

## Supporting Cultural Change:

recognising the value of  
informal learning  
in a public service case study.


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## What we will cover....

- The case study in question – rationale and objective
- Exploring meaning through research
- How the study was done
- What the study found
- Implications for the organisation
- Implications for VET
- Conclusion – four outcomes

## The case study in question ....

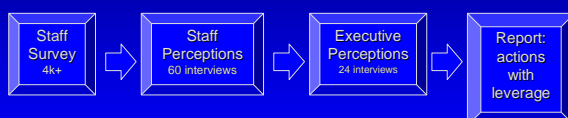
- Merger (?) WA public service  

- What HR actions can support cultural change to the new values?
- Goal of achieving 'dynamic resourcing'
  - What values are embedded?
  - What HR actions are contributing?
  - What actions could accelerate change?

## Exploring meaning through research....

- A clear agenda for research does not preclude discovery of the unexpected
- Cognitive modes of production privilege learning through work and within work relations
- Training focuses on individual skilling; informal learning is generated by cultural relations in the workplace
- Managers are critical instigators of such cultural change

## How the study was done....

- Collaboration – over a year – program logic – embedded researcher
- 4,500 employees statewide



- What will help change the culture for dynamic resourcing?

## What the study found....

- Employee experiences -agencies of change: formal & informal
  - Secondment / transfer / promotion / acting/ position changes ( 10 – 40%)
  - Projects / additional duties ( 80%)
- Executive perceptions
  - Traumatic change / previous poor management / shake –up irony
  - Jostling for space / eye for opportunities / valuing people skills
  - Policing replaced by coaching / group involvement / values as critique
  - HR needs to support this dialogue not enforce compliance

## Implications for the organisation....

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- Chaos producing an emerging more flexible culture
- Values used to critique decisions and actions
- Informal learning from projects and group interactions is instrumental in the culture change process
- Learning is being generated from workplace interactions
- HR needs to leverage their strategic role of focusing on managers developing staff through workplace interactions

## Implications for VET ....

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- Informal learning is a powerful strategic change mechanism
- Change management is based on changing perceptions – learning
- A strategic approach to learning in organisations values informal learning and strategies to manage such learning
- Agencies of change are used by managers:
  - Type one: build relations -use informal and formal negotiating boundaries
  - Type two: selective relational building – focus on a few – inequity
  - Type three: use formal authority as a change mechanism – overworked
- Informal learning through projects and new work experiences changes people and organisations

## Conclusion....

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- Four outcomes:
  - Pragmatic - produced models of managing change for managers and illuminated strategic role for HR(D)
  - Conceptual – a model of managing informal learning
  - Research – directed exploration illuminates the unexpected
  - VET – The need to manage and support informal learning alongside formal training practices

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