100% satisfied with our programmes."

Ethan

All described themselves as happy to come to work each day, with the variety of the role being a particular pleasure. Although the "never knowing what is around the corner" was a challenge, it was felt to enrich the role. Olivia enjoyed being part of a community of practice.
As far as what they wished they’d known before they took up the post, Ethan concentrated on the people aspect, saying he had not realized how much he would be caught up in other peoples’ lives. It is important here to note that this school experienced the death of two members of staff, and the serious illness of two others, and, therefore, it had been a particularly difficult time for both individuals and teams.

When asked what advice they would give to anyone taking up a similar post the advice was overwhelmingly practical concentrating on getting a clear job description and outline of exact responsibilities. It should be noted here that all of the respondents would have had a job description and person specification prior to appointment so it’s not clear whether the ones supplied were inadequate or unclear. It was also felt to be important that everyone in the department was aware of what the role entailed. In particular, Ethan mentioned the importance of treating everyone fairly: “it can be a lonely position because really you have to be seen to be treating everybody fairly and equally and to avoid the accusation of [having] your favourites from previous loyalties.”

There was some frustration expressed in the lack of autonomy in the role, particularly in regard to the finances and the inability to offer incentives or rewards. Olivia commented “they should be aware that their role is essentially one of ensuring that staff are compliant with the university’s wishes and the university’s wishes are determined by a very small number of people.”
5.2. Provocative Propositions

In the AI cycle, when the dream phase data has been analysed, a number of provocative propositions are developed. Macgruder Watkins and Mohr (2001) state that “a provocative proposition is a statement that bridges the best of ‘what is’ with your own speculation or intuition of ‘what might be’”. They go on to suggest the following criteria for good provocative propositions:

- Is it provocative: does it stretch, challenge or interrupt the status quo?
- Is it grounded: are there examples that illustrate the ideal as a real possibility?
- Is it desired: if it could be fully actualised, would the organization want it?
- Is it stated in affirmative and bold terms?
- Does it provide guidance for the organization’s future as a whole?
- Does it expand the zone of possible change and development?
- Is it a high involvement process?
- Is it used to stimulate intergenerational organizational learning?


Provocative propositions are usually written as if the situation has been achieved: as in “we give excellent customer service” rather than “we aim to give excellent customer service” (Lewis, Passmore and Cantore 2008, p. 59). Drawing on the themes identified earlier, the provocative propositions drawn from this series of interviews for the present study were:

- The university has a clear and distinct image as a teaching university with a strong vocational bias.
• Heads and Deputy Heads of Department have clearly defined roles.
• There is a good level of collaboration across schools and campuses.
• Former and current students are our best marketing tool.
• Campuses are maintained to a high standard with a number of social spaces so that colleagues meet one another regularly.
• The university has sufficient funding to deliver high quality courses.

These propositions represented the recurring themes that emerged from the data and an outcome of carrying out the initial phases of the AI cycle. The propositions follow the premise of the “scholarship of inquiry” which is focused on “living the questions rather than seeking the answers” (Mead, 2002, p.3).

The provocative propositions were distributed to all members of staff at the Head or Deputy Head of Department level for their comments as a final stage to the project. The details about how these were distributed are included in Chapter three. A total of 14 responses were received from the 18 questionnaires distributed. Staff in the School of Education and the School of Art and Design all responded. One response was received from the School of Management from four distributed, and because of its different
structure a single response was requested and received from the School of Sport. All of the original interviewees responded. In order to ensure anonymity, quotations have not been attributed to particular respondents. The provocative propositions are presented in turn and respondents responses to each are discussed. Discussion of this phase of the research concludes the chapter.

Provocative proposition (PP) 1. *The University has a clear and distinct image as a teaching university with a strong vocational bias.*

The majority of respondents were in broad agreement with this statement, although several also wanted some reference to the university’s research agenda. There were some doubts expressed as to whether CU was sure about how it wished to be viewed. There was also a feeling that CU did not position itself clearly enough in relation to other higher education institutions in South East Wales and that it was not well known outside Wales.

I personally would see CU as I see all new universities: essentially teaching establishments struggling to play two games: that of teaching and that of trying to build a research agenda…and having a hard time doing the latter!

The ‘mission’ appears to be increasingly unfocused – especially in terms of what might be viewed as two contradictory objectives: research excellence (so that we can play with the big boys in the ‘real’ universities) and teaching/vocational excellence – which is where the post-92 crew are generally situated.
I also feel that after all the effort and expenditure on recruiting a research profile the outcome in terms of output is mixed (evidenced in the RAE ratings) and the return on 'investment' does not exist in relation to the moneys drawn down based on the RAE results.

PP 2. **Former and current students are our best marketing tool**

There was general support for this proposition; although it was clearly stated that the university should not take this for granted, or assume that this would continue. One respondent felt that it was not sufficient to rely on “word of mouth” and several stated that CU needed to consider how it utilised comments from former students, and is it using new media to its full advantage? Another respondent indicated that for their programmes past students were a key marketing tool:

> I agree. We carry out an annual survey of all our first years and for the past four years past students are the single largest source of promotion to promote enquiry/application. With 98% of students putting us down as first choice.

Another added the following caveat:

> Saying that, our reputation is strong at a local (Welsh) level rather than at UK level where many still have not heard of us or confuse us with [Russell Group] University.

One respondent felt that the student experience was not consistent across all courses:

> This may well be the case with regard to certain strong programmes that have led to academic and employment successes for students. But, if this is so, in some successful areas, then the voices of these former & current students, are not articulated sufficiently clearly enough to outweigh the negative images & experiences that some students encounter. How this might be done is complex and, no
doubt, costly but more effective use of the media (c.f. [Valleys University]) suggests itself as a means of disseminating such information in an age where ‘word of mouth’ is largely outmoded.

In the previous section this contributor had also made this comment which refers directly to the issue of marketing:

The content & tone of publicity seems to reinforce this confusion of identity and its images seems to present [CU]as a ‘fun place to be where you might also pick up a few qualifications’, rather than a serious place of study.

PP 3. Campuses are maintained to a high standard with a number of social spaces so that colleagues meet one another regularly

Comments here identified the fact that new facilities built for students were being used by academic staff as meeting places, in the absence of any dedicated spaces for staff to meet privately. Longer serving members of staff felt that the disappearance of staff common rooms had made it more difficult for staff to meet informally. The lack of these facilities meant that staff now communicated by e-mail so that the personal relationship was lost.

The lack of a staffroom leads to an atomization of staff and the maintenance of an email culture of communication that is dehumanizing and inefficient in terms of staff sharing ideas & working together.

In relation to social space – the staff have been ignored
The lack of maintenance of existing buildings was also mentioned:

Much effort has gone into any new building work but few efforts have been made to enhance some of the older areas of the campuses.

Many contrasted the new developments with existing buildings and felt that there needed to be a more consistent approach to maintenance and upkeep of the existing estate. The detrimental effect of poor facilities on standards of learning and teaching was also mentioned:

The variable nature of some teaching combined with drab building and crowded classrooms etc militate against the many good features and strongly committed contributions from many members of staff etc.

PP4. **There is a good level of collaboration across schools and campuses**

There were a variety of responses to this proposition. Some collaboration was taking place respondents felt but too often there was duplication of effort, with staff groups working on similar modules/projects while being unaware of each other’s efforts.

There is some evidence but it is based on personalities, again strategies need to be driven and collaboration has been left to grow organically without nutrition and water. The other argument is that by its very nature collaboration is organic and problem / opportunity specific however in CU it would seem there needs to be an additional refereeing function to ensure that the collaborators remain focused on the outcome.

There are culture differences across schools and this can make simple processes quite difficult.
The “silo” mentality was mentioned, a situation not helped by the physical separation of the campuses. There was also a wistful look back at more relaxed times:

A decade or so ago, there was a mid morning break at 10:30 where both Education & Sport staff met for coffee. There were also end of term Leavers events attended by Sport & Education staff. Whilst these were not panaceas for instant cooperation & creative collusion, their demise has led to an increased sense of campus alienation.

PP5. Heads and Deputy Heads of Department have clearly defined roles

First, not all of the schools had Deputy Heads of Department. Most of the respondents indicated that they were clear about their roles. However, staff in their department were not always aware of what the HoD could and could not do.

In my (brief) experience HoD’s lack much authority although bearing responsibilities, and responsibility without authority is invidious. There is a sense that heads of dept. should achieve consensus in a collegiate manner, and so necessarily the role differs depending on the attitude and approaches of those colleagues.

Reasonably in relation to staff who report up. Less clear in relation to using our expertise or knowledge of staff/students/disciplines to effect positive change, or even to ameliorate the effects of negative change.

The role is clearly defined in that there is a very clear job description. However, it doesn’t justify the level of flexibility and responsiveness that Heads and Deputy Heads have to demonstrate on a daily basis. So much is subject to external pressures that are not containable that it is impossible to fully outline what the role entails.
PP6. The University has sufficient funding to deliver high quality courses

This question came at a very challenging time for most departments, as CU was implementing funding cuts. While it was felt that generally funding was insufficient, it was also acknowledged that CU had to be financially solvent and therefore some cuts were going to be necessary. The current position was making staff fearful about job losses and the non-replacement of departing staff meant that remaining staff had increasing workloads. There were some fears that the quality of provision could be jeopardized.

Absolutely not. There have been too many occasions while I have been at CU where decisions have had to be made based on financial reasons rather than those related to good learning and teaching. The willingness and dedication of staff is the key to the level of quality achieved to date, but increasing cuts have resulted in courses that could be so much better if only there was more time or resources (including human resources) and this can only be achieved with finance.

One made the comment that CU’s portfolio of did not attract many research grants and therefore the university had to rely solely on the monies from student income.

It is also important to realize that CU’s academic portfolio does not included any subject areas that traditionally are able to draw down large research grants or act as R & D departments to commercial research projects. Financially we will always be heavily reliant on ‘teaching’ monies

The researcher had thought long and hard about including this final proposition. CU was facing a year on year reduction in its income. In the previous academic year there had been compulsory redundancies. Although the different funding mechanisms in
England and Wales resulted in more Welsh domiciled students choosing to remain in Wales for their Higher Education (Urwin, Gould, & Page, 2010), the sector was still experiencing reduced levels of funding. In addition, CU was facing increasing pressure to merge. The Secretary of State for Education in Wales stated that he wished to see a reduced number of HEIs in Wales (Andrews, 2011) and that in his opinion the preferred option was a merger between CU, Valleys University and NU. CU had thus far not demonstrated an enthusiasm for this plan and up until very recently had been exploring a merger within the University of Wales. The response from CU’s board of governors in July 2011 was as follows:

The Board of Governors of the Cambrian City University (CU) met on the 12th July and commenced the identification of its strategic options following the ending of merger discussions with University of Wales Alliance partners.

This work will take account of the Minister’s statement today and it is expected that a decision will be made on CU’s future in the early autumn after consultation with staff, students and other stakeholders.

CU is a strong, vibrant and sustainable student-focused university with international reach and a commitment to Cardiff, Wales and the Welsh Government’s agenda as outlined in For Our Future.  

BoG, 2011

The University was therefore likely to face many challenges in the years ahead. In fact, since the collection of this data the University has undergone a major change. It has
withdrawn from the University of Wales and now exercises its own degree awarding powers. The Order of the Privy Council, approving amendments to the Instruments and Articles of Government was issued by the Privy Council on 12th October 2011 with an implementation date of 1st November 2011 (Board of Governors, 2011)

5.3.1 Discussion

This section will reflect first on the interviewees’ wishes and aspirations for the future based on the AI cycle. It will then move on to consider the responses to the circulation of the provocative propositions.

5.3.2 “Envisioning the Future”

As discussed in Chapters One and Two, Higher Education has undergone many changes over the last two decades. Staff in HE are facing difficult times professionally and personally (Cockell and McArthur-Blair, 2012). Therefore maintaining a positive focus is not easy. The respondents were looking for some stability and in particular adequate levels of funding to maintain the service that the University provided. Furnham (2008) suggests that people become satisfied with the status quo and when changes occur they feel insecure. This insecurity increases when there are economic implications, such as reduced funding. There was concern that if funding in Wales dropped significantly behind England it would be difficult to keep estates and buildings in good repair, and that would affect student recruitment and the ability to attract funds
from other investors. Overall, it was felt that the University provided a good student experience, and that no one wanted this jeopardised by uncertainty around the future of the University.

Many of the concerns voiced in this section, became the provocative propositions that were circulated to a wider group of HoDs and DhoDs. These will be discussed further in the next section.

When asked what advice they would give to anyone thinking of applying for the post, there was a clear indication from the respondents that they felt that other colleagues were not always clear about what they could or could not do as managers. The difficulties of moving from a professional to a management role are not restricted to Higher Education, and often occur in other areas where professionals become managers, such as nursing, social work, engineering and accountancy. As Watson and Harris (1999, p. 46) state “opportunities to progress often lead into managerial work, rather than recognition and development as a practitioner”. When discussing how professionals cope with their change in role, the respondents in this study echoed the contributions of “Liza Potts” in Watson and Harris’ (1999) study, where responses spoke of:

prioritizing – asking for things to be done and ensuring that things that are done routinely are being done to a standard […] at the same time as all of this, building the team and keeping the team together – getting people to work with each other.

Watson and Harris, 1999, p.70
Taking on a managerial post places a person in a new position, particularly with regards to how they may be perceived by former colleagues:

they have to reconcile a ‘social self’, addressing public, collective, external, social notions of being a manager and a ‘personal self’ an internal, private sense of themselves as unique individuals, with their own way of seeing the world, their own feelings and reactions to it

Watson and Harris, 1999, p.118

Certainly, in the author’s experience, some colleagues viewed taking on a managerial post as “going over to the dark side”. It was strange to see how some who had formerly been regarded as friends became distant when she took up her new appointment. In Parker’s (2004) account of becoming a Head of Department he makes a similar observation:

My friends and colleagues do treat me differently. I think I can sometimes see the resentment in their eyes. But perhaps I am looking for it, looking for the signs of deference and resistance written on their bodies. Sometimes it is clear enough that it is ‘they’ that are making me become manager. Certain people expect that of me, and seem faintly disappointed if I do not show the symbols of decisive power. They bring me problems, and expect me to solve them.

Parker, 2004, p.53

Floyd and Dimmocks’ (2012) study classifies HoDs as “jugglers, copers and strugglers”

It would appear that all those interviewed in the present study could be classified as either “jugglers” or “copers”. They were able to manage the myriad roles associated with the post to a greater or lesser extent. No one indicated that they regretted taking the post on, or that they would relinquish the role in the near future.

The issues raised in the Dream section became the foundation of the Provocative Propositions and these will be examined in detail in the following section.
5.3.3 Provocative propositions

PP1. Brown (2009) cites a study by the Rand Corporation which suggests that there is a division between those universities who are trying to maintain or acquire the prestige that comes from a successful performance in research and those who are working towards a good reputation for meeting student and employer requirements. At the time of the study, CU was focusing on raising its research profile; and this resulted in many long-serving, older staff feeling that their expertise in teaching was undervalued. Similarly new staff being recruited were more interested in doing research and regarded teaching as a minor part of their role. As Brown (2009, p.7) states, “within institutions, greater differentiation of activities, structures and personnel can lead to, or reinforce, the fragmentation of the academic community”. CU appeared to be both trying to acquire the prestige that comes from high quality research and maintain its reputation as a deliverer of good quality vocational courses. It remains to be seen, at the time of writing, how successful the dual approach will be.

The challenge and the subject of developing a robust research culture have been an issue for many post 92 Universities. Prior to being granted university status, most polytechnics and institutes of higher education concentrated on teaching. Academic staff were usually selected for their vocational expertise, rather than their research profile. There is an increasingly competitive research environment for all universities, where they have sought to increase research capacity to deliver excellence for successive research assessment exercises. In many post 92 universities this has
resulted in a shift to recruiting staff with doctoral qualifications; and those without such qualifications can feel vulnerable:

During my employment in HE I have been required to be a generalist, turning my hand to whatever needed covering, thus, recent emphases on research and specialization, coupled with job insecurity and redundancies, had left me feeling vulnerable; and led to my seeking ways of becoming more attractive to my employers.

Young, 2010, p.54

In addition, those new young staff with doctorates may take up lecturing positions with an expectation that they will have sufficient time to pursue their research interests and may be less interested in their teaching role. There have been at least two instances in the last five years in the School of Education where young academics have left their lecturing posts to take up research assistant posts in Russell group universities.

A corollary of this is the concern that teaching quality could be affected in post 92 universities. This was evident in many of the responses cited in the study and explains the strong emphasis that all research should inform the curriculum since teaching is the main source of revenue for CU. As a respondent in Floyd and Dimmock’s (2011, p.393) study of Heads of Department, also in a post 92 university, stated:

I feel increasingly out of step with the whole climate of academia at the moment, as I feel it has become so excessively research driven. I mean that I think that research is hugely important but what I would like to see is a balance between research and teaching. I feel it has
become so excessively research driven that I don’t feel entirely in step with that…

PP2. In a recent National Student Satisfaction Survey (NSS, 2011), CU was named as the top new university in Wales. Although the number of new universities in Wales is comparatively small (6) this is still an important statistic and suggested that CU was maintaining its reputation as a provider of “education and training opportunities that are accessible, flexible and of the highest quality, […] independently acclaimed for its high academic standards and for its high level of student satisfaction” (CU, 2011, para1). CU has also recently created an Alumni association and is actively seeking funds from former students through the medium of the CU Foundation. Nevertheless, in an increasingly competitive market its strategy for continuing to attract students will need to be reviewed regularly.

The need for active marketing was highlighted in the Dearing report:

We expect students of all ages will be increasingly discriminating investors in higher education, looking for quality, convenience, and relevance to their needs at a cost they consider affordable and justified by the probable return on their investment of time and money.

NCIHE (1997) para. 1.21

The bulk of CU's funding comes from student funding therefore it will be vital to maintain student numbers. As yet it is unclear whether the differences in funding between the home countries will have an impact on participation rates in the four home countries of the UK. Universities in Wales face a particular challenge as funding per student is
considerably lower than in England, in 2007/8, for example, the difference was £900 per student (BBC, 2011). In the year 2010/11, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales announced cuts of 4%, some 15 million pounds in total (BBC, 2011).

PP3. Good communication is frequently cited as a core competency for both leaders and managers (Kotter, 1990) therefore structures which facilitate good communication are obviously key. Between 2008 and 2010 there were major developments on two campuses. On the campus housing Education and Sport a new Students’ Union building was constructed while on the main campus a new School of Management was constructed. Both of these buildings have pleasant, well lit social spaces. While these spaces are primarily for student use, academic staff also use them as there are no specific spaces for staff. In these circumstances it is difficult for staff to have full and frank discussions as they can be easily overheard by students. The demise of the staff room in post-92 universities seems universal (Waring, 2009) but this does not seem to have been the case in the pre 92 universities who have retained their Senior Common Rooms.

In addition, the development of new buildings, while welcome, does highlight the difference between the poor condition of many of the existing buildings which were built in the 1960s and 70s. The contrast was very apparent when the researcher was working with a group of academics from Saudi Arabia. Once they had attended sessions in the new School of Management, there was a marked reluctance to return to the shabby, and not particularly chic, buildings that house the School of Education.
PP4. Traditionally, academics have tended to have more loyalty to their discipline areas than to their institution but as Beer (nd, p.1) points out: “current HE policy also seeks to promote integrative and applied research practices”. How this might best be facilitated in CU is difficult to articulate. There are few events where research groups can discuss on-going projects and those that do take place are usually school based, which militate against cross-school collaboration. The Professorial Lecture series may go some way to disseminate information more widely, but these rely on academics deciding to attend a session on a subject/topic they are unfamiliar with.

McNamee (2005) writing from an AI perspective asserts that for any organisation to function properly the views of all members should be considered:

> The appreciative organisation creates opportunities for members not directly aligned to come together. Introducing members from distinctly different segments of the organisation, who might not otherwise or ordinarily need to know each other or know about each other’s work, could potentially improve organisational functioning. When it comes to the process of review, valuing these various voices contributes to the overall sense of an appreciative organisation.

McNamee, 2005, p.32

Certainly there are currently few opportunities for staff to meet informally to discuss either their teaching or their research.

PP5. Although each respondent had been recruited to a post with a detailed job description there was some debate as to how accurate a job description can be. As stated in the job description for Principal Lecturer (Appendix 1) there is a caveat “The Summary of Duties and Responsibilities is not intended to be an exhaustive list of tasks performed. Other associated technical tasks are likely to be performed as directed by
the line manager”. Thus a Head or Deputy Head of Department’s role is likely to be
dynamic, and to change as required. Some respondents felt that their role was not
understood by staff in the school. This in part comes from divisions between academic
managers and those academics not in management. Trowler (2008, p.48) suggests
that:

Managers’ perceptions and intentions are sometimes very different
from the perceptions and ‘reading’ of those they seek to lead. The
message sent is not always the message received; indeed it is
probably rarely so. Rather than expecting the message to be
received in the same state it was sent, it is important to expect that
this will in most cases ‘not’ be the case, and to consider the possible
or probable reinterpretations that will occur as the message is
decoded ‘on the ground’.

Too often “academic and management agendas are seen as competing narratives”
(Whitchurch, 2008), leading to distrust between staff and their managers.

PP6. The final proposition on the funding of higher education is seen as one of the key
drivers of change in the sector. The HE sector was moving away from block grant
system funded by government to a more market-based system where students (and
whoever pays their fees) were looking for value for money. In Wales, there were
particular challenges as the Welsh Assembly Government supported the idea of a
single vocational university in South East Wales. This would necessitate the merger of
CU with Neighbour University and Valleys University. This uncertainty created a
particular challenge for middle managers as they tried to reassure staff and support
them to move forward with a positive focus.
5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher used participants’ views to “envision the future”. The overwhelming concern was that sufficient funding would be forthcoming to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning was maintained. It was acknowledged that the university needed to build its research capacity but that this should not be at the expense of teaching. Collaboration between schools and departments was limited, and this was not helped by the physical separation of the campuses and the lack of social spaces available for staff to meet informally. In order to maintain funding, the university needed to market itself effectively. Although past students made excellent ambassadors for the university, the university needed to compete effectively to maintain student numbers and could not rely just on “word of mouth” recommendations. The role of Head of Department was a dynamic one and the degree of flexibility required was not always reflected in the job description.

The Discovery and Dream phases of the Appreciative Inquiry cycle have been presented and the findings from these phases discussed. In the next chapter, a synthesis of the overall findings of the analysis will be discussed and the Design phase of AI will be considered.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The key purpose of this study was to identify the positive experiences of academics working as middle level managers in a newly formed academic delivery unit in a post 92 university setting. The impetus was the author’s appointment to one of these roles and her desire to do the job as effectively and efficiently as possible and to understand more about the nature of the role from a professional and conceptual perspective. Over the course of this study the initial formation of the new academic delivery unit became established. However, the role of the Head or Deputy Head of Department continued to evolve and it is this role which forms the core of the thesis. Chapter six will consider the purpose of the study, and give a summary of the research findings. Then these will be discussed in relation to implications for professional practice and future research opportunities. The author’s personal reflection on undertaking the study is included in the Professional Development Portfolio part of the thesis.

6.2 The Study

In April, 2006 the author began an EdD programme that was newly validated at CU. The first taught module was entitled Contextualising Professional Change and the assessment tasks for this module were successfully completed in June and September of that year. In November a Research Degree application was submitted and approved.
While undertaking preliminary reading for the study, the researcher became interested in the use of narrative as a qualitative research tool and sought ways to incorporate this methodological approach in her research. While researching the use of narrative she discovered the work of David Cooperrider (Cooperrider, 1986) and his technique of Appreciative Inquiry. This approach seemed to be a good way of generating personal stories from participants and of countering some of the negative attitudes to management in Higher Education (Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007). It was decided to concentrate on the role of middle managers, in particular, it was considered important to focus on the positive aspects of the role so that members of staff could be supported and sustained when first taking on management responsibilities.

The Aims and Objectives of the research were as follows:

Aim

To conduct a qualitative case study using an appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, 1986) theoretical perspective to identify key experiences of middle level academic managers when implementing organisational change.

Research Objectives (ROs):

RO1 To model Appreciative Inquiry as a research method in Higher Education

RO2 To clarify the roles and responsibilities of middle level academic managers during times of organisational change
RO3 To identify positive experiences the role can bring

RO4 To create a set of provocative propositions (Watkins & Mohr, 2001, p.141) arising from the data

RO5 To use analysis of the data to suggest how such positive experiences could be sustained and enhanced to facilitate on-going organisational change

It was intended to add to the body of knowledge relating to the management of Higher Education, in particular the experiences of those who become Heads of Department; to improve the experiences of those who move from a purely academic to a managerial role and to evaluate the use of Appreciative Inquiry as a research methodology.

A series of semi structured interviews were carried out using AI principles. The results of these interviews were analysed and a set of provocative propositions formulated. These were circulated to all staff at similar managerial levels across the university to conclude the data collection process. Staff responses were analysed and reported in Chapter five.

6.2 Findings

6.2.1 The AI cycle – The Discovery Phase

All of the staff interviewed (n=8) had made a positive decision to move into a management role. The majority saw it as a natural progression from the role of
programme director. The group had backgrounds which had concentrated on teaching rather than research with only two respondents having a PhD. The biggest challenge that they identified was managing more diverse groups of staff than one would find in a programme team. All felt that they had an important role in facilitating change but that having neither “carrot” nor “stick” available to them meant that they achieved change by a process of cajoling and persuading.

The respondents were proud of their organisation; in particular, all were satisfied with their schools’ reputation in the wider world. Each felt that senior staff in their schools supported and encouraged them in their day to day roles. Students at CU gained a good graduate education and were well prepared for the world of work. Therefore, the statement made on CU’s website “that CU provides education and training opportunities that are accessible, flexible and of the highest quality, and has been independently acclaimed for its high academic standards and for its high level of student satisfaction” is echoed in the responses made by the interviewees in this study. Only one respondent had had the opportunity to undertake management training. He valued that training and the on-going mentorship provided alongside the course. He was the only external appointment (moving from further education) which may be why he was offered training.

There was some regret about the physical separation of the campuses, which limited collaboration across schools. The lack of social networking spaces also mitigated against informal networking and meant that managers could feel isolated in their roles.
6.2.3 The Dream Phase

One of the key elements that emerged in this part of the interview was that the university needed a secure and predictable level of funding so that campuses remained fit for purpose and could continue to deliver high quality courses meeting the needs of the local economy. If new buildings were to be constructed it was thought to be essential that they contained social spaces so that academic and administrative staff could meet regularly and informally. It was also felt that staff should be encouraged to participate in more collaborative activity across schools and campuses. CU should cultivate a clear image and brand that reflected its key attributes of a University that focused on providing students with a good learning experience. Participants thought that past and present students had a key role to play in promoting the university.

When dealing with the specifics of the job of Head or Deputy Head of Department, the respondents felt that an up to date job description and outline of current responsibilities was essential. As outlined in Chapter four there was some discrepancy between the role descriptors for Principal Lecturers and Level Four managers, both of which applied to this role. There was also some concern that others in their department needed to be aware of what the job did and did not entail. The role could be a lonely one and there was a keenness to be seen as fair to all within the department; in particular it was important that managers were not perceived to be favouring their own subject or former programme team. Traditionally, in the university sector, loyalty is to discipline field rather than the institution or department (Santiago et al. 2006). The lack of autonomy in the role was described by some as frustrating, and the emphasis on making staff compliant with University systems they felt sometimes hindered good working.
relationships. Deem and Brehony (2005) suggest that there are strong divisions between academic managers and those they manage, even though the former were academics before they took up their posts.

6.2.4 Provocative propositions
The majority of respondents were in broad agreement with the proposition that the university had a clear and distinct image as a teaching university with a strong vocational bias. It was recognized that CU was trying to improve its research profile, but there were some concerns that the university was unsure about where to position itself, particularly in relation to other universities in South East Wales. There was support for the proposition that former and current students were a good marketing tool, although there was a strong feeling that CU should not take that for granted, and needed to consider how best to utilize student input and comments in marketing and promotional literature and web-based publishing.

The general consensus was that the campuses showed a marked contrast between new buildings and older ones. It was felt that there was an inconsistent approach to building maintenance. Social spaces were primarily designed for students, but staff also used them as there were no areas specifically for staff to meet. It was remarked that this lack of social space resulted in a less personal approach, where staff communicated by e-mail rather than face to face. There were also concerns that poor
maintenance of teaching rooms could impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Collaboration across schools and campuses was limited and there was concern that there might be some duplication of effort with groups of staff working on similar projects but unaware of each other’s work. It was acknowledged that separate campuses did not help the process of collaboration.

There was some disagreement about whether the roles of Heads and Deputy Heads of Department were sufficiently well defined. In general, respondents felt that they were aware of their roles and responsibilities but that not all academic staff were clear about the parameters of the role of Head or Deputy Head of Department.

The last proposition was regarded as the most contentious. CU was implementing funding cuts at the time that the provocative propositions were being circulated. There was a consensus that funding was insufficient but, since the cuts were being imposed by government, it was important that CU remained solvent and therefore cuts were inevitable. The difficult situation was making staff fearful and, since departing staff were frequently not being replaced, it meant that remaining staff had ever-increasing workloads. There were worries that the quality of teaching and learning could be compromised and that the vocational nature of CU’s programmes meant that the university was unlikely to be able to make up any shortfall in funding by attracting research funding.
6.3 Review of Objectives and Recommendations (The Design Phase)

In this section the author will return to the original research objectives and reflect on how they have been met.

RO1 *To model Appreciative Inquiry as a research method in Higher Education*

Examples of AI being used in Higher Education (Chapman, 2011, McArthur-Blair and Cockell, 2012; Cockell and McArthur-Blair, 2012) have usually focused on large groups of staff taking part in open meetings. Here the emphasis was on using AI as a means of generating narrative accounts of managers’ experiences one to one. Certainly the novelty of the AI questions proved an excellent way to reflect on their experiences and “dream” of a positive future. The nature of the questions meant that participants were able to contemplate their roles in a non-threatening way. Participants also welcomed the opportunity to discuss their experiences with another person, who was undertaking the same role. The interview did not prevent reflection on the difficulties that academics faced when moved into management but allowed those to be framed in such a way that it was possible to foresee how they might be addressed and overcome in future.

The provocative propositions when circulated to a wider audience of managers in similar roles across the university demonstrated that there was a commonality of experience with many expressing the fear that CU would lose its strong teaching focus as a result of placing more emphasis on research and reduced funding. As discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.8 it would perhaps have been better to present the provocative propositions in a focus group with the researcher present, as there was some confusion
as to how challenging the statements were intended to be. Provocative propositions are phrased as statements rather than questions: “the university does” rather than “does the university?”, and this proved particularly contentious when applied to the question of future funding. Nevertheless, the exercise generated many pertinent comments regarding the future of the university.

The fact that AI was a methodology that people were unfamiliar with helped in the interviews, as the questions asked were not ones that participants had been asked before. Whether AI’s effectiveness would be maintained if the interviews were repeated on a number of occasions is difficult to assess. In challenging times within an institution the way questions are framed is very important.

Questions can lead to a focus on everything that is wrong with an institution, or they can uplift the institution by seeking to understand where it is doing work that is fruitful, which can be built upon.

Cockell and McArthur-Blair, 2012, p.214

The emphasis on positive questions made for a relaxed interview with respondents enjoying the opportunity to discuss their role with another manager.

RO2 To clarify the roles and responsibilities of middle level academic managers during times of organisational change

With regard to RO2 it should be noted that organisational change is ever present. As Delanty (2008, p.127) says: “the context is one of institutions not just responding to
change, but having change built into them.” The lack of stability means that future planning is difficult. The financial constraints faced by the organisation mean that provision is constantly under review and staff cannot be replaced unless there is clear evidence that a post is financially viable. The role of middle level managers is primarily that of implementing changes without necessarily being privy to the decision-making process which has preceded the change. Since they have no budgetary control or access to incentives for staff, it is difficult to implement change. Managers at this level are frequently in a difficult position, as more senior managers expect them to implement change on their behalf but their subordinates expect them to support them where appropriate, in their objections or difficulties in complying. At this time of limited funding, increased competitiveness and the threat of merger, it is difficult to provide staff with the “positive and hopeful image of the future” (Cockell and McArthur-Blair, 2012, p. 19) that organisational change needs as a driving force. This issue is not limited to CU. Many universities were facing the same challenges at that time.

RO3 To identify what positive experiences the role can bring

Perhaps, surprisingly, given the issues identified in the previous section the HoDs and Deputy HoDs were agreed that the role did have positive aspects. They welcomed the opportunity to interact with people from different discipline areas, and to try and cohere different programme teams into a department. The fact that frequently they had the opportunity to interact with people on a very personal level was welcomed, even though it could be emotionally draining. All the respondents mentioned student satisfaction as
a key motivator and were concerned that the good quality teaching offered by CU should not be compromised. They welcomed the opportunity to discuss the role with another manager that this study provided.

RO4 To create a set of provocative propositions (Watkins & Mohr, 2001, p.141) arising from the AI cycle

The provocative propositions related to the university as a whole and were not confined to the role of managers. They reflected many of the current concerns about Higher Education and its future in difficult economic times (Knight and Trowler, 2001; Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007; Waring, 2009; Winter, 2009).

- The university has a clear and distinct image as a teaching university with a strong vocational bias.
- Former and current students are our best marketing tool.
- Campuses are maintained to a high standard with a number of social spaces so that colleagues meet one another regularly.
- There is a good level of collaboration across schools and campuses.
- Heads and Deputy Heads of Department have clearly defined roles.
- The university has sufficient funding to deliver high quality courses.
Responses indicated that there was a general consensus on key issues across the schools and campuses. There were concerns about continuing good teaching; advertising the university appropriately; keeping the campuses maintained well; encouraging cross university collaboration, while at the same time facing funding cuts.

RO5 *To use analysis of the AI cycle to suggest how such positive experiences could be sustained and enhanced to facilitate on-going organisational change*

The one contributor who had undergone a Leadership Foundation Course was full of praise for its merits. In particular, he mentioned how useful it was to discuss issues with individuals who were experiencing similar difficulties. Although the preferred option would be to offer all managers at this level an opportunity to undertake similar training given current financial constraints this is unlikely to be possible. Therefore it is suggested that regular meetings between the HoDs should be encouraged, by the formation of a cross university forum. This would mirror the forum that the Business Support managers have. In addition, perhaps more experienced staff could mentor less experienced ones. This has already happened in the past on an informal basis when new Deputies have been supported by their HoD. However it might be advantageous to have support from a member of staff from a different school.
6.4 Contribution

This research has aimed to contribute to theory, methodology and practice in the following ways:

This thesis has focused on a small group of staff located in a single University. It is hoped that the insights provided by this research will be of use to other department heads working in other university settings. In particular, it may help those transitioning from programme director roles to managing more diverse teams of staff. As Floyd and Dimmock (2011, p.396) state:

> It is also hoped that a more thorough understanding of department heads’ experiences will be useful for policy-makers, managers and researchers in the leadership and management of universities.

Many of the issues identified in the present study are similar to those found by Floyd and Dimmock (2011) and Floyd (2012) carried out over a comparable time frame at a different university. In those studies managers regretted that so much of their time was being spent on administrative tasks; this reduced the time available for teaching and research and the time available to spend with students. The role was very dynamic requiring a high degree of flexibility and responsiveness. This supports the authenticity of the data gathered in the present study and its contribution to the field as a further case study with its findings from Wales.

Appreciative Inquiry proved a useful research tool in practice. The questions used to elicit positive responses enabled the respondents to tell their stories in a relaxed and
informal way. This generated data which described the experiences of middle managers in great detail. It did not discount negative experiences, but enabled them to be placed in context. Appreciative inquiry is more commonly used as an organisational development tool; this too could be implemented with several different groups in Higher Education, for example it would be particularly effective when used with students as in Chapman and Bowen-Jones’s (2008) study.

The detailed consideration of one organisational change enabled the author to reflect on how change is implemented. Although there was extensive consultation it would appear that a decision had been made and was going to be implemented. This is typical of “top-down” management (Tsai and Beverton, 2007). The result was that staff particularly at the School level did not believe in the merits of the change taking place. If a more inclusive approach such as Appreciative Inquiry was used, staff would feel more engaged in the process. At the time of writing CU was seeking views on its new Strategic Plan (Price, 2012). The plan was drawn up and responses sought at the various boards and by e mail from staff. How much more effective such a process could be if staff were more fully involved in the creating of the plan, by holding AI meetings at the department level? Staff would then more fully own the document.

Although the author has now retired from the university the study allowed her to consider and reflect on her role. Certainly the opportunity to discuss this role with other practitioners proved very beneficial. Academic managers, like many other professions,
work at a contested boundary. There is no established hierarchy and frequently one might be line managing a person one day and then working as part of their programme team on another. Leaders of necessity need followers, and academics are used to autonomy in their decision-making and are, therefore, less inclined to follow. In particular, if they feel that they have not been involved in the decision making process then they will not take ownership of new initiatives. For middle level managers, who often are asked to ensure compliance with new initiatives, this is particularly problematic.

6.5 Limitations of the Study

The study is based on a small number of staff in a single university. In particular the role of Head of Department was a comparatively new one in this institution whereas it is a long established post in many Universities. Nevertheless the experiences narrated here show many similarities to other studies conducted at other universities (Smith, 2005; Floyd, 2012; Floyd and Dimmock, 2011). AI is usually conducted on a larger scale where groups of staff come together to identify good practice and discus how such practice can be rolled out across the organization (Cockell and McArthur-Blair, 2012). However this small scale study was successful in engaging with Heads of Department and in identifying their experiences of the role.
6.6 Opportunities for Further Research

Within the Institution: It would be useful to revisit the group originally interviewed to see if their perceptions of the role have changed. All were interviewed a comparatively short time after they had been appointed and given the number of changes that have taken place within CU it would be helpful to follow up on their experiences.

External to the institution: Further research is needed to compare the experience of staff in a wider range of institutions including both pre- and post- 92 universities in the United Kingdom. Comparisons could also be made between research led and teaching led universities in countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States of America. AI has been used extensively in North America to improve organisational performance (Cockell and McArthur-Blair, 2012) in a variety of colleges, but has not been used to explore the experiences of individual academic staff.

6.7 Conclusion

The role of Head of Department is becoming more complex and the administrative burden associated with the role limits the time spent with students and undertaking research. However the participants in this study felt that the role offered them career progression and gave them the chance to work with more diverse groups of staff. This study gave them the opportunity to discuss their work with another manager and all
indicated that such a discussion was beneficial. Having considered the results obtained it is recommended that the university creates a forum for Heads of Department and their deputies. This would allow HoDs and DHoDs to discuss their roles and share instances of good practice. Ideally the forum would follow the principles of Appreciative Inquiry and:

by choosing to focus on the positive, the problems are reframed into what is wanted, the affirmative topic – that is, what is working well already - the strengths and successes.

Cockell and McArthur-Blair, 2012, p.24

In addition, new appointees should be supported in their transition to a management role by a mentoring scheme.

A further perspective of the author’s reflection on undertaking this research is provided in the Professional Development Portfolio section of the thesis. Here she elaborates on how she realised her approaches to change were rooted in her own past experiences. Her default position of “rational adopter” (Pennington, 2003, p.9) meant that she was accepting of change and found herself frustrated by those that did not have the same attitude. As her knowledge and understanding of management increased she became more aware of, and sympathetic to, those who found change unsettling and upsetting. Given the uncertainty surrounding the university sector, particularly in South East Wales, it was difficult to support her department in looking to the future. It was also necessary to accept that taking on a role as manager affected her relationship with
some members of her team who felt that academic and management agendas were “competing narratives” (Lapworth, 2008, p.174).

The research study provided the opportunity to discuss the middle manager’s role with others across the university. The problems that she was experiencing which formed the trigger for this research were not unique. Given the uncertain future that Higher Education and, in particular this Institution, are facing it was a great challenge to provide staff with a positive image of the future. However, the challenges that individual managers faced were outweighed by the opportunities to work with different groups of staff and to create new processes and cultures.

The insights provided by this research have proved useful on professional and personal levels. In particular, the emphasis that AI gives to looking at what is working well rather than concentrating on the problems and difficulties is a philosophy that can be applied positively to implementing change.
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Appendix 1

Person Specification: Principal Lecturer, Teaching and Scholarship
## Person Specification

**Post:** PRINCIPAL LECTURER – TEACHING & SCHOLARSHIP

**Unit/School:**

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<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>ESSENTIAL AND DESIRABLE CRITERIA</th>
<th>ASSESSED BY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Education and Qualifications</td>
<td>Doctoral qualification</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Essential)</td>
<td>Ability to achieve Fellow Status as part of the Higher Education Academy’s Professional Recognition scheme, within a 6 month period.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Membership of a professional body.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and Qualifications</td>
<td>Senior Fellow Status as part of the Higher Education Academy’s Professional Recognition scheme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Desirable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge (Essential)</td>
<td>An in-depth knowledge of, and National / International recognition in, specialist subject and professional area. An in-depth understanding of pedagogy / research / enterprise and scholarly activity. A thorough understanding of institutional management systems and the wider higher education environment.</td>
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<td>Skills and Abilities relating to role (Essential)</td>
<td>Ability to oversee the design and development of the overall curricula.</td>
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<td>Ability to review programme design on a regular basis to ensure compliance with quality standards and academic regulations and to make alterations where appropriate.</td>
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<td>Evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching methodologies, assessment methods, course delivery and effect improvement where appropriate.</td>
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<td>Ability to lead on a range of strategic developments e.g. consultancy, income generation, collaborative partnerships and networks at national and international level.</td>
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<td>Ability to take responsibility at either school / corporate level, for a number of key areas such as Chairing and participating in School and Institutional committees, institutional decision making and governance.</td>
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<td>Ability to communicate and disseminate complex and conceptual ideas in a variety of ways – presentations at national and international conferences, reports to committees, senior management teams, results of scholarly activity, feedback etc to a wide variety of audiences.</td>
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<td>Ability to advise, influence and negotiate effectively both internally and externally to effect appropriate school / organisational development and direction.</td>
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<td>Ability to exercise academic leadership for all subject area teaching and scholarly activity.</td>
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<td>Skills and Abilities relating to role (Desirable)</td>
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<td>Experience of HE teaching.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Experience of providing academic leadership and first line support / mentoring for colleagues including the fair allocation of work according to skills and capacity.</td>
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<td>Experience of leading on the development of academic strategies for example, teaching and learning, research and enterprise at school and/or corporate level.</td>
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<td>Experience appraising and reviewing staff and managing performance through the setting, monitoring and review of objectives.</td>
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<td>Experience of mediating resolution of student / staff issues and acting as an arbiter within school / corporate policy.</td>
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<th>Experience paid / unpaid (Desirable)</th>
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<tr>
<th>Other Requirements (Essential)</th>
<th>Ability to take responsibility for risk assessment and operation all of policy/strategy in relation to Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Quality Standards, Continuous Performance Improvement.</th>
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<td>Other Requirements (Desirable)</td>
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ROLE PROFILE

This role profile is indicative, not prescriptive, and the balance of duties will be in accordance with the contract of employment.

Principal Duties and Responsibilities:

Teaching and learning support

- Oversee the design and development of the overall curricula.
- Lead the development and clarification of academic standards for the subject area.
- Contribute to the development of academic policies across the Institution.
- Ensure that the development of programmes is within the Institution’s overall framework e.g. for the validation and revalidation of courses and assessment.
- Encourage the development of diverse and effective approaches to course delivery and ensure that teaching delivery achieves the educational standards of the department.

Research and scholarship

- Lead the development and implementation of teaching and learning strategy at either the School and/or Corporate level.
- Undertake evaluation research into learning and teaching methodologies and disseminate best practice within and outwith the Institution.
- Develop and promote the use of diverse and effective assessment methods.
• Lead bids for consultancy and other additional funds.
• Make presentations at national and international conferences and similar events.

**Communication**

• Be routinely involved in complex and important negotiations internally and with external bodies.

**Liaison and networking**

• Chair committees and participate in Institutional decision making and governance at either the School and/or Corporate level.
• Lead and develop internal and external networks to foster collaboration and share information and ideas and to promote the subject and the Institution.
• Promote and market the work of the department in the subject area both nationally and internationally.

**Managing people**

• Exercise academic leadership for all subject area teaching and scholarly activities.
• Within the overall management responsibility of the Dean of School to oversee matters relating to the deployment of staffing resources and ensuring the work is allocated fairly, according to skills and capacity.
• Appraise and review staff on personal and career development plans.

**Teamwork**

• Participate in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of Institutional and School strategic plans.
• Promote a collegiate approach and develop team spirit and team coherence.
• Foster inter-disciplinary team working.
Pastoral care

- Responsible for the initial resolution of all student issues within and outwith standard procedures.
- Be responsible for the welfare of staff within Corporate Policies.
- Ensure that an appropriate framework is developed and used for pastoral care issues.

Initiative, problem-solving and decision-making

- Maintain academic standards within own area(s) of responsibility.
- Contribute to the determination of the academic standards framework at either the School and/or at Corporate Level.
- Determine the final allocation of resources within own area of responsibility.
- Act as an arbiter within Corporate Policies.
- Advise and contribute to the strategic decisions at Institutional level.
- Advise and contribute to the lead development of diverse and effective approaches in responding to teaching and learning challenges.
- Provide advice to external bodies.

Planning and managing resources

- Take overall responsibility for the organising and deployment of resources within own areas of responsibility.
- Contribute to Institutional planning and strategic development.

Sensory, physical and emotional demands.
• Balance the pressures of teaching and administrative demands and competing deadlines.

Work environment

• Responsibility for health and safety in own areas of responsibility within CU’s Corporate policies.
• Ensure that appropriate risk management processes are operational.

Expertise

• A scholar in the subject, with a considerable national or international reputation.
• Possess in depth knowledge of specialism to enable the development of new knowledge, innovation and understanding in the field.
• A thorough understanding of institutional management systems and the wider higher education environment, including equal opportunities issues.

Standard Notification

These guidelines are provided to assist you in the performance of your contract. The university is a dynamic organisation; therefore changes may be required from time to time. Any changes will be made in consultation with the post-holder. The Summary of Duties and Responsibilities is not intended to be an exhaustive list of tasks performed. Other associated technical tasks are likely to be performed as directed by the line manager.

It is accepted that individual staff will have a specialist skills and knowledge base in relation to the role they have been appointed to. In addition to this, CU expects that all staff will conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner at all times and have particular regard for their responsibilities under CU’s
Equalities, Financial, Environmental and Sustainability, Human Resources and Health and Safety policies and procedures.
Appendix 2
Letter seeking informed consent
Dear

I’m currently undertaking an EdD here at CU. My research is investigating the impact of the current School structure and the role of the academic as manager. I plan to use an Appreciative Inquiry\(^2\) process and as part of that process I will be interviewing members of staff. My project has been approved by the ethics committee. At this stage of my research I wish to pilot the interview and am therefore contacting you to see if you would be willing to participate in this pilot.

Participation is voluntary and your participation in the pilot will not involve you in any further participation in the study. Your privacy will be protected and confidentiality guaranteed. By signing one copy of this form, you are granting your permission to participate in this study. Findings from this pilot will be submitted as an assignment in partial fulfilment of the assessment requirements of the EdD. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and agree to participate in the study.

Please contact me if you require further details,

Regards

I agree to participate in this study.

Participant’s Signature………………………………………………………Date…………………………

\(^2\) See http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/definition.cfm
Appendix 3
Interview schedule: Pilot Study
Protocol for Semi-structured Individual Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location of Interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name and Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Interviewer</td>
<td>Mary Carter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Introduction and ground rules

Allow interviewee to pick seating

Introduce self and context of study

You have agreed to participate in this pilot study. I have decided to use a process of appreciative inquiry to achieve my research aims; this approach focuses on identifying processes that work well. During this interview I will ask you a series of questions and I would like you to respond as freely as possible. The session should take about 40 minutes, and is informal therefore you are free to ask questions. I’m interested in both positive and negative comments. Your confidentiality is assured.

Any questions?

With your permission, I will record this interview for research purposes. If there are no further questions we will begin

Turn on recorder – state “by permission of ………….I am taping this interview at …………………on…………[date]
Could you describe your current post?

Prompts – roles, responsibilities, number of staff line managed, check whether permanent or rotational, hours on timetable

Why did you apply for the post?

What have been your best experiences at work?

What do you value about yourself, work, organisation.

What do you think is the core life-giving factor or value of your organisation - which it wouldn't be the same without?

If you had three wishes for your organisation, what would they be?

What achievements are you (and/or your team) proud of?
Appendix 4
Revised Interview Schedule
Revised Interview schedule

What is your job title?

A. Theme 1 Biography

Could you summarise how you came to take up your current appointment?

Was it always your intention to progress to a management role?

To what extent does your current post differ from your previous experience?

B. Theme 2 Roles and responsibilities

What do you think is the purpose of your role/post?

Do you have a specific role to play when organisational change is taking place?

Are there factors that would facilitate/ease your management role?
C. Theme 3 Appreciative Inquiry questions

What have been your best experiences while working as a manager?

What do you value about yourself,

your job

, the organisation?

What do you think is the core factor or value of the organisation – what wouldn’t it be the same without?

If you had three wishes for your organisation what would they be?

What achievements are you [and or your team] proud of?
What makes you come into work each day?

D. Theme 4 The future

What do you wish you had known before you took up the post?

What would be your advice to anyone thinking of applying for a similar post?
Appendix 5
Distribution of Provocative Propositions
Dear

I’m currently undertaking a professional doctorate (EdD) at CU. My research is investigating the role of the academic as manager in times of institutional change. I have used an Appreciative Inquiry\(^3\) process and as part of that process I interviewed a number of staff. I have now analysed that data and drafted a number of provocative propositions. A provocative proposition is defined as a statement that bridges the best of “what is” with your own speculation or intuition of “what might be”. It is provocative to the extent to which it stretches the realm of the status quo, challenges common assumptions or routines, and helps suggest real possibilities that represent desired possibilities for the organization and its people.

As an academic who has managerial responsibilities within CU I would welcome your comments on the provocative propositions I have drafted. I have attached a proforma for you to complete with your responses.

My project has been approved by the Cardiff School of Education ethics committee and participation is voluntary and your privacy will be protected. Findings from this study will be submitted as a thesis in partial fulfilment of the assessment requirements of the EdD.

Please contact me if you require further details, however I will be unavailable between the 20\(^{th}\) February and the 4\(^{th}\) March when I am attending my son’s wedding in Mexico.

Regards

Mary Carter

Academic Associate

Cardiff School of Education.

\(^3\) See http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/definition.cfm
Professional Development Portfolio
Contents

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Future Plans ................................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

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Introduction

This Professional Development Portfolio follows a chronological timeline. I am taking a narrative approach to mirror the methodological approach of the dissertation. It starts with a look back at my career development to illustrate the choices I have made in the past and the skills I have developed as a result of these career choices. It moves on to a SOAR analysis undertaken to reflect the positive nature of Appreciative Inquiry, the research method used in the thesis. The next section reviews the training undertaken during the past five years and its impact. Section four reflects on the professional doctorate and how undertaking this qualification has influenced both my personal and professional life. The portfolio ends with a brief sojourn into the future.

Following on from the research methodology utilised in the thesis, this account is based on the premise that whatever personal qualities I display are a function of my particular cultural, historical and relational circumstances (Burr, 2003). Therefore I start with a look at my background to illuminate my views and reactions to undertaking this doctorate. It is my story and it is hoped that it will give the reader an insight into the decisions I made, and why I acted as I did (Cousin, 2009). In particular, since my professional doctorate was closely aligned with my post as an academic manager many of the observations made relate to the job, as well as the study undertaken.
Career Background

I graduated from the University of Birmingham in 1974 with a degree in Medical Biochemistry. I married the following year and my subsequent career moves were dictated by those of my husband. I worked as a research assistant or technician at the Universities of Birmingham and Leeds and Plymouth Polytechnic. I enjoyed my various jobs but my ambitions were more concerned with my marriage and my husband’s career. In 1978 my husband took a post in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and in the months before my elder son was born I worked in the record library of the local radio station.

The next twelve years were fully occupied with my children. I had another son in Manchester in 1980 and a daughter in Cardiff in 1986. During this time I took an Open University (OU) course on the pre-school child; and a Preschool Playgroup Association (PPA) course for parents and playgroup leaders. I was vice-chairman of our local play group and treasurer of the Mother and Toddler group. I enjoyed the time I spent at home with my children, and it is a great regret to me that young educated women with children can rarely afford to take such a career break nowadays.

When my youngest child started playgroup, I went on a “Fresh Start” course. This was designed for women whose children were becoming more independent and who needed guidance on the career opportunities available to them. This course did much for my self esteem. It also made me realise how lucky I was, so many of the women had no qualifications whatsoever and were having to take GCSEs and A levels before they could even consider training opportunities. Teaching as a profession appealed to
me because of the way it could fit in with my family commitments. I was advised to try voluntary work to give myself a taste of the profession and if I showed aptitude such voluntary work could provide me with current references. I started assisting with science lessons at a local school and applied to be a voluntary tutor with the local Adult Basic Education service in Cardiff.

I found working in a school far too similar to being at home and I felt the need to get away from children for at least part of the day. In contrast, I really enjoyed my work in Adult Education and got on well with my new colleagues. Soon after finishing my volunteer tutor training, I was asked to join a training course to obtain the “Initial Certificate in Teaching Basic Communication Skills” a new qualification recently validated by City & Guilds. My initial training was in literacy but I soon found that there was a shortage of numeracy tutors and with my scientific background I actually preferred this option. I started work as a paid tutor and was soon working three and a half days a week in the mathematics workshop.

Although my training was adequate for the job I was doing, I soon realised that the majority of other tutors held a teaching qualification. Most were trained as primary school teachers and I felt that if I were to progress I would need an additional qualification. A chance conversation at a summer garden party pointed out that a local college of Higher Education ran a part-time Post Graduate Certificate in Further Education, PGCE(FE). I made some enquiries and enrolled on the programme in September 1991. I thoroughly enjoyed the course and realised that I had missed the intellectual stimulation that undertaking further education gives.
By the time I had finished the course in 1993, my home life had changed. My husband had been made redundant in October 1992 and was now working as a freelance vision engineer. In addition, the introduction of the Further and Higher Education (FHE) Act in 1992 had initiated a major upheaval in the adult basic education system. The service was now funded through local Further Education colleges and funds were only awarded for two years at a time, this meant that employment prospects in the service were not secure.

I started applying for full-time jobs in the Further Education sector using my college tutor as a referee. Although I was unsuccessful, I received a call from my tutor asking if I would be interested in doing some part-time teaching on the PGCE(FE). I accepted the offer and for the next three years I worked part-time for the ABE during the day and taught on the PGCE(FE) programme during the evening. In addition, I also successfully completed my MA(Ed) at the same time. Looking back I find it difficult to understand how I managed it all; I had three school age children and my husband’s work frequently took him away from home. However both jobs meant that I had school holidays free and this no doubt made my life easier than for many of my friends who found it difficult to fund childcare during the long school holidays.

In 1997, following the retirement of a member of the PGCE(FE) teaching team I was appointed as a full-time lecturer. With the benefit of hindsight I should have enrolled on the EdD at a neighbouring university at that time. I was used to part-time study and as a junior member of the teaching team my administrative burden was not as great as it was to become. However at the time I had been studying part time for six years and
was about to start a full time job, my youngest child was about to start secondary school and I felt that it was time to consolidate rather than embark on yet another course.

I flourished under the guidance of the programme director of the PGCE(FE) and took on more and more responsibilities at work. In 2000, when the programme director was appointed to the newly created position of Director of Learning and Teaching, I took over the programme directorship. I was not the natural successor, there was another more senior member of staff available, but this person did not wish to take up the post. For the next six years I led the programme through a successful Estyn inspection and re-validation. I also raised my profile on the larger university stage by obtaining a Teaching Fellowship, researching the peer review of teaching. I had a secondment to the Staff Development department to encourage more staff to join the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (now the Higher Education Academy). I had by now been appointed to Senior Lecturer grade and realised that further progression would be hampered by my lack of a Doctorate. Fortunately a Professional Doctorate programme had just been established in the university and I joined the first cohort in May 2006. Shortly after this, following an academic restructure covered in full in the thesis, I was appointed as Head of the Centre (shortly afterwards re-titled Department) of Professional Development. I decided to use this appointment to form the focus of my research study.

When I look back at my career, it seems that many of the decisions I have taken have been reactive rather than proactive. I certainly never contemplated a career in Higher Education and would never have applied for a job in the sector. Nevertheless the
opportunity came and I took it and I feel that I have been successful in my career. I would describe myself as a pragmatist, I take what comes and try to make the best of it. When it comes to change I would describe myself as a “rational adoptor” (Pennington, 2003, p.9). I respond to change by analysis, evaluation and discussion and then “get on with the job”. This may have its roots in my early life. My father’s job involved moving from place to place, so every couple of years I would have to move house and change schools; I then married a man with a similar career pattern and moved five times in the first ten years of my married life. So change has always been ever present in my life and my attitude to it has been to accept it and make the most of it. This can lead to my being frustrated by the “pragmatic sceptics” and the “resistors/defenders” (Pennington, 2003, p.9) who do not accept change without protest.
SOAR analysis

When considering personal and professional development it is usual to conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to establish training needs, however in order to reflect the positive ethos of Appreciative Inquiry which underpins my doctoral thesis I have decided to do a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) analysis (Stavros and Hinrichs, 2009). The first section concentrates on identifying my greatest strengths.

Strengths

I would say that my greatest strength is my good interpersonal skills. I am, by nature gregarious and get on well with people from all walks of life. In addition I have been blessed with a good memory for names and faces. My “party trick” was to know the names of all my students by week two of a course and I am still teased by colleagues as, when the name of a former student comes up, I can usually identify them and come up with a short biography. At the start of my second year at university we met our new second year tutor and she had already memorised all our names and faces. I was so impressed by this and have always tried to do the same for my students.

In addition, I have usually got on well with my colleagues and have been lucky to work with some very supportive teams. However, initially, when I moved to a management role I felt rather isolated in my day to day role. Whilst I got on well with my fellow management team members, when I returned to my office, the lack of a close colleague with whom to discuss matters was difficult. This situation improved when a close friend
was appointed to a management role so that there was someone to chat to on an informal basis.

I am very supportive and encouraging and I enjoy developing people whether students or colleagues. I am however better at encouraging self belief in others than I am in developing it in myself. I tend to shy away from conflict and find anger in others difficult to deal with. On reflection I feel that on occasions I have been bullied by colleagues who recognized that when faced with aggression I was likely to back down rather than prolong the conflict. Bullying in the workplace is usually conceived of as being perpetrated by managers on subordinates, or by peer on peer. There is little about how managers can feel threatened and intimidated by those whom they manage.

I enjoy a job well done and therefore am reliable and trustworthy when given a task to complete. I do like to do things to the best of my ability and sometimes I have to force myself to acknowledge that I have done the best that I can in the time allowed and that it is time to “sign off” the work. My time management skills are good and deadlines are met. However when it comes to more personal deadlines such as those presented by the professional doctorate I have found it difficult to prioritise.

**Opportunities**

Undertaking the professional doctorate gave me the opportunity to study a new body of work. My previous research had focused almost entirely on Learning and Teaching and I knew little of theories of management and leadership and the theories that underpin
the management and implementation of change. In addition, my scientific background had meant that I was more familiar with quantitative rather than qualitative research methods. I also was able to meet with people from a range of backgrounds who were taking the same programme of study.

My new position as Head of Department gave me the chance to interact with a much wider range of people. In my department I was now working with a number of different programme teams. In the School I sat on the senior management and planning team. Initially it also gave me an opportunity to network at a university level although this interaction reduced over time. At the beginning of my appointment if the Director of Learning and Teaching was unavailable then I or one of the other Heads of Department would deputise for her, but after two years a Teaching and Assessing co-ordinator was appointed and she took over these duties.

On the wider stage my research interests took me to a series of conferences hosted by Public Service Management Wales (PSMW), The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) and Higher Education Institutional Research (HEIR) which meant I made contact with people from a range of backgrounds.

**Aspirations**

When I started the professional doctorate my main aspirations were to obtain my doctorate and attain the grade of principal lecturer. Within a year of my appointment, due to a change in the grading of my post as Head of Department, I became a principal
lecturer. This to a certain extent removed the necessity to obtain a doctorate. At this point I thought long and hard about whether to continue with my studies. However I did enjoy the intellectual stimulation it provided and since I was studying the principles of management I felt that it could have a positive impact on the way that I carried out my job.

I would not be honest if I did not admit that many times in the intervening years I have wondered if I made the right decision. The demands of a busy management post and part-time study made for difficult bed fellows and I looked on with envy when a colleague was able to take research leave to work on her doctorate. My health problems didn’t help (I was diagnosed with Charcot Marie Tooth disease in 2008), and when I broke a bone in my foot in the Summer of 2010, just before I had to re-apply for my post as Head of Department, it seemed as if the time had come to walk (or in my case, limp) away. Nevertheless by that time I had completed the preparatory modules and I decided to carry on.

Results

This section is normally concerned with measurable outcomes so the obvious one would be attainment of the professional doctorate. However there are less tangible outcomes that I wanted to achieve by undertaking the programme. As indicated by Scott et al (2004) some of my reasons are common to others:

There is a perceived need for professionals to engage in higher professional development, to reflect critically on their practice, to
develop transferable skills and competencies and to gain higher qualifications.

Scott et al, 2004, p 3

The study of management and leadership helped me to become a more aware manager, whether it made me a better one would be for others to decide. Certainly I have become aware that

a perceived lack of fit between an individual’s value system and that of the organisation can be a major source of stress and work-life balance. A crucial function of middle managers and front-line leaders is to talk with people about their role and their contribution to the organisation and how they might match this to what truly motivates them.

Wallace and Gravells, 2007, p.51-2

I realise that I did not always recognise the profound difficulties that some people had in accepting the new structure and management team. I just wanted them to move on. As the new structure became more embedded I think that I did manage to get the majority of staff to recognise both how they could contribute to the department and how their own futures could be enhanced by participating fully in the work of the school. Nevertheless there remained some staff who were determined to continue as they had always done. Perhaps the greatest challenge for me as a manager was to accept that nothing I did was going to change that and that any manager would have faced the same problem; it was my role rather than me that was the problem.
Goffee and Jones (2000) suggest that successful managers have a grounded and consistent self-image. They are aware of what works for them, what is expected of them and what will influence their reputation and as a result they are generally at ease with themselves. I'm not sure that I have ever completely achieved this; but since leaving the university I have become a trustee of a national charity and I have used many of the skills of managing and negotiating in that role. I have found that joining an organisation from outside has definite advantages over being promoted from inside an organisation, perhaps because it gave me the opportunity to create a new and fresh self-image.
Reflections on Training undertaken

A full list of all the training events attended is included in Appendix I. In this section I will concentrate on those that had the most profound effect on the research and its evolution. The first series of training undertaken was closely allied to my new management role. The first of these on Managing Performance gave me my first inkling of the sort of difficulties I might encounter in my new management role. The training was designed for those working in a very hierarchical system with clear line management responsibilities. The idea that I could be line managing a person one day and then could be part of a programme team that they were managing the following day was an alien concept (Hellawell and Hancock, 2003). These issues reappeared in the Staff Performance Review Training undertaken a few weeks later. As a contributor to Knight and Trowler (2001) described:

There seems to be almost nothing on managing an academic department, and the ‘broad-brush’ courses I’ve attended [e.g. on ‘time management’ or ‘negotiation’] haven’t been of much use – not geared to academic settings and the particular kinds of challenges and problems we have to face.

Knight and Trowler, 2001, p.164

In August I had the opportunity to meet the other members of staff from other schools who had been appointed to the Head of Department role. Although described as a Training Needs Analysis session by the Dean of Academic Development who was running the session, it was really an opportunity to share and exchange our views on how the role would work out in practice. It was a really useful session and I looked forward to more opportunities to meet with them. Sadly this never happened and my
research would indicate that there is a real need for some sort of cross university forum at the level of Head of Department.

On the research side, I undertook library training and was introduced to the delights of Endnote. It was quite startling to see the developments that had taken place since I had completed my Masters degree in 1997. Electronic journal access had improved immeasurably. Endnote has enabled me to keep track of my sources very efficiently and is a far cry from my old box of index cards. I still don’t use automatic citation preferring to cross reference manually. Further research skills days enabled me to meet other students which gave me the community of practice that I craved. Of my own original cohort, only one student remained and he was based in Aberdeen. Since I had chosen, in part, a professional doctorate rather than a PhD, because of the involvement of a student cohort it was important that I had the opportunity to meet with other students.

In May 2008 I was able to attend a two day course entitled “How to be an Effective Researcher” which involved doctoral students from across South Wales. Although some of the sessions were of more interest to young full-time students it was beneficial to work with others on a series of projects. Looking back at my notes I recorded that “Really great to have a couple of days devoted to research. Met students from across South East Wales, very interesting to share experiences”. The exercise I enjoyed most was when we had to prepare a grant application and then defend it.

In February 2009 I had the opportunity to attend a conference hosted by PSMW on Story Telling for Change. I enjoyed many of the presentations. The most compelling
were those based in the Health and Social care sector, here patients/clients had been encouraged to share their stories. I felt reassured that using personal accounts could be a reliable and valid research technique. There was also some cross over with a session on “patient voice” which Dr John Gunson (now Professor) had presented at the university as part of a research seminar series. I was less persuaded by some of the more whimsical approaches to storytelling. It occurred to me that perhaps one of the reasons why narrative approaches to research took some time to attain credibility was that in colloquial English, the phrase “telling stories” means “telling lies”.

In April 2009, I was introduced to NVIVO 8 at a research skills training day. I had some knowledge of computer packages for quantitative research but this was my first experience of a software package for qualitative research. I realized that this would be a really useful tool for both storing and handling data for my research project. Unfortunately it was too late to be used in my pilot study but I resolved to use it for my main study. I have found the package (by now NVIVO 9) invaluable for facilitating analysis of my interview transcripts. Although I did not use the full range of tools available to me I experimented with some of the functions and an example of one of the “wordclouds” that I generated is included in Appendix II. My analytical approach echoed that of Trowler (1998)

The computer package proved invaluable as a database for retrieving comments and reading the reports it produced often led to new analytical ideas. My early fears that the holistic nature of the data would be destroyed, the individual lost, as a result of this kind of vertical slicing proved groundless: I made frequent reference back to the original interview transcript, and sometimes the audio-tape itself.
Alongside my research skills training I was also undertaking training for my management role. I have already alluded to some of the difficulties I faced in the SOAR analysis. I still struggled with the fact that all of the training I undertook seemed based on the premise that when asked to jump my staff would at least jump even if they didn’t ask “how high?”. Facilitators seemed baffled by a situation where some of my staff would respond to my requests with a downright refusal. Berlach (2011, p.1) suggests that my experience is not unique “for a change stimulus in education usually comes in the form of an edict from a superordinate (leader) through the conduit of a subordinate (manager) on to a field worker (implementer). Frequently the response to change initiatives from staff is why?” What made it more difficult for me personally was that when they responded to my questions the underlying assumption was that it was my fault if I couldn’t bring staff into line.

Although not training in the conventional sense, in April 2009, I was asked to participate in a “Working Lives” project being managed by neighbouring universities. The Working Lives Project was funded by Welsh Education Research Network (WERN) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).
of Wales Newport, the University of Glamorgan and Cardiff University, a number of expert associates also contribute to the team in an advisory capacity.

Gornall, 2009

This was very fruitful experience. It gave me the opportunity to network with other staff from both Higher Education and Further Education in Wales. It also introduced me to a range of research approaches used to record narratives of working lives. Following the research study, the group hosted a number of seminars which showcased a range of research activities based on work undertaken in both HE and FE. Subsequently, I have worked with Professor Jan Laugharne and Professor Eleri Jones on a book chapter based on the experiences of staff undertaking the professional doctorate. We have just learnt that it has been accepted for publication in a book edited by the Working Lives team.

I had already decided to use Appreciative Inquiry as the basis for my interviews so I was delighted to see mention of the technique included in the flyer for a Higher Education Academy (HEA) seminar. I attended the seminar and discovered that in an effort to improve accessibility for disabled students in the University of Worcester, a team led by Professor Val Chapman had used the AI technique. I learnt more about the study at a subsequent meeting hosted by HEIR (Chapman, 2011, Chapman and Bowen Jones, 2008). It was encouraging to see the methodology being used in a Higher Education context and reassured me about the validity of my own research. I subsequently in November 2009 attended a conference hosted by the Leadership Foundation for Higher
Education and again saw a presentation on AI being used for staff development at a London University, although I have yet to see a publication on this project.

The final training I undertook was “preparing for the viva”.
Reflections on Undertaking the Professional Doctorate

Much of the trials and tribulations of undertaking a professional doctorate can be followed by scrutinising the progress reports included in the Annual Monitoring forms. For someone who prides herself on meeting deadlines it is quite sobering to see how many deadlines passed without being met. Part of the problem stemmed from the fact that to some extent doing the Doctorate was a luxury. It was unlikely to lead to further promotion; I was already older than those in the senior management positions in the school and therefore had realistically achieved as much as I was likely to achieve in terms of job grade.

In the spring of 2006 I joined a small group of students who were to be the first group to undertake a professional doctorate. We had two days of presentations on the topic of “Contextualising Professional Change”. I left feeling energised and with the impression that to complete the module successfully I had to be a “change agent” within my organisation. Conversations with succeeding cohorts have led me to conclude that perhaps my interpretation was too literal.

Fortuitously, an opportunity to facilitate change came with the creation of a management post which I applied for and gained. I then developed a presentation on my research proposal which was shared with tutors and fellow students in May 2006. Having delivered what I thought was a fairly slick presentation I was disappointed to receive quite critical feedback which suggested that I had the most work to do to develop a viable research proposal. Anyway I returned to the drawing board and
completed my assignment for that module and successfully submitted a research proposal.

Having decided to look at my role as manager I started to trawl through the literature on change management and more general texts on successful management techniques. Not having a business background I found it increasingly difficult to discriminate between what were accepted theories and what were not. I prepared a rough draft of my literature review and met with my two supervisors. I have the notes I made at that meeting in front of me now, there are about twenty authors identified that it was suggested I needed to read. A visit to the library produced about half of them and I set about studying them. Each viewpoint seemed appropriate when I was reading it but when I moved on the next text my perspective would change, I felt increasingly adrift.

Another tutorial followed, I felt exposed and my lack of knowledge and understanding frustrated me. I wanted guidance, a clear map of the route I was to take; instead what I felt I had was an insistent SATNAV demanding “please enter your destination” but I didn’t know my destination, I didn’t even know my starting point.

Pragmatically I decided to use this confusion to frame my presentation on my literature review quoting Donald Rumsfelt “As we know, there are known knowns, there are things we know we know, there are known unknowns, that is to say, we know there are some things we do not know, but there are also unknown unknowns, the ones we don’t know, we don’t know”.

This worked quite well and my presentation was well received. However I was really no nearer deciding on how exactly I was going to research my project.
I was coming to the end of my first year in my new role. It had been a challenging time.
In my presentation at my job interview I had given my vision of the new role as a “conduit”; increasingly it felt more like a “pinch point”. A colleague startled me by saying “you don’t like managing do you? If I’m honest I didn’t like managing some tasks and some people some of the time. I felt quite isolated in the role, a senior colleague with whom I had had a close working relationship had left and I was now line managing former colleagues so it wasn’t appropriate to “chew the fat” with them in the way I had with my retired colleague. Looking back I did feel rather lonely and had to develop a different way of working. Always a garrulous person I had been used to chatting informally about all sorts of issues and I soon realised after a couple of incidents that I needed to be more guarded in my comments. However as time has moved on my management skills have improved and I’ve developed other support networks.

However as far as my research was concerned I did not have the autonomy to implement changes as I had expected and I felt that my original idea of an action research cycle was going to be impossible to carry out. I was further dismayed when attending seminars with succeeding cohorts of professional doctorate students that some appeared far more advanced in their research than I was – to stretch my motoring metaphor, they were coming up fast behind and some had overtaken me.

During the initial series of lectures I had enjoyed one on the use of narrative, later I had attended a research seminar on the “patient’s voice” which had been equally engaging. When writing my presentation on my literature review I came across a quote “good managers are good storytellers”. This set me looking at the concept of “story-telling” as
a research technique. I came across the work of Geoff Mead almost by accident, a
contact at the Welsh assembly was organising a conference and had forwarded the
website address to me as she thought I might be interested. There I discovered that a
conference was to be held on “Storytelling for Change” and Geoff was the opening
speaker. A quick search on Google led me to Geoff’s PhD dissertation. Reading the
first words of the abstract

In writing this thesis, I address the "new scholarships" identified by
Ernest Boyer and Donald Schon. In particular, I seek to make a
contribution to an emerging "scholarship of inquiry" in which - in the
spirit of the poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1934) - the focus is on living the
questions rather than seeking answers. I do so through the self-study
of four strands of my practice: as a man, in loving relationships, in
search of healing and as an educator. The thesis is both an account
of my learning in these areas and an action research inquiry in its
own right as, over the course of two years, I sustain a cyclical
process of writing and reflection, searching for connections,
contradictions and tensions between the various strands.

(Mead,2002, p.1)

I felt that this “scholarship of inquiry” and in particular the line “the focus is on living the
questions rather than seeking the answers” was much closer to my vision of my
research question than anything else I had read. I read Geoff’s stories with great
interest, but I was concerned that I would be unlikely to create an entire dissertation
based on my own life experience. Therefore I thought it would be useful to collect
stories from other managers working at the same level, but how could I do that?
It was while looking at interview techniques for eliciting stories from participants that I came across the work of David Cooperrider and his approach termed “Appreciative Inquiry” (AI) (Cooperrider, 1986). Although developed initially as a tool for organizational development, it was being increasingly used as a research tool (Reed, 2007). After much discussion with my supervisor I decided to use AI principles to conduct a semi-structured interview as my pilot project.

The pilot project went well and I was able to submit my report for assessment. However it did show up my inexperience as an interviewer. For someone who prides herself on her good communication skills it was obvious that I was a much better talker than listener. Several times as I listened to the interview tapes I winced as I went on about my experiences rather than listening to theirs. My interventions also led to some digressions so that when I came to analyse my data I was not always able to compare like with like.

Having prevaricated for nearly two years I finally started to make some progress, I submitted assignments to complete the Literature Review and Methodology modules and embarked on the main study by interviewing colleagues using an interview schedule derived from my experience with the pilot study. When the interviews were analysed I created a number of provocative propositions (Watkins and Mohr, 2001). These focused more on the university as a whole rather than the experiences of academic managers, but that reflected what had emerged from the interviews. I circulated the provocative propositions by e-mail, on reflection I should have tried to
convene focus groups as I could then have explained the concept more fully and perhaps obtained richer data.

The project has finally been written up and I am beset by doubts about its contribution to the body of knowledge. I have shied away from presenting my research in public forums but a request from Jeanie Cockell (2012) for short vignettes to feature in a book on AI in Higher Education proved tempting. The vignette (Appendix III) has been accepted for publication and will be included in a book by Jeanie Cockell and Joan McArthur-Blair in August 2012.

Watson (2001) suggests that stories are ways of making sense, of handling the hurt of organisational life. Certainly the professional doctorate has led me to reflect on my professional life, past, present and future. It sometimes helped when dealing with the “hurts” as I struggled with my new role, it sometimes hindered as I struggled with competing demands on my time. I have been very lucky in that researching within my university has not proved problematic, my studies have been supported and encouraged.
Future Plans

This has been a very long journey. Much longer than I anticipated when I set out. My life has changed in a myriad of ways, some predictable, some not. Over the six years I have spent on this study, all of my children have married, I have a second granddaughter and a much loved niece has died tragically young from cancer. I have been diagnosed with a progressive neuromuscular disease which means that my future health is uncertain. Following a fracture of my left fifth metatarsal, somewhat ironically known as the “footballers' injury”, caused by a fall due to my condition; I have had to consider what I want from the future. The university in line with many similar institutions has faced funding cuts. As part of a way of reducing costs the university instigated a round of voluntary severance packages and after much discussion with my family I decided to apply for a package. I am now “retired” and have never been so busy in my life. Since I left the university I have become a trustee of a national charity and have participated in a couple of research studies. One, a clinical study, on the genetic make up of my condition means that my DNA is being stored in a repository at the University of Miami. The second utilized a research methodology called a Citizens’ Jury and looked at the weighing up the risks and benefits when licensing new medicines. I have made so many new friends of all ages from all walks of life.

I realise that this account may be seen to be an unconventional approach to a Professional Development Portfolio but this has been my story and this is the way I have chosen to tell it.
References


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PDP Appendix I
Record of Training Undertaken and Events attended
### Training undertaken and Events attended during the Professional Doctorate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2006</td>
<td>Recruitment and Selection Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 25&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2006</td>
<td>Managing Performance Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2006</td>
<td>Sharepoint Training</td>
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<td>November 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; 2006</td>
<td>Chairs of Panels Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2006</td>
<td>Unfair Practice Panel Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2006</td>
<td>Library Induction for Research Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2007</td>
<td>Endnote training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;, 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2007</td>
<td>Estyn Peer Assessor Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2007</td>
<td>Head of Centre Training Needs Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; 2007</td>
<td>Staff Performance Review Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2007</td>
<td>Research Skills Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2007</td>
<td>Research Skills Training: The research process, ethical and legal context</td>
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<td>December 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2007</td>
<td>Linking Teaching and Research</td>
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<td>February 21&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; 2008</td>
<td>Literature Review Presentations by EdD students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 28&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2008</td>
<td>Research seminar led by Jan Laughter and Adela Baird</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2008</td>
<td>Dysg Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 17&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2008</td>
<td>Complaints Procedure Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; 13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2008</td>
<td>Effective Researcher Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; 2008</td>
<td>“Work related stress – the manager’s role”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2008</td>
<td>Estyn Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; 2008</td>
<td>CAMS Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
January 15\textsuperscript{th} 2009  “Conducting Effective Investigations”
February 3\textsuperscript{rd} & 4\textsuperscript{th} 2009  Attended Conference hosted by PSMW
March 30\textsuperscript{th} 2009  “Effective Communications in Conflict Situations”
April 6\textsuperscript{th} & 7\textsuperscript{th} 2009  Research Training on NVIVO 8
April 2009  Participation in “Working Lives” project
May 2009  HEA Seminar on Assessment and Feedback
July 2009  HEA Seminar on Inclusion and Diversity
September 29\textsuperscript{th} 2009  Estyn Seminar
October 22\textsuperscript{nd} 2009  HEIR Seminar on Appreciative Inquiry
November 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 4\textsuperscript{th} & 5\textsuperscript{th} 2009  Leadership Conference
March 18\textsuperscript{th} 2010  Preparing for a VIVA
2009-11  Attendance at a series of seminars on the Working Lives Project
PDP Appendix II
Wordcloud created using NVIVO 9
Top 50 7+ letter words

actually although another anything
because between cardiff certainly colleagues current
department decisions difference different
director education experience experiences important interesting
learning looking management manager meetings obviously
organisation partnership perhaps previous probably programme
programmes quality research something student students
support suppose talking teacher teaching thinking thought
through together training university working
PDP Appendix III
Vignette Accepted for Publication
Shortly after embarking on a professional doctorate, I was appointed as a Head of Department and I decided to focus my dissertation on the role and the positive experiences it could bring. I undertook a qualitative case study using an Appreciative Inquiry theoretical perspective to identify key positive experiences of middle level academic managers in a UK university when implementing change. Interviews were carried out, using AI guidelines, with my fellow managers, and then a number of provocative propositions were generated and circulated for comment. As well as more general points about the strengths of the university as a teaching university with a strong vocational bias, staff articulated the need for strong collaboration across departments with a need for more social spaces for staff to meet together.

The AI Process has had a positive impact on the complex role of middle level managers which is primarily that of implementing changes without necessarily being privy to the decision making process. Managers at this level are frequently in a difficult position as more senior managers expect them to implement change without question, but their subordinates expect them to support them in their objections or difficulty in complying if appropriate. Other outcomes from the AI process were: the respondents welcomed the opportunity to interact with people from different discipline areas; to interact with people on a very personal level; and an increased focus on student satisfaction as a key motivator.

As a result of this work it is recommended that managers at this level be supported by the creation of a cross university forum where they can meet to discuss issues and that a mentoring scheme be introduced for new appointees.