

# Faculty members' perceptions about the management of organizational change

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## Introduction

Education in the Gulf Region is an important component of each country's political, economic and social future. Educational change is sweeping the region, with accreditation of educational organizations taking on increased importance. The management of change is a vital aspect of the life of an organization; decisions and actions taken about changes affect attitudes and behaviors of all who are connected with the organization (Schein, 1992). The purpose of the present study was to investigate a stratified purposeful sample (Patton, 1990) of some faculty members' perspectives about the changes implemented during the past decade at UAE University's College of Education (CEDU). More specifically, the study sought some faculty members' perceptions about which processes and changes have been successful or difficult, and why, and how the difficult or unsuccessful experiences might have been managed differently. The theoretical implications of faculty members' perceptions about changes and change processes were examined in relation to international literature on organizational culture and change management. Recommendations about future management of change at the CEDU are offered.

## Models of organizational change

While organizational change can be very positive, it can also be threatening to those who work within an organization. The behavioural and attitudinal norms particular to the culture of a specific organization may present a resistance to change (Marsden, 1998; Schein, 1992) as people adapt to a new set of knowledge about "the way we do things around here" (Bower, 1966, p. 22).

Lewin (1952) developed a three-step model for implementing change. This model involved: *unfreezing* (dismantling old ways of doing things); *introducing a new alternative*; and *freezing* (reinforcing the changed behavior both formally and informally in the organization). Lewin's model now seems rather simplistic, because it implies that change is simple, straightforward and easy to implement. It does not allow, for example, for the effects of multiple changes on each other, nor for an explanation of how to maintain the change over time as people leave or arrive in the organization.

As a result there have been a number of adaptations to Lewin's concept, and more complex models have been developed: see, for example, Bullock and Patten's (1985) phases of planned change; Bridges' (1991) managed transitions model; and Kotter's (1996) eight steps to organizational change. Senge et al. (1999) present a systemic model that recommends that change should start small and grow steadily, that it should not be fully planned from the beginning, and that challenges should be expected. The flexibility of this model allows for initiating, sustaining, designing and re-thinking change as the process evolves.

Nadler, Tushman and Nadler (1997) developed a congruence model that attempts to balance four elements of an organization (people, the work, and the formal structures and aspects of organizational culture) as change is managed. Successful change reaches congruence between these elements; a lack of congruence means there is resistance to change.

According to Humphries and Senden (2000), four stages of response commonly experienced when changes occur are denial, resistance, exploration (energy, excitement, sometimes frustration and lack of focus with too much to do and think about), and, finally, commitment. Denial and resistance can be triggered by many fears, including loss of security, loss of status, or apathy (Rabey, 1997), and can take many forms, from subtle sabotage to outright opposition.

Successful positive changes are often due to a leader or change agent who acts as a catalyst in developing and maintaining a culture that allows staff members to reflect on how improvements might be made (Bloom, Sheerer, & Britz, 1991) rather than legislating autocratically. The establishment of a "bottom-up" co-operative approach to change assists people to become involved in the ownership of change (Dimmock, 1995). Other essential features include careful planning, sufficient time and consultation (Rabey, 1997), and safe support groups where problems can be aired, discussed and remedied (Schein, 2004). Schein also suggests that a reward and discipline system and organizational structures that are consistent with the new ways of thinking and working should be in place before change is attempted, while Dunphy (1991) contends that continued monitoring and modification of change are important features that need to be built into change processes. In addition, continuous professional development for staff is essential (Neville, cited in Walker, 1992).

How change is experienced in an organization is due, according to Evans (2001), to the patterns of attachment and understanding that members have established over time. He claims that while public meanings of change may be positive and linked to growth, renewal, innovation, progress and development, the private meanings for members of an organization are often about loss, challenges to competence, confusion and conflict. Resistance to change is therefore a major challenge, and Fullan (1991) says that neglecting to deal with resistance is at the heart of the "spectacular failure" (p. 127) of most social reforms.

Senge (1990) argues that the traditional top-down model of change, where change is dictated from the upper levels of administration, is no longer appropriate in the fast-moving, unpredictable, dynamic organizational context in which we live today. Leadership skills, he says, must be distributed widely throughout the organization, not held by one person. Evans (2001) suggests that "the pulse of change" (p. 250) should be checked frequently through formal and informal meetings and discussions. He claims that, if members of an organization are encouraged to take leadership roles, participate in formal and informal activities that plan and implement change, and address conflict positively, changes are more likely to be effective. Bolman and Deal (1991) advocate using different leadership approaches for different situations, and provide four frameworks which could be considered for different contexts.

The present study involved interviewing some CEDU faculty members to ask about changes and change management they have experienced during their tenure at the UAEU. Four main changes were identified by them: instigating and maintaining quality assurance processes and accreditation with an American organization (termed "accreditation" by participants); changing from Arabic to English as the medium of instruction (referred to as "teaching in English"); employment and other conditions of work; and new research requirements.

## **Purpose and rationale**

The CEDU is ten years into the process of change involving accreditation, and changed to using English as the medium of instruction five years ago. Other changes have occurred also. It is important to look back in order to improve what happens in the future; to learn from past mistakes and to consider models from international literature to enhance future development. Faculty members of an institution are one of the largest groups within the institution to facilitate change, and their experiences are a major component in the success or failure of change. Therefore, the present study was designed to seek the perceptions of faculty members about changes they have experienced at the CEDU. Faculty members were asked to:

- a) identify which changes and processes have been successful (and why);
- b) identify which changes and processes have been difficult or unsuccessful (and why); and to
- c) make suggestions about how difficult or unsuccessful experiences might have been managed differently.

The collected data was to be analyzed, coded and categorized, and used with the literature from the field to inform ways of understanding and managing future change at the CEDU.

## **Method**

A qualitative case study approach, using the grounded theory method, was selected. A case study involves an investigator making a detailed examination of a bounded phenomenon (Merriam, 1988), or event (Davey, 1991). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) claim that a case study “is both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that case” (p. 436).

A grounded theory is one that “is inductively derived from the phenomenon it represents” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p23). It was chosen for the present study because it enables a practice-to-theory “from-the-ground-up approach using everyday behaviors or organizational patterns to generate theory” (Hutchinson, 1995, p. 183).

### **Sample**

It was considered appropriate that the sample selected for interview should represent, as accurately as possible, the characteristics of the entire CEDU faculty. As a result, stratified purposeful sampling, described by Patton (1990) as useful for illustrating characteristics of particular subgroups of interest and facilitating comparisons, was selected for this study. A sample of fourteen participants was selected to represent percentages of faculty members according to their gender, preference for using English or Arabic language, country of origin, rank, length of employment at the CEDU, and the department in which they work. In addition, this method of sampling was used to ensure that the sample contained participants who had worked at the university over a range of time (i.e. from 2 to 20 years) so that a variety of time-related changes could be discussed.

### **Interviews**

Informed consent was obtained from prospective participants. Individual semi-structured, or “focused” (Yin, 1994, p.84) interview questions were prepared by the two principal researchers, who were also the interviewers. Each participant was provided with the set of guiding questions in preparation for their interviews, which took from three-quarters to one and a half hours. Although all participants spoke English, the interviews were conducted in either Arabic or English, depending on the preferred language

of the participant. Interviews recorded in Arabic were translated into English by one of the researchers, who is bilingual. Furthermore, the bilingual researcher undertook back translation and compared content, and also asked another bilingual speaker to check the translations to ensure validity and reliability.

Finally, all interview transcripts, now in English, were returned to be checked by the participants for appropriate translation (if applicable) and accuracy, to ensure that their intentions were not misrepresented, and to ensure that they did not consider that confidentiality had been breached. Amendments to the transcripts were made if participants requested them.

All interviews were then formatted for entry into the NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis software. The software was used, in Stern's (1994) terms, to "codify the substance of the data and ... use the very words used by the actors themselves" (p. 120). Data collection and analysis continued as interviews were conducted until the codes were saturated (no new information was found), using the grounded theory method of constant comparison. A set of categories - codes that seem to cluster together - was developed, compared further, and reduced. Five categories finally emerged from the data: resistance to change; communicating change; the development, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of change; the introduction of a newly-emphasized activity (research) into the organization's culture, and leadership. Theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 1994) was conducted to examine the categories to ensure that sufficient data had been obtained, and when saturation of the data was realized after the 12th interview, it was decided not to undertake the final two interviews. The analysis of these data will be presented in the results section.

Finally, the data analysis was compared to the literature on change management, and, together with participants' perceptions about possibilities for improvements at the CEDU, form the discussion and recommendation sections which follow the results.

## **Results**

The five categories which emerged are inter-related and will be described next. In some categories, suggestions for possible improvements for future planning that were specified by participants will be included also. Participants will be referred to by pseudonyms and all referred to as "he" (in spite of some being female) to help ensure confidentiality.

### ***Resistance to change***

Resistance to change was discussed by 66% (n=8) of the participants in the present study. Changes to do with accreditation and teaching in English were the subjects of most discussion about resistance.

### **Accreditation**

Three participants had been faculty members or students at the CEDU prior to accreditation, and one had been employed as the process was beginning. Accreditation brought with it many changes to the traditional, didactic regime where students were "recipients" of knowledge (Abdulla). The new requirements, according to these four participants, caused initial resistance from almost all faculty members.

Accreditation changes were initially confidential to CEDU and university administrators, according to Saed. Faculty members were confused about what they did hear. For example, Abdulla described one example of confusion about

accreditation as a concept and 'cultural invasion'. We wanted clarification ...we had some reservations regarding religious and cultural issues.

As a result of their resistance, Saed said that all the Chairs of departments and two consecutive Deans either stood down or left the CEDU. Hamad indicated that faculty members also resisted the changes because of the amount of work to do. However, Saed explained that during the two years after the accreditation processes began, compulsory involvement in professional development and in planning led to a more positive understanding of the processes.

Ahmed noted that the "new thinking improved our performance", especially in the area of assessment. He and Mubarak both commented that they felt that assessment processes are still evolving after 10 years of accreditation development. Abdulla summarized the positive comments about overcoming resistance to accreditation changes when he said:

Now, having made the changes, we are following standards. The accreditation process has been very positive.

In explaining the reasons that he resisted accreditation changes, Amir said that changes for accreditation had been "painful and stressful" for several reasons. First, he claimed that accreditation was "for status", with "no underlying intention to change to improve". Second, there was so much to change. Third, large amounts of work done by faculty members seemed not to be used. The perception of Amir was that perhaps the intention was to keep people busy, or that possibly those leading the changes did not know exactly what was required. Either way, Amir said that, in the end, "I did not make any effort because I knew my work would just be canceled".

In hindsight, Abdulla believed that the accreditation processes were eventually successful because they involved faculty members working collaboratively in groups. He felt that once CEDU faculty members began implementing programs,

we were happy because we felt like pioneers. Each one gained a lot of experience - like participating in working with international standards, connecting with others... We were making knowledge with others and it was positive.

Hamad agreed that involvement and processes of contribution ensured that faculty members learned a great deal and now feel a sense of satisfaction; Amir perceived that courses were now much better "because we wrote them ourselves" in committees of two and three faculty members.

Mubarak found it difficult to teach 12 credit hours with the increased workload that detailed course outlines (including rubrics) have provided. He indicated that a decrease in teaching hours and/or student numbers and committee work would help him to mark student work carefully as required when rubrics are used. Saif also found the workload of 12 credit hours heavy.

Saed, Hamad, Khalifah, and Amir all felt that workshops offered during the accreditation process increased faculty members' confidence in teaching and writing courses for programs and that they should be continued as accreditation is maintained in the future.

### **Teaching in English**

Resistance to the decision to teach in English was expressed by 66% (n=8) of participants. Amir remarked that there was much resistance to the introduction of teaching in English, with problems for faculty members as administrators used contract changes and renewals to force faculty members to teach in English or leave the CEDU. Hassan explained that teaching in English was a "huge problem for students .... Instructors must use Arabic to deliver information" and that many faculty members still resist the change by continuing to teach in Arabic. Abdulla, Ashraf, Mubarak and Ahmed felt that

English is difficult for students, who lose or fail to master concepts, and therefore are unable to gain a deep understanding of their work. Ashraf considered that students are being prepared in English to teach in Arabic after they graduate, and that they find English a barrier to the application of theory. Mubarak expressed his resistance to teaching in English by saying "I think the country will suffer. Our students need to be strong in their own language". Amir provided the only positive comment about teaching in English when he noted that he enjoyed teaching in English because "resources are so much easier to get".

### **Communicating change**

Communication of change - in relation to a wide range of issues - was discussed by 100% (n=12) of the participants in the present study. Each of these issues will be described below.

#### **Accreditation**

Saed, as noted in the previous section, indicated that the concept of accreditation was kept confidential initially, even from the Dean and faculty members at the CEDU. Saed and Khalifah perceived that this was inappropriate; Saed considered that

the concept of accreditation [should have been] clarified to all faculty members and nationals of the country before they embarked on it. Everyone involved in it should [have been] educated about it.

Amir said that, during the early development of accreditation processes, faculty members were often told to "just do it" if they asked questions to clarify the purpose of an activity or requested help. He felt discouraged by this, indicating that a lack of communication made some development work difficult. Saif, Khalifah, Ashraf and Omar said program changes or review processes in more recent years were often not communicated at all.

Ali and Saif said that they knew nothing about the conceptual framework (CF) and learning elements (part of the accreditation documentation) when they arrived at the CEDU. Ali still struggled to see the "big picture" (or system) because accreditation processes were not communicated to him when he arrived, even though he was on several committees working on parts of the process. Saif explained that he was required to undertake specific program work on arrival and, like Ali, experienced difficulty in understanding the accreditation requirements. He said that he read, asked colleagues, and was told different things each time:

it was hard to know what was going on .... we find out about it from someone else and then have to ask for it.

On the other hand, Hassan said that information about the CF was communicated to him by his chairperson when he was appointed, and he was given material to read.

Both Ali and Saif considered that clear communication at the beginning of employment at the CEDU would have clarified the issues they found so difficult as they changed from previous employment to the current job. Saif also felt that conceptual framework reviews and program changes should be undertaken step by step and communicated carefully with all faculty members "because every change affects everyone". In addition, he said, a specific role should be established for communicating changes to faculty members and students to ensure that everyone has the whole picture.

#### **Teaching in English**

It was clear that the reason for the change from teaching in Arabic to teaching in English, and who had made the decision, had not been communicated clearly to faculty members. Only one Arabic-speaking participant did not express resistance to this change. The other eight participants for whom Arabic is

their mother tongue expressed resistance to teaching in English. For example, Abdulla stated “perhaps it is an international trend. It is not my job to ask why. Perhaps experts have advised us”, while Amir said “I understood that the policy [on teaching in English] came from the university, not the CEDU”. Ahmed indicated that he had heard two stories: one that the chairman of the university had made the decision, and the other that the decision had been made by the CEDU as a matter of status. Saed and Mubarak both expressed confusion and concern about not being told why all students should be taught in English when most would be teaching in Arabic in the future.

Those cited in this section felt that the decision to teach in English should be reversed in the future. Mubarak suggested that some comparative studies could be done to help the CEDU determine the advisability of teaching in English, while Ashraf thought that other strategies, such as higher English entry test score requirements, should be investigated.

### **Induction of new faculty members.**

In the present study, eight participants had been hired at the CEDU within the previous four years. Of these, three had been Teaching Assistants (TAs) at the UAEU prior to their fulltime employment as faculty members. The remaining five had come to the CEDU from a range of backgrounds, and induction for them was a relatively recent experience. All five discussed their induction experiences, while the three who had been TAs and the other four participants, who had been employed at CEDU for nine or more years, did not.

The five participants who had been appointed in the past four years and who had not been TAs all spoke of the lack of initial explanation to them about the accreditation requirements that were in place at the CEDU. Specifically, they were ignorant of how programs at CEDU were structured, how courses were to be written, and how assessments were to be designed. The level of concern they felt depended on whether they had past experience in teaching in a university that complied with accreditation and quality assurance processes. Ali, for example, explained that he had not been employed in a university before. On arrival at the CEDU, he did not know the questions to ask because he had not been required to write programs and courses previously. He said:

I was just making an exam based on what I had taught in the course without ever looking at the written course outcomes.

He indicated that, after three years at the CEDU, it was still not clear to him how a program was written. Omar felt “just overwhelmed by this whole accreditation process” when he arrived two years ago: “Nobody really explained to me how the system worked”. Even for Ashraf, a new faculty member who had worked in a university that was accredited, understanding what was needed at the CEDU was difficult. He said that he pieced things together over his first year, and was fortunate to be able to use his past experience to help him.

Ali summarized his views about the lack of communication about accreditation issues in current induction processes when he said:

I think there are a lot of expectations [about what new recruits know]. I assume that people thought I already knew. So I assumed that what I knew was enough. No-one was telling me any differently.

Both Ali and Saif indicated that a carefully planned and implemented induction process should be available to communicate “the big picture” of the CEDU’s programs and courses to incoming faculty members. In addition, Ahmed and Omar expressed interest in how future potential recruits and current employees would be helped to understand which aspects of their work took precedence now that research had become a major focus at the CEDU. They considered that clear communication about what is required from faculty members in this regard would be useful at induction.

### **Performance appraisal**

Amir bemoaned the lack of communication between administrators and faculty members regarding performance appraisal. He felt that the process, over time, has been very subjective and that there is no fairness in it ... it should be changed so that attitudes and perceptions are not tools for judgment.

Ahmed, Khalifah and Ashraf all commented in similar fashion.

While the need for clarification of criteria for performance appraisal was clearly articulated by Ahmed, Khalifah, Ashraf, and Amir, a further suggestion was offered by Amir. He indicated that recruitment processes should emphasize and prioritize the appointment of experienced teachers and researchers with high ethical values to act as good role models and assist others in developing their teaching and research skills. He said:

We should put good examples in front of faculty members. We need people who have good attitudes to model for others.

### ***The development, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of change***

The data revealed a cluster of related perceptions about how change had been developed, maintained, monitored and evaluated. Acknowledgement of work completed, consistent monitoring and evaluation of changes made to programs, and open and transparent treatment of concerns and problems were discussed by participants. Each of these, with participants' perceptions about possible improvements (if they were noted) will be detailed next.

#### **Having work acknowledged**

25 percent (n=3) of participants commented on the need to have their work acknowledged. Their comments were focused on accreditation processes (one participant) and different aspects of performance appraisal evaluations (two participants).

Omar said that many hours had been spent on accreditation committee work but that after it had been presented to their department, it had often disappeared for more than a year without acknowledgement. He indicated that this was disappointing and undermined his confidence: "I do a lot of work and I do not know what I am doing it for!" Amir considered that objective appraisal processes should acknowledge each individual's contribution to the CEDU.

#### **Monitoring and evaluating program changes**

Four participants (33%) suggested that accreditation processes had not resulted in improvements that they had expected and that more monitoring and evaluation processes should have been put in place from the beginning. Amir indicated that he considered that accreditation

has not significantly improved outcomes for our students. I am still disappointed when I go to observe practicum teaching and I think that all our changes to courses, assessment criteria and teaching have made no difference to the quality of teaching we see in schools.

On the other hand, Hamad, who worked in a different department from Amir, felt that his department made constant changes and improvements to courses as a result of feedback, but indicated that the quality of this work depended on departmental Chairs and willing faculty members. Like Hamad, Abdulla was convinced that

we can locate problems, consider new elements, develop new assessment techniques and variations, and we can put our fingers on problems because the picture is clear.



He specifically mentioned the improvement he had seen in student involvement in their own education (as a result of policies for student complaints and more active learning environments in classrooms). However, Abdulla, similarly to Amir, considered that more work needs to be done in the area of practicum teaching: “field experience needs to be changed. We fail to properly document students on practicum”.

In addition to the suggestions for monitoring practicum experiences noted above, Abdulla said:

I have observed a lower enrolment rate since we began to teach in English. There are many other variables (such as a shortage of universities in some emirates, and the quality of pre-degree education) and I am not sure why our enrolment rate is lower;

however, he felt that some research into these issues would be beneficial. He considered that consistent and frequent monitoring processes should be put in place.

It was noted earlier that faculty members who have been at the university for a shorter period of time (and had not, therefore, been subject to the earlier accreditation processes) felt that they had little induction to the infrastructure that supports programs at CEDU. In relation to this, Ali and Omar suggested that a professional development induction program was needed to help newly-appointed faculty members to understand and manage their work, especially with regard to program and course design, research and student portfolios. If they understood the accreditation requirements that the CEDU expected, they felt that monitoring and evaluating those requirements would be easier for them.

### **Open and transparent treatment for problems**

Being able to discuss problems openly and transparently in a safe environment was an issue raised by six participants (50%). Each faculty member provided one or more examples of situations where they had not felt able to fully express a problem to colleagues at a department meeting, or to a Chair, because they felt intimidated, incompetent or foolish, or that others did not want to listen because it may have meant a heavier workload for them.

For example, Saif explained that, in his department,

There is no organization in term of implementing changes. Nothing is filed; everyone does something and they keep it for themselves and they share between maybe their department Chair or their committee Chair and nobody else. Everyone has something. I do not know who is bringing [the changes] together.

Although he had tried to ask for systems for recording changes, he felt that he had not been listened to and that course and program changes continued to be made by individuals without notification to colleagues.

### **“Just do it”**

Related to the need for open and transparent treatment of problems noted above is the issue of being told to “just do it”. Six of the participants (50%) in the present study reported this phenomenon. Two of the participants (Ali and Saif) who had been told to “just do it” were also concerned that they had not had a safe environment in which to fully discuss and solve their concerns, some of which were noted in the previous section.

The problems the six participants had identified ranged over teaching in English, accreditation work, a content examination, and portfolios. An example concerned the marking of portfolios, for which there were, at that time, no English criteria. Faculty members were told to “just do it [mark the portfolios]”. Saif and Omar circumvented the problem by inventing their own criteria for the purpose, with no consultation, and without moderating their marking with others who also marked portfolios.

### ***The introduction of a new emphasis on research into the organization's culture***

At the end of 2008, administrators indicated that the UAEU was to become a world-class research institution. When the present data was collected early in 2009, eight participants (66%) indicated that the new emphasis was very acceptable to them. For example, Hamad said:

It (research) connects you with the field itself and you make teams and you collaborate with faculty members from other departments and other colleges. It enriches your experience, enriches your knowledge with the latest in the literature.

Omar thought that the focus on research was “a very positive thing”.

The research focus for the CEDU is relatively new, and the eight participants who commented on it were looking forward in time, assessing what it would mean for them. They made a number of suggestions that they perceived would help them engage in research more successfully. The suggestions they made addressed the need to establish a research culture that includes: support from administrators; mentoring and professional development to assist faculty members to develop research skills; an infrastructure that allows adequate funding and time to undertake research, publish, and present findings; clear direction for faculty members about what they are expected to do; and an environment that permits the freedom to think critically.

### ***Leadership***

Four participants (33%) in the present study mentioned leadership. Saed had perceived a change from the top-down approach in the 1990s at the UAEU, during which time he considered that “higher administrators” (i.e. those holding positions of power over the CEDU) made all the decisions about teacher education programs. Both Saed and Ahmed considered that these decisions were often made for political and personal reasons, rather than for an understanding of the complexities of teaching. Abdulla thought that after the accreditation process had begun, the CEDU appeared to take over many strategic leadership decisions previously made elsewhere.

Abdulla acknowledged that the Dean and the university administration had tried to keep progress moving during the development of the accreditation process:

They would meet with us often, give us encouragement. It was good leadership, but it was difficult to know exactly how to guide and keep people committed and interested. It was hard work at that time, and leadership was important. Telling about good experiences, successes and benefits helped. It was also important to know that program preparation would take a long time and that it would happen step by step.

## **Discussion**

### ***Resistance to change***

Faculty members who had been employed at the CEDU prior to accreditation were able to look back on the processes they had been through and describe strong feelings of initial resistance, followed by a gradual acceptance, and, for most, later perceptions of pride in improvements made. This accords with Humphrey and Senden's (2000) model of four stages of response: denial, resistance, exploration and commitment. The participants who commented on this felt that, after the introduction of accreditation, good initial planning, clear communication and the provision of professional development also helped them move into the new organizational culture of accreditation.

Some initial resistance to the accreditation process could possibly have been overcome by providing all involved with information about what the process would involve, and by helping faculty members to air their concerns in a safe environment. Schein (2004) contends that safe support groups that enable problems to be aired, discussed and remedied are vitally important in the process of change.

Some participants thought that, as the accreditation process continued, careful on-going planning (e.g., with regard to specific projects, and for realistic time allocations for faculty members to do the work allotted to them) and continuing communication about further changes would have been helpful in reducing residual resistance.

In contrast, the decision to change from using Arabic as the medium of instruction to teaching in English was – and still is – strongly resisted. Eight participants discussed this issue, but of the remaining four in the sample, three spoke English as their mother tongue and did not perceive teaching in English as a major change for them. The fourth was strongly bilingual and expressed no concern about the issue.

The eight who expressed resistance to this change discussed two issues: the manner in which they felt it had been introduced without planning or consultation; and the perceived effects it had on students. Although the accreditation process had also been introduced without consultation with faculty members, a strong wave of professional development and some strong leadership (to be discussed below) eventually provided an antidote to resistance, supporting Neville's (cited in Walker, 1992) contention that continuous professional development for staff is necessary if resistance is to be dissolved.

No such learning opportunities were offered to faculty members who were required to switch to teaching in English. They felt that they were professionally responsible for students' learning and so still used some Arabic to assist understanding, thus subtly resisting the change.

### ***Communication of change***

In the present study, the importance of communication in the process of change was noted more often than any other consideration, and by 100% of the sample. It was noted with regard to managing resistance (above) in accreditation and teaching in English, but also in relation to induction and performance appraisal.

#### **Induction of new faculty members**

Participants who had been employed at the CEDU for more than four years did not mention induction, presumably because its importance had receded over time. In addition, those who had been TA's reported no concern about induction; instead, they spoke positively of workshops and professional development they had been provided with over the time they had been studying for their qualifications. But for the remaining five participants who had come from other countries and different jobs (one had never worked in a university previously), induction processes had been minimal and mostly consisted of them having to ask about what they did not know, if they were able to identify this. They all described their difficulties in trying to determine how programs and courses should be written, the purpose of various committees, and, in general "the big picture" of the system of accreditation, as one participant described it. Of the five, those who did not speak Arabic were unaware that the change to teaching in English had so recently taken place, and neither they nor those who spoke both Arabic and English noted that they had received any communication or professional development about theory and techniques to help them teach students who struggled to understand English.

### **Performance appraisal**

Some participants perceived that the criteria by which their performance was judged were not clear or fair, and that more communication and consultation is needed to clarify and improve them to reduce subjectivity. The notion of improving the organizational culture of the CEDU by employing experienced teachers and researchers who would communicate and act as good ethical role models was suggested as a way of helping faculty members to grow professionally.

### ***The development, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of change.***

Related to the issue of performance appraisal was a perceived need for faculty members to have their work acknowledged as they did it, both for appraisal purposes, and also to encourage them to continue to contribute to the work of the CEDU and thus continue the development and maintenance of changes already embarked upon. Communicating successful results of work, or telling faculty members when and why work was no longer needed were noted as important.

Following the progress of changes – by means of observation, feedback, and measuring achievements against the original goals – was also perceived to be essential. While much progress had been made in monitoring accreditation changes, for example, some areas still needed attention. Various suggestions for maintenance of change were made, ranging from small research projects and observations to high-quality induction programs for new faculty members so that change processes could be maintained knowledgeably.

The development of an organizational culture that supports frank, open and transparent discussion and analysis of problems instead of a “just do it” reaction that leaves problems unresolved was a very strongly-expressed perception of half of the participants, and is well-supported by the literature (see Schein, 2004). Participants felt that being told to “just do it” not only has a negative effect on faculty members who conscientiously monitor the progress of change, but may also skew or even prevent further progress.

### ***The introduction of a new emphasis on research into the organization’s culture***

The overwhelming opinion of participants about the new emphasis on research was that it was very acceptable, and something that they relished the opportunity to do. Because the change occurred only a few months before this study commenced, most participants projected their wishes and ideas rather than commenting on any changes that had already taken place. Noticeably, participants did not discuss concerns about the process of obtaining funding to do the research, so it may be assumed that this is being dealt with appropriately.

Perceptions about how the change to the new emphasis on research might be developed included the development of an infrastructure within the CEDU that would provide encouragement, collaboration and mentoring, and opportunities to work on projects instigated with a CEDU focus. Other features of a supportive research climate involved linking research opportunities to conditions of work such as professional development opportunities, adequate time to research, funding for travel to disseminate findings, a clear link to performance appraisal and promotion criteria and processes, and the freedom to think, research and write critically.

### ***Leadership***

The important and positive leadership roles of past and present Deans were mentioned by some participants as crucial to the development and management of change. Giving encouragement, recognizing work and telling stories about success were all noted as important aspects of the leadership

they had experienced, supporting Bolman & Deal's (1991) notion that different approaches are needed for different situations. Successful leaders, Bolman and Deal suggest, select from political, human resource, structural and symbolic frameworks to support their leadership activities. No suggestions were made by participants in the present study about possible improvements or future planning for leadership roles.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

The purpose of the present study was to examine faculty members' perceptions about changes that had been successful (and why) and those which had been difficult (and why), and to make suggestions about how the changes might have been managed differently. The data analysis provided a clear focus on how the participants perceived each change and included considerations that could beneficially be utilized as the CEDU continues to develop changes already made and introduces new ones.

Managing resistance is noted in the literature as an important feature of successful change (Bridges, 1991; Kotter, 1996). In the present study, examples were given of when managing resistance was successful (e.g., some time after accreditation was initially introduced), and other examples of when it was not (such as the decision to teach in English). Faculty members perceived that clear communication and consultation as well as supportive professional development to help them manage the new requirements were the most helpful ways of overcoming their resistance. Some participants expressed pride in their work, which also demonstrated that their resistance had been managed successfully. These perceptions, especially about professional development, may have strong implications for future organizational changes, such as the new focus on research. In addition, it may not be too late to provide professional development support for teaching in English.

The need for clear communication processes is expressed in the literature as a pre-requisite to effective change (Evans, 2001; Rabey, 1997), and is supported in the present study. Communication about "the way we do things around here" (Bower, 1966, p. 22) was perceived by faculty members to be essential if they were to fulfill CEDU expectations of them. They mentioned the need for clear and continuing communication with regard to accreditation requirements, induction, and performance appraisal criteria. They perceived that new changes to research expectations would need carefully planned communication systems as well. While 66% of the participants clearly resisted teaching in English, the marked absence of suggestions about professional development to improve faculty members' capabilities of teaching students for whom English is a second language may indicate a need for professional development on this topic. Without it, faculty members may not consider it necessary to do anything, or, alternatively, may be employing unsound teaching practices that further undermine learning.

Communicating clear and fair criteria for performance appraisal and promotion was strongly recommended by some participants, and it is noted that, since the interviews for this study were undertaken, a review of the criteria for performance appraisal has already begun under the auspices of new administrators.

Participants referred to the leadership role as mostly belonging to the Dean of the day, without suggesting that leadership can be distributed amongst Chairs and faculty members across an organization. Strong leadership – provided by administrators or faculty members who have been provided with professional development to ensure consistency across departments – will need to be demonstrated in maintaining, monitoring and evaluating the changes that have already been made with regard to accreditation so that progress continues. The induction of new faculty members, professional

development for teaching in English, the development of an organizational culture that encourages a safe forum for the resolution of problems, and the consistent and on-going evaluation of programs, policies and practices have already been discussed and will need to be under the purview of leaders who can plan effectively and communicate well.

The development of a strong research culture rests on quality leadership, too. Positive and enthusiastic responses to the concept of increasing the CEDU's research capability and output have been expressed so far. As the CEDU plans for the future, a research culture and infrastructure needs to be planned carefully to support the institution's goals.

In summary, the data in the present study indicated that successful organizational change depends on making changes to the organization's culture, which involves changing the attitudes, values, and beliefs of individuals within it. To do this, participants in the present study considered that all members of an organization should be involved in change processes, which often take place over considerable time. Clear and frequent communication and professional development opportunities, according to the data they provided, are key functions of successful change which manages resistance; develops, maintains, monitors and evaluates change; contributes to successful leadership; and forms the basis of future change.

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## Appendix

### Guiding interview questions

1. Please talk about your experiences teaching at the College prior to 1999 (when the accreditation process began):
  - How was the CEDU program organised? Was it very different from today's program?
  - Who decided what was taught?
  - What roles (if any) did faculty members play in program development?
  - What input (if any) did students have in program development?
  - What responsibility did students take for their own learning?
  - Was professional development about program requirements available to faculty members?
  
2. How did the accreditation process begin?
  - How did you first hear about accreditation, and what did it mean to you?
  - What was your involvement (if any) in the process at the beginning?
  - What did you think about the processes and changes as they developed ?
  - Were there any problems with the way the accreditation concept or processes were introduced and then developed?
  - What went well? Why?
  
3. Accreditation was gained in 2005 and a new program was being taught.
  - What did this mean for you and other faculty members?
  - What did this mean for students?
  - Looking back over the 1999-2005 period, is there anything that could / should have been done differently?
  - If you were advising an organization that is just beginning to make major changes to their program, what advice would you give about managing the changes?
  - What have you learned as a result of the changes?
  
4. Since 2006, new committees have been formed and work has begun on revising and updating the original documentation.
  - Have you participated in this development? If so, how?
  - In your opinion, is the revision and updating necessary? Successful? If so, why? If not, why not?
  - How do you feel about the current processes?
  - Is there anything that has been particularly successful?
  - Do you have any suggestions for improvement to the processes being used at present?
  
5. In summary, what is your opinion about the management of the entire accreditation experience?