Title: **Managing effective change interventions – what do you understand about what you do?**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to approach change interventions with a deeper understanding of the complexities and tensions and be able to draw from a range of considerations and theoretical models to inform their personal approaches and practice

Session Outline

'There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to lead in the introduction of a new order of things.'
Machiavelli 1532

The process of change within higher education largely reflects the nature of its context: complex, dynamic and unpredictable. Approaches to developmental projects or change initiatives are often instinctive or intuitive, rather than theoretical or scholarly ways of working. Whilst effectively and relatively comfortable, a question arises about the extent to which we are scholarly in our accounts about our ways of working. There is now a growing body of work focusing on change within the context of higher education but attempts to theorize change processes in this context often feel irrelevant to our experience as educational developers or reflect limited or simplified interpretation of the context.

In my work as an educational developer and in studying my own practice I have found enormous benefit in analysing the impact of specific elements of interventions I have used and considering this alongside the work, both established and emerging, from other environments where the nature of change has been explored in detail (Bond. C and Shrives. L,. (2003). Hall. J and Shrives. L,. (2006)) A model was developed from this work, 'Interventions through a Change Process' published in Bamber. R, et al (2009).

 Developing and sharing such a model has been a powerful and challenging activity and colleagues have valued its use in developing their own change interventions. However, my contention is that because of the complexity and dynamic nature of our work as educational developers involved in leading change initiatives there is the potential for each of us to develop our own theoretical models. These will draw relevant theories and challenge and develop our intuitive approaches to ultimately achieve more effective change.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

This workshop will provide an opportunity for participants to consider a change intervention from the context of their own work and to reflect in detail on what is happening during the process. We will then draw upon and explore how relevant approaches, theories, models and frameworks might help us in developing a deeper understanding of what is happening. This might, for example, include theories underpinning how individuals or groups learn, aspects of organizational change, and the role of educational or academic development. Participants should feel free to bring models or theories which they find useful to share with colleagues at the workshop. Groups will then be supported in developing their own model which brings together these relevant theories.

The workshop will be highly participatory focusing on work in small groups interspersed with plenary activities. The groups may change to involve delegates in the development of different models in which they feel they have a special interest in or contribution to make.

Indicative outline of session:

> Short introduction by facilitator
> Personal Reflections on change initiatives shared in small groups (10 mins)
> Drawing out relevant theories and models and relationship doodles for identified change initiative (20 mins)
> Sharing initial thoughts in plenary (15 mins)
> Further development and sharing (20 mins)
> Discussion of final models (20 mins)
> Consideration of Intervention through the Change Process model (5 mins)

References

Bamber, V., Trowler. P,. Saunders. M, and Knight. P. 2009. Enhancing Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Curriculum in Higher Education. OU Press. Maidenhead.

Bond. C and Shrives. L,. 2003. Consultancy in educational development in Kahn. P and Baume. D,. 2003 . Kogan Page. London.

Hall, J. and Shrives, L. 2006 Leading the Jazz band; conducting the orchestra or wild improvisation? New perspectives on enabling cross institutional change. Paper presented at ICED conference. Sheffield Hallam University 11-14 June