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Importance of Integrating Cultural and Structural Change

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## **GENERAL EDUCATION REFORM AS ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: INTEGRATING CULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL CHANGE**

**Susan M. Awbrey**

“I died on the hill of general education reform.” This adage is repeatedly heard from faculty and administrators who have fought to bring a renewed vitality to undergraduate education but who were defeated by the process. The reform of general education is one of the most prevalent and complex challenges facing colleges and universities. General education is embedded in the culture of the institution. Its meaning and symbolism permeate the organization and extend beyond to external constituencies. Yet the task of reform is often assigned to a faculty committee or task force made up of individuals from a variety of disciplines who have little experience in examining institutional-level issues or in examining such issues from an organization-wide perspective. Faculty members focused on research, teaching, and service are often not aware that general education reform thrusts them into the unfamiliar role of agents of cultural change.

A significant impediment to effective organizational change, including general education reform, is failure to recognize the extent to which the change process is vulnerable to powerful cultural influences (Dooley, 1995). Information that assists faculty and administrators who are charged with general education reform to understand the nature of the issues, problems, and resistances that they will encounter—within the academic community and among themselves—can help them to work more effectively. This paper examines how higher education administrators and faculty can obtain more successful and sustainable reform outcomes by applying knowledge derived from literature and research on organizational change and by recognizing the importance of systematically integrating cultural and structural approaches to change.

An overview of the evolution of general education in the United States provides a backdrop for the discussion. The advantages of including the cultural perspective in change initiatives are identified and a model of organizational culture change is introduced and illustrated through application to the process of general education reform. The relationships of culture to learning and of learning to continuous institutional improvement are described. The paper concludes with the theoretical and practical integration of cultural and structural change processes.

### **The Changing Landscape of General Education**

General education was not always a part of higher learning in the United States. When universities were first founded in the United States, classical education provided unity and coherence within the confines of a single canon. However, as the curriculum changed, faculty faced the challenge of integrating new forms of knowledge with older forms and defining what is essential to the education of undergraduate students. One of the first attempts to define what general education should be took place at Yale in 1828 (Kanter, Gamson, & London, 1997). The evolution of general education continued with the Harvard model and later with the rise of research institutions. But the development of general education did not unfold smoothly (Rudolph, 1977). In 1977 the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1977) issued a report that called general education a disaster area. This report gave impetus to a new and intense round of general education reform during the 1980s. Numerous national associations received funding for the study and improvement of general education and also issued reports during the mid-1980s indicating that undergraduate education had lost its liberal arts roots and that "students lack exposure to fundamental subjects and . . . basic intellectual skills" (Kanter et al., 1997, p. 9).

Gamson, Kanter, and London (1992) identified internal and external catalysts leading to general education reform during the 1980s. According to these authors, internal catalysts for change included: changes in academic leadership and vision, declining or under-enrollment, sagging university reputations, faculty dissatisfaction with

current working conditions, faculty desire to educate students in a way that reflects faculty views, and departmental competition. External catalysts included the impact on reputation of declining enrollments, drops in the academic ability of students, and meeting accreditation standards.

Gaff & Wasescha (1991) studied 305 colleges and universities that underwent general education reform during the 1980s. They found that 67% of the institutions under study increased interdisciplinary coursework, 68% tightened their distribution requirements, 73% added upper division courses, and 93% increased writing across the curriculum requirements. In addition to programmatic changes, some institutions reported that the process focused the college's identity, brought people together from across the institution, and made faculty more aware of the environment beyond the confines of their department. However, potentially damaging effects of unsuccessful general education processes were also reported, including deeply divided and embittered faculty and increased tensions between faculty and administration (MacDonald, 2003).

Johnson (2002) studied how general education changed between 1989 and 2000 in a national survey of over 500 chief academic officers and directors responsible for general education at various Association of American Colleges and Universities institutions. He found that "the majority of reform activities consisted of changes to structural aspects of general education programs. Furthermore, institutions did not often assess broad aims for general education nor did they involve students in forming these aims" (p. 121). He notes that some of the primary strategies for changing curricula included more prescription of general education courses, the addition of interdisciplinary sequences, and thematic organization of general education programs. Although one of the major reasons for undertaking general education reform during the 1990s was to increase program coherence, Johnson found that the structural strategies used to create more coherence had not "achieved their aim of a more coherent curriculum." He concludes that "achieving coherent curricula may require more than academic planning and structure reorganization" (p. 109).

Results of a survey on the status of general education in 2000 conducted by Ratcliff, Johnson, La Nasa, and Gaff (2001) indicated that

57% of the institutions studied were engaged in the process of reviewing general education and that many more were planning to begin the process. Nevertheless, the authors indicate that “despite the high level of interest in general education from campus and external sources, there is little evidence that academic leaders have made much advancement in the science or art of developing shared educational values and embedding them in the life of institutions” (sp.18).

### **Depth of Change**

A mistake that faculty and administrators sometimes make when beginning the reform of general education is to believe that they are simply engaged in the overt structural task of curricular reform. Yet general education change is not just a task of curricular change: it is also cultural change. As Ratcliff writes, “The educational program of the institution reflects the norms, values, and behavior of the organizational culture” (Ratcliff, 1997b, p. 9). Fuhrmann and Grasha concur that what is or is not thought to be quality curriculum “is largely the result of our educational philosophies, beliefs, values, and normative positions (Cited in Ratcliff, 1997b, p. 152).” Although campus-wide general education efforts may focus on what is best for students, recognizing why faculty hold the beliefs they do about what is best is a much deeper task that involves systematic examination of the cultural context in which the change is taking place.

Regarding organizational change as involving just the task at hand is not unique to higher education. Selfridge and Sokolik (1975) have described this organizational problem as the iceberg phenomenon. The tip of the iceberg is the everyday, apparent operations of any organization. These include elements that are observable, rational, and related to the structure of the organization, including span of control, hierarchy, mission, goals, objectives, operating policies, procedures, programs, and practices. This is the formal, visible organization. It is in this realm that organizations focus most of their time and energy when dealing with change.

However, Selfridge and Sokolik note that there is a deeper, covert level of the iceberg that is crucial to the success of systemic

organizational change. This level is made up of elements that are affective and that relate to the psychological and social characteristics of the organization. This is the informal organization that is made up of elements such as power and influence patterns, personal views and interpretations of the organization, interpersonal relationships, norms, trust, risk-taking, values, emotions, and needs. It is the level at which institutional culture operates. It is necessary to address this deeper level if change is to succeed and be maintained (Farmer, 1990). Organizations are not just operations: they have meaning for the individuals who inhabit them (Smircich, 1983b) and understanding the meaning that the organization has for its members is critical to facilitating successful change. Organization members enact shared meaning as culture (Morgan, 1986).

### **Defining Organizational Culture**

The role of culture in organizations has long fascinated researchers from many disciplines both as a description of the life of the organization and in relation to an organization's effectiveness (Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Smircich, 1983a). There is no one definition of organizational culture. Many definitions reflect Peterson and Spencer's view that culture consists of "deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members have about their organization or its work" (1991, p. 142) or Farmer's conception that it is "what is done, how it is done, and who is doing it" (1990, p. 8). Anthropologist Clifford Geertz views culture as a web of significance—"a pattern of meanings embodied in symbols" (1973, p. 89). Culture has also been defined as the way organizational members enact shared reality (Morgan, 1986). J. Steven Ott notes that organizational culture "provides organization members with a way of understanding and making sense of events and symbols" and that "organizational culture is a powerful lever for guiding organizational behavior" (1989, p. 52).

Within higher education, early explorations of culture focused on describing the culture of specific segments of higher education such as students and faculty (Becker 1963; Bushnell 1960, Clark 1963) and on institutional distinctiveness (Clark 1970, Reisman,

Gusfield & Gamson, 1970). Subsequent works focused on institutional improvement (Chaffee 1984; Freedman 1979) and on categorizing types of academic culture (Bergquist 1992; Cameron and Ettington 1988).

Tierney's work identifies the advantages of becoming aware of organizational culture. He notes that the cultural perspective encourages members of academe to: (1) consider conflicts "on the broad canvas of organizational life"; (2) recognize how tensions in the organization are played out in operational and structural issues; (3) make decisions with "keen awareness" of their impact on groups within the institution; (4) understand the symbolic nature of seemingly instrumental actions; and (5) consider why different groups in the organization have different perspectives on how the organization is performing (1988, p. 6). Having this deeper recognition also allows faculty and administrators to approach change initiatives such as general education reform with greater understanding of how the change process can best be facilitated and how the implementation of change can be sustained.

## **A Model of Organizational Culture**

Given the amorphous nature of organizational culture, how can faculty and administrators form a useful picture of institutional culture? Based on decades of research, organizational theorist Edgar Schein developed one of the most useful models for cultural inquiry. Schein identifies three levels of organizational culture: artifacts, values and beliefs, and basic assumptions (Schein, 1984, 1985).

### *Level 1: Artifacts*

Artifacts are visible behavior patterns and the results of behaviors, including language, jargon, programs, and policies. Because these elements are tangible and it is possible to "get your arms around them," so to speak, change strategies are often focused on changing artifacts, for example, changing policies or changing operational systems (Ott, 1989). However, artifacts are symbols of the deeper level of "the values and beliefs that lie behind" (Davis, 1984, p. 12).

If artifacts are changed without likewise reaching to the values and beliefs that give them meaning, the change is unlikely to be lasting.

### *Level 2: Values and Beliefs*

The second level of Schein's model involves organizational values and beliefs, "how people communicate, explain, rationalize, and justify what they say and do as a community—how they make sense of the first level of culture" (1985, p. 10). This level also includes elements such as philosophies, ideologies, ethical codes, and attitudes that help the individual make interpretations (Ott, 1989).

However, Schein acknowledges that the values that people espouse are not always the values that they enact in everyday life, which are called values-in-use (Argyris & Schon, 1978). Values-in-use actually guide everyday behavior, whereas espoused values are symbolic. Vision is the embodiment of our values. When we create a vision we are abstracting an ideal derived from our view of current reality. However, if that abstraction is not used to do something to improve reality it can become a utopian idealization, an idol that we espouse but fail to act upon.

Unfortunately, we often inhabit organizations that do not encourage us to disclose or discuss discrepancies between espoused values and those we actually use to guide our actions (Bergquist, 1993). Under conditions of uncertainty or threat, such as those that occur in times of change—including the reform of general education—individuals are more likely to use hidden value systems that are not aligned with the values they espouse (Dooley, 1995).

### *Level 3: Basic Assumptions*

The final level of Schein's model involves basic assumptions. Basic assumptions are beliefs that are tacit—no longer fully conscious because they are so taken for granted (Schein, 1985). They are used to guide behavior without reflection and represent the deepest level of culture.

Change is more likely to be lasting if it reveals and reflects on the basic values and assumptions actually used to guide behavior—if it arises from examination of one's personal constructs or mental



models of the world. Altering the basic beliefs and assumptions of organizational members can actually change their internal images of what the organization is and its purpose. Smircich has stated that “the success of strategic change efforts depends not only on the organization’s ability to undergo a significant shift in direction, vision, and values, but also the ability of stakeholders to understand and accept a new conceptualization of the organization ” (quoted in Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi, 1994, p. 363). Barnett translates this view to higher education when he states, “What we mean by, and intend by, ‘quality’ in the context of higher education is bound up with our values and fundamental aims in higher education . . . what we take higher education ultimately to be” (quoted in Ratcliff, 1997a, p. 152).

### **Applying Schein’s Model to General Education Reform**

Schein’s three-level model can help to illustrate how academic culture interacts with change initiatives such as general education reform. The following illustrates how deeper levels of cultural change may be achieved by examining the values, beliefs, and assumptions of the reformers and their decisions about general education.

#### *Level 1: Artifacts*

The general education literature discussed above shows that much of the focus of general education reform has been on overt, structural changes at the program level. Reforms such as tightened distribution requirements, addition of upper division courses, increased interdisciplinarity, and increased writing across the curriculum represent Level 1 artifact changes. They are structural and observable, often taking place within a specific accepted model of general education. When change takes place within the prevailing model of general education, reformers sometimes grapple with cultural issues as an aside or miss the step of examining the values and assumptions that underlie structural changes. This paper encourages reformers to systematically unveil cultural perspectives prior to undertaking discussion of structural change.

*Level 2: Values and Beliefs*

Although implementations vary widely, Newton (2000) described the three dominant models of general education in the United States as the *great books model*, the *scholarly discipline model*, and the *effective citizen model*. It is important to note that the adherents of each model hold a different set of values and beliefs about what it means to be an educated person and about the purpose of higher education. Newton's descriptions of the models illustrate the tensions and differences that derive from their underlying values and beliefs. According to Newton (2000), the great books model defines an ideally educated person as someone who is familiar with classic works and who has struggled with fundamental questions of human existence. This model strives to provide a context within which students confront fundamental questions of life, the perennial questions of humanity. These questions are introduced through "in-depth historical review of the works of thinkers whose ideas changed human history" (p. 170). Criticisms of this model include the lack of attention to current knowledge and the heated debate over what the canon should contain in order for it to represent cultural heritage. This model focuses on the unity of knowledge within a single framework, and those who take issue with this model point to its lack of diverse voices. The beliefs that underlie the great books model include the importance of introducing students to questions that transcend the disciplines and integrating knowledge through discussion of fundamental questions viewed from the perspective of Western civilization.

In Newton's description of the scholarly discipline model (Newton, 2000), the ideally educated person is a beginning practitioner of the basic disciplines who has an understanding of the key concepts and the methods of inquiry that scholars use. In its purest form, this model is an introduction to the separate disciplines. It views scholarly disciplines as the developers and "storehouses of human knowledge" (p. 172), and it focuses on the importance of specialization. According to Newton, this model became popular with the advent of the research universities where undergraduate students were viewed as novice practitioners of the disciplines. Its greatest advantage is that it offers a rigorous introduction to the basic concepts of the chosen discipline and the methods by which scholars

analyze and solve problems in the discipline. Major criticisms include its fragmentation, the absence of an attempt to effectively communicate the relevance of the disciplines to students and society, and its focus on what is taught instead of what is learned. The scholarly discipline model is still the dominant model of general education among liberal arts faculty in universities in the United States.

Newton (2000) writes that an ideally educated person in the effective citizen model of general education is someone who is familiar with the important ideas and discoveries of the disciplines *and* who also understands their relationship to and implications for society. The effective citizen model focuses on the student and what the student should learn in order to live well and engage fully in society. Its major advantage is the combined focus on understanding important ideas and approaches of the disciplines and their social implications: it makes relevancy pivotal. This model is becoming more prevalent because of its focus on student learning. According to Newton, there are two roots of the effective citizen model. The first grows out of the assessment movement and the desire for accountability through student learning outcomes. It is based on development of the competencies needed to become a productive member of society. The other stems from the philosophy of John Dewey, which links theory and practice. It is based on learning the competencies needed to lead societal change.

There are several drivers that are moving higher education toward the effective citizen model. The focus on relevance to the “real world” makes the effective citizen model attractive to external constituents and to faculty within community colleges. Administrative culture favors the accountability of the model and marketability of the model to external constituencies. The effective citizen model also appeals to faculty concerned with giving voice to segments of academe previously marginalized by the Western intellectual tradition. The model supports the integration of multiculturalism and diversity into the curriculum.

The effective citizen model is often favored by external higher education accrediting agencies. Cecila Lopez (1999) completed a study of 100 randomly selected reports written by North Central Association (NCA) Evaluation Teams for comprehensive institutional reaccreditation visits from 1994–95 to 1997–98. These teams used

regional accreditation standards to examine general education in each of their visits. The teams identified elements of good general education practice with a “high level of agreement.” These included elements such as coherence, common learning experiences, integration and application of information, inclusion of multiculturalism and diversity, inclusion of skills and values, ongoing assessment and review, learning outcomes, and interdisciplinarity. Such elements of good practice are based on the values that underlie the effective citizen model of general education. The NCA’s Higher Learning Commission Statement on General Education (2003) declares: “Understanding and appreciating diverse cultures, mastering multiple modes of inquiry, effectively analyzing and communicating information, and recognizing the importance of creativity and values to the human spirit not only allow people to live richer lives but also are a foundation for most careers and for the informed exercise of local, national, and international citizenship” (2003, p. 3–4–3).

The major criticism of the effective citizen model has been how it has been implemented. In many cases, programs teach only about the disciplines rather than rigorously teaching the substance of the disciplines. The effective citizen model is designed to develop values and teach skills in addition to knowledge. This has raised fears among adherents of the discipline-based model that only one particular set of values will be taught. Within the Western intellectual tradition that underlies the discipline-based model there is also a separation between theory and practice, where practice is seen as a more base pursuit. Skills equate to practice and applied knowledge is seen, in this view, as a lesser form of education. Thus, the emphasis on relevance in the effective citizen model is seen as suspect by many adherents of the discipline-based model of general education.

A fourth, less researched model of general education is emerging (Ratcliff, 2000; Stark & Lattuca, 1997). The *communicative model* focuses on the relationship between student and instructor and the connection between general and specialized education.

### *Level 3: Basic Assumptions*

Underlying the models of general education are the basic assumptions that guide behavior and actions. This is the deepest level of

culture. Judgments about what constitutes the “core” knowledge every educated person should know are based on paradigms that define what can be known and how we develop knowledge (Toma, 1997). Such paradigms also determine how higher education institutions are structured to pursue knowledge.

During the Renaissance, the well-educated person was defined as someone who was not only learned in one particular specialization, but who was also conversant within a broad range of knowledge, that is, a generalist. Renaissance assumptions regarding the unity of knowledge are foundational to the Great Books model of general education.

Since Descartes, the dominant inquiry paradigm has been positivism (Guba, 1990, pp. 19–27). Positivism subscribes to a realist ontology that believes reality is “out there” and is governed by natural laws. Positivists take an objectivist epistemological stance, whereby the appropriate methodology for inquiry is empirical experimentalism. The Industrial Revolution, the rise of science, and advent of research institutions have led to the development of specialization and the disciplines. The positivist paradigm underlies the discipline-based model of general education and also the departmental structure of research universities, making a shift away from the discipline-based model difficult. General education, when viewed from the discipline-based perspective, is often seen as a set of service courses that are delivered by individual departments or a set of courses with individual purposes (Levine, 1978). This can lead faculty to a course-by-course view of the change needed to revise general education rather than an overall assessment of general education as a curriculum. Agreement within this context of general education is often difficult because disciplines impart their own individual processes for inquiry, norms, and modes of learning.

Positivism has now been challenged by a resurgence of pragmatism, which values relevance, by critical theory, which seeks to eliminate “false consciousness” through “ideologically oriented inquiry” whereby values mediate inquiry (Guba, 1990, pp. 23–25), and by constructivism, in which “inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single entity—reality is created through their interaction” (p. 27). These are the paradigms that undergird the effective citizen and communicative models of general education.

Discussion of the major inquiry paradigms provides a lens for understanding the tacit underlying assumptions that shape the values and beliefs of academic culture. These paradigms help us to understand faculty adherence to the various models of general education, along with the corresponding resistances to change.

## **Learning to Change**

The sustainability of change initiatives for an organization is related to the depth of self-examination and learning that takes place within its culture. Learning within organizations has been studied extensively (Argyris & Schon, 1996; Crossan & Guatto, 1996; Dodgson, 1993; Easterby-Smith, Snell, & Gherardi, 1998; Miller, 1996). Still, there are disagreements about whether learning is an individual process or can take place in groups (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Burgoyne, 1976; Elkjaer, 1999; Jones & Hendry, 1994; Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell, 1991). Nevertheless, many scholars do agree that there are different levels of organizational learning (Argyris, 1991; Argyris & Schon, 1978; Bateson, 1972; Hawkins 1991, 1994; Swieringa & Wierdsma, 1992.)

Level 1 learning has been variously termed single-loop learning, adaptive learning, assimilation, or first-order learning (Perin & Sampaio, n.d.) This level of learning adds to knowledge but does not alter the values, beliefs, or rules that underlie it (Dodgson, 1993). Level 2 learning, which Argyris calls double-loop learning, is reflective. It reshapes patterns of thinking and reorganizes mental models and examines values and beliefs to reframe the situation (Probst & Buchel, 1997). Finally, Argyris and Schon (1978) extended Bateson's (1972) idea of deutero learning, which they term triple-loop learning. This is Level 3 learning, which shifts how organization members view themselves and how they view the organization. It restructures the context and creates new environments that allow both Level 1 and Level 2 learning to take place. The three-level model of learning is analogous to Schein's model of culture.

Table 1. Levels of Organizational Culture and Learning

	<b>Cultural Levels (Schein)</b>	<b>Learning Levels (Argyris)</b>	<b>Organizational Levels (Adapted from Selfridge and Sokolik)</b>
Level 1	Artifacts	Single Loop Adaptive	Formal Organization
Level 2	Values and Beliefs	Double Loop Reflective	Informal Organization
Level 3	Tacit Assumptions	Triple Loop Transformational	Informal Organization

The deeper the learning reaches, the more profound and lasting is the change it elicits (Boyce, 2003 ). Thus, change that reaches only to the formal, operational level of the organization usually involves only single-loop learning and is often short-lived. Change that is deeper, that involves examining the values and beliefs of the participants through interactive dialogue, and that fits better with the organization's culture and sometimes changes the culture (Farmer, 1990) involves double-loop learning. Change that is transformative, that changes both the structure of the organization and the way the organization is conceptualized by its members, involves triple-loop learning (Gioia et al., 1994). As members of the organization reach deeper levels of learning, they are more open to self-examination and the change they initiate becomes more lasting and sustainable because it is embedded in the culture through dialog. In this view culture is not something an organization has—it is something an organization is (Smircich, 1983a), and sustainable change is not something that is imposed on the culture—it emerges from the culture's self-examination.

### **Potholes on the Road to General Education Reform**

The various ways that general education initiatives can get off track and end up in failure are described by Gaff (1980) as potholes in the road to change. He identified 47 such "potholes." If Gaff's potholes

are examined in light of the above discussion, most can be shown to have cultural roots. For example, a disregard for cultural fit can lead to searching for the one best general education program, attempting to borrow a program whole-cloth from another institution, reform committees that work in isolation, or assuming that any opposition to attempted change is irrational. Miscalculating the depth of change that is needed can lead to beliefs that general education change is only curricular change, that general education change should be revolutionary, that change should take only a short time, or that the resources needed to support the change process will be minimal. Not reflecting on the underlying values of the culture and the model of general education that the institution embodies can result in a failure to understand the source of problematic beliefs, for instance, that there is only one true meaning of general education, that general education deals only with knowledge and not skills and values, that general education is only cognitive, that integration of what is learned is the responsibility of the students, and that general education reform is a strictly rational process. Engaging the organization's culture and attempting to understand it can help to steer the process of general education reform around Gaff's potholes.

Resistance is a normal part of the change process (Keup, Walker, Astin, & Lindholm, 1997; Simsek & Louis, 1994.) Individuals engage in active or passive forms of resistance. Trader-Leigh (2002) identifies several factors that contribute to resistance to change, including: (1) change threatens perceived self-interest; (2) changes in status and security have negative psychological impacts; (3) ingrained traditions present barriers; (4) fear of loss of job responsibility; (5) destabilization of the status quo; (6) change doesn't fit the organization's values and beliefs; and (7) change threatens individuals or groups with a loss of power.

Cultural inquiry helps those involved in reform to recognize that resistance can also exist as a group phenomenon and that it can operate below the level of conscious awareness resulting in what Argyris terms "organizational defense mechanisms" that are designed to sustain existing cultural norms. Organizational defense can manifest itself as rejection, procrastination, indecision, sabotage, and regression (Argyris, 1990). Understanding the values, beliefs, and assumptions that underlie the culture and dominant subcultures of an



organization can assist in understanding the institution's patterns of resistance to change.

Culture can also create or reinforce structural problems. Organizations that do not reach the levels of double- and triple-loop learning can maintain organizational structures that pose barriers to change and to further learning. For example, faculty may support the discipline-based model of general education not only because they agree with its underlying paradigm and assumptions, but also because of the practical barriers presented by the structure of the university. Resources flow to departments based on credit-hour delivery. Change that affects credit hour delivery elicits fears about the survival of the department. These concerns may make it hard for faculty worried about department survival to focus on student learning, to consider the value of interdisciplinary courses, or to consider models of delivery other than the dominant discipline-based model on which much university structure is founded.

### **A Call for Integrative Change Process**

Ultimately, effective change cannot be achieved by replacing structural change with cultural change. The goal is to overcome the penchant for seeing change as an either/or process, either structural or cultural. Schein's model illustrates that structure (artifacts) and culture are parts of the same whole. It focuses on the variables (artifacts, values and beliefs, and assumptions) that make up that whole, but it does not address the dynamic interaction between the variables. Hatch (1993) extended Schein's model by adding a fourth variable, symbols, and by describing the dynamic processes that take place between the variables. These processes include:

*manifestation* (assumptions manifested in beliefs and values), *realization* (values materialized into artifacts), *symbolization* (artifacts acquiring surplus meaning and coming to stand for something more than they actually are), and *interpretation* (acting back upon and changing the initial assumptions). (Bates, Khan, & Pye, 2000, p. 198)

Based on Hatch's work, Bates, Khan, and Pye (2000) created a four-phase change process that integrates cultural and structural change. Phase I, cultural framing, involves mapping out the culture and hidden challenges by examining people's expectations and aspirations regarding the subject of change. Phase II, soft structuring, involves building new connections and trust between groups involved in the change. It involves overcoming the tensions identified in Phase I that exist between groups. This phase constructs a social foundation for the new program that will result from the change process. Phase III, hard wiring, brings together the expertise of relevant specialists to create a single, integrative design for the new program. Phase IV, retrospecting, is reflecting on what was learned, reexamining assumptions, and reconceptualizing—consciously creating new assumptions.

Applying Bates, Khan, and Pye's process to general education reform involves consciously unveiling the cultural frame and building a social foundation for the change prior to undertaking discussions of changes in program structure. It involves systematically reflecting on what has been learned and reconceptualizing general education once the renewed program is in place.

## **Conclusion**

Making a conscious effort to undertake cultural inquiry and to integrate cultural and structural change from the outset of a systemic change initiative such as general education reform can lead to the possibility of implementing a more sustainable change. Structural change and cultural change are not separate, but are two parts of a whole. Administrators and faculty attempting to facilitate organization-wide change will be more likely to be successful and to develop sustainable change if they recognize that all members of the organization, including those attempting to make change, have values, beliefs, and tacit assumptions that guide their behaviors. Organization-wide change, such as the reform of general education, is not just a change in the operations of the institution. It is cultural change that is rooted in the meaning that the organization has for its members—including its students.

Cultural aspects of change are often overlooked in systemic change initiatives such as general education reform because of the time that it takes to unveil the values, beliefs, and assumptions of the institution's members and to engage in dialogue that leads to reflective, deep-level learning. It is estimated that successful, deep-level systemic change takes three to five years (Dooley, 1995). Nevertheless, it is this deeper change that fosters future growth and development, and that can open the institution to continuous learning and improvement. Therefore, the success of initiatives such as general education reform should be assessed not only by the structural, operational changes achieved but also by the cultural change and learning that takes place within the organization. The deeper the level of cultural awareness and learning, the richer the change process and the more likely the organization is to continue learning.

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