

Value Based Leadership and Management – Creation, Permeation and Visibility: A Critical Analysis of Value Development in a Leading New UK University

by

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The University of Wales Institute, Cardiff [UWIC] is a leading “new university” in the UK and in Wales more particularly. It recently engaged in academic re-structuring. Senior management strongly endorsed a value-based management approach to help inform strategic planning and implementation. This paper highlights the processes through which core values were articulated, owned and made visible. It highlights the inevitable value tension between personal and corporate values and it critically reflects upon the central importance of value-based leadership. It uses the research of Robinson and Katulushi (2004) as a starting point and stresses the need for universities to retain a passionate conviction about the ethos that underpins university action, whilst balancing tensions linked to political imperatives and an emergent service culture. Finally, it offers the emotional selling points [ESP's] behind UWIC's core values and indicates ways to build measurability and inform strategy review.

Introduction

For many organizations, value statements reside as simple rhetoric – being placed on a prominent notice-board that is conveniently “front of house” or placed in promotional literature, e-based marketing or a university website. They reside on walls or in electronic format and do not percolate throughout the organization because they are invariably not owned by colleagues and they do not get weaved into their thinking or actions at work. For a variety of reasons, values do not seem to easily translate into day-to-day behaviours. One main reason is that the values-building process is “top-down” and involves little or no whole staff engagement.

Universities acting as “learning organizations”, however, grow their values organically via on-going dialogue with their people and their external stakeholders and use their values strategically to help guide actions and decision-making (Senge, 1990). A good example can be seen by examining literature from the University of Derby, a modern vocational UK university (www.derby.ac.uk/press-office/archive/Connect27.pdf). The university offers five core “organizational values” of quality, valuing people, customer focus, challenge and innovation, and opportunity and openness. There are many other examples in the higher education system. However, explicit values-based leadership and management is not the dominant style in the British higher education system and hence there is not a wealth of comparative material to draw on.

Values are usually single words like “trust”, “teamwork”, “integrity”, “caring”, “knowledge”, “learning”, “excellence”, “self-actualisation”, “accomplishment”, “financial health”, or short phrases that suggest positive behaviours – e.g. “together we ensure openness, accountability and trust”. These words or phrases can have real emotional power and attachment for the individual and the organization that they help represent. Essentially, the core value statements a university constructs should help to define what is acceptable and even cherished in terms of personal behaviour and overall organizational focus (Atkinson, 1990). Arguably, the best value statements are those that can be readily translated into clear operational principles and can be modelled throughout all levels of the organization. For example, instead of simply saying “we value trust”, it is important to know how to operationalize that trust and ensure that every meeting, transaction or behaviour manifests this value.

Put quite plainly, the value statements any university constructs will speak volumes about its organizational culture. Of equal importance is how the value statements are constructed and shared. A further challenge relates to how value statements are articulated and rolled out across an organization. Leaders of modern universities can design value statements that indicate preferred behaviours and core beliefs, but it is the procedural underpinning, modelling and positive “story-telling” to staff that will really reinforce value alignment (Johnson, 1987). The initial challenge, however, is to design value statements that are focused and offer a strong sense of personal and organizational attachment. Inevitably, any value statements may be internalised and actioned by people in slightly differing ways. This may lead to value conflict, but it will be a positive conflict based around interpretation and open up dialogue leading to improved understanding and organizational learning (Murlis and Schubert, 2001).

Another challenge for executive and senior officers in any university is that if they embark on a values-based approach to management they *must* hold these values dear to themselves and use them strategically at all times. To walk away from them at any time is to court hypocrisy and to fundamentally undermine the organizational culture. Essentially, if one believes in this type of leadership and management approach then one cannot have two sets of values – the ideal and the pragmatic. If this pervades, then trust is quickly lost, uncertainty builds and ultimately commitment to the value set will diminish (Johnson and Scholes, 2002).

Value-based management offers so much to both leaders and followers, but it also demands much in return. Organizational values and associated forms of acceptable behaviour will come initially from executive leadership and hopefully these colleagues will always try to model the desired and expected behaviours. Accountability starts with executive officers and flourishes where all colleagues keep each other on-track with the institutional value-base. This is the true test of whether the university is living its values – when they have meaning to all people – and are protected, espoused, and promulgated by all (Senge, 1990).

The initial commitment, therefore, is the adoption of the values-based management approach in the first place. The next step is to get proper management buy-in and this requires a lot of hard work constructing value statements that are meaningful – and possibly constructing ones that might challenge the organization in the short-term. Management teams in universities must be able to imagine what it will take to make the value statement work in reality and whether followership can be assured. Lastly, values and their connected behaviours *must* be aligned with strategic intent and direction of the organization and *must* be able to be easily operationalized. This research attempts to critically study that initial start-up process in one modern vocational university in the UK.

Context

This research is set against an evolving agenda linked to leadership, management and governance in UK higher education. The recent formation of a Leadership Foundation for Higher Education in 2003 by the UK government and HE stakeholders is a testament to the growing national interest in educational leadership and management training and development, and specifically to a desire to stress the importance of succession planning, leading change and building successful senior teams in UK universities (Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, 2004). Little systematic research has been carried out in the whole area of leadership and management in UK higher education and the development of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education heralds a new departure in this regard. The work of Middlehurst (1991) is most notable as an early paving document. Recent literature from the Leadership Foundation (2004) intimates that a Leadership Foundation research programme has recently commissioned 11 leadership projects using partnership teams from 11 universities and one management consultancy group.

The context of this investment of government money and time into extending effective HE leadership and management is that universities are key drivers in helping fulfill government's political and social imperatives of economic growth and developing and locking intellectual capital in the nation. However, it is only recently that universities have had any form of structured investment in management training and development – especially when compared to other public sector organizations in the UK and other European and North American universities (Middlehurst, 1991). Previous evaluative studies related to leadership development in UK universities go back to the influential Jarratt Report (1985). The Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, formed only quite recently, has commissioned projects that focus on governance in HE; leadership and selection; evolving leadership roles in HE; and leadership development training.

In a leadership “summit” in December 2004, organised by the Leadership Foundation, UK vice-chancellors identified 15 strategic challenges for their universities between 2005 and 2010. Interestingly, none of these drivers directly mentioned leadership effectiveness. Some drivers alluded to organizational cultures and change capacity, and also to the balance between competition and collaboration (Leadership Foundation for HE, 2004). In Wales, it is difficult to avoid the economic, social and political indicators of change as they emanate from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). This is best represented in the WAG new Strategic Framework for Economic Development, entitled “Wales: a Vibrant Economy”, November 2005. The political pressure is for greater demands against management efficiency; value-for-money; fitness for purpose; accountability of public funds; increased entrepreneurialism and knowledge transfer; and increased individual and institutionalised performance. These many drivers also come with the added pressure of greater government and public scrutiny, as well as accountability and a call for strong leadership and a clear managerial authority amongst executive and senior staff in HEI's. Undoubtedly, this has increased the volume and focus of management and leadership development (Leadership Foundation for HE, 2004). The authors suggest these challenges also highlight the need for strong, value-based management.

The values – building process

In January 2004, as the university was beginning to prepare for a thorough academic re-structure in 2005-6 and starting to construct a new five-year corporate strategy for 2005/9, it was felt by the Vice-chancellor's management board that articulating a clear set of organizational values would be an important first step in building strategic mission and organizational culture. To that end, a “learning journey”, linked to values creation, was designed by a small group of staff, led by the university's Director of Operations.

At a senior management “away day” in January 2004, it was agreed that UWIC would benefit from establishing a core set of values. Incidentally, initial discussion indicated that these values could also help a

drive towards a performance management environment where a “balanced score-card” (Kaplan and Norton, 1993) linked to organizational priorities might be introduced.

Between February and October 2004, a plan for values creation was rolled out. Initially, this involved one-to-one interviews of all senior managers conducted by the university staff development manager based on organizational strategies, priorities and core values for the university. 21 out of 26 of the university’s senior managers were interviewed. Views on core values and behavioural standards were transcribed, collated and analysed, culminating in a brief report to colleagues. In July, a leadership development residential event was held in order to share initial thinking. The outcomes from this initial discussion were mixed, with little clear consensus of what set of values would be acceptable to work to. In particular, there was a lack of agreement about whether value statements should be aspirational or statements of accomplishment. Following this event, an e-mail dialogue was co-ordinated between the staff development manager and all senior colleagues and by August 2005, eighteen value statements had emerged for further consideration. The co-ordinating group also carried out environmental scanning of other university value statements and made contact with a number of similar “vocational” universities.

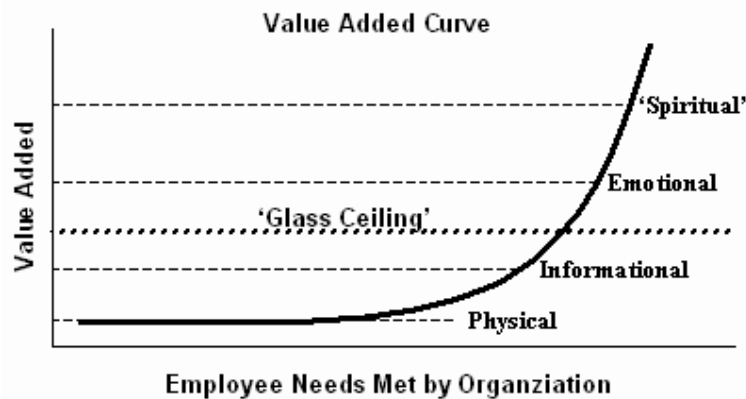
The university engaged the OPM (Office for Public Management) to run a workshop for the core team in September 2005, looking at successful methodologies for developing lasting value statements. Participants were introduced to a variety of private and public sector value statements. The initial 18 UWIC value statements were used as a starting point to identify the core substance or “DNA” and to word-smith the final five values in such a way that they exhibited a rhythm, visual flow and passion.

Final consideration of these scripted value statements took place in November 2005, running in concert with discussions around the possible content of a university statement of “strategic intent and direction” that the governing body was keen to adopt. A formal paper on strategic intent, the new mission and values for the university was presented by the Director of Operations and was endorsed by the university Board of Governors in December 2005 – and went “live” at the same time. Since then, the university’s core values have been reinforced in formal and informal meetings with colleagues and a qualitative review of value ownership is planned by interviewing a random sample of staff and publishing their views in the university monthly newsletter.

Research Perspective

Any university’s vision and mission should provide a clear focus for all their people and thus ensure that they are trying their best to act and make decisions that are in the best interests of the organization and its stakeholders. The “Value-added Curve”, developed by the late Michael Basch, co-founder and MD of Federal Express, highlights the levels of value-added commitment from the individual and the corresponding discretionary effort that the individual “re-invests” or unconditionally gives back to the organization.

Figure 1. Value-added Curve



Source: Tangri, 2003

This suggests that people commit to the organization in a variety of operational and psychological depths. Superficially, the physical level is all about a pay cheque mentality and shows management doing lots of “telling” and little share visioning or personal empowerment. The informational level sees people having knowledge of “where we fit” and some alignment with organizational goals, personal power and decision-making. However, values are building engagement when they get to the emotional level and help facilitate clear visioning and strategic intent, offer people “buy-in” and demonstrate leadership that allows real personal empowerment. The spiritual level is when true visioning and compelling value-based management are combined to promote the highest levels of people commitment. When this level is reached, discretionary effort from workers is massive and energy is invested by vice-chancellors and senior management teams to make internal systems work to support the value-base. Basically, value-based management is effective when the “glass-ceiling” is broken through and people in the organization offer, and are offered in return, emotional and spiritual buy-in to the organization’s values and strategic intent (Tangri, 2003).

Cultural analysis of universities is highly relevant to any exploration of value-based leadership in HEIs. An organization’s culture is likely to act as a filter on its members’ perceptions of leadership and the appropriateness of leadership development and change management (Tagiuri and Litwin, 1968). This culture or climate also relates to recognition of the organization as a social system and the extent to which membership is perceived as psychologically rewarding. It is where mutual trust is built between the individual and the organization and sense is made by the individual of management policies and leadership practices (Rentsch, 1990). This type of analysis builds on the work of Atkinson (1990) who explains organizational culture simply as “how things are done around here” – where leaders operate off a set of underlying assumptions about the way work should be performed. This also relates to the analysis of Schein (1985) who distinguished three levels of organizational culture: level 1 – artifacts; level 2 – values; and level 3 – basic assumptions.

UK universities are similar to each other, but they are certainly not the same. Even inside UK “clusters” – defined as “redbrick” or “Russell Group” and “vocational” or “post 1992” – these clusters may have conflicting goals, differing degrees of academic autonomy, and varying levels of financial and environmental vulnerability. However, researchers have attempted to model universities in an operational context. The traditional image of the university is the *collegial model*, where the institution is seen to exert a powerful yet consensual influence over its community and members. Status and authority are invariably

based around seniority and intellectual expertise, and shared power is exercised via facilitative leadership and negotiation (Bush, 1989). Whilst this may be seen as emotional and positive, it might be argued that the external drivers for change today militate against this approach at senior management levels.

Research by Robinson and Katulushi (2004) questions the integrity of the modern UK university and starts by debating the Oxbridge vision of the collegial community. They argue that this historic model lacks a sense of equality and inclusivity. They also argue that the seemingly “settled values” of the old university model is now challenged by modern tensions that centre on increased professionalization, market and consumer choice, and commercialization. Arguably, these drivers have eroded core values such as trust, commitment, community, equality and freedom and have pushed universities towards more instrumental values. They articulate a new set or “cluster” of values for modern universities based around academic values (independence, impartiality, responsibility, competence); learning values (reflection, self-understanding, self empowerment), social values (citizenship, tolerance, betterment) and management values (efficiency, accountability, democracy, collegiality, transparency). This last management value set are, of course, underpinned by the Nolan principles of public life; notably selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

However, since selectivity is required in the distribution of scarce resources in modern vocational universities in the UK today, and because activities and values legitimately differ between key internal stakeholders, the authors believe the *political model* is arguably the most realistic way of framing value-based management activity. The central components are the use of power and conflict in management decision-making, with leadership in universities invariably focusing around balancing competing priorities. Baldrige (1978) led the way in building this perspective when analyzing North American collegiate management styles. This is a model that forms an important bedrock to this research, as it is felt by the authors that a critical paradigm is best suited to understanding the interplay between the organization and the individual – wherever they appear in the staffing structure. Indeed, research by Bates (1992) of educational leadership argues for “a study and understanding of leadership which is informed by critical theory. In this context, the research focuses upon hegemonic views of leadership and notions of empowerment with a background of ‘cultural battles’.” (Van Knippenberg and Hogg, 2003)

The main conclusion from this research is that effective leadership and management is a highly prized commodity in all organizational settings. Increasingly universities are seen as corporate businesses, and their leaders are trained and developed by sophisticated corporate leadership development programmes offered by consultants. These programmes are often delivered in very distinctive manner and offer well researched “models” of excellence for leadership and management. In Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government has commissioned HayMcBer/Serco Learning to run professional development programmes for serving and aspiring head-teachers using research compiled from over 3 000 surveys of effective business teams and school leadership teams in England and North America (HayMcBer, 2005). Additionally, the Leadership Foundation for HE (2004) is now offering similar developmental programmes for senior managers from UK universities.

Research methodology

This research adopted a qualitative approach. Data collection strategies included:

- A desk-top study of relevant documentation linked to leadership, management and governance in UK higher education.
- Semi-structured interviews with members of the university’s senior management team (SMT).
- Interviews with training providers.

- Participant observation at university management meetings and leadership development sessions.

The research, therefore, in part, utilized ethnographic methods. This is because, as Denscombe (1998) intimates, the culture of an organization reveals itself when it is facing change and under stress. Observing senior management teams when faced with organizational problems or a need to change was deemed to be beneficial because it facilitated direct contact with relevant people located in contextual situations. Participant observation was also central to the research method in allowing the researchers to gain a detailed grasp of the evolving organizational value base – arguably the least “visible” aspect of any leadership and organizational culture.

Data collection was mainly by means of semi-structured tape-recorded interviews of approximately one to two hours duration. UWIC’s Senior Management Team (SMT) was, at the time of interviewing, made up of 27 members of staff represented as follows:

Category of Staff within SMT	Level	Membership
Vice-Chancellor and Principal	tier 1	1
Vice – Chancellor and Principal's Board [VCPB]	tier 2	5
Heads of Schools and Support Units = 9 Heads of Schools, 11 Heads of Units	tier 3	20
Director of Learning and Teaching	tier 4	1

21 members (78%) of the 27 members of the SMT kindly agreed to participate in the interviews, which were held throughout October and November 2004. The questioning focused upon leadership and management. Interviews were confidential and responses were kept anonymous. There was a fair balance of staff participating across the three representative groups, specifically 4 out of 6 tier 1 and 2 staff (66.7% sample); 8 out of 9 Heads of Schools (88.9% sample); 9 out of 11 Heads of Units (81.8% sample). Of the total population of the SMT, 7 members (26%) were women. Although under represented, the women were fairly balanced across the 3 representative groups, specifically being 2 out of 6 tier 1 and 2 staff (VCPB) and 3 out of 9 Heads of Schools and 2 out of 11 Heads of Units. With respect to interview format, participating members of the SMT were initially asked to consider what they would like to see included in a set of key value statements for UWIC and what was important to them in their particular role. Secondly, participants were asked to comment on the relevance and/or validity of the Nolan Principles for Public Life (a set of behavioural standards) to UWIC and their work in particular. Additionally, the interview schedule was piloted with one member of the SMT and subsequently reviewed. Minor modifications were made, largely in relation to the emphasis and sequencing of questions. The interview schedule allowed for a broad exploration of general and specific issues linked to leadership and value management. Following the interviews, the data was transcribed, coded and categorised into emergent themes, representing unifying ideas or topics. These topics were then summarised and interpreted. This interpretation was then used in “second-stage” leadership development away days in July and September 2005. In those away days a participant observation approach took place focusing upon values development and ownership.

Emergent values “themes”

A number of emergent value “themes” came out of the interviewing and participant observation. The most significant themes are summarised below and illuminated by selected comments from senior management colleagues.

The most widely supported theme was based around the need to **value people, both individually and as part of a team** and to building the university as a “learning organization.” For example, Two Heads of support units commented:

“most of our people are leaders of groups of academics or support staff that contribute to the university and so I think that valuing teams and their contribution is very important.”

“I’d like to see something about valuing people – which may sound a bit tacky...but our staff are our most expensive and most valuable resource...we must value our people.”

On a theme of teamship and common responsibility, senior managers stated that values should be about working together for the common good and that:

“values should be about working together to meet institutional objectives...accepting personal responsibility. Few people say ‘yep, it was my fault, sorry’.”

There was a strong desire to build a real sense of teamship, that the university had to be very people focused and that core values had to reflect that. Being a “caring” organization and a “learning” organization were re-occurring organizational principles in open discussion. Gaining external esteem indicators like “Investors in People” and “CharterMark” were seen to be important, but the thrust behind this value theme was valuing people in a moral, behavioural and professional context.

With respect to how valuing people and teams might materialise, a number of colleagues bought into the “learning organization” concept. For example, one head of school remarked:

“I like the idea about the ‘learning organization’...this is vitally important...it’s all about creating a culture and ethos where change can occur naturally,”

And another senior colleague reflected that:

“I think that a learning organization is a journey and not a destination.”

These two commentaries highlight the awareness of the constant change brought by culture building in modern UK universities as a result of internal pressures and external drivers linked to efficiency, accountability and general fitness for purpose. This gave rise to a number of comments that saw individuals having a concern for continuous improvement throughout the organization and the need for growth of a self-evaluating organizational culture. For example:

“I think we’re all being encouraged to think about quality enhancement in all of our areas of work, so I think continuous improvement is very pertinent.”

“Well I suppose evaluation within the context of continuous update is very very high on our agenda.”

Another theme highlighting the debate around the university’s “core business” was that of **valuing learning and teaching, research and enterprise and development equally**. Heads of academic schools made comments like:

“I think that’s particularly important especially at the moment where there is so much debate about research over-taking learning and teaching,”

And:

“the business of the balance between learning and teaching, 3rd mission, knowledge transfer, and the interface with business industry is difficult and I think this is about the kind of culture we aspire to. By and large, I think we are still perceived by large numbers of staff as a teaching

organization, and I think if we are going to make real progress and to have any real credibility as a university we are going to have to support the whole research base and the whole knowledge transfer base.”

Again, this highlights the tensions around meeting the needs of various stakeholders and the human, physical and fiscal costs linked to prioritising organizational goals. These tensions can be ameliorated by a clear value base and strong value-based leadership.

A related theme was the concern for **valuing customers**. This has always been high on the university’s agenda both explicitly and implicitly and is reflected in its strong showings in UK public “league tables” for organizational effectiveness. For example, a head of a support unit stated:

“I think it is customer first all the time. I think it’s got to be customer led what we do, I think that’s essential. That’s a key one for me, more than anything else. I think it should underpin all that we do.”

Another senior colleague felt that a concern for “customers” was too simplistic and service oriented and reflected that:

“you know, we all have to value students and the money they bring in, but actually it’s a lot deeper than financial ‘value’. We shouldn’t think of students as our customers.”

Linked to that, a large number of senior academic staff felt that the university needed to **value the student learning experience**. As one might expect with this value, they made clear and forceful statements that:

“they (the key values) should focus on the student learning experience because that’s what we’re all here for.”

“it’s fundamentally the core business – students experience and students achievements...and without that we haven’t got anything. That should be top of the list.”

“you need simple, crisp statements which state what are our core values and statements are - ‘We believe that the students and their experience is central to our organization’.”

Some colleagues also felt passionately that the university ought to reflect its changing community and be aware of its environmental responsibilities. So, valuing equality, diversity and the environment was another strong value theme. Senior academic and support staff noted that:

“widening access is of central importance now in the government agenda and it should be important to us, especially promoting social inclusion and being committed to equality and diversity.”

“university has got to be an inclusive environment and not an exclusive culture...that’s the first thing that came to mind...I don’t know how far we can make that a reality – that’s another thing, but its got to be something we aspire to.”

With respect to valuing the environment, staff commented that supporting the sustainability agenda was important and that the university needed to be seen to be “socially responsible in its whole energy policy.” Having a clear value statement for the world we live in was deemed vitally important, as was having measurable targets that could witness organizational commitment to sustainability and the environment.

Discussion

Value statements are grounded in core beliefs and define how people want to behave one with another. They are statements about how the organization will value its people, “products”, environment, stakeholders and the broad community it seeks to serve (Schwartz and Davis, 1981).

Value statements should also help guide behaviours that are the enactment of the fundamental values held by most people in the organization. In this case study, value alignment became organically linked to strategic intent via a lengthy series of discussions and structured workshops. Whether this process was too long is difficult to determine. Either way, the university’s newly established organizational goals are now grounded in clearly identified values. Hopefully, this initial thinking and reflection, now manifested in a “strategic intent and direction” statement with supporting “value underpinnings”, will help senior managers to model personal work behaviours, decision-making, and inter-personal interaction. All senior managers in the university were agreed that the next important step was to enable these core values to become “visible” in individual and group behaviours. Additionally, these same staff realised that it might be advantageous, though not essential, if these core values had some sort of capacity for “measurement”, or evaluation. As a result, the work being carried out by the university strategy development office on the creation of a “balanced score-card”, using the model from Kaplan and Norton (1993) has been shared with colleagues in order to align value adoption and behaviour to regular performance feedback.

What this initial study has also revealed is the critical importance of relationship development in university leadership and management. We would agree with Chemers (2003) that effective leadership and management comes from a delicate and sophisticated “mix” and utilisation of image management, relationship development and resource deployment. Building emotional commitment seems to be at the core of the project and this seems to fit with more modernist attempts to define a contemporary view of the employee, which not only examine attitude and behaviour factors, but also now include the notion of a psychological contract (Linstead, *et al.*, 2004).

Directly linked to relationship development is the “learning-in-organizing” concept (Gherardi, 2001). After much reflection on process, it is clear that the project had its roots in what has been described as “situated learning” within “communities of practice” (Brown and Duguid, 1991). Learning-in-organizing is essentially what the values project was all about. It was not just about problem-solving linked to corporate strategy; it was clearly oriented towards improving the relationships that are needed whenever people endeavour to act in an organized way. The “communities of practice” are defined as collections of individuals with varying degrees of expertise in a particular area who share insight and a sense of identity. They are, in essence, an elaborate form of “occupational community” (Linstead, Fulop and Lilley, 2004). That is certainly what the senior management team became during the values project. They decided what counted as legitimate knowledge and appropriate behaviour to endorse and exemplified research by Wenger (1999) on “situated learning” that learning is fundamentally a social phenomenon and that knowledge is integrated in the life of communities that share values, beliefs, languages, and ways of doing things.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), members become involved in a set of relationships over time and communities develop around things that matter to people. Certainly in this values project, colleagues evolved a sense of joint enterprise and identity. Additionally, colleagues did generate a shared repertoire of ideas, values commitments and “memories” from the whole process. Hopefully, these intellectual, social and emotional interactions will help colleagues build cooperation and ownership of the university’s core values with the staff they manage. Also, central to Lave and Wenger’s theory of situational learning (1991) is the notion that initially some people join communities and learn “at the periphery”. On reflection, this was certainly true in our case. Some colleagues had, and still have, a strong sense of their own personal values and a clear idealistic understanding of what a university ought to represent. Alignment to the

collegial understanding of “university” was very strong in some colleagues and they took some time to move to a more contemporary understanding of the values and drivers that now shape a modern, vocational university. Additionally, four colleagues were “new” to the organization and each of them used exemplars of practice in their previous universities to frame their engagement in these new discussions and gently make their position clear within their new “community”. As Lave and Wenger (1991) have commented:

Legitimate peripheral participation provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artefacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. A person’s intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a socio-cultural practice.

This quotation aptly synthesizes the build-up of trust and general engagement between the UWIC senior management team. “Team UWIC” became a verbal hook that was used by many staff throughout the leadership development training and is still used in formal and informal work situations. Additionally, this situational learning built up of a set of positive relationships between staff at various levels in the organization. In some respects, the project moved beyond experiential learning and moved to embrace Lave and Wenger’s concept of “situatedness”. This was highly relevant in the sense that “situatedness” involves people being full participants in the world and in generating social and political meaning. The whole values project was hoping for this type of engagement and learning and data analysis would seem to indicate this has been achieved within the senior management team.

Another outcome of this highly focused professional development is the building of self-understanding and values thinking in executive officers. In particular, the realization that leadership and management in an educational context must be continually “explored” and seen as “contested terrain” is a recurrent theme throughout the project. The values workshops attempted to build a behavioural understanding of leadership and management in colleagues. Arguably, leadership in modern universities has interesting parallels with parenting, where there is movement from autocracy to trusteeship and a controlled release of compulsory control towards voluntary co-operation, trust, respect and commitment between executive and senior colleagues. Building value alignment and gaining that vital ingredient of “discretionary effort” in the minds and actions of colleagues was a real target for executive officers. We would argue that the “soft skills” of management in universities – *i.e.* building trust in people, inspiring teams; facilitating and supporting teams – needs much more development and analysis.

Finally, a few brief reflective comments on the whole leadership development process is appropriate. Ashton and Felstead (2001) and Stern and Sommerlad (1999), in separate analyses of management training provision categorised it as largely being reliant on incidental learning and “forced investment” linked to specific organizational events. Superficially, it could be argued that was the case in this project. However, the university *is* committed to creating a “learning organization” where learning is continuous and central to organizational transformation. Leadership development training is now being institutionalised within the university via partnership working with the new Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. Arguably, the vital “edge” to this whole “values journey” will be the evolution of internal coaching and mentoring from senior managers and the growing emphasis upon transformational leadership and dynamic team working as encouraged by executive officers. This aspect of values “roll-out” is now being monitored by a small research group using the work of Jones, *et al.* (2002) using the “coaching process” as a key starting point. Embedding values into the organization is certainly the real long-term challenge to the university.

Consciously designing a rhythm or visual flow and an emotional passion inside the core values was deemed important by the researchers and external consultants. What has “gone public” certainly has a passion, but arguably the visual flow and rhythm has been lost in an attempt to inter weave key strategic commentary with core values – to go (www.uwic.ac.uk/new/about_uwic/mission_statement.asp).

Staff placed great emphasis upon the need to build emotional selling points (ESPs) inside the core values and this is probably why valuing people, valuing customers and the whole student experience were consistently high on everybody's value agenda. Additionally, they debated at length how these values could become visible. This is something Johnson and Scholes (2001) comment upon with respect to cultural "mapping" and building a cultural "web". Their research extends the thinking of Schein (1985) by suggesting organizations offer positive symbols, stories, rituals and routines in order to underpin core values and build organizational culture. One "story" from the research is that whilst being involved in a workshop session with a consultant from the OPM, colleagues examined the university motto – written in Latin and Welsh – and translated it to be "the most valuable possession is knowledge". This prompted the creation of a university "ethos" using knowledge as a theme, and states what the university feels are the foundations upon which it will engage with others and plan for the future. This "motto" is now posted on the university website and, along with the "strategic intent and direction", is now in positions of prominence in reception areas and gets mentions in key introductory addresses. Organizational routines and power structures are now being put in place to enable core values to be "lived".

To conclude, Linstead and Small (1992) remind us that a distinction can be made between "corporate culture" and "organizational culture". The former is devised, transmitted, marketed or imposed by management on the rest of the organization. The rituals, stories and values that are offered to organizational members are part of the seductive process of achieving membership and gaining commitment. The latter, however, is that which grows organically within the organization. The researchers feel that the senior management team can be seen as "culture-makers" and that the commentary from colleagues quietly alludes to the resistance or tension against the creation of a dominant research culture (Linstead, *et al.*, 2004). Executive colleagues have recognized that emergent tension and have, through ongoing dialogue, evolved a learning and teaching culture that is of equal significance to the research and enterprise culture.

The values project is an important first step in a substantial cultural change process. The next steps will involve studies of organizational climate, identity and image and search out the cultural and symbolic forms that distinguish the university and reinforce and refine its core values.

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