

Managing Change

The following matrix was developed as a way to conceptualize the process of complex change in an educational setting, and help those involved in implementing change to understand both the process and the ways in which their reactions to change might be understood. While it is usually used in advance of educational change, it is used here as a framework to review and reflect on the changes that have occurred in the Faculty of Education as a result of its involvement in the LEAP project .

Table 1. Managing Change

Adapted from Villa and Thousand (1995)

Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Collegiality	Change
***	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Collegiality	Confusion
Vision	***	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Collegiality	Anxiety
Vision	Skills	***	Resources	Action Plan	Collegiality	Resistance
Vision	Skills	Incentives	***	Action Plan	Collegiality	Frustration
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	***	Collegiality	Treadmill
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	***	Isolation

In terms of the above model, **vision** is ‘the big picture’ that people need if they are to have a sense of where any change is leading them. Often the people in charge or who are driving an innovation have a good sense of the ‘vision,’ of where they are all going and what will be achieved, but frequently this is either not conveyed to everyone else, or it is not accepted by those who are expected to follow. Building a shared sense of vision is therefore a critical factor in managing change, without which participants are likely to feel **confused**.

If people involved in change feel, for whatever reason, that they do not have the necessary **skills** to effectively take on the proposed change, they will more than likely experience **anxiety**. Change frequently implies acting in new ways, trying out different strategies, implementing new plans. It is not surprising that, if people feel they are inadequately equipped to do these things, they will feel a sense of anxiety; however, too

often those driving change fail to appreciate this and do not put in place strategies for identifying the skills staff will need and the means for acquiring them.

If people have no **incentive** for change, they are likely to be **resistant** to it. In other words, if people feel that they are not going to get anything out of it, their normal reaction is to ask themselves ‘why change?’

Resources are a vital ingredient in managing change — not necessarily physical resources, but any of those items which people feel are necessary to enable them to make the required change. It might be new equipment, but it might just as easily be emotional or social support. If the perceived needed resources (i.e., those that are perceived to be needed by the participants themselves, not necessarily just by those who are driving the change) are not provided or accessible, the participants are likely to feel **frustrated**.

It is rare these days for people to contemplate change without putting in place a **plan of action**. Funding is so tightly tied to plans these days that most people are accomplished at drawing them up; but without a plan (and without it being convincingly and clearly explained to all participants) people will quickly come to feel as though they are once again, on a **treadmill**.

While proposed change can sometimes bring people together, it can also just as readily drive people apart. Without a sense of **collegiality** when managing change, people may feel lonely and **isolated** and without collegiality; any attempt to develop a ‘community of learners,’ as this project was trying to do, would be doomed to failure. While this factor was not part of the original Villa and Thousand matrix, the experience of one of the authors of this paper (Alderson) has found this to be as an essential ingredient in managing change.