

Workshop 18:
Restructuring! Reculturing! Generating Change!
Meeting new demands in VET practice and
corrective services training

Richard Krogh

Coordinator, Development, Delivery and Evaluation of Training
Juvenile and Adult Corrective Services, ACT

Lola Krogh

Coordinator, Flexible Workplace Delivery
ACT Corrective Services Training Programs

This report will address a process of organisational change and the development of a learning culture for staff in Corrective Services. It will track the process using several explanations for the changes including the upgrading of the training profile of the workforce. It will discuss how workbased-learning strategies can be effectively employed in promoting organisational change.

The report focuses on the use of an improved team approach and a greater sense of staff worth and belonging towards:

- the evolution of a changed philosophy and culture across the organisation
- improved casework practices
- a substantial reduction in critical incidents
- less need for restraint
- more positive outcomes for young people and adults in correctional facilities and programs

The report identifies that there has been:

- a creative use of effective education and training in tandem with cooperation throughout the organisation
- an inclusive management approach
- the establishment of a vibrant learning culture
- an expansion of social capital for staff and clients

Introduction

Our project was born out of a moment in 1996 when a young life was lost in a youth justice centre. That tragic event prompted a Coronial Inquiry, which led to the development of a vision of what would constitute 'best practice' for clients to the grounding of that vision in reality and extends to the introduction of the same model of training for staff at Adult Corrective Services in 2002.

Quamby provides the residential function of ACT Youth Justice Services. Quamby is a 32 bed residential facility accommodating young males and females between 10 and 18 years of age who have been sentenced by the ACT Magistrates' Court to a period of detention (a committal sentence) or have been remanded in custody.

Coronial Inquiry

... 'In 1996, a death in custody occurred at Quamby. The subsequent Coronial inquiry highlighted the need for the reform of work practices and the need to change the culture within Quamby. Organisational culture is the sum of the formal and informal behaviours that an organisation adopts. Ott (1989), states that organisational culture is a "phrase that means two different but related things ... first it is the culture that exists in an organisation ... and ... second it is a way of looking at and thinking about behaviour of and in organisations, a perspective for understanding what is occurring." A negative culture and philosophy had developed, which was impacting poorly on the young people held there and the staff who were attempting to manage the young people. In its Annual Report for 1998-1999, the Office of the Community Advocate, said that Quamby, by *"its very design and structure (is) not conducive to an interactive, rehabilitative environment, and the level of neglect would certainly impact negatively on low staff morale, as well as the mental wellbeing of young people"*. The report goes on to say that, at the time of the death in custody (1996), the Centre was *"a very depressing and neglecting place."*...

The response

The Government responded quickly to the Coroner's findings, recognising the need for urgent change and in May 1999, a new manager was appointed to the Centre. The requirement was to bring about positive institutional change within a negative workplace culture and philosophy. In order for the new management to achieve this appointed outcome there was a need to recognise that changing the direction of this type of organisation would be difficult, at best, and may be impossible if the inertia of this problem was tackled by relying on the traditional position of power. The new management was seeking an innovative change management strategy. The strategy needed to be forward thinking, intuitive, and innovative. To be effective it was imperative to revise the role of the centre within a new vision, and question whether it needed to move from being a "cog" in the larger organisational "wheel" to being a paradigm changer. This meant introducing new directions, sharing new innovations and mentoring others towards a new realm of best practice (Koellner.2002). An innovative manager relies on empowerment of the team and creating passion with a focus on innovation.

The evolution of change

Changing the status quo

The vehicle for change became the development of a combined Case Management and Unit Management methodology that fitted within the change management framework developed by Kotter (1995). Juxtaposed and integral to this methodology was for the Centre to become a place of learning, rather than a place of detention, to emphasise the rehabilitative role of the facility.

A learning partnership

An innovative learning partnership was developed between the organisational management, *ACT Youth Justice*, the staff of the Centre, *Quamby*, the registered training

provider, *Department of Community Development, CIT and OTAE*, the funding body. The decision was made that the existing fragmented training arrangement must be replaced by a responsive, learner-led system, and that a culture of lifelong learning must be developed throughout the organisation.

Propagating the vision

The impact of a dysfunctional workplace culture can go beyond mere unpleasantness to high staff turnover, low productivity and low staff morale. The stress caused by such negativity can keep the organisation from achieving its full potential.

Experts in organisational development say that transforming a workplace culture requires a broad approach, addressing as many as possible of these elements: mission and vision, goals and measures, policies and procedures, customs and norms, organisational structure, training, performance evaluations, reward systems, communications and ceremonies. Focusing on one element alone will not bring about fundamental change (Colter, 1988, p1)

Managing organisational structural and cultural change is much like tending a garden. By faithfully and patiently following some fundamental guidelines, you will likely reap a good harvest. Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) provide fundamental guidelines for Transformational Leadership, an appropriate theory for promoting a vision of organisational change because such leadership “transforms the goals of followers from self-interest to collective achievement”. (Chemers 1997 p79)

Transformational leadership theory, as developed by James Burns (1978), Bernard Bass (1985), and others, is a perspective of leadership that has emerged out of the post-modernist analysis of earlier theories. The transformational leader “looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (Burns, 1978, p. 4) in an effort to transform followers into self-motivated “leaders” and to create a new culture of effective practice. Kotter (1991) proposes, ... “It is the leader’s role to develop a vision and to align constituents and followers around that vision through the use of persuasive communication, inspiration, and empowerment.” The development of a clear vision is important because to get where you want to go, you need to know what it will look like when you get there. This approach was multifaceted, multidimensional and consequently extensively challenging.

The business and training plans for the Centre were developed to reinforce a desire for learning. The concept was to engage all staff at all levels in the training culture and tailor training to meet individual needs throughout their employment with the Service.

Why a learning organisation

There was a need for a more effective approach to management in the centre. One that would enhance its capacity for innovation and creativity, provide more effective strategies and policies and develop a structure that allowed the assimilation of the various disciplines involved in the provision of service. Furthermore a learning organisation acknowledges the importance of life learning and investment in people. We contend that the organisational learning model applied is an empowering, effective and efficient change management strategy. (Meyers.p1.2000).

Developing the training

The creative training and education model

Given the diverse range of young people at Quamby and the complex nature of the issues that affect them, there is a strong requirement for staff to possess skills, knowledge and understanding in a wide range of disciplines. It was decided that these skills would be best passed on by providing operational staff with tertiary educational experiences that underpin and, if need be, help change their operational experience. This education and training was also seen as vital in the strategy of change management within the facility. The use of training was a major goal and a strategic direction undertaken in the change management process at the Centre.

The challenge

The challenge was to develop and deliver a customised range of courses which:

- met the industry needs identified by the organisational workplace
- had the ability to support empowerment and change
- was an inclusive model, and
- met the requirements of the prescribed competencies of the Training Package

Empowerment through education

Ife believes that individual and structural empowerment is intertwined and that it is difficult to have one without the other. He argues that:

The idea of empowerment inherent in a critical paradigm is one that requires it to incorporate the personal and the political in the same process (Ife 2002:136-137).

The empowerment of young people in a practical sense was displayed effectively with the introduction of a mutual code of conduct developed by young people and staff to support equality in decision-making processes. The Code of Conduct allowed staff and young people to acknowledge each other's rights within a power structure that does not usually promote mutual respect. The Community Advocate who has undertaken statutory visits to the facility over the last two years has indicated that the significant feature of the facility is the empowerment felt by residents who feel free to raise issues with staff and management in a climate that does not naturally lend itself to an empowerment model.

This process enabled structural and individual empowerment through the mutual respect that was promoted by the introduction of appropriate and relevant training. Training that worked to empower staff in their own learning and increase levels of personal self-belief. This experience helped staff to see the benefits of such an approach when working with their clients.

Customising the training

The primary aim was to offer a customised course to deliver quality outcomes to staff and offer future opportunities and pathways to further tertiary education. Youth Justice Services and CIT developed modular transportable training, which reflected best practice needs within industry and incorporated a meta analysis study to allow contemporary and up to date course content. The process involved identifying key developmental needs and developing a training plan that could be operationalised individually for all staff throughout

their employment with the agency. This became a process of individualised case-planned learning. This became a four-tiered model which consists of: Initial In-House Workplace Training; TAFE Workplace Training; Tertiary Training; Higher Education Training.

This strategy allows all staff to engage in a continuum of learning whilst employed at the Centre. The use of work teams and multi skilling are integral and complimentary concepts to the Centre's framework and delivery of training. These concepts are utilised throughout the delivery of Induction Training, the role of mentoring and the delivery of Professional Development activities built into the Centre's rosters.

The organisation, in consultation with CIT, designed a flexible course timetable to allow staff to attend tuition either prior to commencement or upon completion of their shifts. This flexibility of delivery achieved high enrolment rates which in turn created a climate of learning. Interest in the courses offered is high, with attendance rates above 90%. Similarly, assessment returns are above normal response rates.

Program planning

The first step in the program planning process was the selection of a program format. "Program format refers to how educational activities are structured and organised" (Caffarella, 1994, p. 152). A theoretical underpinning of Transformative Learning was proposed for this Training Program – Expose – Explore – Explain.

A delivery strategy of workplace learning was engaged at the Centre. This included:

- CIT based workshops that allowed participants a high degree of ownership over their own learning environment;
- Assessment against competencies on-the-job;
- Support of staff placements, secondments and opportunities to build capacity;
- Development of new operational practices; and
- A commitment to the integration of innovative, accessible and flexible training and assessment.

The opportunity for staff to integrate theoretical knowledge acquired off the job and to align this individually to direct client practice became a significant learning tool within the organisation. Thus a proactive, holistic and therapeutic model of operation was implemented which enabled all staff to have access to tertiary education as part of their employment conditions. Programs and educational opportunities for the young people in the Centre were also greatly increased.

The combination of innovative yet rigorous learning through cooperative inquiry, collaborative learning, judicious dialogue, and critical self-reflection formed a basis for the development of a learning community as an effective change management strategy.

Outcomes

A number of fundamental and lasting achievements, which can be attributed to training have occurred, the most significant of these achievements are outlined below:

The revolutionary change that has occurred in attitudes and approaches has led to the adoption of new professional practice across the Service.

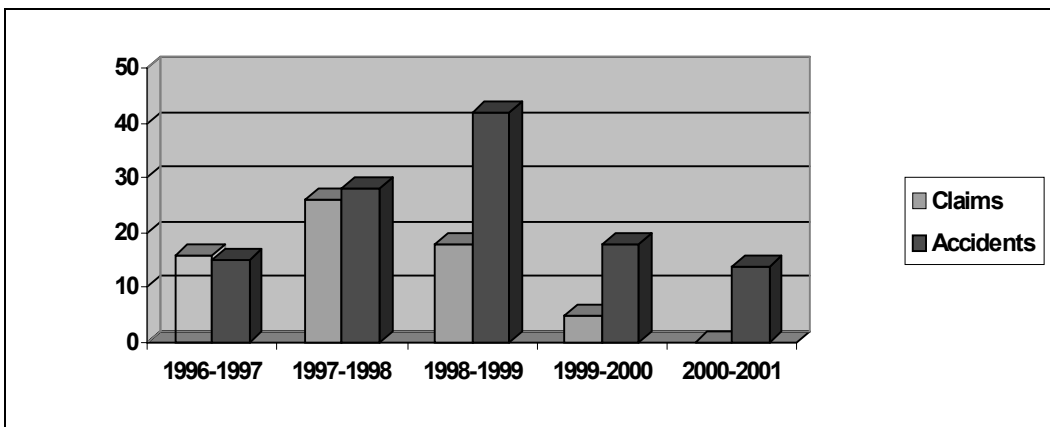
Quamby has undertaken an independent audit against the Australasian Standards for Juvenile Justice facilities and is the only Centre in Australia that has participated in the audit.

The organisation was awarded the 2001 Employer of the Year at the ACT Training Excellence Awards.

The increased provision of programs and services has reflected directly in the rehabilitation and achievement of residents.

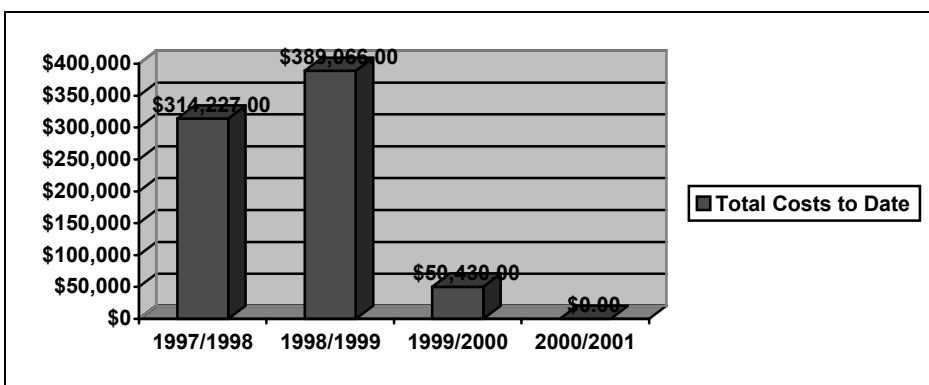
Considerable changes to the management and administration of the Centre occurred in 1999. What was particularly evident at Quamby during this time were the high rates of staff injury and associated Comcare claims reflecting the problems associated with the environment and culture. The rate of injury and associated claims are shown in the following table.

Youth justice accidents and claims



The highest rates of injury were to operational staff as a result of being exposed to workplace or occupational violence, muscular stress, falling and being hit by another person. The high incident and claim rates naturally translated into significant costs for the organisation. The chart below illustrates the salary related costs associated with the Comcare claims but does not include additional/reduced costs in medical expenses and increased insurance premiums. It also does not reflect the associated costs/reduced costs in staff morale and the cumulative effect on the overall operation of the Centre.

Comcare costs



The reduction in claims can be directly attributed to staff training, the improved knowledge, skills and awareness related to the daily operation of the Centre, and staff's ability to deal with difficult situations. As a result of Quamby's substantial reduction in Comcare claims, Quamby was nominated for the 2001 ACT Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Prevention Award. Management and CIT believe that there is a direct correlation between the two which is an indication of a heightened staff morale and an increased awareness of the safety and security issues within the Centre. Evaluation of this important educational outcome is continuing and will be reported on in the future.

Conclusion

Training can be the catalyst for fundamental and lasting change in all aspects of an organisation. The changes that training brings to the workplace affects people and how they work. The challenge is about changing supervisors' attitudes about sharing decision-making responsibility and empowering workers as it trains workers to complete specific tasks. Workers and supervisors will only change their behaviour if it is reinforced/rewarded by management. That means that management changes have to go hand in hand with training. If that does not occur, training builds up expectations that are not realised and workers become cynical about the whole process.

With the implementation of the new model outlined Quamby has become a positive and effective learning community, where workers and management value training, management are supportive of training programs financially and educationally and young people and staff benefit from the development of educational opportunities and more positive outcomes for all.

The model we have developed has been instrumental in the development of social capital, and the effective engagement of young people, allowing them to have real decision-making power. Their active participation in the residential units through staff-client meetings and staff involvement in one-to-one support for residents in their educational program proved effective in improving their well being on all levels. The model of engagement employed at the facility reflects a participatory engagement of staff and young people.

The specific engagement undertaken by staff, now professionally trained, can be correlated with the dimensions of social capital building in the specific dimensions of bonding, bridging and linking capital. (Woolcock 2000; Putman 2000; Woolcock & Narayan 1999). These are described as the nexus of effecting opportunities through an engagement process that allowed the creation of strong social capital growth and stability.

Bonding capital refers to the informality and intimacy of social connections between family and close friends thus promoting mutual understanding and support (Cattell 2001). The development of a good case practice framework that holistically engaged young people allowed for the development of more meaningful engagement between staff and young people within a trusting working relationship based on mutual respect. This framework was administered by staff at all levels of the institution in a joint framework incorporating program staff, operational staff, young people and their families.

The achievements realised by the organisation have had a positive impact on all aspects of the Centre including the educational, program and service provision for residents. Residents have greater access to accredited educational courses, programs and services

than ever before and the social capital to grasp the opportunity to move through a more positive model of rehabilitation.

We believe that this project has seen the development of a valid strategy for - *Restructuring, Reculturing, Generating Change, and Meeting New Demands in VET Practice and Corrective Services Education*

Future developments

This same model has since been introduced into Adult Corrective Services in the ACT with the same degree of success.

Further education and training opportunities are currently being developed in partnership with Universities for opportunities in higher education. This negotiation involves the development of Associate Degrees, Undergraduate Degrees and Post Graduate Degrees in a range of Justice and Youth studies.

References

Bass, B. M. (1985) *Leadership And Performance Beyond Expectations*. Free Press. New York

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row. New York

Cattell, V. (2001) Poor people, poor places and poor health: The mediating role of social networks and social capital. *Social Science and Medicine*

Chemers, Martin M, (1997) *An Integrative Theory of Leadership*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.: Mahwah, New Jersey.

Colter, C. (1988) *Transforming Workplace Culture* [www document] URL <http://www.cooperativegrocer.coop/cg1998/workplacecult.shtml>

Ife, Jim (2002): 'Community Development: community based alternatives in the age of Globalisation'. Pearson Education: Australian Pty Ltd.

Koellner, Laurette (2002) "*The Evolving Role of Managers and Leaders*" National Management Association, Boeing Space Coast Chapter. [www document] http://www.boeing.com/news/speeches/2002/koellner_020221.html

Kotter, John P. (1998) "Winning at Change" *Leader to Leader*. 10 (Fall): 27-33. [www document] <http://drucker.org/leaderbooks/L2L/fall98/kotter.html>.

Kotter, J.P. (1991) "What Leaders really do" in / *The Best of the Harvard Business Review*. Harvard University, Boston. p. 73-82.

Meyers, D. (2000) *A Learning Organisation – What is it?* In Research Digest Edition 6, Dec. 2000, Canberra Institute of Technology. Canberra. Education and Development Centre.

Putman, R. (2000) 'Bowling Alone: The collapse and revival of civic America'. Simon and Schuster: New York.

Ott, J. S. (1989) *The Organisational Culture Perspective* Illinois: Dorsey. p.1.

Woolcock, M. (2000) The place for social capital in understanding social and economic outcomes. Paper presented at the symposium to the contribution of human and social capital to sustained economic growth and well being, Quebec, Canada March 19-21.

Woolcock, M. and Nayararan, D. (1999) 'Social capital: Implications for Theory, Practice and Policy'. World bank Research Observer 15(2) [www document]
www.aifs.org.au/institute/research/program