

## Institutional change: oxymoron or opportunity?

Mark Nichols  
SELF, College of Education  
Massey University

## Agenda

- Introductions
- Questions and goals
- My story
- Your story
- Lessons and issues from experience
- Change management literature
- Your change situation
- Our College strategy (using the systems)

## Institutional change

- “I began to understand in depth how an educational institution can be trapped in its own history, by an action it took fifty years earlier rather than by a judgment on current events, by the things it has come to take for granted even more than by the things it consciously believes.”

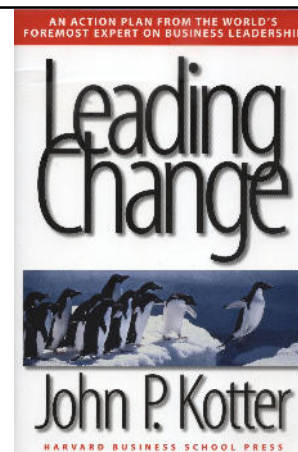
CE Beeby (1992:102), writing on lessons learned *in the mid 1930s*

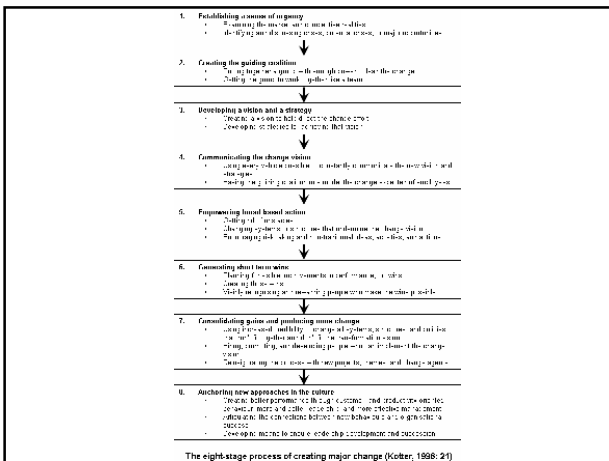
## What we know about change

- E-learning specific
  - Sustainability is the goal
  - Rogers' *Diffusion of innovations*
  - Professional development emphasis
  - Institutional context must align; strategic and organisational fit are essential (Mitchell, 2006)
  - Change involves “art, craft, science as well as technology” (Salmon, 2005)
  - Pedagogy, people and performance (Ferdig, 2006)

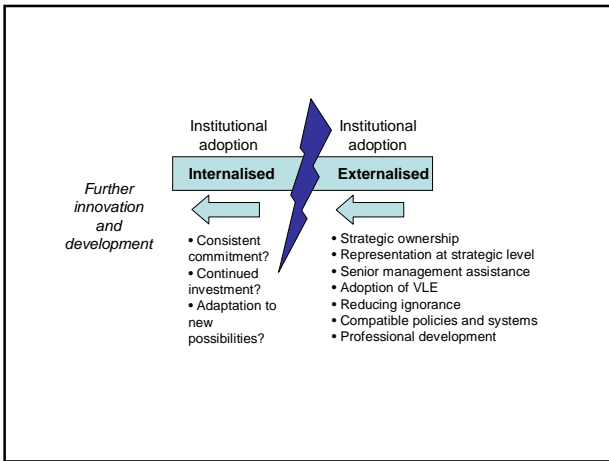
## What we know about change

- General principles
  - Change effects everyone; *minor* change is insignificant to systems so is very easy (Elton, 1999)
  - Change takes place in the context of complex systems (Senge, 1990)
  - People respond to innovation in different stages (Rogers, 1993)
  - Change is *led* and requires *teamwork* (Kotter, 1996)





- ## E-learning and change
- Strategic ownership
  - Representation at strategic level
  - Senior management assistance
  - Adoption of VLE – indicator of readiness
  - Reducing ignorance
  - Compatible policies and systems
  - Professional development



- ## Changes to tertiary teaching
- Innovations must be firmly based on progressive management, which is fully behind the innovation, but at the same time recognises the limitations of power in the face of entrenched traditionalism. It is in fact top management which must be subtle as serpents, while the innovators should be gentle as doves.
- Elton, *New ways of learning in higher education: Managing the change*, 223.

## GREAT advice...

- Don't go around people, but consider how you can make them work toward your goal. Prepare memos through vertical chains. Find the rules, work within them. Always explain the cost and who will do it. Consult, and make two recommendations at most. Keep it all to about four pages, and give the decision makers all the credit.

Discussion participant

## Closing thought

- ...leaders will increase their effectiveness if they pursue moral purpose, understand the change process, develop relationships, foster knowledge building, and strive for coherence – with energy, enthusiasm and hopefulness.

Fullan, *Leading in a culture of change*, 11.