

An Exploratory Study on the Preparedness of Further  
Education Teachers to Cope with, Manage and Implement  
Educational Change during a College Merger

MARY OTIOTIO

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## DECLARATION

I certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not concurrently being submitted for any degree other than that of the Doctorate of Education being studied at the University of Greenwich. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations except where otherwise identified by references and that I have not plagiarised another's work.

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

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In loving memory of my dear mother

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the preparedness of FE teachers for educational change with particular focus on a recent merger between two further education colleges in South East England. The merger was conceived three years before implementation with the intention of developing a model that eliminated competition and promoted collaboration between the two colleges. Previous studies on changes in the further education sector (LSIS 2010; LSC 2010) have shown that change whether internally or externally imposed can impact on teachers who are the main fulcrum of educational change but they seem to have very little input in the change process even though they have to constantly adapt their mental framework to cope with the challenges associated with change. The study specifically explored how the merger between both colleges was conducted and whether teachers were prepared to cope with, manage and implement a change of this magnitude. It then goes on to discuss whether teachers require specific skills and knowledge to enable them cope better with change and if so, how such skills should be incorporated into their professional development.

The research was designed as a case study which draws on a mixed method approach. Research data were collected through surveys and interviews with six teachers from both merging colleges in order to gain detailed insights into their experiences and how this impacted on their personal and professional lives. The participants who took part in the study were mostly teachers most of who hold additional management responsibilities including course leadership and management. Other participants were curriculum leaders. Data obtained from interviews were transcribed and analysed, with the following themes emerging: integrating cultures and systems, communicating change, motivation, the impact of power and politics during mergers, emotional and psychological issues of change and the pace and timing of the merger.

One of the key issues that emerged from the data was teachers' perception of their role as change agents and their acceptance that change was an intrinsic part of their job that they have to adapt to. The issue however, was the lack of training in change management to prepare and equip them with the skills to manage and cope with change. The non-inclusive, top-down approach to educational change was also an area of concern for teachers because their needs are usually ignored. In developing the case study, selected statistical analyses were conducted to measure the relationship between key variables.

The research concludes that, as professionals working in a rapidly changing environment, teachers in the FE sector would benefit from acquiring 'new knowledge' in change management which will not only equip them with vital skills to cope with change, but also place them on the same level as other professionals

An alternative framework that empowers teachers for change management and mergers in the FE sector is provided and recommended as a tool that would be of particular use to those responsible for teacher induction, and for coordinating professional development of teachers.

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## List of Abbreviations

- AoC: Association of Colleges
- EFTA: European Free Trade Association
- LRN: Learning Resource Network
- LSC: Learning and Skills Council
- LSIS: Learning and Improvement Council
- NEA: National Education Authority
- TLRP: Teaching and Learning Research Programme
- DIUS: Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
- OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
- AACTE : American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
- FEFC: Further Education Funding Council
- VET: Vocational Education and Training
- NCL: National College for School Leadership
- BERA: British Educational Research Association
- TES: Times Educational Supplement
- IFL: Institute for Learning
- NFER: National Education for Educational Research
- DfES: Department for Education and Skills

## **1.1 External Environment as the Trigger for Organisational and Educational Change**

‘One thing that is certain in the organisations of today is that there will be more, not less, change. All managers need to have an ability to manage such change’ (Balogun 2001:9)

The above quotation emphasises the need for organisations to respond to changes within their external environment. Change impacts on all organisations irrespective of the sector as they reposition and respond to competitive, political, technological and economic pressures (Balogun and Hope 2008; Boddy 2014; Buchanan and Huyzinski 2012). The rapid response to change in the environment is mostly pertinent in organisations whose main objective is profit maximisation as they adapt to competition and changes in consumer demand. This, however, has also become the norm in the education sector due to greater monitoring by government agencies, significant decreases in government funding, rapid change in technology and growing consumer rights, which has led to demand for better quality teaching (Hillier 2006; Shadwick 2007; LSIS 2010; BIS 2014; AoC 2014). Teachers are now presented with the challenge to mediate between the rapidly changing world and equipping learners with the skills needed to work and live in it (LSIS 2010; Commission for the European Communities 2007). The gap between teachers’ skills and the expectations of their job to respond to change tends to create a feeling of vulnerability (Zembylas and Barker 2007).

The role of teachers encompasses administration, teaching counselling and research (Hughes 1996) but changes in education have altered and expanded these roles to include management responsibilities. In the current study, the term ‘management’ in relation to a teacher’s job, have been used to encapsulate responsibilities that involve course leadership and management, managing a team of teachers, managing resources, mentoring new staff, and managing the learning environment. Changes in the education sector have also prompted institutions to develop collaborative partnerships in the form of mergers rather than compete against each other in an attempt to maximise income (FE News 2014; FEFC 1998).

Given the above environment, the aim of this thesis is to investigate how a merger between two Further Education (FE) colleges in the South of England was conducted, how teachers were prepared for this particular change, the impact of the merger on

teachers and the lessons that could be learned from the processes adopted by the college. For the purpose of anonymity, the two colleges will be referred to as: College A and College B.

The first section of this chapter sets the scene in the further education sector and discusses some of the factors that have influenced change. It then presents a brief synopsis of the impact of the rapid change on teachers. My own motivation for conducting this study is discussed. The final section of the chapter outlines the structure of the thesis.

## **1.2. Further Education Sector**

The FE sector was originally established through the 1944 Education Act during an era when there was apparently a partnership between the state, local government and educational professionals (Goddard-Patel and Whitehead 2000). Up until 1991, the sector was mainly known for offering vocational qualifications (Gillard 2011). These colleges now provide opportunities for lifelong learning which enables the development of skills leading to innovation and career progression (BIS 2014). Some of the colleges are in partnership with universities to offer higher education provision and a high percentage of students are obtaining their degrees through colleges mostly because of the cost advantage compared with studying at universities (Parry 2012). One commonality amongst colleges in the further education sector is that they deal with people of the post-compulsory schooling age group and there is emphasis on training linked to work (Burchill 2001). FE colleges contribute in significant ways to the UK education system and they have been part of the government's agenda to eradicate exclusion, unemployment and skills shortages (Foster 2006; Bathmaker and Avis 2004; National Audit Office, 2000). However, their external environment has become highly competitive and complex (BIS 2013, Gleeson 2001; Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler 2005; Alexiadou 2001; Orr 2011; Page 2013). With ongoing changes in the sector, colleges have in fact, developed a market-oriented approach in their delivery with more emphasis on cost effectiveness and increase focus on accountability, similar to the private sector (James and Biesta 2007; Simkins and Lumby 2002; Alexandou, 2001; Hannagan et al 2007; Elliott 2006; Mather and Worrall 2012). The outcome of these changes have exposed teachers to a culture of performativity (Ball 2003; Avis and Bathmaker 2004), deskilling of teachers and decrease in job autonomy (Mather and Worrall, 2005). The rapid rate of change in the FE sector, has become a subject of huge interest (Durrant and Holden 2006; Jameson 2007; Simkins and Lumby 2002; Hillier 2006). The pace of change and how they are managed in the sector has a huge impact on teachers (Edward et al 2007).

Rather than face the intense competition in the sector as a result of change, most colleges have decided to move towards partnerships in the form of mergers. The leaders and managers who are left with the responsibility of managing such mergers are usually from teaching backgrounds and they are increasingly placed at the forefront of dealing with the conflicting demands of external and internal competencies (Wilson and Hall 2002) but without the skills and competency to do so (Stewart 2003). The implication is that teachers in FE find themselves under immense pressure to meet targets (Jameson 2013), some of which involve making some adjustments and implementing the results of change for which they are not usually prepared (Fullan 2003; 2007).

Like any other sector, policy implementation, as well as change initiatives in further education depends to a large extent on staff particularly teachers who have to introduce change within their learning environment. According to Hillier (2006:103), an agenda for change should 'engage the staff in FE to implement local recommendations for change'. This, however, is not the case in practice because of the non-involvement of teachers in the change process, coupled with the lack of adequate preparation of teachers to cope with the changing demands of their jobs which seems to be prevalent in the sector. The holistic professional development programme that ought to develop the teacher seems to be lacking (Collinson 2011). These issues which tend to pose major challenges have also been highlighted as an area for concern by the European Commission (2006) who state that:

'The motivation, skills and competencies of teachers, trainers, other teaching staff and guidance and welfare services, as well as the quality of leadership, are key factors in achieving high quality learning outcomes and the effort of teaching staff should be supported by continuous professional development'  
( p3)

In the process of implementing change, the 'voice' of the teacher is not usually heard even in matters that concern them (Vedder and O'Dowd 1999). The non-involvement of teachers in change programmes could be attributed to the fact that they are confined to the lower levels of the organisation and therefore, perceived as unimportant in decision making process (Brehony 2005; Colley et al 2007). This, in fact raises a very important point about the role of power in decision making and the undemocratic culture that pervades a sector where teachers are constantly told what to do.

Without new knowledge, skills and competencies to prepare for their expansive role, teachers in FE will continue to face more challenges as they respond to change both at

micro and macro levels. This seem to be a discrepancy in the FE sector and is in fact, a major reason why LSIS (2010) urged the UK government and other policy makers to support further education providers in providing relevant professional development for teachers. Such training is believed, would equip teachers and enable them prepare for a global economy and the changing demands of their jobs. Even though teachers have been described as change agents in the literature, the skills they require to fulfil this important role do not emerge from a natural ability (Snoek, 2010). Hence, they still have to be developed and programmes of professional development for teachers should support them to focus on change itself or the change process.

### **1.3 Research Context**

Apart from dealing with change within their own immediate working environments, teachers now have to cope with mergers which involve major strategic change for which they are usually unprepared. The overall impact of these changes has led to increase burnout (Ravichandran and Rajendran 2007; Vandenberghe and Huberman 1999) in a job that is considered a ‘high stress’ profession, and already presents challenges often linked to emotional, psychological issues and anxieties compared to other professions (Wilson and Hall 2002). Stress and burnout are prevalent amongst human service professionals in general and teachers in particular and these are in fact, major reasons for early retirement among teachers (Centre for the Advancement of Mental Health Practices in Schools; ETUCE 2012; HSE 2014). In the UK, teaching is one of the professions that reported the highest rates of work-related stress, with a consistent number of 2,310 cases per 100000 people over the last three years (HSE 2014). The level of psychological stress amongst teachers in the FE sector is quite high and it is in fact a serious cause for concern (Kinman and Wray 2013:8).

Kyriacou (2001) describes teachers stress as:

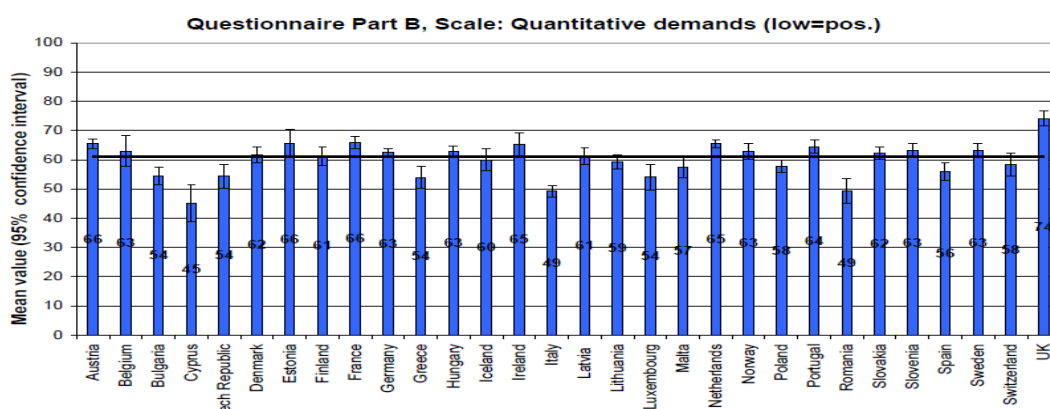
‘The experience by teachers of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher’ (p.28)

Inos and Quigley (1996: 1) also noted that as a result of incessant changes in education, ‘Teacher stress and alienation are at an all-time high’.

The ability to cope with change, lack of information on the implementation of change and lack of professional development opportunities are key factors contributing to teacher

stress (Kyriacou 2001, Kyriacou and Sutcliffe 1978; Wilson and Hall 2002; Soleimani 2012; HSE 2014). These factors also emerged in this study and seem to have impacted on teacher preparation. Changes, particularly those changes involving mergers, can be life-changing events and in most cases, have a negative short term impact on health (HEA 1999).

A study (Nubling et al 2011), aimed at comparing work place situations and factors which contributed to teacher stress across European Union (EU) and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries showed that the UK obtained 74 points on the highest emotional demands and a high level of insecurity among teachers, indicating that it has the worst record across numerous countries (Figure 1.1). Such a high figure could be attributed to the unsettling and rapidly changing environment in which teachers operate.



**Figure 1.1 Comparison of Scale ‘Insecurity at work’ by country**

### 1.4 Aims of the Research

The aim of this study is to explore the preparedness of FE teachers during educational change. The primary focus is the merger between two FE colleges. The study also aims to examine whether there was a state of readiness for teachers to respond and cope with such change. The ultimate objective of the study is to investigate whether teachers have the skills and competencies to cope with, manage and implement change and, if not, how change management could be incorporated into their professional development.

### **1.4.1 Research Questions**

#### **Overarching Research Question**

How well are teachers prepared by the management of their college to cope with, and manage educational change during a merger?

#### **Subsidiary Questions**

1. What strategies were employed by the college to involve and prepare teachers for the merger?
2. What was the impact of the merger on teachers in the college?
3. Are teachers more likely to embrace change if they perceive change as an intrinsic feature of their role as change agents?
4. Should change management skills be incorporated as part of the professional development of teachers in the FE sector?

### **1.5. Personal Motivation for Conducting this Study**

The initial idea to carry out this study was conceived based on two experiences which involved managing change. The first was during my appointment as a Subject Learning Coach in a Further Education (FE) college. The Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) describes a subject learning coach as a ‘change agent’ (Buchanan and huczynski 2010). This position involved management duties as well as the usual teaching responsibilities. Part of my remit was to introduce innovative teaching and learning methods in the business studies department with the objective of engaging and improving students’ achievement. Like most roles and ‘faddish change management’ programmes introduced in FE (Mather and Seifert 2014:98), this position was at the forefront of change and required change management skills in order to initiate and share ideas with colleagues in the department. I was enthusiastic about this role and I felt that it was an opportunity to drive and introduce change but this excitement was not widely shared by most of my colleagues who were experienced teachers, with over ten years’ teaching experience. These teachers were used to their conventional ways of doing things and were not ready for change. Apparently, such hostility or resistance to educational change is not uncommon (Ackerman and Mackenzie 2012) and may partly be due to lack of awareness about change management and how to engage with colleagues during periods of change. The role of a Subject Learning Coach was held concurrently with my position as a business studies lecturer. Although the role is described as a change agent, the opportunity to gain the requisite skills to manage change and engage colleagues during periods of



change was not carefully considered by the college. The role itself became a buzz word among FE colleges with most colleges appointing Subject Coaches for each curriculum area. Like most teachers who have been thrown into responsibilities for which they have not been trained for, I started managing and implementing change with the hope of convincing my colleagues to embrace the new initiative. This was particularly challenging, as my colleagues were already fed up with too many failed change initiatives that the college had attempted in the past. My own lack of change management skills at that point in time also made it problematic in persuading my colleagues to use the teaching resources developed by LSIS (these were resources designed to encourage interactive teaching). Looking back, I think that I was expected to ‘run faster in order to keep abreast with the requirements of the job’ (Wilson and Hall 2002: 175).

The other reason for carrying out this study relates to an occasion when College A introduced a new initiative known as ‘Tasks Based Learning’ after senior staff visited a successful college in the South of England. This visit was embarked upon by the Principal, 3 Vice Principals and the entire leadership team of the college. Departmental Heads and Curriculum managers also attended with the intention to replicate the practices of the other college by improving teaching and learning and also enhance student achievement. On return from the visit, the exact content of the change initiative and the processes involved could not be articulated even by senior managers, most of who were from teaching backgrounds. Teachers based in College A were expecting to be briefed by management about the contents of the proposed initiative and the implementation process, but this was not forthcoming. Like most change programmes in the college, this initiative was quickly abandoned. The reason may be attributed to the fact that majority of the senior management staff in FE commenced their careers as lecturers (Alexiadou 2001) and as a result, may lack the relevant skills and competences in managing change.

From the two accounts given above, it is evident that teachers who have progressed into management and leadership positions in the FE sector may not yet be equipped with the skills set to manage change. Yet, they have to introduce and cope with change on a regular basis. My own experience of managing change shows that teachers’ roles are expanding but without the formal development of relevant skills to enable them carry out their duties (Gleeson 2001). With this in mind, this study aimed to investigate how change management could be integrated into the professional development of teachers in FE in order to ensure that they are adequately prepared for change, including merger initiatives.

## **1.6. Background to the Merger**

Mergers between neighbouring further education colleges (FE) have been prevalent since at least the early 2000s when colleges were encouraged to collaborate (Calvert and Rosner 2010; Stewart 2003; LSIS 2012). This drive towards collaboration leading to mergers appears to have been fuelled by the government's desire and eagerness to stimulate competition and improve provisions (Panchamia 2012). When the two colleges in this study decided to merge, it was seen as the norm in the sector. On the face of it, the merger of these two colleges was largely informed by their physical proximity as both colleges are situated in the same borough in South England. For the purpose of anonymity, they will be referred to as college A and college B in this study.

### **1.6.1 Process, Timeframe and Rationale for the Merger**

The initial decision by College A and College B to merge was announced in 2009 following the outcome of discussions held between 2007 and 2009. An initial outline for the merger was developed and endorsed by the local authority, the Learning and Skills Council and local Businesses. The merger was, however, deferred because 'the timing', according to the college governors, 'was not right' (Minutes, Joint Steering Group of College Governors, 2010). However, six months later, a decision was finally made to implement the merger (as indicated in the consultation document). According to the documents circulated at the time, the decision to merge was based on the benefits of working collaboratively to meet the needs of learners rather than compete with one another in a very unstable business environment particularly in a Borough where schools were beginning to expand their sixth form provisions. There were three main strategic objectives for embarking on the merger. The first objective was educational. This objective was to be achieved by developing the provision of higher education courses and taking advantage of best practice and talents from both colleges. As a further development on the educational objective, both colleges also wanted to avoid any curriculum duplication and wasteful competition in order to create an institution that was sustainable and responsive to the external environment.

The second objective of the merger was to achieve value for money, as well as to achieve major efficiency gains through the combination of management and other administrative functions. The rationale behind this was that such a combination would deliver substantial savings and reduce overhead (consultation document 2011). The third objective was to ensure that the needs of the local community were met, as both colleges located barely

four miles apart. The rationale and objectives of the merger were presented to staff by the incumbent Principals at a full staff meeting.

### **1.6.2 Types of Mergers in the Further Education Sector**

A merger takes place when two or more organisations or institutions combine their resources, which can either lead to the creation of a neutral organisation, or the retention of the identity of one of the organisations. Usually, the stated objective of a merger is to expand existing operations. This contrasts with takeovers which involve the acquisition of another organisation with the intention of increasing the market share (Scheiger and Very 2015). Mergers in the FE sector in the UK have become popular and have led to a reduction in the number of colleges (Panchamia 2009; LSIS 2012). The mergers that have taken place in the sector are either classified as a Type A or Type B. Type A mergers are usually classified as an alliance between both institutions whereas with type B, the identity of one organisation is retained and the other dissolved. Type B mergers are often referred to as a form of takeover (KPMG 2010). The merger in this particular study was a Type B merger and it was achieved by dissolving college A and transferring its property rights to College B. According to the consultation document, the decision to dissolve College A was solely based on the fact that College B was much bigger and provided more courses, particularly higher education courses, when compared with College A. It was also believed that the name of College B reflected the borough-wide role of the merged institution.

### **1.6.3. Background Information on College A**

College A was a small sized FE college. Although based in South England, it recruited learners mostly from neighbouring boroughs. The ethnicity of learners was quite diverse, with the majority largely from Black Caribbean and African Backgrounds. 50% of learners classify themselves as white compared to 92% of the population of the borough classified as White British (Consultation document 2011).

The college provided vocational courses for 14-19 year old learners and a few higher education courses which were delivered in partnership with two universities, one based in South London and the other in Kent. The overall turnover for College A was £10.7 million and the overall success rate of students was 71%.

In an attempt to rectify the challenges it was facing prior to the merger, the college had embarked on major change initiatives in the following areas: curriculum, organisational

development, restructuring and a completely new approach to teaching and learning referred to as ‘Tasks Based Learning’. Most of these initiatives were not sustained and in some cases were abandoned.

#### **1.6.4. Background Information on College B**

College B was a medium sized FE College. Compared to college A, the majority of its students were residents in the borough. 59% of the learners classified themselves as white compared to 92% of the population of the borough. The college provided more vocational courses, notably work-based learning programmes ranging from entry level to higher education. It also provided higher education courses which were successfully delivered in partnership with a university based in London. The annual turnover for the college as at 2009/10 was £21.7 million and the overall learner success rate was 79%.

#### **1.6.5. Respondents’ View – A Merger or a Takeover?**

From the above brief background information on both colleges, it is evident that College B would have had more control over the merger, as a result of its financial position, larger facilities and wider curriculum provision for learners. It was the dominant position of College B and the way the merger was conducted that led staff in college A to conclude that it was, in fact, a takeover, since the merger took place when College A was experiencing major financial problems and was not in a viable position to sustain its operations (This was disclosed by the incumbent Principal at a full staff meeting in 2009). Mergers in the FE sector are usually embarked upon for two main reasons: they are strategic in nature or an attempt to rescue a struggling college (LSIS 2012).

With a merger, both organisations make a mutual agreement to combine their assets and operations into one entity and they operate on the control of one organisation whereas a takeover involves one organisation buying another organisation. The dominant position of college B was evident during the redundancy process, due to the high number of redundancies in college A. It was a result of the above experiences and background information in mind that I decided to focus this thesis on the preparedness of FE teachers in managing, coping and implementing change.

### **1.7. Structure of the Thesis**

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Chapter one begins by setting the scene on educational change in the FE sector and the impact on teachers. It examines the levels of stress affecting teachers in the UK which

has been attributed to rapid rate of change and the demands placed on teachers to meet targets such as retention and achievement rates. The chapter also examines the factors that have contributed to change in the further education sector and how these influenced the decision of two colleges in South East England to form a merger. It then highlights the problematic issue of lack of teacher preparedness in the FE sector to cope with, implement and manage change. The rationale behind the study and background information about the two merging institutions is also provided.

### **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter presents a summary of relevant literature on change management and more specifically, educational change, particularly as this relates to further education and the wider field of education in general. It then goes on to examine the extent to which teachers are prepared to manage, implement and cope with educational change, particularly during mergers. The intrinsic feature of change as part of a teacher's job and how they perceive their role as change agents is considered in detail. The question of 'management' in relation to teachers' wider roles is explored with emphasis on the additional responsibilities which they carry out but without specific management skills to enable them fulfil such roles.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This section of the thesis presents the research methodology and data collection processes. It examines the two dominant paradigms: positivist and interpretivism, and the rationale behind the choice of methodology and tools adopted in the study. It also discusses the triangulation strategies adopted to ensure the validity and integrity of data in the study. The ethical issues relating to this study and my role as an insider researcher are also discussed.

### **Chapter 4: Data Analysis**

This chapter presents the data, with detail analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data depicting the stories and evidence as reported by respondents. The chapter provides detailed insight into individual stories and teachers' lived experiences of the merger. It also presents statistical analysis and test of key variables which may have influenced teachers' attitude to change and their perception of the merger.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Findings**

Chapter 5 provides a detailed explanation of the data analysis processes including the coding method adopted and how each theme that emerged from the data was developed. The emerging themes are analysed in detail.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations**

Chapter six presents a summary of the findings, the contribution to knowledge and the implications for future research into the management of change in FE, with particular reference to college mergers and the impact on teachers. It also discusses the limitations of the study and presents some recommendations including a framework which may be helpful for institutions providing teacher education programmes for the FE sector and those responsible for planning CPD programmes for teachers in their institutions.

## 2.1 Introduction

‘Good ideas with no ideas on how to implement them are wasted ideas’ (Fullan 2006)

Successful implementation of any change programme can be challenging and requires a lot of effort. Part of that effort involves the willingness to learn new ways of doing things. The focus of this chapter is to review and evaluate the current literature on change management. The chapter starts with a review of existing work and theoretical frameworks on change. It then goes on to discuss change management models which, in the last few years, have tended to shift from traditional top-down, directive styles to more participative leadership approaches with greater emphasis on ‘process’ (Mabey and Mayon-White 2004). In the next sections, the similarities between different models of change and their relevance in education is discussed. The chapter also evaluates how changes in education have impacted on the professional identity of teachers, who have limited preparation for coping with the change process despite the fact that they are key implementers of educational change (Tang 2011) and often referred to as change agents (Fullan 2003; 2007).

Creating a culture of ‘readiness’ for change (Holbeche 2007:207) involves specific processes and requires specific skills (Bennett et al 1992), which teachers are not exposed as part of their pre-service training and professional development programme (Donaldson 2010).

Studies on educational change have mostly focused on types of change strategies, the social and psychological impact of change on teachers and their resistance to change. There is an assumption particularly in the FE sector (Mather and Seifert 2014; Jameson 2008) that educational change can only be initiated and implemented using a top-down approach. This partly explains the lack of preparedness of teachers by their institutions and their non-participation in the change process. This was identified as a gap during the literature review process and it is the rationale behind this study.

## **2.2 Search Strategy**

In carrying out the literature review, various databases and search engines were used including Eric, Swetwise, Sage, and Google Scholar. The review was conducted using key words such as ‘changes in further education’, ‘mergers in further education’, ‘teachers and change’, ‘impact of change on teachers’, ‘preparing for change’ and ‘teachers as change agents’ These key words were chosen after breaking up the research topic and identifying key words that may be relevant. The literature review also explored broader topics on change management and the role of leadership, management, governance during periods of change. What clearly emerged during the search was substantial materials both in the grey literature and journals on the concept and theory of organisational and educational change (Holbeche 2007, Boddy 2011; Nadler and Tushman 1997; Branson 2010; Sikes 1992) and how change impact on stakeholders. Although some the literature explored the importance of preparing teachers for change (Fullan 2003; 2007 and Fullan and Hargreaves 1992), there was virtually no peer reviewed article on the preparation of teachers for change, particularly mergers in further education. Nonetheless, initial indication was that there were studies that explored issues that are relatively close to mergers and teachers in the FE sector. For example, Hay Group (2010) reported on the impact of mergers from the perspectives of FE Principals. Perhaps more important, Calvert and Rosner (2009) examined how mergers had been conducted in the sector and the key success factors for successful mergers. All of these informed some of the emergent issues in the literature search for this study.

To a large extent, studies that highlighted how change impacts on teachers make very limited suggestions as to how teachers could be better prepared to cope with, and manage change. Some literature (Danielson 2007; Fullan 2003; 2007), also question whether teachers have the skills to cope with change, which is a critical part of their role.

The initial conclusions from the literature, therefore, revealed a gap on the preparation of teachers for change and particularly mergers. This, in spite of the vast array of literature (Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler 2005; Fullan 2003; 2007; Fullan and Hargreaves 1992) which describe teachers as agents of change. Table 2.1 below provides a summary of themes emerging from the literature review (journals) used.



**Table 2.1: Literature Review Search Results**

Theme	ERIC	Swetwise / Sage	Google Scholar / Grey literature
Preparing teachers for educational mergers	0	0	0
Mergers in further education	(2) Stewart (2003) Calvert and Rosner (2009)	(2) Payne L (2008) Chadwick (1997)	(3) Hay and Fourie 2002 Hay Group (2010) FEFC 1998
Measuring successful change	(3) Hargreaves (2005) Horsley and Kaser (1999) Quinn (2002)	(2) Zinnerman (2006) Hanagan, Lawson and Mallory (2007)	(2) Marzano et al (1995) Berlach (2010)
The role of leadership on educational change and the impact of change on teachers	(2) MacBeath (1998) Kelchtermans (2005)	(5) Nguyen (2010) Veen K and Slegers (2009) Wallace (2004) Hargreaves (2004) Hannagan et al (2007)	(4) Sikes (1992) Edward et al (2007) Wallace (2003) Swanepoel and Booyse (2006)
Teachers as leaders and change agents	(3) MacPhail and Tannehill (2012) Cranson (2010) Greenlee (2007)	(10) Fullan (1990;1993) Atkinson (2000) Curtis and Cheng (2001) Inos and Quigley (1995) Lieberman and Miller (1990) Lane et al (2003) Atkinson (2000) Fairman and McKenzie (2012) Price and Vialli (2005) Quinn et al (2006)	(9) Lukacs and Galluzzo (2011) Cardoso (2008) Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler (2005) Sikdar M and Balwariya (2013) Kang H (1996) Ash and Persall (1999) Lu and Ortlieb (2009) Lattimer (2012) Danielson (2007) Boyd-Dimock and McGree (1995)
Change as an intrinsic feature of a teachers' career	(1) Balyer and Ozcan (2014)	(1) Cardoso A (2008)	(2) Travers and Cooper (2006) Danielson (2006)

### **2.3 The Rationale for Change in Organisations**

There are different perspectives of organisational change with the environment being the main driving force for change. Organisational change involves a deliberate attempt to change one or more elements within the context of the organisation's existing operations. It involves an experiment and an attempt to create something new (Boddy 2011) and has in fact been seen as the 'litmus test of organisational management' (Schmithausen 2012:2). This means that the survival of organisations both in the private and public sectors depends on how effectively they respond to change whilst maintaining a competitive edge (Burnes 1992). As complex social units (Buchanan and Huczynski 2010; Senior 1992), organisations are continually challenged by external stimuli which can then impact on the structure, strategy, policy and culture that it develops (Boddy 2011; 2014). This happens to be one of the sources of change (Holbeche 2007) as they attempt to minimise costs whilst improving efficiency. From an external perspective, change can be triggered by economic, political and legislative, globalisation of markets, demographic and technological factors. These factors have been identified as contributing to major changes such as mergers, acquisition and takeovers (Dawson 2004).

Whilst external pressure drives change, change can also be triggered from within the organisation particularly when there is a new vision or mission which dictates the overall strategy of the organisation. The core activities of the organisation and the administrative structure can also trigger internal change (Nadler and Tushman 1997; Cameron and Green 2012). Internal changes can sometimes arise as a result of changes in organisational values, beliefs and expectations, and demands from stakeholders (Wilkins, 2000). The effect of these changes can impact on organisations such that they develop the willingness to adapt and renew their vision and strategies in order to take advantage of the opportunities available. Without such radical changes which sometimes impact on organisational policies and structures, it may be difficult for organisations to survive. The accelerated rate of change in organisations has led to the use of different models of change management which impact on the strategic aims of the organisation (Buchanan and Huczynski 2010; Holbeche 2007). Therefore, it has now become imperative for leaders and managers to have the ability to manage change, whilst meeting the needs of stakeholders. Without this proactive strategy, change will happen to organizations instead of organisations being at the forefront of change (Pryor et al 2008). As such, it has now become necessary for managers to be competent in coping with ongoing demands within their environment and in establishing a more or less permanent condition of

‘organisational readiness’ that can quickly respond to change. This view is perhaps, best summed up by Kanter (1997) who stated that:

Managers who can embed change capabilities in everyday operations and who empower their people to serve as agents of change are ‘less likely to be blindsided by surprises or to face resistance from the workforce’ (p3).

As reflected in many of the studies reviewed above, we can reach a preliminary conclusion on the relationship between management and change - that change management is an essential feature of a manager’s job. It is no longer sufficient for managers to be seen as change agents; it is equally important for them to gain the right skills in order to fulfil their roles in this context.

## **2.4 The Concept of Change**

The literature on change management is vast and in fact, relevant to all disciplines or profession. This suggests that change is perceived to be a real and significant phenomenon in organisations because they have no control over the external environment but to be proactive enough to cope with the challenges it brings. Change management has been widely accepted in organisational literature as an intrinsic aspect of the activity of businesses as they continue to respond to environmental changes (Schmithausen 2012). It has, however, also been applicable in education because of the frequent changes that have now become an integral part of educational life (Kinchington 2006).

The literature on change management covers four main themes namely, theoretical models and frameworks that provide guidance on change management, approaches and tools, factors important to successful change management, and the outcomes and consequences of the change management process (Branch 2002). Having acknowledged the context of the wider literature, this study adopts a specific focus in examining change management models adopted in education and the likely consequences of change on teachers, who are the main fulcrum of educational change. Teachers are described in the literature as ‘change agents’ (Fullan 2003; 2007), but they are also change agents without any input in the change process (Sikes 1992). As will be revealed later in the chapter, changes in education are often imposed as a result of external pressures. Whether change is radical or incremental, in education change tends to be top-down (Huberman 1989), with little or no involvement of teachers.

## **2.5 Types of Organisational Change**

Change is a concept that is experienced in all walks of life, in society and the economy at large. In the context of organisations, change involves the adoption of new ideas or behaviour with the objective of maximising effectiveness (Northouse 2013). Organisations can decide from time to time to change their existing state of operations by moving from its current state, going through a transition process and eventually repositioning itself. Such changes may be planned, involve new processes, structures, or culture which are attributes of any merger like the one discussed in this study (Boddy 2014; Buchanan and Huczynski 2010).

Although change used to be more prevalent among businesses in their quest to maximise income, the trend has since shifted towards educational practices. Change can be regarded as a dynamic and ongoing process of development and growth that involves some kind of reorganisation in response to meeting certain needs (Boddy 2014). Change will ultimately involve transformation, a flow from one state to another. It creates the desire to utilise and capitalise on innovation and technological development which therefore requires strategic management (Morrison, 1998). According to Chrusciel (2006) every organisation will experience change at one stage or another but how the organisation deals with change is of particular interest to its stakeholders.

Change can be incremental or radical (Quinn 1987). Incremental change involves taking small steps to improve existing strategy. Norman and Verganti (2012) describes incremental change as ‘doing better what we already do’ and radical change as a complete change of frame which involves ‘doing what we did not do before’ (p5). Incremental change cannot be avoided because of the complex and political nature of organisations and the rapid rate at which they evolve.

Radical change involves a shift from the usual ways of doing things in the organisation. This type of change is often associated with fear of disruption and can in fact impact on staff morale and competence. The current study focuses on a merger that took place in 2011 between colleges A and B, as described more fully in Chapter 1. In terms of the prior literature on change, this merger can be described as a radical transformation. The justification for the merger was not so much of a problem since the change was driven by demands in the external environment. What was more problematic was the approach adopted by the college during the implementation of the merger and the impact this had on teachers who, although are seen as agents of change (Fullan 1993), were, in this instance not prepared to cope with change.

To expand on the point made above, change in organisations, whether incremental or radical, involves some form of transformation in process, structures, or systems. Changes that impact on organisational processes alter the operations of the organisation in question by transforming its input into output whereas changes impacting on organisational procedures can alter its existing systems and structures (Buchanan and Huczynski 2010). Although radical change is sometimes inevitable, it is more likely to lead to a realignment of organisational goals and objectives and most likely to lead to resistance (Kotter 1996). In contrast, incremental change is more likely to create less resistance and may in fact enable individuals in the organisation to take ownership of the change and willingly make adjustments.

Managers are aware of the difficulty of achieving the best strategy to cope with change but they tend to develop the right mechanisms which enable the organisation to progress and cope with uncertainty. This means that members of the organisation are encouraged to become more innovative and try out new ideas to see which is more effective (Johnson 1987; Mabey and Mayon-White 2004).

The current study tends to subscribe to the incremental and emergent approach as a more effective way of engaging teachers in educational change. The reason is because the incremental approach enables teachers to explore, develop and implement changes within their learning environment depending on the context. However, the rapid rate of change in the environment also means that the radical approach to change cannot be completely avoided in education.

## **2.6 Theoretical Framework and factors influencing change management**

Theories on change management have evolved as a result of the assumptions made regarding the links between an organisation and its relationship with its environment. According to Dooley (1997), and argued also by Carnall (1997); Haveman (1992); Hughes (2006), this relationship between the two variables can be summed up as follows: Firstly, an organization may be seen as an organism that adjusts to its environment. Therefore, as living creatures, organisations tend to be homeostatic (Carnall 1997). Based on this assumption, change will be initiated by the environment. This is closely linked to the individual school of thought which emphasises an individual's interaction with their environment and how they respond to it (Hughes 2006; Sikes 1992). Closely aligned to this is chaos theory (Graetz et al 2012) which is based on the

assumption that all organisations operate in a chaotic environment and therefore, to survive the chaos, organisations have to promote their own internal crisis in response to external circumstances. This implies that a change in any elements of the external environment can trigger changes within the organisation. The inability of the organisation to coordinate its internal and external environment may eventually inhibit the organization's capacity to sustain itself (Amagoh 2008). Organisational change can also be analysed using complexity theory. Complexity theory is based on the notion that organisations are complex systems typically made up of subsystems that interact with each other and also with their environment. These systems tend to evolve or develop into something new which eventually leads to more change. The implication is that effective planning and prediction of future outcomes becomes problematic (Amagoh 2008).

Changes of this nature may be applicable at different stages in the organisational life cycle. The implication is that those managing change in the organisation may need to understand and apply different approaches which may be relevant to the particular context (Burnes 2009).

Secondly, an organisation is influenced by its context and politics. Individuals with power are more likely to be dominant and tend to exert their power in decision making. The use of power can influence how individuals react to change. This is an intrinsic feature of the power coercive model (Bennis, Benne and Chin 1985) of change management discussed in the next section.

The theoretical perspectives discussed above are similar because they all view the organisation as an entity which does not operate in a vacuum but is heavily influenced by what goes on in the external environment hence the need to respond. How an organisation responds to change can influence the behaviour of individuals and group (Hughes 2006). In the context of this study, it can be argued that it was in response to external pressures that the two colleges in this study merged as a result of reduced funding and inability to cope with increased competition from schools providing similar courses. In order to ensure their continued existence in the face of the change in their circumstances, the colleges' managers and leaders recognised that there had to be some form of adaptability (Geribo 2011). The previous strategic aims of both colleges were no longer sustainable. They had to develop a collaborative strategy rather than compete with one another since they are located in the same area. This, in effect, highlights the rationale for the change being investigated in this study. This clearly echoes Fullan's (2003) view that change involves movement from one operational phase to a more advanced phase. How such a

process is managed in an educational context and the impact on teachers is one of the central foci of this study.

## **2.7 Approaches to Change Management**

The ability to manage and coordinate change has been recognised as a core organisational competence (Burnes 2003; Caldwell 2003; Schmithausen 2012; Crawford and Nahmias 2010). As explored below, there are various models of change management although there is no particular one that is universally applicable to all situations. The models give an insight into complex issues but do not guarantee the desired result since each organisational context differs (Leigh and Walters 1998; Branston 2010). An approach that works for one organisation may not necessarily work for another because the structure, functions and role of the organisation are context specific, and, therefore, influence how change is managed. Buchanan and Huczynski (2010:585) refer to these contextual factors as ‘the best practice’ puzzle when new ideas and methods adopted in one context cannot be replicated in another. Given various conceptions of the change process, there is a consensus on some broad themes. This includes the assumption that change is inevitable, has to be managed, and may lead to resistance (Buchanan and Huczynski 2010).

The planning and implementation of a change programme starts with an idea or suggestion about the best approach that fits in with the organisational context. One of the factors usually considered is whether change should be incremental and controlled or whether it should evolve in an unplanned way (Quinn 2002). Each of these approaches is explored below including the particular approach adopted by the college during the merger.

## **2.8 The Planned Approach to Change Management**

Many writers have written about the planned approach to change management but Lewin (1951) is the pioneer of this approach. He advocated four models namely, the force field theory, group dynamics, the action research model and the 3-step. However, the 3-step model seems to be more influential and dominant particularly in the US (Burnes 2004). The planned approach aims to enable managers identify, analyse and predict the outcome of change and then develop strategies to counter likely resistance. It requires an organisation to be proactive and to plan its activities in a way that ensures that it can adapt to changes initiated from the external environment (Robbins and Judge 2009; Wilson

1992). The decision to adopt a planned approach to change management depends upon the strategic choices facing the organisation such as mergers and acquisitions (Wilson 1992). This approach to change management is particularly useful where there is a smooth transition from the previous strategic position of the organisation towards a future desired state.

The planned approach, similar to Bennis et al (1969) power-coercive strategy (Liu 2009), is usually top-down and often authoritative because it involves modifying the behaviour of individuals to ensure compliance with the culture and expectations of the organisation. The major limitation of this approach is the difficulty for managers to predict or anticipate the exact nature of change and its likely impact on the organisation, given the rapid rate of change in the environment. This particular task would require managers to be adequately prepared with change management skills in order to conduct a thorough analysis of each stage of the process, particularly the implementation stage, which is the most difficult (Scott 2003). There is also the added difficulty of mobilising individuals in the organisation to adapt to the desired change.

Several models of planned change which embrace all the features of the power-coercive approach have been developed but the literature appears to be focused specifically on four main ones which are discussed below.

### **2.8.1 Lewin (3 step model)**

Lewin's model of change management provides the framework on which many theories of change have been developed (Burnes 1996). His model identifies three distinct steps to follow when implementing change. The three steps are: unfreezing, change and refreezing. He suggests that change should be managed by firstly unfreezing the present and current state of things. According to Lewin (1947) if these steps are not followed, then changes will be short-lived. He suggested that in order to avoid the potential regression in change process, and to ensure that change is effective, every prospect of moving back to the previous state of things before the proposed change should be avoided. Although the importance of Lewin's work is usually acknowledged (Burnes 2004) it has also inevitably attracted some criticisms. A key criticism is that it is more suitable for small change programmes (Burnes 2004). Furthermore, it has also been argued that although Lewin's approach to change management may be ideal in a more stable environment, it is probably not appropriate in a volatile environment where immediate response to change is required (Dawson 2004). Another criticism of this model of change



management is the assumption that the future state of an organisation can be predicted based on the organisations' previous experience (Beeson and Davies 2000). That leaves a gap in terms of how change impacts on individual and group behaviour at work seem to have been ignored in this model. There is an assumption that the 'soft' aspects (Coffey, Garrow and Holbeche 2012) of change which are usually emotional can be 'frozen' easily in order to move on to the next stage. Irrespective of the amount of planning involved in using this model, change management is not always straightforward (Macabe 2010) because of the subjective elements such as behaviour that are usually involved in the process. People can easily revert to the status quo which might eventually distort the entire change process. The model emphasises the importance of bringing change through teams rather than individuals. Lewin's viewpoint in this context is built around the assumption that, individual behaviour is closely influenced by what happens in the group or teams they work in. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on changing group behaviour. The model emphasises the need to subdue the forces resisting change which can only escalate the resistance often associated with organisational change.

Another limitation often associated with this model is the fact that it neither provides enough insight into how the driving and restraining forces of change should be analysed nor offers comprehensive guidance on the specific skills required to implement change at each stage. For example, the first stage suggests 'freezing' the status quo which may require changing the mind-set of those likely to be the subject of change, motivating those who are going to be affected and identifying the discrepancy between the current and desired performance (Weiner 2009). In order to achieve these goals, specific skills are required in the first instance, in order to avoid a contradictory assessment (Buchanan and Huczynski 2010) of the existing situation. It is interesting to note that Lewin did not offer any guidance on how this is to be carried out and the specific skills required.

This linear approach advocated by Lewin echoes some elements of the power-coercive model also known as the political model proposed by Bennis et al (1969), they both tend to subscribe to the top-down approach to change management. Those with less power in the organisation may have no influence on how the change should be implemented during the unfreezing, change and refreezing stages. This approach to change is often adopted in educational change initiatives and it has been argued that this is one of the reasons why teachers are not usually involved in the process (McCarthy 2009). In spite of the

limitations of Lewin's model, it has been used as the foundation for several other planned change models discussed below.

### **2.8.2 Lippit et al 7-Steps Model**

Lewin's model was further expanded by Lippit et al (1958). They extended Lewin's three stages of change management model into seven stages but placed more emphasis on the role of the change agent rather than the process of change itself. They suggested that change should start by going through the following stages: Identifying the need for change, establishing the change relationship which involves a diagnosis of the problem; identifying the desired goals; examining different attributes; transforming these into the desired change and that the role of the change agent as the facilitator and communicator of change is clearly understood. The final stage is to create awareness about the change, build new internal relations and integrate the change as part of the organisational culture. Although similar in some ways to Lewin's, this model is more comprehensive because it considers both the 'soft' and 'hard' (Hofstede 2006) aspects of change and the crucial role of a change agent during the change management process.

### **2.8.3 Schein's Model**

Building further on Lewin's model, Schein (1995) identified the specific actions that should take place at each stage of the change process. He describes the unfreezing stage as the period of time when members of the organisation are dissatisfied with the status quo and are indeed pushing for change. Once the need for change has been identified, there should be time to reflect on the desired change. This is believed to lead to effective change management provided people feel psychologically safe during the change. At the next stage, people in the organisation should be able to identify with new role models in the organisation. Like Lippit et al (1958), Schein seems to emphasise the human aspect of change rather than assume that change is purely a mechanistic or linear process. The emphasis on people, attitudes, relationships and opinions during the change process reinforces the normative re-educative change model (Chin and Benne 1984; Quinn and Sonenshein 2008). The emphasis on people is more likely to gain support during change.

The three models discussed above are similar despite their slight variations with regards to the sequence of steps to be completed before proceeding to the next stage. None of the models sets out the specific task to accomplish at each stage. The drawback of these models is the false assumption that organisations operate in a stable environment which

can be easily predicted. Even those managers and leaders adept in managing change may still experience difficulties when analysing each stage of the change process. Also, the undue emphasis on the technical aspects of change means that the human and emotional problems often associated with change tend to be overlooked (Stewart 2003; Coffey, Garrow and Holbeche 2012). Changes within the education sector seem to follow this pattern.

#### **2.8.4 Kotter's 8 Steps Model**

Kotter (1996) advocates a planned approach to change which requires the organisation to follow a step by step process and to establish a fit with the external environment. Kotter developed an eight point plan which all successful change programmes should adopt in sequence. He emphasised that ignoring one level or going too fast could lead to failure or create problems. The first major obstacle of this model is that it ignores the difficulties of analysing or defining the external environment and the organisation itself in order to achieve the desired results (Appelbaum et al 2012; By 2005). A further limitation of this model is that it is heavily reliant on the strategic position of the organisation and what it hopes to achieve from the change which may not have been clearly articulated from the onset. Also, following this process could be time consuming. The organisation may not be able to keep track of the rapid changes going on in the environment. Finally, the model assumes that the organisation would have trained and equipped their managers with the right leadership qualities to motivate and gain the commitment of all employees during the change process. This is not usually the case as will be revealed later in this study. The effectiveness of this model also depends on the experience and skills set of the change agent without which the stages become irrelevant.

#### **2.8.5. Comparison of Planned Change Theories**

As mentioned earlier in section 2.6, there is no particular theory for change management that is universally applicable to all situations. The most appropriate approach to change management depends on the circumstances of the organisation. With regard to the current study, the approach adopted by the college seems to be aligned to Lewin's model as the objectives of the merger were clearly stated. However, the actual process of managing the change may have been irrational had the process of change not been clearly articulated to those likely to be affected by the merger. Although Scheins' model is closely aligned to Lewin' theory of change, this may have been more suitable for the particular type of change discussed in this study because of the emphasis on the psychological impact of

change which is particularly important during change initiatives involving a merger. The key features of the planned change theories discussed above are summarised in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Comparison of Planned Change Models  
(Adapted from Boddy 2014; Burnes 2009; Buchanan and Huczyski 2013)**

Lewin (3 step model)	Lippit et al 7-Steps Model	Schein's Model	Kotter's 8 Steps Model
Rational, clear focus on what goals to achieve and plan oriented.	Logical approach to change management	Linear with clear focus on specific actions during periods of change.	Tend to focus more on the need to evaluate the strategic position of the organisation in relation to the external environment as the basis for initiating change
Provides a single view of how to manage change	Limited focus on the forces driving change.	Emphasises the need to reflect on the desired change that the organisation hopes to implement	Knowledge of environmental analysis is required in order to conduct detail analysis of the current situation in the organisation
Ignores personal factors likely to influence change	Emphasises on the role of the change agent	Considers the psychological and human impact of change rather than the mechanistic aspect of change	

## 2.9 The Emergent Approach to Change Management

In complete contrast to the planned approach to change management, the emergent approach does not perceive change as a linear process and refutes the planned approach as irrelevant given the fast changing pace of the environment (Geribo 2011). It views organisations as heavily reliant on what goes on in the wider environment (Burnes 2004; Ramanathan 2009), therefore, the actions and aspirations of individual managers alone do not determine the existence of the organisation (Wilson 1992; Quinn 1997). This approach to change management is based on the assumption that change is continuous, open-ended and unpredictable and will continue until the organisation realigns itself to its environment. The main emphasis is that organisations will be affected by unknown factors, and that planning has no impact on the outcome (Boddy 2011; 2014)

Unlike the planned approach, the emergent approach to change management views change as a process that can be managed through the interplay of multiple variables such as culture, structure and managerial capabilities (Burnes 2009). It does not assume that

change management needs expert knowledge but rather requires the kind of general knowledge about change that should be part of every manager's role. It stresses the importance of matching the organisation's strategy to the needs of an uncertain environment. Proponents of the emergent approach identified five internal capabilities (Burnes 2009) which determine how an organisation can respond to changes in the external environment. Based on the emergent approach, it is imperative to establish a close link between the proposed change and the culture of the organisation, examine how politics and power could impact and influence the attitude of stakeholders during change. The approach also emphasises the need to educate the workforce and prepare them for change. This reinforces the rational-empirical approach which assumes that because human beings are rational in their decision making, they are more likely to support the change initiative and take part in the implementation process if the purpose and process of change are explained adequately (Chin and Benne 1984; Quinn and Sonenshein 2008). The problem, however, is that human views are not always rational in decision making which makes this approach very subjective. It ignores the likelihood of conflict in the change process, particularly if some groups or individuals are not likely to benefit from the change initiative (Buchanan and Huczynski 2010).

Compared to other approaches discussed earlier, the emergent approach highlights the importance of acquiring relevant managerial skills in managing and motivating staff during periods of change. Even though these factors are all internal they all have to be adapted to fit in with the external environment.

Although there are many differences between the planned and emergent approaches to change management, the most significant is the top-down directive role of senior management during the process often associated with the planned approach (Burnes 1996).

## **2.10 Processual Framework**

The processual framework for change management advocated by Dawson (1994; 2003) is closely aligned to the emergent model. According to Dawson (1994), organisations move in and out of different states which sometimes overlap. Therefore, change management processes should be analysed as they occur in order to link the change to the context in which it happened. Although the processual framework is not widely acknowledged compared with the planned approach, it clearly identifies the initial stage when the idea of change is conceived. The actual process of change and the

implementation of new work practices are seen as crucial during change management and should therefore be closely monitored.

Although the planned, top-down, power-cohesive change management approaches previously discussed appear to be the more dominant approaches employed in change management in the educational sector, I argue that, the emergent, processual and rational empirical approaches seem to be far more relevant to teachers. This is because change is embedded within teachers' job and they are expected to manage tactical changes on a regular basis as part of their duties. In essence, there is a natural synergy between the nature of teachers' roles and the structure of these two change management approaches. Even if there is a need to adopt the planned approach particularly for an organisation-wide change, the rational empirical (Benne and Chin 1985) approach may be more suitable because it provides an opportunity to educate and communicate the need for change and the likely impact on those who may be affected. A preliminary conclusion, therefore, is that problems with change management in the education sector can be caused by the mis-match between the dominant, power-cohesive approach to change management, and the very nature of teachers' role which requires them to use their own initiatives and apply changes within their learning environment for the benefit of their learners which seem to suggest that the emergent or processual approach to change management is also relevant in education. This study hopes to negate the assumption that the planned, power-coercive model is the most suitable approach to change management in education. In contrast, it aims at making the case that successful organisational change management should create an opportunity where both planned and emergent approaches to change can co-exist (Liebhart and Lorenzo 2010).

Table 2.3 summarises the differences between the planned and emergent approach to change management.

**Table 2.3: Differences between the planned and emergent approach**

<b>Planned Approach to change management</b>	<b>Emergent Approach to change management</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on the assumptions that organisations operate in a stable and relatively stable environment (Robbins and Judge 2009; Wilson 1992)</li> <li>• Change is a process but at a slower speed compared to the emergent approach (Kotter 1996)</li> <li>• Managers decide when change is required (Wilson 1992; Burnes 1996)</li> <li>• Assumes that all stakeholders in the organisation are willing to change using appropriate change management tools (By 2005)</li> <li>• A specialist change agent should be used to guide through the process of change (Lippit et al 1958; Buchanan and Huczynski 2010)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on the assumptions that organisations are open systems and dynamic, there is a need to continuously scan their environment in order to align the organisation's internal strategies with changes in the external environment. (Burnes 2004)</li> <li>• Identifying and managing change is the responsibility of every individual in the organisation. (Wilson 1992; Quinn 1997).</li> <li>• Change evolve around power and politics and is not necessarily linked to rationality (Burnes 2009)</li> <li>• Change is best achieved through small-to-medium scale incremental changes (Wilson 1992)</li> <li>• Managers are mostly facilitators and promote an environment which encourages experimentation, learning and risk taking so that the workforce can introduce new ideas (Burnes 2004)</li> </ul>

## **2.11 Limitations to using change models**

In summary, the models of change discussed above, particularly the planned approach, view change as discrete stages (Carnall 1997; Burnes 1996) where problems are identified, diagnosed and solutions are implemented and reviewed. These are, however, only assumptions which do not take in to account the difficulty of identifying specific external factors that are likely to impact on the organisation. According to Wilson (1992), the decision to adopt a planned approach relies on the organisation and the perceived role of the managers during the process. The planned approach is more relevant in US and UK compared to countries like Japan and Sweden where the idea for change can be generated by the workforce through consultation. Davies, Ellison and Bowring-Carr (2005), however, argue that this is no longer the norm in most UK institutions, particularly in schools where head teachers have realised that the implementation of change is not their sole responsibility but ought to involve all members of staff. By contrast, Collinson (2011) provides a conflicting view by suggesting that the planned approach is still widely used in the UK, which suggests a possible explanation why change in the further education sector, which is the main focus of this study, predominantly seems to adopt the planned, top-down approach to change management (McCarthy 2009).

Even though the planned and emergent models differ in their approach to change management, they both tend to emphasise the importance of organisational culture and the likely impact that it may have during major reforms. The models are also based on assumptions that organisations will always go through a period of stability. In reality, this is not often the case, as there are times when change is recurrent depending on the needs of the organisation, which may not always be predictable. Although change models enable organisations to develop a framework for change, in a constantly changing environment, the frequency of change may not allow much planning, even though there are occasions when specific change framework may be appropriate.

Adopting a single approach to change management can only yield short-term results and is likely to lead to instability due to the social factors often associated with educational change (Weiler and Mintrop 1996). This view is echoed by Fullan (1985: 399) who asserts that:

‘Effective strategies for improvement require an understanding of the process, a way of thinking that cannot be captured in any list of steps or phases to be followed’.



Fullan emphasised the importance of having a focused leadership, a system of monitoring performance and relevant ongoing staff development programme to prepare teachers for change. The sequence for change should consider the state of readiness and preparedness of participants in change (Fullan 1993). Ideally, a clear direction and a knowledge seeking mindset should be encouraged, to enable staff to begin to formulate their knowledge about change in advance and to ensure that full communication of the vision for change and related strategic planning processes are effectively managed.

This, however, is contrary to the way educational change is often managed in reality, as teachers who are meant to implement the change are not usually involved in the process (Fullan 2003; 2007; Hargreaves 2005) which makes it difficult to develop a shared vision for change.

### **2.12 Measuring the Effectiveness of Change**

Change will encounter three general problems: resistance, control and power (Benne and Chin 1985). Any approach adopted, therefore, needs to be aimed at motivating people, managing the transition and shaping the political dynamics of change (Johnson 1987). There are a number of conditions under which change can be effectively managed. Firstly, organisational change is effective if the desired result is achieved and when the organisation moves from its current state to the planned future state. Change is, therefore effective when the functioning of the organisation meets expectations, and the transition is completed without undue cost to individual employees.

Secondly, change management is effective when the pressure for change is particularly induced by a situation in which the strategic position of the organisation is threatened. Associated with this is the condition that communication during the process is effective and those affected by the change are kept informed (Judge and Robbins 2009). The emphasis here is not to focus only on financial and technical aspects of change but also on the human aspects. Thirdly, an explanation of the change initiative can reduce the psychological problems often associated with change (Johnson 1987). This clearly highlights the effectiveness of change when the vision, goals and directions of the proposed change are shared (Senge 1990; Zimmerman 2006).

Fourthly, change management is effective when capable people with sufficient knowledge and skills are encouraged to take part in the process. This, in my view, is quite relevant in educational change where the involvement of teachers who are the implementers of change in the learning environment is crucial and can help reduce the barriers and resistance to change. The emphasis here is that the change management

approach should be convergent with the strategic vision of the organisation and should involve the use of competent facilitators who are able to establish clear lines of communication with the subjects of change. These conditions may not have been in place during the change process in the college where this study took place.

### **2.13 Key Factors for Successful Change Management**

Most of the literature on change management recommends generic models which are seen as panaceas to all organisational change issues (Miles et al 1978). The models discussed above are mostly applicable to businesses since they operate under completely different circumstances and have a sole objective of maximising profit. The educational sector however, is far more complex and sensitive and does not have the same ethos as a business. Also, the 'world' in which these change strategies are likely to be effective is different from that of teachers who develop their own world view of change (Fullan 1991). The management and implementation of change involve the use of resources including financial, physical and human resources. However, in the process of implementing major change initiatives, too much emphasis is placed on financial issues and key human capabilities such as efficient people skills, emotional intelligence, of those managing change are not carefully considered. As a result, some teachers, who have already acquired such skills are often ignored in the change process despite the fact that they are key human resource in their institutions and more likely to add value to the change process (Fullan and Hargreaves 2005).

Zimmerman (2006) identified several factors based on research evidence that are vital in preparing for change. These include encouraging shared decision making, collaboration between key stakeholders and providing support through relevant professional development programmes, but most importantly, a careful consideration of the model of change adopted by the leader. She advocates an approach whereby the leader adopts a systems perspective in order to recognise individual attitudes and behaviour. Organisations that develop a learning culture are better prepared to manage change effectively because knowledge management is seen as an intrinsic feature of the organisation and employees are encouraged to become more innovative in order to generate new ideas (Senge 1990; Buchanan and Huyzinski 2010).

The elimination of barriers during the change process is one of the main themes highlighted in the literature (Judge and Robbins 2012; Boddy 2011; Buchanan and Huyzinski 2010). Sources of resistance may include self-interest or lack of interest in the

proposed change. Barriers can also exist in the form of uncertainty and insecurity (Boddy 2011). Even though organisational change takes different forms, the expectation is to adapt, although any form of adaptability can be blighted if the process is not communicated. This is a major reason for the failure of educational change (Geribo 2012). However, support from senior management, provision of adequate resources, effective and open communications systems and regular reporting on the change process can minimise the resistance to change (Boddy 2011; 2014). The success of any change programme depends mostly on how change is managed and the specific contents and characteristics of the change itself. The main characteristics of a change programme according to Morrison (1998) is that it is a dynamic process that embraces multiple perspectives, and it requires investment in structures, institutions, people, technological and psychological support.

## **2.14 Educational Change**

The literature on educational change is inundated with strategies about the most effective way to lead educational change. Despite these suggestions, there is no evidence that those responsible for managing educational change can do so successfully (Branson 2010). According to (Marzano et al 1995:162),

‘One of the constants within education is that someone is always trying to change it. That is, it seems that someone is always proposing a new practice, a new program, a new technique to change education for the better’

The statement above suggests that change in education is ongoing and cyclical. Educational institutions operate in a constantly changing environment as a result of a combination of factors, most of which are outside the control of individual institutions. These factors are due to increased competition from other institutions, greater monitoring by government agencies, significant decreases in government funding, and rapid change in technology.

Collectively, these forces have led to rapid change in the educational sector. Educational institutions are now under increased pressure to respond to the needs and expectations of stakeholders. Some of these changes are sometimes put in place in an attempt to modernise institutions and ensure that they adapt to the external environment (Wilkins 2004) whilst at the same time focusing on cost reduction (Vedder and O’Dowd 1999). Change in education is constant, whether it is internally or externally imposed. It can and does impact on the professional lives of teachers who are the main implementers of

change in complex environments (Kelly and Berthelsen 1997). Karjalainen and Nissila (2011) noted that educational change can also impact on the professional identity of teachers and their ability to deal with the challenges often associated with change. Teachers' professional identity describes how they perceive their identity in relation to their profession with particular emphasis on their experience as teachers and the context in which they teach (Fang 2011). According to Cheng (2009), educational change takes place across four levels. At the macro level, the educational aims are restructured and may involve developing a new vision at different levels across the organisation. At the meso level, the trend is to encourage parental and community involvement in education and management. The third level referred to as the 'site' level, is to ensure accountability and promote teacher quality and the fourth level referred to as operational, focuses on the use of technology to improve and enhance learning in the institution.

### **2.15 Educational Change and Teachers**

The rapid rate of change can have a major impact on teachers (Van der Heijen et al 2015). Apart from coping and adapting to changes within their learning environment and other reforms which have been imposed, they may also be required to take on managerial tasks, and change 'their pedagogy, curriculum content, the resources and technology they use' (Sikes 1992:37). In many cases, teachers have not been prepared for these roles and changes. These changes, according to the European Commission (2007: 4):

'require teachers not only to acquire new knowledge and skills and competences for its new roles, it is necessary to have both high-quality initial teacher education and a coherent process of continuous professional development keeping teachers up to date with the skills required in the knowledge based society'.

From the above text, it is evident that change involves learning new ways of doing things and may require identifying a 'perceived performance gap' (Boddy 2011:384), or capability gap (Scott 2003). However, current levels of training and ongoing professional development for teachers do not prepare them for such challenges (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992) particularly in further education (Orr 2011) even though they are the subjects of change and the agents of change (Sikes 1992). Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler (2005:4) noted that teachers in further education are affected by change 'either as the recipient of change or agent of change'. As the recipients of change, teachers have to cope and adapt to changes within their learning environment and other reforms usually imposed. In the process of carrying out their duties, teachers act as change agents. Despite the lack of

training in the area of change management, the demands of their profession mean that teachers have to respond and manage imposed changes within their learning environment. There is an assumption that educational change can only be managed from a top-down perspective (Berlach 2010; Branston 2010; Huberman 1989). This tends to exclude teachers who are also stakeholders and key human resources in educational establishments. The challenges usually associated with educational change have been attributed to the exclusion of teachers during the process by leaders in their institutions (By 2005). Kominsky (2011) highlights this approach to educational change as a major characteristic of the UK education system compared to a country such as Finland where teaching encompasses a democratic dialogue.

Mather and Seifert (2014) assert that the top-down approach which tends to focus on managerial discourse is common in the FE sector where teachers are told what to teach, how to teach it and the type of professional development programme that they need to attend.

According to Mather et al (2009:149), the top-down approach to management of teachers in the FE sector is evidence that:

‘Lecturers have been marginalised from decision-making. It also indicates that managers have increasingly taken control of core work-planning matters, legitimised within the language of flexibility’

The lack of teachers’ voice and authority in the FE sector could be attributed to the shift towards marketisation, managerialism and performativity (Ball 2003; Kinman and Wray 2008; Gleeson and Shain 1999). This seems to reinforce a masculinist approach (Deem and Ozga 2000) and autocratic leadership pattern as noted by Jameson (2008:15) that managers:

View lecturers and administrators as resources to be managed and ‘controlled’ for the achievement of efficient quality outcomes for the organization. Professional lecturers, on the other hand, tend to view themselves as accountable to the recipients of their services (students, business clients or other staff), and to national or international professional standards, sometimes linked to the ‘community of practice’ (CoP) of a professional network.

Terry (2013:3) also expounds the lack of teachers’ voice:

‘Teachers have not exerted much control over their profession as a whole. They lack the structures and processes present in other professions, like law and medicine. A lack of autonomy and control on the part of teachers has been problematic because it affects productivity and commitment to the workplace’

The autocratic and masculinist approach to management could also be attributed to the gender disparity in the FE sector with men occupying senior leadership positions compared to women (McTavish and Miller 2009; Walker 2013; Leonard 1998).

There is a general consensus that the successful outcome of educational change depends on the quality of the relationship between those who initiate the change and those implementing the change (Branson 2010). This, however, is not usually the case with educational change, because the relationship between teachers and those leading change in the institution is not usually transparent. Teachers are not fully informed about the change and they are rarely involved in the planning of change (Sikes 1992; Fullan 2007). This inevitably creates a feeling of alienation. The non-involvement of teachers in the change process could be attributed to the fact that they are accorded a lower status in the hierarchy of professionals (Brehony 2005; Colley et al 2007; Terry 2013) hence the emphasis on performance and target monitoring.

The low status accorded to teachers was revealed in a study conducted by Hargreaves et al (2006) in which teachers appear to devalue their own status compared with other professionals. Although this was a one-off project, it does raise concern that teachers have learned to accept the low status accorded to their profession. Within the education sector, the difference in status is equally apparent as revealed by Misra (2011: 27) who stated that the role of vocational education teachers:

‘Is often overshadowed by their counterparts in general education as societies place greater emphasis on academic education and credentials’.

In a study conducted by Fullan (1993:12), teachers were asked why they chose the profession and the response was “to make a difference in the lives of students’. This statement indicates that individuals who take up a career in teaching do so because they believe in change and intend to fulfil their desire of enabling students to achieve. Other studies conducted by Balyer and Ozcan (2014) and Bakar et al (2014) also confirmed that individuals who take up a career in teaching do so because of altruistic-intrinsic reasons which means that such individual have an instinctive passion about the profession and intend to make a contribution. Olyai (2012) reinforces this point by asserting that an essential feature of a teacher’s role is to facilitate learning, equip and develop the child. This clearly connotes a convergence between the moral purpose of teaching and educational change because teachers cannot develop their students without adapting the learning environment to the learning needs of students. It can be argued, therefore, that teachers have a vested interest and care about what they do and that change is embedded within their roles.

The problem is that teachers are expected to adapt and work within a constantly changing environment yet the training they receive does not prepare them for any such transition. This, according to Fullan (1993:12) is more likely to mean retention of the status quo. Fullan suggests that the only way to resolve transitions is to make 'explicit the goals and skills of change agency', one that integrates both individual and institutional development. Both the pre-service and in-service teacher training is usually based on the need to be innovative and develop creativity in the process of carrying out their duties (Hargreaves 2004; Pennington 1995; Karjalainen and Nissila 2011). It can be concluded that by the very nature of their job, teachers have the potential to contribute to educational change if included earlier on in the change process especially when there is constant pressure to maximise student's potential and results.

Furthermore, the context in which teachers work differs significantly compared to other professionals who may be working in more stable environments. The diverse kinds of knowledge which teachers have can enrich the change process if they are involved. However, teachers' views are rarely sought.

### **2.16. Change and the Role of Teachers**

Using Bascia and Hargreaves' (2000) constructions of teaching, it is evident that change is an intrinsic feature of the teaching profession. Bascia and Hargreaves identified 4 perspectives on change management which are important to the role of teachers but often overlooked. These include technical, intellectual, socio-emotional and socio-political perspectives. From a technical perspective, teachers are seen as individuals who have acquired technical skills, having gone through professional training, and been equipped with the skills to transmit knowledge in their teaching environment. The content of what they teach and how it is delivered may be subject to change. In other words, there are pedagogical changes in relation to teaching and learning including curriculum content which teachers can implement, given the context in which they work and the needs of students. Although this perspective of change management highlights the relationship between change and the role of teachers, it ignores the intellectual, socio-emotional and socio-political (Bascia and Hargreaves 2000; Zembylas and Barker 2007) aspects of teaching and how these impact on educational change.

Change management within these contexts may require a completely different approach which should be inclusive and which enables teachers to cope with the negative experiences usually associated with change (Hargreaves 2004). However, as an intellectual, a teacher's job is based on their level of expertise and the ability to reflect

and continuously seek ways of developing themselves. Consequently any change that impacts on their professional development should involve their input but most externally imposed changes usually ignore the emotional perspective of teaching. In essence, although the socio-emotional perspective of teaching acknowledges both the technical and intellectual aspects of teaching, it inevitably focuses more on the emotional aspect of teaching. Teachers are believed to be passionate about their profession. This passion, it is argued, emanates to a large extent from their commitment and dedication to ensure students' success. Therefore, an approach to change management that deliberately ignores these emotions is far more likely to lead to negative reaction to new initiatives and will place teachers under immense pressure to adapt or face sanctions (Robbin and Judge 2012). This view is also supported by Zembylas and Barker (2007:252) who concluded that:

‘Change is not about forcing all teachers to subscribe enthusiastically to new ideas; a reform process needs to allow teachers to carve out spaces for themselves in order to work individually and collaboratively and find ways to reflect on their practices’

The socio-political perspective of teaching views teaching as a political activity because of the interaction that takes place in classrooms, within teams and the institution as a whole. This inherent relationship can change and can lead to conflict.

The four perspectives on the role of teachers discussed above shows how their input could be useful during periods of educational change. Unless teachers are willing to implement changes in their classrooms, the entire reform programme is more likely to be doomed to failure.

One of the questions that this study attempts to address is to establish how teachers can be better prepared to cope with, and manage change. This has been identified in the literature as a major reason why educational change sometimes fails (Boyd-Dimock and McGree 1995).

Swanepoel and Booysse (2006) make a clear distinction between two factors that ought to be considered during a change process. That is, the role of first order change which examines the psychological approach to change management by carefully considering the values and beliefs of those likely to be affected by the new initiatives, and the role of second order change, which allows those affected by change to construct their own meaning of the change initiative. From the literature and arguments explored above, it is evident that there is a link between change and teaching which highlights the importance of engaging people who are pivotal in the establishment during the entire process of change.



## **2.17 The Impact of Leadership on Change Management**

Although this study focuses on the role of teachers and their preparedness to cope with educational change, it is necessary to devote a section on leadership because change management is a core leadership skill (Geribo 2011; Northouse 2012). Teachers are leaders of their own learning environment (Boyd-Dimock and McGree 1995). As mentioned previously, some of them may have progressed from their roles as teachers into leadership positions which may involve managing change.

Leadership is a topic that is widely discussed hence the vast array of both academic and non-academic materials on the subject. The lack of any specific definition for leadership indicates that it is contextual (Simkins, 2005) particularly because the model, style of leadership and the goals of organisations differ (Boddy 2011; 2014). Some writers describe leadership based on qualities whereas others focus on the content of a leader's role (Buchanan and Huyzinski 2012).

However, a useful framework offered by (Northouse 2010), identifies four elements which ought to be present for leadership to take place: that leadership is perceived as a process, involves influence, occurs in a group context and involves the achievement of goals. This framework highlights a key feature of leadership: that is, the ability to influence followers who are able to share the vision of the leader(s) and work towards achieving the goals of the organisation. Without followers there is no leadership. Another interesting aspect of Northouse's (2010) framework is the emphasis on leadership as a process. Leadership is an ongoing process that is contextual and needs to be adapted in line with changes in the environment. Yukl (2010) identifies two functions that are usually associated with the definitions of leadership: that is, the ability to provide direction and to exercise influence. There are some similarities between both frameworks as they both emphasise the ability to influence others.

The functions of leadership identified by Yukl (2012) can be carried out in different ways and have in fact led to the development of different leadership models which include the trait, behavioural, transactional, transformational and contingency approaches to change management (Boddy 2011;2014). Amongst these different types of leadership, transformational leadership is thought to be the most productive during a period of change because the leader is expected personally to model and champion change (Holbeche 2006). In the education sector, leadership is believed to be a key variable in the evaluation of way in which institutions manage the learning process. It is, therefore, seen as a catalyst for change (CEL 2004; Hannagan et al 2007). This might explain why failing schools and

colleges have been ‘turned’ around through the intervention of talented leaders (Leithwood and Jantzi 2000; Bush 2007).

The nature and type of change may determine the leadership type. A radical change such as a merger may require a different style of leadership if the process is to be effective (Cunningham and Harney 2012) It is the vision of the leaders, how they communicate this and how they collaborate with stakeholders that determine the level of commitment of the entire organisation (Geribo 2011). The onus is on the leader to listen to those whose voices are not heard during the transformation process (Geribo 2011). However, the state of affairs in the organisation and the urgency of change, particularly if the strategic position of the organisation is being threatened, can make this impossible to achieve (Burnes 2009). The leader is, therefore, expected to have the ability to incorporate both a ‘hard’ vision, which includes strategy, structures and systems and a ‘soft’ vision, which includes values, behaviour and attitudes (Holbeche 2007).

From an educational perspective, leadership is not just a technical concept that involves managing curriculum and resources. Leaders have a profound moral commitment and obligation to their students (Foskett and Lumby, 2003). With regards to the management of change, the literature indicates that if the leadership of the institution engages teachers in the decision making process, the process is far more likely to be successful (Hargreaves 2004). However, this is not always the case in reality as studies show that management are usually hesitant to engage with teachers during educational reforms (Swanepoel and Booyse 2006). Horsley and Kaser (1999) reiterate that leaders of educational change should pay particular attention to the process and content of change management as key determinants which can lead to successful change management. They identified nine ‘risk’ factors that leaders ought to consider when implementing change. The nine factors include: making a case for change; developing a clear vision for change which should be shared by all stakeholders; identifying the change leaders; set guidelines for change and encourage commitment from individuals. They also emphasised the importance of aligning change to the culture of the organisation, to ensure that there are available infrastructures to support the change, an awareness of the external environment because of the impact it is likely to have and to develop an implementation plan. Of particular relevance to this study is the need for leaders to clarify the reason for educational change (Boddy 2011; Buchanan and Huczynski 2010) and the need to highlight the importance of identifying and utilising those who are most likely to be affected by the change as

change agents, in order to enhance collaboration with those leading the change. This reinforces the potential impact that leaders can have on the effective management of change.

In summary, the literature on leadership identifies specific characteristics of leaders of educational change (Boyd-Dimock and McGree 1995). Leaders are expected to have a vision, be proactive, value human resources as key assets in the organisation, take risks, be good communicators and value the institution as a learning environment. The role of teachers involves all of these, with the exception of risk-taking, because of the strict compliance with policies stipulated both internally and externally. The aversion to risk taking can manifest itself particularly because teachers are not certain as to the extent to which they are allowed to implement change.

Whilst considerable efforts have been made to identify the best ways of leading educational change, there is still no evidence that there is a unique leadership approach to ensure change is managed productively and cooperatively (Branson 2010; Burnes 1996).

### **2.18 Teachers as Leaders**

Teacher leadership has been widely featured in educational literature (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2009; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2014; Fullan 2007; Harris and Mujis 2005; Liberman, 1998; Sergiovanni 1987; Fairman and Mackenzie 2012, Brondyk and Stanulis 2014). This description is often used to identify teachers who develop their own professional learning and have a vision that goes beyond their classroom. These calibre of teachers are likely to take up institution-wide responsibilities and they enjoy working with their colleagues to develop a learning community with the objective of improving their practice, influencing and implementing change (Danielson 2007; Fairman and MacKenzie 2012; Brondyk and Stanulis 2014; Gordon, Jacobs and Solis 2014). This approach to leadership often referred to as shared and distributed leadership, is prevalent in the US and it is believed to contribute to governance and school improvement (Hallinger and Heck 2009).

Despite the fact that a vast array of the literature describes teachers as leaders, most teachers feel uncomfortable with this description. They do not perceive themselves as such mainly because they lack power and influence to contribute towards organisational wide change initiatives. Power and influence are both attributes of leadership (Katzenmoyer and Moller 2009; Lattimer 2012). Another reason why teachers do not

feel comfortable with the description is because they assume that the additional responsibilities usually assigned to them, most of which involve leadership function are a normal part of their professional duties (Fairman and MacKenzie 2012). The concept of leadership is often associated with power and influences which teachers do not possess. This means that the term is often used in a passive way. The roles and responsibilities of teachers vary from one institution to another but include some kind of managerial function, at least in relation to the classroom and curriculum management of their students. As part of their roles, teachers are expected to plan, organise, manage and monitor and analyse data (Southworth 2010; Szucs 2009). Most of these roles have been learned just by doing it (Kimble, Hildreth, and Bourdon 2007). The constant educational reforms and the ensuing demands placed on teachers have led to increased responsibilities including the management of change (Ash and Persall 1999).

According to Gleeson and Shain (1999:6)

‘As senior management teams decrease in size as part of cost-cutting, and increasingly concern themselves with strategic planning, middle managers appointed from the lecturing ranks, are taking on broader managerial roles’

Gleeson and Shain (1999:9) went on further to say that:

‘Promoted from the ranks, many middle managers retain often heavy teaching commitments and, at the same time, are expected to ‘hold the line’ between lecturers and senior managers in brokering change’

Clarke and Newman (1997: 2) also emphasised how changes can impact on staff who have made it to middle management:

‘They not only manage budgets and people in pursuit of greater efficiency. They also mediate tensions and dilemmas often associated with rapid and unpredictable change’

As the statements above indicates, teachers in FE have become leaders or managers of departments, course leaders, team leaders, curriculum managers and subject coordinators (Cedefop 2011). These roles are classified as the emergent leadership stage by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). One of the key qualities of leaders in organisations is the ability to identify the potential of people (Sharratt and Fullan 2009). According to Scott (2003), the profile of effective change leaders is similar to that of a teacher. Teachers who have a passion for their vocation would work with their learners, identify their potentials and encourage them to achieve. These are key leadership and

change agent qualities which may not be evident to those leading educational establishments and, as a direct result, the leadership qualities of teachers which could have been a key resource during periods of change are often ignored.

The fact that teachers' role involve training, teaching and preparing students to become leaders and managers of the future is a valid reason why they themselves have to be adequately prepared for leading and managing change (Geribo 2011).

As their roles evolve, teachers should be willing to learn and develop their leadership skills through ongoing professional development which equips them with effective change management knowledge and skills. This, however, can only be achieved if their institutions provide the support (Nudrat and Akhtar 2014).

Educational change does not have to be top-down nor bottom up but interactive and should encourage participation from everyone (Fullan, and Hargreaves 1992). The ever changing demands on teachers require them to participate in decision making processes which then facilitate their role as change agents. Arguably, these qualities and characteristics are similar to those of visionary leaders who are proactive and constantly seek ways of improving their organisations.

Danielson (2006) identifies three areas where the ability of teachers to manage change can be demonstrated. Firstly, leadership qualities can be demonstrated within the department or team because decision making by teachers is not only focused on their classrooms but may have impact on the department as a whole. This particular role of a teacher-leader requires knowledge of change management because it prepares them to drive new initiatives in their department or teams. Secondly, teacher leadership can take place across the institution, focusing on areas where teachers have significant influence on students across the institution. Thirdly, teacher leadership can go beyond the institution when teachers take part in other initiatives outside the institution or get their voices heard in their communities.

In the process of fulfilling the three roles identified by Danielson (2007) above, teachers find themselves carrying out functions involving change management for which they have not been prepared. Fullan (1990; 1991) argues that the model of pre-service training ignores the need for teachers to meet the challenges of educational change.

A leader or manager requires certain skills, levels of knowledge in order to carry out the role effectively (Curtis and Cheng 2001; Liberman and Miller 1990). With the expansive role of teachers, there should be opportunities to expose them to leadership training which

equips them with change management skills since this is a key component of management and leadership requirement (Nguyen 2010).

As critical thinkers, particularly in times of educational change (Lu Ly and Orlieb 2009), teachers require appropriate skills so as to become conversant with educational objectives and hence be better prepared to cope with their changing environment (Cranston 2010; Zembylas and Barker 2007). Inculcating change management skills as part of the professional development of teachers provides a feeling of empowerment to initiate and manage change in their institutions (Atkinson 2000). Those teachers who are keen to act as change agents feel insecure to manage or contribute to the change process primarily because they are not empowered to do so even though their input is critical in the implementation process (Fullan 2003). York-Barr and Duke (2004) acknowledged that teachers' lives are far more likely to be enriched if they have opportunities to develop relevant skills and knowledge which increases their confidence and commitment to the profession. This form of professional development for teachers may lead to attitudinal changes as they become more aware and accept change as an essential feature of their constantly evolving roles. A study carried out by Cardoso (2008) concluded that teachers who have had continuous professional development on change tend to be more receptive to change. (Rucinski et al 2009) also asserts that teacher-leaders tend to implement more reforms and mentor other teachers effectively.

What seems to be emerging from the literature is that teachers are in fact leaders carrying out functions for which they may not have been prepared for either through their pre-service or ongoing professional training.

### **2.19 The Impact of Change on Teachers**

Change means different things to different people, depending on their perception, how they make their own meaning and whether they feel comfortable about it or not (Samad 2007). One significant point is how change is managed and how teachers cope with the challenges it brings. Imposed changes are usually costly for teachers (Inos and Quigley 1995).

Typical cost incurred by teachers during period of change include fear, anxiety, lack of skills to manage new initiatives and constant pressure to meet targets most of which they have no direct control (Kyriacou 2001, Kyriacou and Sutcliffe 1978; Wilson and Hall 2002; Soleimani 2012). The type of change initiatives introduced can have a significant impact on a teacher's professional identity and their commitment to the change process. Imposed change usually originates externally and outside the remit of the teacher with

consequences for not participating in the process. Whereas such changes are viewed negatively, changes initiated by teachers in their own classrooms tend to be more positively viewed (Huberman 1989.)

Different generations of teachers tend to share similar values and respond to change differently based on their age or gender (Bayer, Brinkkaer and Plauborg 2009). Huberman (1993) refers to this as the teacher life cycle. Teachers respond to educational change depending on the values underpinning the change process (Elliott 2008) and how such change is likely to impact on their students and on their personal situation. Continuous emphasis on the technical aspect and content of the change process tends to ignore the perception of the people implementing the change process. These perceptions, motivation or frustrations of individuals are equally important in the process. If change continues to be a top-down phenomenon it may threaten the values and beliefs that teachers hold. It is also likely to have emotional impact on teachers (Smit 2003). From a socio-psychological perspective, Veen and Slegers (2006) examined how teacher's emotions are affected by change, and found that teachers who had a link between their professional orientation and a particular educational reform tend to react more positively to change. They also found that such teachers believed that their professional identities had been restored. Those who did not experience congruence between their professional lives and a particular educational reform held a negative attitude to change. The findings from the study by Veen and Slegers (2006) again, reinforce the view that teachers' reactions to educational reforms depend on how it threatens their professional identities. Similarly, Little (1992) supports the involvement of teachers in educational change by emphasising how imposed change could impact on teachers and how such changes could lead to increased burnout. The responsibility therefore, is for policy makers initiating change to engage teachers because of the impact it is likely to have on their professional identity which plays a vital role in the implementation of educational change (Kominsky 2011).

## **2.20 Conclusion**

The literature on the role of teachers in educational change has been widely researched. However, the ways in which teachers are prepared by their institutions to engage and cope with change has received very little attention despite the fact that it can impact on motivation, performance and commitment to change. The experiences of teachers in the next chapter will shed more light on the approach adopted by the college involved in this

study and whether teachers felt they were adequately prepared to cope with the challenges of the merger.

This chapter explored various perspectives on change and change management models. This exploration suggests that recent models of change management have only presented an extension of earlier models of change. Change management within the educational context, the role of leadership and how it impacts on the crucial role of teachers as change agents was also discussed. The literature on change management which may be seen as eclectic in nature, and value laden, tends to favour the planned approach by advocating that change should be planned in stages. Of course, there are times when the planned approach is inevitable particularly when the change initiative is likely to impact on the strategic goals of the institution.

Within the field of education, the emergent or processual approach to change may need to be incorporated in order to enable teachers respond to, and manage change in improved ways. Teachers are aware that change is a phenomenon that is embedded within their career and they tend to be willing to embrace change as long they are involved in the process and empowered to take part in decision making on tactical issues that impact on their practice. This seems to be the most effective way of encouraging them to take ownership and develop a more positive attitude to change.

Another area of interest that emerged from the literature is the fact that teachers have been described as leaders and change agents but there is very little evidence to suggest how they acquire the essential skills to perform this crucial role since this is not included as part of pre-service or professional development programmes.

Drawing from these various standpoints, empirical data evaluating teachers' perceptions and views on the impact of educational change will be discussed in chapter 4.



**3.1 Introduction**

This chapter begins by explaining the rationale behind the research topic and the need to conduct the study using a structured approach. It then proceeds to examine the key features of the two dominant paradigms in research and the philosophical assumptions that underpin each one. A section is also dedicated to the mixed method paradigm which is the preferred paradigm under which the study will be grounded. The research questions are outlined together with the relevant methods of inquiry and techniques which addresses the specific research questions. The concluding section examines issues relating to research ethics, validity and reliability and the sampling methods used in gathering data.

**3.2 Why This Research Topic?**

Key stakeholders in educational establishments have certain expectations which they hope will enhance the quality of services they provide or receive. In an attempt to achieve these objectives, educational institutions have continuously adapted their strategies to accommodate changes that may be internally or externally imposed. It is in response to one such change, which led to a merger between two FE colleges, that this study has been conducted.

Another major reason for undertaking educational research is the desire of educators to improve their practice and contribute to knowledge in specific areas of interest (Creswell 2008; Bassey 1999:115). This is my primary motive for choosing the research topic on teacher's preparedness for managing educational change. In undertaking this study, I acknowledge that my personal experiences as a qualified Subject Learning Coach (Change Agent) and former lecturer in a FE college which had undergone significant changes in the last three years were significant factors that informed my choice. As it is usually the case, teachers in the college where the study was conducted were affected by change. One of the objectives of the thesis is to ascertain whether the essential change management skills which teachers need to enable them cope and manage change (Fullan 2003;2007) had been provided as part of traditional teacher education or ongoing professional development programme.

In the next section I discuss the contentious topic of the two dominant paradigms namely, positivist and interpretive. I argue that neither of the two paradigms can fulfil the objectives of the study and opt for the mixed method approach which acknowledges the strengths of both.

### **3.3 Conflicting Paradigms in Educational Research**

Selected key texts on research methods in the educational research literature (Cohen et al 2009) tend to highlight the controversy between the two dominant paradigms namely, positivist and interpretive sometimes referred to as quantitative and qualitative approaches to research (Dash 2005; Alexander 2006; Gray 2009; Denscombe 2010). This suggests to the researcher that both paradigms are incompatible, and should not be used together (Azorin and Cameron 2010). However, the fact that the mixed methods offers the researcher a choice to combine both qualitative and quantitative data has led some writers (Johnson and Onwugbuezie 2004; Creswell 2004; Rocco et al 2003) to classify this approach as the ‘third paradigm’.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003:245) describe a paradigm as ‘a set of beliefs and values that guide action’. This implies that a paradigm influences the way that the researcher conducts and interprets the study and that it provides a conceptual framework for seeking and making sense of the social world (Silverman 2010). Creswell (2009) asserts that the type of belief held by the researcher will determine the type of method applied in a study and that a careful consideration should be given to issues relating to epistemology, ontology, methodology and human nature irrespective of the paradigms (Crotty 1998).

The difference between the two dominant paradigms will now be examined from an ontological, epistemological and methodical perspective. In subsequent sections, the features of each of the two dominant paradigms will be compared in relation to the four issues. This will be followed by a discussion on the mixed methods approach which is the preferred method for this study.

### **3.4 The Positivist Paradigm**

The positivist paradigm prefers quantifiable variables which can be measured (Alexander 2005). It is based on the notion that the world exists separately from the personal thoughts or facts of its inhabitants (Tuli 2010). Positivists postulate that natural science is the only credible method of generating knowledge and that the behaviour of humans in response to their environment can be predictable by testing a hypothesis. It involves taking large samples of data that can be measured using statistical analysis and carrying out specific operations that are measurable (Conway 2009).

From a positivist, epistemological perspective, knowledge is acquired based on the relationship between the knower and what is known (Guba and Lincoln 1994). This, for positivists, is how the researcher acquires knowledge about the subject of the research and how such knowledge can be used truthfully (Briggs and Coleman 2007). From a

positivist perspective, knowledge is therefore discovered through direct observation of the object of the study. Ontological issues refer to the nature of reality and are important because they form an intrinsic part of the subject under investigation. From a positivist stance, this can be viewed from a single reality. Science is seen as the way to get the truth, to understand the world well enough so that it might be predicted and controlled (Crotty 1998; Conway 2009).

With regards to methodological issues, the focus is on the type of data collection tools used for the study. Since the positivist paradigm creates a distance between the researcher and the participants, data cannot be obtained without direct contact with the participants (Gray 2005) and is therefore not suitable for this particular study. The positivist approach would involve the use of tests, questionnaires and statistical analysis but they are not sufficient for the current study.

The final assumption focuses on human nature and examines how human beings relate with their environment since they are the subject of the study. The positivist sees this in terms of the laws of cause and effect whilst the interpretivist views such pattern as being created out of evolving meaningful systems that people generate as they socially interact (Neuman 2003; Tuli 2010). These philosophical stances are significant and determine the researcher's chosen methods (Crotty 1998).

The positivist method has to comply with certain principles and assumptions of science. Cohen et al (2011:8) identify these assumptions as follows: determinism, empiricism, parsimony and generality. Determinism implies that there are causes that lead to events and that understanding such links is important in order to predict and control the outcome. Empiricism refers to the process of collating empirical evidence that can be verified to support theories. Parsimony relate to how the phenomena can be explained in the most economical way possible and, finally, generality refers to the process of generalising the particular phenomenon in such a way that it makes a wider impact than would ordinarily be the case (Crotty 1998). In relation to positivist expectations, the subjective nature of this study and the small sample used means that the findings cannot be generalised across the FE sector as representing the view of teachers particularly as their past experience of change in the institution may have influenced their opinions of the merger. However, the unique set of data obtained from teachers who are the subject of change has identified a particular aspect of FE mergers that has been neglected. The findings may be significant in terms of the future strategy adopted by colleges in preparing teachers for change.

### **3.4.1 Limitations of the positivist paradigm**

Although the positivist methodology has been widely used in educational research, particularly in the US, and was in fact known as the ‘gold standard’ of research methodologies (Alexander 2006), it has a major limitation because it ignores the experiences of individuals who are the subject of the research (Dash 2005). This major limitation of the positivist method is also acknowledged by Clough and Nutbrown (2007:16), who assert that it is impossible to study ‘society and the social system’ without taking into consideration the role or impact of the ‘individuals who are the subject’ of the research. Along the same line of reasoning, White (2000); Conway (2009) also argues that it is impossible for individuals to ‘stand back’ and be objective since they are part of the subject being investigated. Too much emphasis on measuring and predicting the outcome of an investigation may turn the researcher’s attention from the subject being investigated and the findings may be too abstract and generic to be relevant to a specific context (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004).

In the context of the current study, the positivist approach on its own would be unsuitable because of the subjective and exploratory nature of the topic, which relies on the values and opinions of individuals. Teachers’ opinions and attitudes cannot be measured by observation and experiment, as these methods measure behaviour only, which, in effect, creates a point of divergence (Ade-Ojo 2011) between change management and the positivist paradigm.

### **3.5 Interpretive paradigm**

From the interpretive perspective, the world is seen as constructed, interpreted, and experienced by people as they interact with each other and with wider social systems (Gray 2009). Advocates of the interpretive paradigm argue that the social world can be understood not only scientifically but also from the point of view of individuals who are intrinsically linked to the phenomena under investigation (Cohen et al 2011). Interpretivism is based on the assumption that individuals have autonomy and can impact on the phenomenon under investigation rather than merely being controlled by their environment. From an ontological perspective, a single phenomenon can be interpreted from different perspectives based on the feelings, experiences and behaviour of individuals. With regard to this study, the impact of the merger could be re-lived differently despite the fact that teachers had experienced a similar phenomenon. For instance, teachers who have already acquired knowledge of change management may have felt that the processes adopted by the college during the merger was fair because

they had been informed about the proposed change. However, those without such knowledge might in contrast feel that the college did not prepare them emotionally and psychologically for the change. The role of the researcher therefore is to gain insight as to why these differences exist. Cohen et al (2009) further stress the role of the researcher as critical to understanding the participant's interpretation of the world around them. The interpretive paradigm requires contact with the participants in order to understand their lived experiences (Cohen et al 2009) and may involve the researcher spending a long time with the participants. This partnership with the participants can lead to deeper insights into the phenomenon under investigation adding richness and depth to the data (Tuli 2010).

With regards to epistemological issues, the interpretivist sees the world as constructed and interpreted by people in their interactions with each other and with their wider social systems. The objective, therefore, is to understand a particular phenomenon and not to generalise to the entire population. From a methodological perspective, data gathering methods used within this paradigm are expected to be rich and detailed or to constitute a good description of the phenomena. As a result of this, focus groups and interviews seem to be the preferred choices.

Crotty (1998) classifies three theoretical perspectives within the interpretive paradigm namely, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and hermeneutics.

Symbolic interactionism is based on the notion that 'meanings arise from social interaction', that people act when they are able to interpret the meaning of objects and actions around them (Gray 2009). With the phenomenological approach the researcher must be 'grounded' in people's experience of that social reality. The interpretation of the researcher and the subjects of the research are both essential. A phenomenological study allows several participants in a study to describe the meaning of their lived experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell 2007:57). Hermeneutics is a technique used in interpreting and analysing qualitative data. It is based on the assumption that social reality is too complex to be understood solely through the process of observation. This requires that the researcher should be acquainted with the language of the respondents and be able to interpret and analyse the meaning of particular texts in order to gain better understanding of the world as experienced by the respondents and the rationale behind their actions (Myers 2008).

### **3.5.1 Limitations of the interpretive paradigm**

Individual perceptions, values and opinions are intrinsic features of the interpretive paradigm which makes it very subjective and difficult to eliminate bias and also ensure validity of data (Silverman 2010). The involvement of the researcher can be equally subjective because their values and opinions can impact on the data, particularly if they have experienced the phenomenon and are willing to share such experiences with participants (Gray 2009). Crotty (1998) suggest that such preconceptions should be ‘bracketed out’ when conducting an interpretive study. With regard to the current study, my own experience of managing change could have resulted in subjective interpretations of events and phenomena during the investigation. This, however, would have been kept in abeyance by using multiple research tools such as interviews, questionnaires and consulting other relevant documentation to ensure the validity of data.

### **3.6 The Mixed Methods Approach**

The mixed methods approach involves using both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to obtain a variety of data and provide a more holistic picture and better opportunity to address the research problem than either of the other approaches on their own. Authors such as Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:15) referred to mixed methods approach as the ‘third paradigm’ because it lies in the continuum that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative approaches and allows the researcher to combine their choice of methods and strategies (Desccombe 2010; Creswell 2003; 2009; Azorin and Cameron 2010). However, this description has not been widely acknowledged in the literature. In this study, the mixed methods approach creates an opportunity to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods. It also enables a better understanding of the research problem than either method on its own, and overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from adopting a single approach (Teddie and Tashakkori 2006; Silverman 2010). This point will be elaborated on later in subsequent section on the rationale for choosing mixed method approach.

The literature on mixed methods advocates pragmatism as the philosophical assumptions underpinning this paradigm (Desccombe 2010; Silverman 2010, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Creswell 2009). Whereas the philosophical assumptions underpinning the positivist and interpretivist paradigms are unique to them, pragmatism is drawn from these two contrasting paradigms because it encompasses both the use of multiple perspectives (Creswell 2009). Pragmatism rejects the view that researchers

ought to make a choice between positivist and interpretive paradigms and that both can be compatible with each other giving the researcher the opportunity to use both quantitative and qualitative data to address the research problem and research questions. (Azorin and Cameron 2010). Denscombe (2010) describes ontological issues in relation to pragmatism as follows: that social reality is perceived to be 'out there' and external to individuals and can be socially constructed by individuals. Therefore, the vision of social reality that the researcher opts for depends on the one that is most likely to be useful.

From an epistemological perspective, pragmatism provides a set of assumptions which include the following: that there are no perfect methods that can provide an opportunity to obtain knowledge and that knowledge is provisional. It assumes also that what is perceived as truth today may not be perceived as such in future, that knowledge evolves over time, and therefore, the research should test what works through empirical enquiry (Denscombe 2010). In essence, this could mean that the views and opinions of the research subjects could change over time even if the research topic remains the same but is situated in a different environment.

Creswell (2009); Silverman (2010) and Denscombe (2010) suggest that careful consideration should be given to the timing, weighting and mixing of the qualitative and quantitative components when planning a mixed method study.

With regards to weighting, there was more emphasis on the qualitative component due to the descriptive and subjective nature of this study, which depends profoundly on the values and opinions of individuals and therefore, necessitates 'exploration and understanding' (Creswell 2008).

Another reason for emphasising the qualitative component more is that the current study took place within a dynamic social setting with a deeply entrenched organisational culture which in itself is a subjective topic and should be re-lived by those who experience it. This fact is highlighted by Hillier (2006); Gleeson and James (2007); Spurs et al (2007); (Orr 2011) and Jameson (2008) who describe the further education sector as diverse and complex in terms of size, student profile and provision of services. As can be expected, change management in any organisation often involves social interaction and relationships. The qualitative component created an opportunity to understand the complexities of the merged institution and the proposed organisational culture. The focus therefore was on the 'voice' of the teacher, which provided the opportunity to capture multiple perspectives relating to the merger (Creswell 1997).

In highlighting the important role of teachers in managing educational change, Fullan (1993: 131) asserts that it is important to ‘understand the subjective world of the role incumbents play as a necessary precondition for engaging in any change effort with them.’ This subjective world can only be interpreted through ‘storied experiences’ (Creswell 2007), and recorded through interviews. Having discussed the key features of the mixed methods approach, the next section attempts to provide some justification for the preferred method of enquiry for this study.

### **3.6.1 Rationale for Choice of Approach**

Guba and Lincoln (1985), postulate that for research to be authentic and credible the investigation should be based on a sound rationale that justifies the use of chosen methodology and the processes involved in data collection and analysis. Azorin and Cameron (2010) also state that the research questions and context should dictate the choice of the appropriate research methods. As there is no single format or methodology for planning research, the researcher should use a combination of methods which addresses the research problem (Cohen et al 2010; Tuli 2010).

The literature on educational change and organisational theory and behaviour indicates that many such studies have employed the mixed method paradigm, which is becoming an increasingly popular approach in this area of study (Azorin and Cameron 2010). Although this study has a disposition towards interpretive paradigm, previous studies on educational change (Bishop and Mulford 2010; Wermke 2010; Tang 2011; Kennedy 1996; Hargreaves 2004; Churchill et al 2006; Wise and Bush 1999; Fullan 2003) have used mixed methods, the subjective and complex nature of the topic predicts that some data will require statistical analysis. This automatically demands the use of some positivist research tools such as data analysis using statistical tools such as SPSS in order to accommodate these varying demands. The mixed method approach seemed more favourable for enabling the researcher to capitalise on the strength of both research tools. What this means is that there is a convergence between certain research objectives and particular paradigms (Ade-Ojo 2011).

The subjective elements of the study could not be sufficiently addressed using quantitative tools. According to Denscombe (2010), positivist science on its own is not appropriate when interpreting a social phenomenon. On the contrary, incorporating qualitative elements provided a better opportunity for teachers to make meanings and construct their own realities of their surrounding environment.



The choice of mixed methods is closely linked to my own personal inclinations (Creswell 2009). I believe that change impacts on individuals differently and can only be understood through the experiences and perceptions of those who have experienced it (Creswell 2007). I also accept that the story of individual participants is unique to them and has to be reflected in the information and data obtained during the interview process (Cohen et al 2010). This should then help clarify specific issues from the interviewees' perspectives. Another reason for adopting a mixed method approach was because it provided the opportunity to triangulate data in order to limit bias, ensure validity and reliability of data. This was done by comparing the results obtained from the survey, interviews and documentary evidence on FE mergers and Teachers' CPD records.

Having justified the reasons for choosing the mixed method approach, it is also important to acknowledge the limitations of the approach. Although the mixed methods approach addresses some of the drawbacks associated with the positivist and interpretive paradigms, its major limitation is the time it takes to collect data due to different combinations and phases associated with the data collection process (Denscombe 2010). However, this limitation was addressed in this study by ensuring that substantial parts of the data, both qualitative and quantitative, were collected during the first research phase through questionnaires and data analysis was conducted simultaneously to save time. This process was efficient as it created an opportunity to feed into the next stage of data collection.

Another limitation of the mixed method approach is the weighting allocated to both the qualitative and quantitative components. Although some variables such as teaching experience, gender are vital in this study because they impact on teachers' response to change (Lieberman 1998), they do not provide detail insight into individual experiences of the merger. It is for this reason that emphasis was placed on generating more qualitative data through interviews.

### **3.7 Research Questions**

#### **Overarching Research question**

How well are teachers prepared by the management of their college to cope with, and manage educational change during a merger?

Teachers in the further education sector are inundated with changes but they do not seem to be part of the process of change. However, they do have a role as key implementers of

change in the learning environment. The institution where this study was conducted has implemented several changes including a merger. Changes have also been implemented across curriculum areas, learning and teaching methods and a major restructuring of the organisation which led to three episodes of redundancies. The lack of teacher involvement in educational change has been widely discussed in the literature (Fullan and Hargreaves 2005; Fullan 2003; 2007). There is often a feeling of vulnerability because of the gap in skills and knowledge and the ability of teachers to cope with frequent changes in the sector.

The objective therefore, is to examine how teachers have responded to these changes.

#### Subsidiary questions

1. What strategies were employed by the college to involve and prepare teachers for the merger?
2. What was the impact of the merger on teachers in the college?
3. Are teachers more likely to embrace change if they perceive change as an intrinsic feature of their role as change agents?
4. Should change management skills be incorporated as part of the professional development of teachers in the FE sector?

### **3.8. Research Design**

Although this study has a disposition towards an interpretive paradigm because of the subjective nature of the research, which relies on personal stories and experiences of teachers about the merger, statistical analysis were conducted to compare key variables.

Also, as evident in the literature review conducted in chapter 2, change management is a very subjective topic with different interpretations of what constitutes effective change management particularly when the approach adopted by the organisation may be influenced by its culture. The culture of the organisation and the approach to change management can ultimately influence individual perception and their experiences of the change process. It is for this reason that this study adopted an exploratory case study using the mixed methods approach. Data was collected through surveys, interviews and documentary evidence to avoid relying on a single subjective data source. Although the survey and interviews focused on unique individual experiences, the impact of the merger on individual teachers provides wider context of change management in the college and the processes adopted during the merger. The interviews also provided an

opportunity to examine relevant themes emerging from the data. The study has been conducted from an ‘insider researcher’ perspective, which in itself presented some ethical concerns discussed in section 3.21. The research design and methodology for the current study has been consolidated in table 3.1 below. The rationale behind the use of case study and specific research instruments adopted in the study will be discussed in the next session.

**Table 3.1: Research Design**

	<b>Positivist (Quantitative)</b>	<b>Interpretive (Qualitative)</b>	<b>Mixed Methods</b>
<b>Research Approach</b>			✓
<b>Theoretical Perspective: Pragmatism</b>			✓
<b>Methodology: Case Study</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b><u>Data Collection Tools</u></b>			
<b>Questionnaires</b>	✓		✓
<b>Interviews</b>		✓	✓
<b>Document Analysis</b>	✓	✓	✓

### **3.9 Research Methodology: Case Study**

Given the mixed method approach adopted in this study and the research questions, it was deemed necessary to adopt a case study methodology because both positivist and interpretivist approaches are compatible with this (Creswell 2007; Silverman 2010). A case study also provides a better opportunity to understand the impact of the merger on teachers, how well they were prepared to cope with the change by reliving their individual experiences and it also provided a real-life example of how change has been managed in a complex social environment (Wilson 2009).

A case study helps to illuminate and contextualise complex social phenomena that require an in-depth analysis (Yin 2009; Gray 2009; Bell 2010). It also created an opportunity to develop a comprehensive picture of real-life events in organisations, managerial processes or a small group’s behaviour. It is often applicable to events where the researcher attempts to uncover information but has no control. According to Gray (2009), a case study approach is particularly useful when the researcher is trying to uncover a relationship between a phenomenon and the context in which it is occurring. Even though the use of case study requires the collection of data from multiple sources, the researcher

is still expected to become more focused in their approach (Gray 2009) which can adopt both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Yin (2009) identifies sources of data collection methods which are appropriate for case studies such as observation, interviews, questionnaires, archival records and physical artefacts. The use of case study as a research method, though controversial, has remained useful in situations where in-depth explanation of a social behaviour is sought (Zainal 2007).

Case studies have been used as a research method to address some of the problems associated with the positivist method because they allow the researcher to go beyond the quantitative analysis and attempt to address a phenomenon from the participants' perspective. Furthermore, case study has the added advantage of combining both qualitative and quantitative methods which captures the phenomenon under investigation. Yin (2009) classifies case studies into three categories namely, exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Exploratory case studies are mostly used to explore a phenomenon in the data that may be of interest to the researcher. Descriptive case study allows the researcher to describe the 'natural phenomena' which occur when data is analysed. Finally, explanatory case studies allow the researcher to examine and investigate the data closely in order to ascertain the phenomena in the data. This study has adopted an exploratory approach by carrying out detail inquiry from teachers about their lived experiences of the merger process and how it impacted on their professional and personal lives. 40 teachers based at both campuses of the merged institution took part in the initial survey and interviews were conducted with 6 teachers from Colleges A and B.

### **3.9.1 Justification for using case study**

This study is unique in the sense that it took place in a single establishment even though data has been collected from two campuses. It has an advantage of revealing in detail the unique perception of individual teachers in real-life situation which would be lost in quantitative or experimental methods. The use of case study provides detail insight into the preparedness of teachers in coping with change and the merger in particular. This may not have attracted much attention. Using a case study for this investigation will create an opportunity to identify specific features which may have wider implications but were clearly ignored during the merger process (Silverman 2010). This is one of the benefits of using a case study (Denscombe 2010) because it brings attention to a general problem which may have been ignored. The time and effort spent investigating the issue can lead to a better understanding of complex issues particularly when the study takes place in a social setting (Buchanan and Huyzinski 2012).

Another reason for choosing a case study methodology is because it is compatible with the preferred paradigm (mixed methods) for this study and lends itself to different sources of data such as interviews, questionnaires and document analysis (Denscombe 2010; Silverman 2010). Combining these methods tend to triangulate the data and reduce bias in the study.

### **3.9.2 Why the Case Study is Focusing on a Merged Institution**

There are three main reasons for choosing this particular college. Firstly, the merger affected teachers who are key stakeholders and the main drivers of change in the college but they do not seem to have any powers in decisions that affect them. Teachers are therefore in a better position to articulate and provide their own testimony and construct meaning and understanding of the merger (Creswell 2007; Bassey 1999; Briggs and Coleman 2007). Secondly, one of the colleges, prior to the merger, had undergone several strategic and tactical change initiatives including the introduction of a new teaching strategy known as ‘tasks based learning’. The particular college also changed its organisational structure three times which also led to a review in policies and practices. These changes took place within a short period of time, were not usually planned and may have led to uncertainties for teachers.

Thirdly, mergers have become prevalent in the further education sector (LSC 2003). This case study highlights a good example of how the integration of two independent further education establishments can impact on key stakeholders particularly when the cultures of both institutions are divergent. This created an opportunity to analyse the characteristics of institutions, the behaviour and attitude of people in the institutions and how they responded to this particular change. The findings could contribute to the professional development of teachers if there is clear evidence that they require change management skills in order to fully embrace and implement future change initiatives.

### **3.9.3 Limitations to Case Studies**

Case studies are not universally accepted as a ‘reliable and objective’ approach because of the difficulty of generalising the findings of a specific case to other settings (Gray 2009). However, the problem can be overcome by adopting a multiple case study approach. With regard to the current study, data was obtained from two different campuses. This created an opportunity to compare the views of participants even though the objective was to investigate a single phenomenon (Yin 2009). Another criticism of case study is the fact that it can become time consuming and generates substantial amount

of information from different sources which can lead to different interpretations, and potential ‘researcher bias’ (Denscombe 2010). There are ethical issues to consider with regards to negotiating access to people and relevant documents. This problem was encountered during the course of the study but it was eventually addressed by agreeing with the ‘gate keepers’ (Silverman 2010) not to disseminate questionnaires online as intended. The alternative was to distribute the questionnaires physically which was time consuming and led to logistical issues.

### **3.10. Data Collection Methods**

Data were obtained both from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources comprised structured interviews and surveys. Although the survey was useful in reaching a wider audience, interviews provided an opportunity to gain deeper meaning of the themes that emerged from the initial survey. Secondary data were obtained from the professional development records of teachers and the merger consultation documentation. Other documents setting out government policies promoting mergers in the further education sector were also analysed, albeit with caution.

### **3.11 Questionnaires**

The first stage of data collection started with the use of questionnaires (Appendix 3) in order to generate initial responses from participants. 100 questionnaires were disseminated to teachers in college A and B after a full staff meeting pre-merger. The questionnaire was designed to capture specific data which reflected the views of teachers regarding the management of change in the college and the impact of the merger in particular. The questionnaire was also used to capture data on teaching experience, gender and other variables likely to impact on teachers’ attitude and response to change. The views of teachers about their experience of managing change within the learning environment were equally important and were included in the questionnaire.

Questionnaires were considered as the most efficient and time-saving method to reach a wider audience (Hillier and Jameson 2003; Wilson 2009; Cohen et al 2011). This is particularly important in this study because participants were based on different campuses. The questionnaire included mostly closed questions to make it manageable to analyse but there were some open questions that gave respondents the opportunity to share their views and rate their preferences. All attempts were made to avoid emotive questions (Bell 2010), particularly those focusing on staff morale by emphasising the acquisition of change management skills more and how teachers responded to the merger. There was

more emphasis on the following themes which were identified in the literature: years of teaching experience (this was particularly relevant because the literature (Lieberman and Miller 1990) had indicated that teachers' attitude to change is intrinsically linked to their teaching experience. Other questions focused on the ability of teachers to make sense of the change process, managerial or leadership position, attitude and involvement in the change management process and professional development and experience of managing change (Fullan 2003; 2007; Geribo 2011).

### **3.12. Limitations to Questionnaires**

Although using questionnaires in this study had an advantage of reaching multiple respondents, it has some disadvantages. From an ethical perspective, the questionnaires have been seen as an intrusion into the lives of respondents (Cohen et al 2011). However, the issue of intrusion was addressed by informing all participants that it was a voluntary process which required their consent (BERA 2009) and voluntary participation (See section 3.20 on research ethics). Another limitation to using a questionnaire in this study is the fact that participants may not have presented their real views (Sauders et al 2003) on the merger or their involvement in the change process especially if they had been directly responsible for implementing change without having the necessary skills. Given the subjective nature of the topic, questionnaires would be inadequate in measuring opinions, values, attitudes or beliefs. This issue, however, was further explored during the interview process by asking questions which allowed respondents to describe in their own words, their experiences and specific incidents that impacted on them during the merger process. A further drawback of using questionnaire is fact that participants may not understand some of the questions. This problem was encountered in this study but it was addressed during the piloting process before the real survey (see section 3.14 on piloting research instruments).

### **3.13 Interviews**

Due to the subjective and controversial nature of this study and the difficulties of measuring change, interviews were also used to elicit information from six respondents who had already completed the questionnaire. The interview questions were piloted with three volunteers. The respondents were selected based on convenience but included teachers from both campuses of the merged institution. All interviews were conducted on a one to one basis. Four interviews were conducted by a colleague while I conducted two (see section 3.20 on research ethics). Interviews are particularly useful when investigating

a phenomenon and the people interviewed have experienced it. I was particularly keen to interview individuals who were in a position to describe their own unique experiences of the merger in order to develop a case study which presents a comprehensive picture of the merger (Creswell 2007). A specific consent 'agreement' form (appendix 2) was developed in order to gain approval from participants (BERA 2009). Participants were also provided with detailed information about the purpose of the study, and how the final report will be disseminated (appendix 1). This highlights the intrinsic aspect of the qualitative component used in this study and reinforces the fact that human subjects play an essential role in research rather than treating them as something abstract in the data that can be manipulated (Cohen et al 2010).

Interview is one of the most useful methods of collecting data for a case study because of the emphasis on humans as the main source of information. The interview created a forum for investigating the research questions and for developing a range of answers (Hartas 2010). Gray (2009) classified interviews as follows: structured, semi-structured, non-directive, focused interview and informal conversational interview. For the purpose of this study, a structured interview was used. Interviews have also been deemed suitable because the interview creates an opportunity to understand the lived experience and views of participants. In response to the questions, the respondents may need to comment on power structures and leadership styles and how these impact on their ability to manage and cope with change, which can be very sensitive issues. I took all these factors into consideration when phrasing the questions in order to gather as much information as possible.

Interviews have some advantages over other research tools. The interview creates an opportunity to develop a discourse over a wide range of issues compared to observation (Silverman 2010; Denscombe 2010). Compared to questionnaires, interviews provide a range of answers from participants and the researcher is able to clarify the meaning of any term used during the interview which the participants may not have understood.

Although the interview has a lot of advantages when compared to observation and questionnaires, it can lead to bias if the researcher influences the interviewee and the data generated. This raises questions relating to the validity or credibility of data. With regard to the current study, I was able to avoid this by remaining transparent and 'bracketing' (Cohen et al 2011) my own experience or views on how teachers cope with, and respond to educational change. Due to the subjective and emotive nature of the study, participants may not be willing to give accurate or truthful answers to questions asked.



Another major drawback of interviews is the fact that they can be time consuming both in planning and transcribing of data. This was overcome by conducting a smaller number of interviews given that data from questionnaires from a larger sample size were used to corroborate the results.

Six structured interviews were conducted with teachers based on both campuses. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. Four of the respondents were based at college A and two at college B. To avoid any bias as a result of my own experience with change management, another colleague conducted four interviews and the transcripts were shared with respondents to ensure that they were a true account of their stories. Appendix 6 shows the transcript from one of the interviews. The interview topics focused on:

1. Teachers' teaching experience and whether they held any management responsibility which may have included change management.
2. How they were prepared for the merger
3. Whether they considered themselves as change agents
4. Whether change management should be incorporated into their professional development, given the rapid rate of change in the sector.

### **3.14. Documentary analysis**

Several policy and consultation documents were used to complement interview and survey data and provide multiple perspectives on the study (Hartas 2010). The third source of data, as will be evident in this study, were documents obtained from other sources and include the following: the initial merger consultation documents and due diligence processes, reports from the Learning and Skills Network (LRN), Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and Business Innovation and Skills (BIS). CPD records of teachers were also verified to ascertain whether they included any training on change management or leadership skills. Documentary analysis is particularly useful when used in conjunction with interviews and might form part of a case study (Coleman 2007). In the current study, documentary evidence provided an opportunity to corroborate interview and questionnaire data on teachers' previous training in the area of change management and whether this had prepared them for the merger.

### **3.15 Quantitative Data Analysis**

In order to gain thorough insight into ‘lived experiences’ of teachers, the following statistical analyses were performed:

- Frequency tables showing percentage of relevant variables including gender, teaching qualification, position and teaching experience.

Descriptive statistics to calculate:

- The correlation analysis to ascertain the relationship between key variables
- Chi-Square test to establish and test the relationship between two or more variables.

Qualitative data explored the feelings and experiences of individual respondents and how they were prepared to cope with the change. The analysis of qualitative data was done in stages. Firstly, interview scripts were read several times in order to identify repeated patterns and meanings captured in the data. There was a lot of emphasis on the language and meaning of the experiences disclosed by respondents. Secondly, codes were used to identify key words before each set of data was categorised and grouped under separate themes (Braun and Clarke 2013). The data analysis process is explained in the next session.

### **3.16 Qualitative Data Analysis: The coding process**

The coding process created an opportunity to ascertain the relevance of the data obtained to the research questions (Braun and Clarke 2013; Saldana 2008). The interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed in order to gain more insight into teachers’ perceptions of their roles in managing change and the impact of the merger.

The coding process also created a platform for the researcher to become immersed in the data (Mills, Durepos and Wiebe 2010; Ryan 2006) and to identify repeated patterns and meanings captured in the data.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) identified three types of coding: Axial coding, open coding and selective coding. Axial coding process involves relating categories and properties to each other. Open coding process involves identifying, categorising and describing the phenomena found in the text. The objective is to identify distinctive categories which will then form the basis of the analysis. With selective coding the goal is to identify a core category while at the same time, establishing and relating other categories to the core one. Open coding was applied in this study and it was quite useful in translating the questions and responses from respondents.

Particular emphasis was placed on the language and meanings of the experiences shared by respondents (Cohen et al 2009). Even though the experience was unique to each respondent, they seemed to have similar concerns about the concept of change as it applies to the FE sector. They also raised similar concerns about how the merger was conducted. The words respondents used to describe their experiences were similar, and were instrumental in the generation of relevant themes.

In line with the framework offered in Braun and Clarke (2013) the coding process as used in this study involved a series of steps. The first stage in the process was to decide on the codes and categories to use. This involved a careful analysis of each line in the transcript using descriptive codes. The next stage in the coding process was to decide whether to code the frequency of words or themes. In this study, this process was used to identify recurrent patterns or themes by checking the frequency of the words in the transcript. The experiences of individual respondents were analysed in order to evaluate how individual teachers relived their experiences of the merger and how they were prepared to cope with this particular change. The categories of data were then compiled under separate headings in order to group together those that were relevant (Braun and Clarke 2013). During the coding stage, it became apparent that there was more data on general attitude to change and lack of knowledge of change management than on the merger itself. This in itself is a crucial issue in this study. It meant that respondents were contacted again to elaborate more on how the merger impacted on them and their own contributions, if any, during the process. As a result of the second contact with respondents, they revealed their concerns about the lack of coordination, organisation and poor communication as some of the issues that they encountered during the merger. The coding process is detailed in Appendix 6.

An inductive approach was adopted after a careful examination and comparison of data because the themes and categories that emerged were grounded in the stories and views of respondents (Zang and Wildermuth 2005; Gale et al 2013; Mills, Direpos and Wiebe 2010). The themes which emerged from the data are discussed in chapter 5.

### **3.17 Triangulation Strategies**

In order to strengthen the validity of the data (Wilson 2009; Hartas 2010), this study adopted both data and methodical triangulation (Guion et al 2011).

Data was obtained from different sources and include both qualitative and quantitative data. The objective was to test for consistency rather than attempting to achieve the same

results (Patton 2002; Rocco et al 2003). Whereas data triangulation involves the use of multiple sources to obtain information, methodical triangulation involves using different qualitative and quantitative methods to carry out the analysis (Guion et al 2011). All data sources were anonymised, the similarities and differences from questionnaires and documentary analysis (CPD records) were analysed. The results and data that emerged from the questionnaire created an opportunity to develop a more holistic view by comparing the responses of teachers, and analysing other variables likely to impact on their preparedness and attitude to change. These results were then linked to the structured interviews. The data obtained from teachers' CPD records were used to corroborate the responses from the interview and questionnaires. The convergence approach (Ade-Ojo 2011) adopted, ensured that both the qualitative and quantitative components reduced bias and validated the data (Wilson 2009).

### **3.18 Validity**

Ensuring the validity of data is essential due to the subjective nature of this study. The perceptions of respondents can lead to bias. This issue however, can be addressed by ensuring that a particular data collection technique measures what it intends to measure and also by making sure that the data collected demonstrated honesty, depth, and richness (Cohen et al 2010). The method of sampling, appropriate instrumentation and analysis of statistical data can improve the validity of data and also addresses ethical issues in research (Howe and Moses 1999). The results and data obtained from the questionnaire were used to prepare structured interviews elaborating on the following themes: teachers' description of their feelings or perception of the merger; description of their roles and experience of managing change and specific training that might have prepared them for change. Combining two or more data collection methods greatly reduces the uncertainty in interpreting data (Gray 2009). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argued that using different methods for triangulation is potentially the most powerful approach, since the bias of methods of each paradigm could be counter-balanced by methods from the other.

### **3.19 The Sample**

Using a case study approach meant that this study had to be conducted within a localised boundary with time constraints (Bassegy 1999). The sample was drawn from College A and College B and was representative of the population for the study because they displayed similar attributes. I decided to use both convenience and purposeful sampling which are both non-probability sampling and are compatible with the case study

methodology (Cohen et al 2011; Silverman 2010). As it is usually the case with convenience sampling, participants happen to be on site which made it easier to gain access. (Cohen et al 2010). Participants who took part in the initial survey included both experienced teachers with management responsibilities and novice teachers. Themes emerging from the survey were then used to structure the interview questions.

Purposeful sampling was used after the initial survey to ensure a good mix of participants who had both management and leadership responsibilities at both colleges, and were willing to open up about their experiences of coping with change and the merger in particular. This method of sampling provided the opportunity to use previous knowledge to choose respondents. Four teachers from College A and two teachers from College B took part in the interview. The rationale for not relying solely on convenience sampling was to avoid selectivity bias whereby the attributes of individuals are unequally distributed (Hartas 2010).

In terms of the survey sample, the intention was to engage 100 participants. However, the response rate for the survey was 40% and was much lower than originally intended. Despite the low response rate, however, it seems to have met two conditions of sufficiency and proximity to average, and the adequacy of the number for conducting a thorough analysis (Punch 2003). Based on the above, therefore, the response rate of forty was utilised in this study because, in the first place, it has surpassed the recommended response rate of 34% (Punch 2003) and secondly, because it offers a sufficient number for patterns to emerge and for the patterns to be subjected to rigorous exploration and analysis.

### **3.20 Ethical Considerations**

Two ethical issues were of significance in this study. Firstly, it was important to reassure participants that the data they provided will be anonymous and confidential. Intrusive and sensitive questions were kept to a minimum by focusing more on knowledge and acquisition of change management skills.

Secondly, participants had to be informed of their right to partake or withdraw from the study at any time (BERA 2011; Howe and Moses 1999). A signed agreement on a written informed consent document (Appendix 2) stating the purpose of the study was issued to all participants. Management was also informed about the purpose of the study. This is in accordance with the standards set out by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

The merged colleges where this study took place had undergone significant changes within a short period of time. A study on the management of change may have been perceived as a threat by management because of the likelihood of discussing the morale of teachers. Permission was sought from key 'gate keepers' (Silverman 2010) in the college about the purpose of the study and that the interest and identity of the college will be protected (BERA 2009). The college agreed to the research on condition that the survey was not conducted online because it was, at that point in time considering conducting its own study on change management. They did however agree that questionnaires could be issued to individual teachers who were keen to take part in this study.

### **3.21 My Role as an Insider Researcher**

Given that this study was conducted within my previous work place, there is a potential for me to emerge as an insider researcher. Costley (2010) describes an insider researcher as someone conducting a study within their own practice or a researcher who is part of the population of which they are also members. This implies that the researcher shares similar experience or identity as the population (Dwyer and Buckle 2009). With regard to my own position as an insider researcher, I had previously experienced unsuccessful change initiatives in College A and the merger as the participants. This could have placed undue influence on participants during the data collection stage. Also, my role as an insider researcher could have led to a potential conflict of roles, interests and issues of power and risks (Creswell 2007) particularly from colleagues or senior managers who may have perceived my role as a researcher as an 'outsider' (TLRP 2015). I was familiar with the culture and power structures of college A. This meant that I had access to information and insight on staff training, the due diligence process and other documents relating to the merger which may not have been easily accessible to an outsider researcher. From the outset I ensured that specific ethical boundaries were established (Floyd and Arthur 2012) whilst also remaining objective during the data collection and analysis phase (Unluer 2012).

Although being an insider researcher has some perceived advantages, there are drawbacks particularly if the researcher is unable to 'bracket out' (Crotty 1998) their own emotions and experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. This could lead to bias and loss of objectivity (Unluer 2012) particularly if the participants were not truthful about their

experiences of the merger. Similarly, my own experience of managing change in the same organisation could have influenced respondents' perception of change.

To overcome these issues, some preventative strategies were put in place. Firstly, I ensured that all interviews conducted in College A were carried out by another colleague while I conducted the interviews in College B where I had limited knowledge about the structure, politics or culture and perceived my role as an 'outsider' (Unluer 2012). Secondly, by triangulating the data from different sources I was able to obtain a balanced view of the data obtained from interviews, surveys and documentary analysis. Thirdly, participants were also encouraged to check the interview transcripts to ascertain whether it was a true reflection of their account about the merger.

### **3.22 Piloting the Research Instruments**

A pilot of the research instruments was carried out to test the research instruments such as questionnaires in order to assess their feasibility for the study and to identify specific questions that required improvements before a full-scale survey in both campuses. A covering letter explaining the theme and objectives of the study was attached to each questionnaire. The covering letter also guaranteed the anonymity of participants and their right to withdraw from the process (see Appendix 2). Questionnaires were disseminated to ten teachers at different colleges who have similar experiences of a merger in order to verify whether the questions and instructions were coherent and easy to comprehend. The duration for completing the questionnaire was also considered: this provided an opportunity to remove any item unlikely to yield useful data (Bell 2010). During the pilot phase, two questions on teachers' involvement in change management were not very clear according to the participants. They wanted some clarity on the specific type of change highlighted in the questionnaire. They felt that this particular question was vague as it did not specify the type of educational change. The use of the term 'change agent' in the questionnaire also required clarity. As a result of the pilot, the questionnaire was then amended to clarify the type of change and a footnote explaining the meaning and the role of a change agent was also included. This process was concluded when participants felt that the questionnaire was 'fit for purpose'.

### **3.23 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have presented the two dominant research paradigms. The chapter also highlighted the limitations of each paradigm and elaborated on the use of case study as the chosen approach for the study. I also examined and justified my reasons for adopting

a mixed methods approach because of the subjective and complex nature of the topic which require both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The subjective nature of the topic demands the use of some positivist research tools and data analysis using statistical tools such as SPSS to analyse and compare key variables. The triangulation methods discussed in this chapter provides the opportunity to verify the validity of data due to the emotive nature of coping and responding to change. The chapter has also considered the ethical issues relating to this study and their likely impact on the study. The next chapter focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data generated through the instruments.



## CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Introduction

‘If a healthy respect for and mastery of the change process does not become a priority, even well-intentioned change initiatives will continue to create havoc among those who are in the firing line. Careful attention to a small number of key details during the change process can result in the experience of success, new commitments, and the excitement and self-satisfaction of accomplishing something that is important’. (Fullan 2001: 5)

The above quotation emphasizes the importance of managing the change process efficiently in order to achieve the desired results, whilst minimizing those negative factors usually associated with change. One of those negative factors often linked to organizational change is the non-involvement of people usually affected by change during the planning process. The literature (Fullan 2004; 2007) emphasizes the lack of support and relevant professional development and training in the management of change as a primary source of discontentment particularly for those teachers who are keen to take part in the change process (Kennedy 1996). This study has been conducted in an attempt to explore the preparedness of teachers in managing and coping with educational change, with particular reference to a merger between two FE colleges. The previous chapters explored the existing literature on the role of teachers in managing educational change and how change impacts on them and then outlined the methodology for data collection for this research study. This chapter presents an analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data obtained during the initial survey, interviews and documentary analysis. Different instruments such as questionnaires, interviews and documentary evidence were used as part of the data collection process. The initial survey included a sample of 100 teachers from both colleges A and B with a 40% response rate. The participants completed a questionnaire which included open, close and rating questions. Interviews were also conducted with six teachers who provided detailed insights about the merger and how it impacted on both their personal and professional lives. The intention from the onset of this study was to disseminate the questionnaire to 100 out of 140 teachers in the college where the study was conducted but so many staff were suddenly made redundant even though they had been reassured prior to the merger that there would be no redundancies. The sudden redundancies in itself signifies a crucial point in this study of how change is managed in the college and the precarious environment in which teachers are expected are to work.

The sudden redundancy of teachers led to a response rate of 40%. Some writers (Kaplowitz, Hadlock and Levine 2004) have suggested what could be classified as an

acceptable response rate but there is no consensus (Punch 2003). However two conditions, sufficiency and proximity to average have to be met to justify the response rate. According to Punch (2003), the response rate must be adequate to ensure thorough data analysis. Nutty (2008) suggested that response rates should be between 25% and 30% based on the comparative studies he cited even though these studies were carried out in the context of teaching evaluation. Given that the response rate of 40% was achieved, I am confident that I will be able to gain sufficient depth of teachers' views of the merger process and how they were prepared to cope with such a major change. To avoid any bias due to the reduced response rate, data from other sources will be triangulated to strengthen the validity of the enquiry.

The chapter starts with the quantitative analysis of demographic data obtained from the survey. It then goes on to discuss the impact of the merger, how teachers perceived their role in educational change, their views on teachers' role as change agents and whether change management training should be incorporated into their professional development. A section of the chapter will also focus on the qualitative data.

## **4.2. Piloting the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was initially piloted with ten teachers to ensure it was 'fit for purpose', including the duration for completion. This process created an opportunity to remove any item that was unlikely to yield useful data (Bell 2010).

During the pilot phase, two questions on teachers' involvement in change management were not very clear according to the participants. They wanted clarity on the specific type of change to which one of the questions referred. They felt that the question was vague, as it did not specify the type of educational change. This was later amended to include change involving curriculum, teaching strategy and policy changes within their departments. (A detail explanation of the piloting process is discussed in section 3.22).

### **4.2.1 The Questionnaire: structure and content**

Questionnaires were considered to be the most efficient and time-saving method for this study because it provided an opportunity to reach a wider audience simultaneously (Hillier and Jameson 2003). The questionnaire included mostly closed questions to make it manageable to analyse (Kelly 2003). Some open questions were also included to give respondents the opportunity to share their views and rate their preferences.

**The main themes of the questionnaire were as follows:**

1. Generic information including gender, years in the teaching profession, role or function in the college and specific teaching qualifications held by teachers. Although not a central factor, it was important to analyse demographic data because they could impact on the general attitude to change (Overbay, Patterson and Grable 2009; Hargreaves 2005; Huberman 1989). These variables also provided an opportunity to establish whether or not more experienced teachers who had previously managed change had gained experience that enabled them to cope with the merger compared to those without any change management experience and in particular, novice teachers who are usually underdeveloped or prepared to cope with the challenges of the job role (Anhow 2008).
2. Teachers' prior knowledge and involvement in managing change. This question was crucial to the study because it provided an opportunity to evaluate whether the college had previously adopted an inclusive approach to change management by involving teachers before and during the implementation process.
3. Teachers' attitudes to change with particular reference to the merger. The objective was to evaluate how they perceived the impact of the merger on their job roles and whether it created an opportunity for career development. This line of enquiry was also important as it provided an opportunity to assess the level of preparation prior to the merger from the perspective of the teachers.
4. Whether previous professional development courses involved any aspect of change management and how this may have enhanced their knowledge and preparedness for change. The objective was to establish whether this strategy may have been adopted by the college to prepare teachers for change.
5. How change management can be incorporated into the professional development of teachers. The purpose of this question was to evaluate whether exposing teachers to such training will impact on their perception of change since they are already aware that change is an intrinsic aspect of their job.
6. How teachers view their role as change agents and whether specific skills and knowledge are required in order to carry out this crucial role.

The literature review discussed in chapter 2 identified various themes which have been captured in the research questions highlighted in Table 4.1. These themes were also incorporated into the discussion of data in order to develop a better understanding of teachers' perception and knowledge of change management.

#### **4.2.2. Data Collection Process: Research Questions and Themes**

Table 4.1 shows the relationship between the research questions and the themes emerging from the literature. There are specific commonalities between the research questions and the themes in the literature. The literature seemed to draw attention to the fact that teachers are working in a constantly evolving environment which places immense pressure on them as a result of the challenges usually associated with change. This was therefore reflected in the research questions. Also, they both identify the lack of power and influence of teachers to partake in change initiatives that affect them. In essence, teachers seem to have no voice in decision making at organisational level. Finally, they also draw attention to the expansive role of teachers but without the relevant support to fulfil the demands of such roles.

**Table 4.1: The relationships between themes and research questions**

<b>Research questions</b>	<b>Emerging Themes from the literature</b>
<p>How well are teachers prepared by the management of their college to cope with, and manage educational change during a merger?</p>	<p>Change is inevitable within the educational setting as a result of internal and external pressures (Kinchington 2006; Zembylas and Barker 2007; Edward et al; Hillier 2006; Shadwick 2007; Fullan and Hargreaves 2005; Fullan 2003; 2007). Teachers usually have no say in strategic decisions which impacts on them but they are responsible for implementing changes which are usually imposed (Sikes 1992). Most of these changes have been known to lead to stress and ill health (Kyriacou 2001, Kyriacou and Sutcliffe 1978; Wilson and Hall 2002; Soleimani 2012).</p>
<p>What was the impact of the merger on teachers in the college?</p>	<p>Change in the sector tend to be top-down (Mather and Seifert 2014; Mather and Worrall 2005; Huberman 1989; Jameson 2008) which sometimes leads to conflicting values between managers and teachers (Elliot et al 2006). There is an assumption that teachers belong to the lower level of the organisational structure (Brehony 2005; Colley et al 2007; Terry 2013; Misra 2011), and therefore have little or no authority. Teachers are expected to adapt and cope with a whole range of personal and organisational factors usually associated with change (Hargreaves and Fullan 2005; Berlach 2010; Branston 2010 Mather and Seifert 2014).</p>
<p>Should change management skills be incorporated as part of the professional development of teachers in the FE sector?</p>	<p>Developing change management knowledge and skills is a crucial part of teacher development (Fullan 2003; 2007; Inos and Quigley 1995; Zembylas and Barker 2007; Caena 2011; Lane et al 2003; Donaldson 2010).</p>
<p>Are teachers more likely to embrace change if they perceive change as an intrinsic feature of their role as change agents?</p>	<p>Teachers are described as change agents in the literature (Fullan 2003; 2007; Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler 2005; Lukacs and Galluzzo 2011). Their duties and responsibilities have expanded to include the management of change but teachers assume that these are their normal duties (Gleeson and Shain 1999; Fairman and McKenzie 2012). Very often they learn on the job. Change agents are usually equipped with specific knowledge and skills (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992). However, teachers are described loosely as change agents. They are change agents</p>

	<p>without change management skills. It is important for leadership and management to engage and recognise the crucial role of teachers as agents of change and engage them during the change process in order to minimise or eradicate teacher resistance to change (Leithwood 2000; Bush 2007; Geribo 2011; Fullan 2007; Hargreaves 2004).</p>
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### 4.2.3 Conducting the Interviews

Data obtained through the survey highlighted the direction for further investigation into issues identified during the interviews. The interviews provided an opportunity to gain insight into teachers' perception of change management, and most importantly, to capture their feelings, emotions and experiences: the kind of data that are described by Cohen et al (2009; 2011) as their 'lived experiences'. The main reasons for conducting the interviews were to ensure the validity of data obtained during the preliminary stage, to derive further in-depth understanding of their experiences from specific probing of responses and also to provide an opportunity to triangulate the data (Bryman and Bell 2011).

Six interviews were conducted with teachers. Each respondent was allocated a number. The interview questions explored some of the themes identified during in the initial survey but into greater depth. As discussed above, the literature review informed the design of the research questions, which were closely aligned to themes emerging from the literature. Two of the participants interviewed hold middle management positions while the other four had course leadership responsibilities in addition to their normal teaching duties.

The sampling approach used for the interview was similar to that used during the survey. The choice of interview participants was based on responses from the initial survey, particularly from those who had volunteered after the initial survey. Compared to the initial survey, the sample size for the interview was much smaller. This process did, however, address any gender imbalance, status and job roles of participants, since these variables were likely to influence their response. The perception of the teachers recorded in the interviews helps to address the main research and subsidiary questions. The presentation of data, including extracts from the interviews, is presented as part of the interpretive analysis, which enabled the participants to narrate their own individual account of how change had been managed with particular reference to the merger.

#### **4.2.4 Documentary Evidence**

A study of this nature relies to some extent on other sources of published documents. These sources also provided an opportunity to triangulate the data. Data obtained through these sources include research reports commissioned by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Documents relating to the merger from the initial proposal to implementation were also used. The CPD records of teachers were useful in supporting the stories told by respondents regarding the lack of change management and leadership skills for teachers in the college.

#### **4.2.5 Data presentation and Analysis**

The interviews were transcribed in order to become more immersed in the data (Ryan 2006) and to gain more insight into teachers' perceptions of their roles in managing change. Each transcript was read several times in order to develop a better understanding and reflect on the teacher's 'voice'. In developing the case study, SPSS software was used to ascertain the distribution patterns of key variables and to conduct descriptive statistics and chi-square analysis. The literature on change management indicates that some variables such as gender and teaching experience can impact on teachers' attitude to change. This in effect means that I would be exploring the level of significance amongst these variables. The preferred instrument for this is the SPSS chi square test. I have opted for this because it has been established as one of the more effective tools for analysing categorical data in order to ascertain whether the relationship between two categorical variables is significant. The results can then be used to infer whether similar variables found in the sample can be observed in the population as a whole (Marsh and Elliot 2008) as indicated in the literature (Hargreaves 2005). Although a correlation analysis was considered as an alternative test, it is not particularly suitable for categorical data which is required for this study.

The content of the qualitative data was analysed using codes and then grouped under the relevant themes (Appendix 6). A detail explanation of the coding process will be explained in the next chapter on emerging themes.

### 4.3 Profile of Participants

#### Gender

As mentioned earlier, 40 teachers completed the questionnaire. Table 4.2 shows the gender distribution with 24 (60%) female teachers and 16 (40%) male teachers. This mostly reflects the gender disparity in further education, with the number of female teachers significantly higher than their male counterparts (Commission for the European Communities 2007; Mctavish and Miller 2009). Gender and experience have been included as key variables because they are both believed to impact on teacher's attitude to change (Hargreaves 2004; Tang 2011).

**Table 4.2: Gender of Participants**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	24	60.0	60.0	60.0
Valid Male	16	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

#### 4.4 Job Roles, Titles and Teaching Experience

Table 4.3 shows the roles of participants. Most of the participants have teaching as well as management or course leadership responsibilities. 20 (50%) of the participants have a lecturing as well as course leadership role. Three (8%) of the participants are team leaders. 10 (25%) of the participants are curriculum coordinators and seven (18%) are curriculum managers. These roles may have involved change management, which they may or may not have been prepared to undertake. The expanding role of teachers without relevant support and training could mean that most of them are given responsibilities for which they are not ready (Hall and Wilson 2002). This is partly responsible for the high rate of attrition among teachers (Dove 2004). Rouse (2001); Rouse and Florian (2012) also alludes to the fact that teachers are not sufficiently prepared and supported to work inclusively particularly during periods of change.

Readiness for change has been used in the context of change efficacy (Weiner 2009) and only achievable by involving and equipping those affected by change, gaining their commitment and ensuring they share the values and beliefs to engage in change.



**Table 4.3: Job Roles and Titles**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lecturer /Course Leader	20	50.0	50.0	50.0
Curriculum Team Leader	3	7.5	7.5	57.5
Curriculum Coordinator	10	25.0	25.0	82.5
Curriculum Manager	7	17.5	17.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

One of the key functions of management is to develop a vision, implement and manage change. If the participants have management responsibility and yet lack change management skills, this may well have impacted on their performance. As shown in the Table 4.4, 14 (93%) teachers had never had any form of change management training neither did they have any management responsibilities at the time of data collection. Only one (3%) admitted to having undergone a form of training on change management whilst also having management responsibilities. 21 (84%) teachers said they had management responsibilities but had never undergone any training in change management compared to four (16%) teachers who did not have any management responsibilities but had undergone training in change management which they did as part of their undergraduate or post graduate degrees. The result highlights the fact that most of the participants may have been given management responsibilities which included change management but without relevant skills. Change as a phenomenon can be unpredictable and in most cases presents some challenges both at professional and personal levels. The implication is that those without any training may have dealt with the emotional issues often associated with change without the support they needed. (Veen and Slegers 2006; Zembylas and Barker 2007).

**Table 4.4: Management responsibilities in relation to training**

			Any previous training on change management		Total
			No	Yes	
Management responsibilities apart from teaching	N	Count % within Management responsibilities apart from teaching	14 93.3%	1 6.7%	15 100.0%
	Y	Count % within Management responsibilities apart from teaching	21 84.0%	4 16.0%	25 100.0%
Total		Count % within Management responsibilities apart from teaching	35 87.5%	5 12.5%	40 100.0%

#### 4.5 Teaching Experience

Although the teaching experience of teachers was not central to the study, it was important to establish whether there was a link between teaching experience and specific roles in the college which may have included an opportunity to manage change. Another reason was to establish whether those teachers who were more experienced had undergone any change management training to prepare them for change when compared with less experienced teachers. As professionals, teachers go through various levels of proficiency which range from novice to expert, according to Berliner (1994). The objective here was to ascertain whether those who fell into the expert category had managed and coped better with change compare with others.

As shown in Table 4.5, 21 (53%) of the participants had over 10 years' experience, while eight (20%) had over 5-10 years 'experience. Similarly, eight (20%) of the participants had 3-5 years' experience. Only three (8%) of the participants had 1-3 three years' teaching experience. This means that over half of the sample population had over 10 years' teaching experience. Given the rapid rate of change within the FE sector, this group of teachers would have been affected by changes in the college for which they may not have been adequately prepared. Also, the evolution of teachers' roles (Boyd-Dimock and McGree 1995; Gleeson 2001) means that they would have taken on additional responsibilities which may have involved change management, but without relevant training. As leaders in the learning environment, teachers develop their vision beyond

their classroom and are keen to take on the responsibility to influence change (Lieberman, 1998; Sergiovanni 1987).

**Table 4.5: Teaching Experience**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1-3 years	3	7.5	7.5	7.5
3-5 years	8	20.0	20.0	27.5
5-10 years	8	20.0	20.0	47.5
10 years and above	21	52.5	52.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

#### **4.6 Teaching Qualifications**

Participants were asked to identify the type of teaching qualifications they held. The objective was to examine whether they may have been introduced to change management as part of their initial teacher education programme to enable them adjust to change in their working lives (Overbay, Patterson and Grable 2009).

Training in change management is an essential feature of other professional qualifications such as accountancy, engineering, project management and health care (Hes and Cranfield 2004). On a comparative basis, therefore, it was important to ascertain whether teachers had the same opportunity. Teacher education is more diverse in further education than it is in the primary and secondary sectors (Pring and Pollard 2011). The particular teaching course that a teacher in further education pursues depends on their practical experience or degree already gained. Teachers in the sector are expected to hold a formal teaching qualification relevant to the sector. However, the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) seems to be more popular compared to other qualifications. As shown in Table 4.6, 30 (75%) of the teachers hold a PGCE, while six (15%) hold a Cert Ed. Only one (3%) teacher holds a PTLLS qualification (Preparing to Teach in the Life Long Sector). Three (8%) teachers have a DTLLS qualification (Diploma to Teach in the Life Long Sector). This pattern was also repeated during the interviews with five out of the six participants confirming that they have a PGCE qualification.

All the qualifications mentioned above are quite intense, with a lot of emphasis on pedagogical issues relating to teaching. The survey revealed that none of the teaching qualifications mentioned above included any aspect of change management, even though change is an intrinsic part of a teacher's career (Bascia and Hargreaves 2000; Fullan

2007). This highlights the point made by Danielson (2007:14) that teaching is a ‘flat profession’ because teachers do not have the opportunity to exercise greater responsibility compared with other practitioners.

**Table 4.6: Teaching qualifications of participants**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
PGCE	30	75.0	75.0	75.0
Cert Ed	6	15.0	15.0	90.0
Valid PTLLS	1	2.5	2.5	92.5
DTLLS	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

#### 4.7 Teachers’ Attitudes to Change

It was important to examine teachers’ attitudes and readiness to cope with change because of the likely impact on the successful implementation of change (Iles and Cranfield 2004). The participants were asked to describe their attitudes to change as positive, negative or indifferent. From the result in Table 4.7, it seems that only six teachers (15%) had a positive attitude to change, whereas 21 (53%) of the teachers had a negative attitude to change. 13 (33%) of the teachers seemed to be indifferent to change. Quite a high number seemed to have expressed negativity about change and the implementation process which may be due to non-involvement during periods of change.

**Table 4.7: Teacher’s attitudes to change**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Positive	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
Valid Negative	21	52.5	52.5	67.5
Indifferent	13	32.5	32.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

In order to ascertain whether the negative attitudes reported by teachers in this study were linked to the number of years they had been in the profession, it was necessary to compare their attitudes to change with reference to the duration of their teaching experience. Table 4.8 shows that 11 participants with over ten years’ experience had a negative attitude to change compared with participants with less experience. The table also shows that the negative attitudes to change increase with teaching experience. This data has been included because it could impact on how participants relived their experience of the

merger. The result confirms evidence in the literature (Hargreaves 2005) that teachers' acceptance of change decreases with age or teacher life cycle. The teacher lifecycle describes the stage that the teacher has attained in their career. However, the chi-square test carried out on the data in Table 4.9 was insignificant, showing a result of 5.399, (*df*) 6,  $p=.494$ . This means that, in relation to this set of data, teaching experience did not influence teachers' attitude to change. This seems to suggest that those new to the profession may have a negative attitude to change. This tends to conflict with the findings in the literature that teacher life cycle influences their attitude to change.

**Table 4.8: Experience compared to Attitude to Change**

		Teacher attitude to change			Total
		Positive	Negative	Indifferent	
No. of years teaching	1-3 years	0	1	2	3
	3-5 years	1	4	3	8
	5-10 years	2	5	1	8
	10 years and above	3	11	7	21
Total		6	21	13	40

**Table 4.9: Chi-Square Test on Teaching Experience and Attitude to Change**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.399 <sup>a</sup>	6	.494
Likelihood Ratio	5.313	6	.504
N of Valid Cases	40		

#### 4.8 Gender and Attitude to Change

Evidence from the literature (Overbay, Patterson and Grable 2009) suggests that female teachers are more receptive to change than their male counterparts. This was the reason for including gender as one of the variables in the analysis. The results in table 4.10 confirm this to be the case although the difference in attitude between male and female teachers is minimal. The result shows that 12 female participants (30%) were more positive to change compared to their male counterparts. Five female participants (13%) had a negative attitude to change compared to four (10%) male and seven (18%) female teachers who were indifferent to change compared with three (8%) male. A chi-square test shown in table 4.11 indicates a *value of* .621, (*df*) 2,  $p= .733$ . This suggests that for

this small set of data, there, is no association between gender and attitude to change. This means that the positive attitude to change indicated by female teachers has only occurred by chance. This result conflicts with the findings of the literature (Hargreaves 2004) on the link between gender and attitude to change.

**Table 4.10: Gender and Attitude to Change**

		Teacher attitude to change			Total
		Positive	Negative	Indifferent	
Gender of the teacher	Female	12	5	7	24
	Male	9	4	3	16
Total		21	9	10	40

**Table 4.11: Chi-Square Test on Gender and Attitude to Change**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.621 <sup>a</sup>	2	.733
Likelihood Ratio	.620	2	.733
N of Valid Cases	40		

#### **4.9 Previous training on Change Management Compared to Teaching Experience**

Participants were asked whether they had any previous training in change management to prepare them for their roles. Table 4.12 shows that 35 (88%) participants had never had any training while five (12%) confirmed that they had. To further ascertain whether there was a link between participants' teaching experience and previous training on change management, another statistical test was carried out. The main objective was to assess whether those teachers with over 10 years' teaching experience may have been trained in change management. Table 4.13 shows that out of three participants with 1-3 years' teaching experience none had any previous knowledge of change management. Among the eight teachers with 3-5 years' experience, only one had previously received training on change management. Similarly only one teacher with 5-10 years' experience had been trained in change management. Even amongst those participants with over 10 years' experience, longevity didn't seem to make any significant difference, as only three had previous knowledge of change management. The chi-square test carried out on the data in table 4.14 was insignificant, showing a value of .490,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = .921$ . It can be

concluded that, in relation to this dataset, there is a no relationship between teachers' experience and change management training. The data gives an indication that the acquisition of change management skills may not have been considered as a priority in the teaching profession.

**Table 4.12: Teachers who have previously undergone change management training**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	35	87.5	87.5	87.5
Valid Yes	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Table 4.13: Teaching Experience in relation to training**

			Any previous training on change management		Total
			No	Yes	
No. of years teaching	1-3 years	Count % within No. of years teaching	3 100.0%	0 0.0%	3 100.0%
	3-5 years	Count % within No. of years teaching	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	8 100.0%
	5-10 years	Count % within No. of years teaching	7 87.5%	1 12.5%	8 100.0%
	10 years and above	Count % within No. of years teaching	18 85.7%	3 14.3%	21 100.0%
	Total	Count % within No. of years teaching	35 87.5%	5 12.5%	40 100.0%

**Table 4.14: Chi-square Test on teaching experience and change management training**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.490 <sup>a</sup>	3	.921
Likelihood Ratio	.860	3	.835
N of Valid Cases	40		

#### 4.10 Embedding change management as part of teacher development

The literature on change management advocates the importance of equipping teachers with change management skills (Fullan 2007; Greenhill 2011). The roles and responsibilities of teachers in further education vary from one institution to another but include to some extent, a managerial function. As part of their roles, teachers are now expected to plan, organise, manage and monitor and analyse data. Like most educational institutions, teachers in FE have become leaders or managers of department, course leaders, team leaders, curriculum managers and subject coordinators (Cedefop 2011). These roles are classified under the emergent leadership stage by the National College for School Leadership. These responsibilities are, in some cases, taken on without relevant training. In response to the question regarding teachers' perceptions about acquiring change management skills in order to prepare and cope with change effectively, Table 4.15 shows that 17 (43%) participants acknowledged that change management skills are vital and should be gained, six (15%) strongly agree that change management skills should be acquired. Nine (23%) of the participants disagreed that gaining change management skills would be beneficial to teachers. Eight (20%) strongly disagreed that gaining the skills would be useful. The results reveal a slightly higher number of participants (57.5%) who were in favour of developing their competence in managing change. The fact that over 50% of the respondents support the idea of incorporating change management into the teaching profession may be an indication that they are willing to engage more in the change process. This is likely to impact positively on their attitude to change if they felt that they were being supported and encouraged to partake in the change process. According to (Garrett 2003) ownership and voluntary involvement during periods of change inevitably creates a state of readiness.

**Table 4.15: The need to gain change management skills**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	17	42.5	42.5	42.5
strongly agree	6	15.0	15.0	57.5
Disagree	9	22.5	22.5	80.0
strongly disagree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	



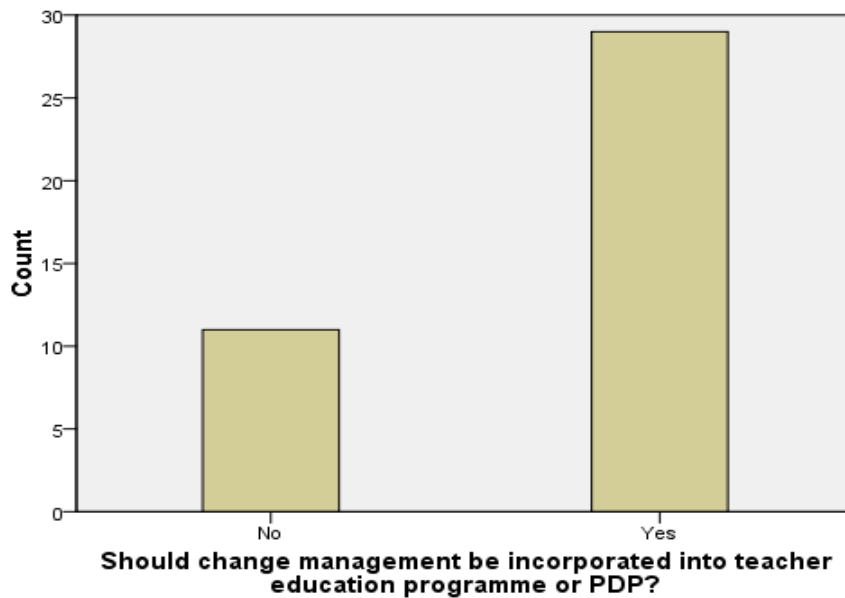
In response to the question whether it was essential for teachers to have knowledge of change management and whether it would enable them prepare better for change, 31 (76%) teachers said yes and nine (24%) said no (Table 4.16). As professionals whose jobs clearly incorporate change, it can be concluded that, in relation to this group of participants, teachers themselves believe that gaining change management skills would optimize their knowledge of change and would ultimately favour a more positive attitude to change. If teachers identified change management training as essential to their professional development, surely, this may need to be considered by the college as long as the senior leadership team perceive such training is intrinsically linked to a teacher's job. All professionals have a responsibility and right to acquire relevant CPD (Coffield 2008).

**Table 4.16: Teachers perceptions about gaining change management skills**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	9	22.5	22.5	22.5
Valid Yes	31	77.5	77.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

#### **4.11 How Training should be provided**

Teachers work in a constantly changing environment and as a result, have to be adequately prepared to cope with change (Darling-Hammond and Bransford 2012, Edward et al 2007). It was important to establish how teachers felt about the prospect of introducing change management as part of their training or ongoing professional development. The participants were asked whether teacher education programmes or CPD programmes should include some form of change management and whether this was likely to change their attitude and commitment to change. In response to this question, 29 (73%) of the participants felt it was important to incorporate change management into their professional development, while 11 (27%) rejected the idea. Those who responded positively felt they would be better prepared with the right skills and mindset, that change is an intrinsic feature of their role. The results are shown in figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1: Incorporating Change Management into the Teaching Profession**

### **Teachers' Perspectives**

There were two alternatives for the provision of change management training: to include as part of teacher education programme or as part of the CPD programme. There are two main reasons for suggesting teacher education programmes as an appropriate avenue to provide teachers with change management skills. Firstly, the period of initial teacher education and induction according to Donaldson (2010), sets the pace of 'professional values and expertise of those who will be our teachers and educational leaders'. Secondly, documentary evidence (teacher education programmes) shows that relevant policy changes in education are introduced to trainee teachers during their training. It seems rational to embed change management skills in such forums. This option however, is beyond the scope of this study. The alternative route to equip teachers with change management skills is through their continuous professional development programme (CPD) or Professional Development Programme (PDP). CPD has been used here to encapsulate any learning experience or planned activities which can be beneficial to the individual or school (Day 1999). This means that the knowledge gained by the individual can enhance their teaching and management of the learning environment (Day and Sachs 2004) and also improve their commitment as change agents.

### **4.12 Preparing Teachers for Change in the College**

Although change is a key feature in education in general in the UK, it is far more prevalent in the post compulsory sector than in other sectors (Pring 2011). Teachers are usually at

the centre of educational change, and they are often affected depending on how change is implemented especially if they are not adequately prepared for change by their institutions. Non-involvement and poor preparation of teachers during change has been recognised as one of the reasons for negative response to change by teachers (Fullan and Hargreaves 1996; Zimmerman 2006). Such negative responses were also evident from the data obtained from participants. Teachers who are involved in initiating and implementing change tend to take ownership of the change process. Apart from the motivational impact, their involvement also enables them to reflect carefully on their role as change agents (Fullan 2007). In complete contrast, extricating teachers from the process can lead to low morale and emotional problems (Stewart 2003).

Participants were asked how they were prepared for change and the merger in particular. The objective was to establish the processes undertaken by the college to ensure the readiness for the merger. The initial survey revealed that teachers had attended a particular CPD training session regarding the merger. However, the training entitled 'change management' took place after the merger had been concluded and had very little impact at a time when teachers were feeling quite vulnerable.

In response to the question regarding teacher preparation for the merger, the data revealed in Figure 4.2 shows that 34 (85%) of the participants felt they were not prepared with regards to the provision of training in change management or how the merger could impact on them. They, however, confirmed that they attended two briefing sessions about the proposed change. Six (15%) of the participants felt that the briefing sessions they attended prior to the merger prepared them for change. They felt that the college had taken steps to inform them about the impending opportunity to increase provision if both colleges were merged. From their point of view, the briefing session had created an opportunity to find out more about the sector and the intense competition between colleges but they were not at that point in time aware of the impact of the merger on their jobs.

The second part of the question further examined the type of training and level of preparation the college provided. Some of the participants said that although it was classified as training on change management, from their perspective it was just another staff briefing session on how to adapt to change post-merger. The participants were further asked specifically whether they benefited from the training. Four of them said that the training enhanced their awareness of change and why they had to embrace it. They gave the following responses:

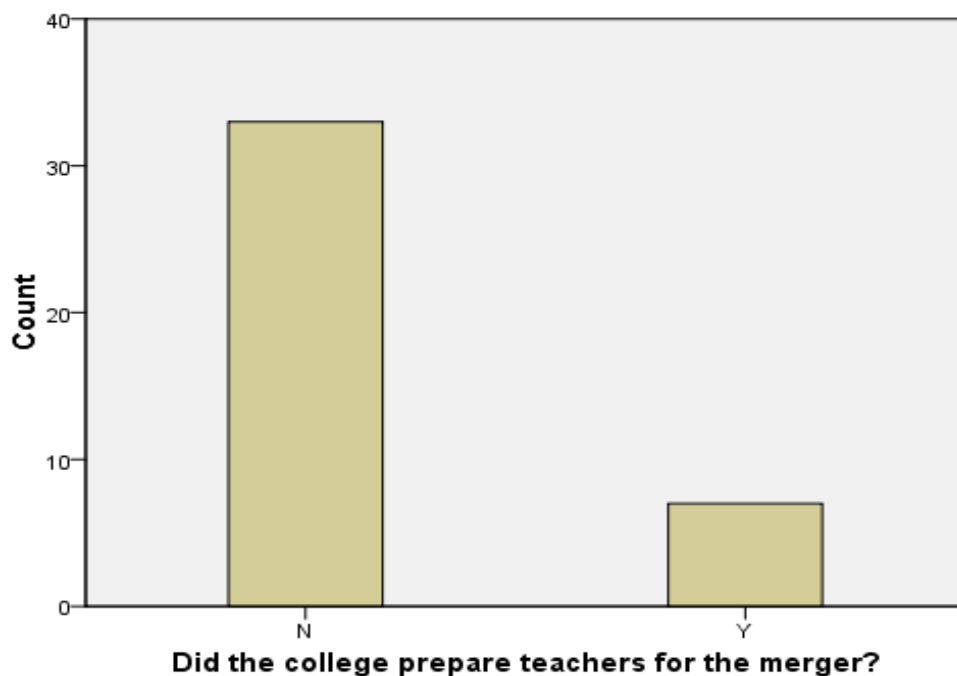
'The training made me sparkle '(7 participant, College B) - This was apparently the theme of the training.

‘I was informed about what is happening in other parts of the sector’  
(participant 21, college A)

‘It created awareness about the economic environment’ (Participant 2,  
college B)

‘It gave me some idea why I had to embrace change in my new role.’  
(Participant 15, College B)

If these comments were made prior to the merger, it could easily have been concluded that the college adopted an inclusive approach during the merger. However, it is evident that the training was specifically aimed at promoting a positive working environment post-merger.

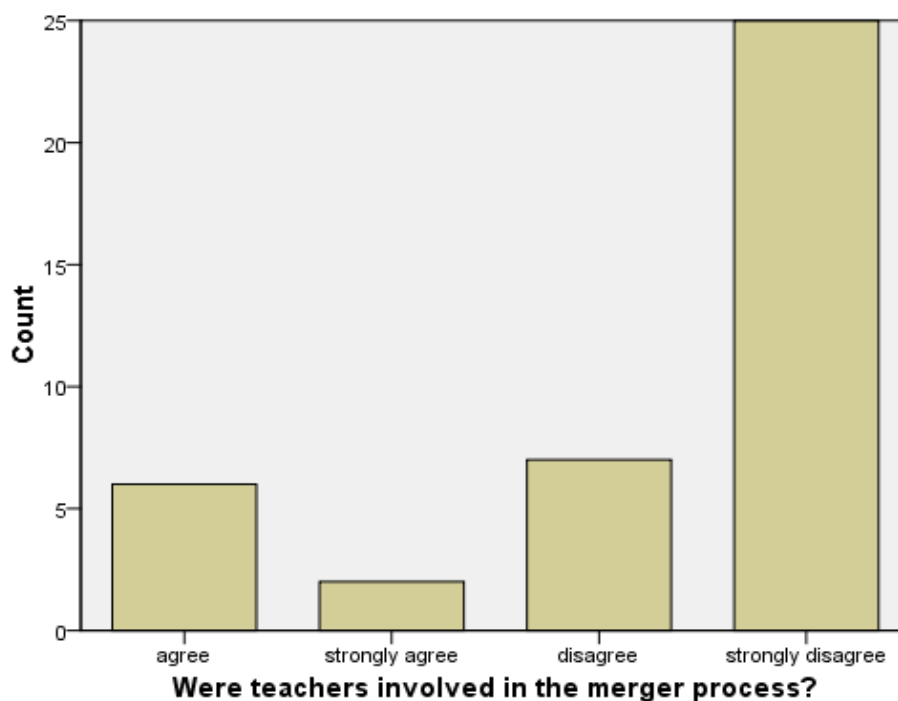


**Figure 4.2: Preparation of teachers for the merger: participants’ perception**

#### **4.13 The Role of Teachers During the merger**

As mentioned previously, the merger was a major change in the history of both colleges and it impacted on all key stakeholders. As it is usually the case during periods of change, people who are most likely to be affected by change are not usually involved in the decision making process (Boddy 2014). During the initial survey, participants were asked whether they had a role to play during the merger. In response to this question, Figure 4.3 shows that 25 (63%) participants strongly disagreed and three (18%) participants

disagreed that they had a role to play in the merger. Three (8%) participants strongly agreed that they had a role to play in the merger while a total of seven (17%) participants agreed that they had a role to play in the process. Overall, this result shows that only 25% of the participants felt that they had an input during the merger process.



**Figure 4.3: Teachers' involvement in the merger**

It seems that those who were involved in the merger are curriculum managers and coordinators. It could be assumed that they were required to identify the staffing needs for their departments. If this was the case, then this group of participants would have faced immense difficulties of having privileged confidential information which they could not divulge to their teams. This alone could have led to speculations, low morale and possibly, some animosity in their teams. This also highlights the political nature of such an environment. With regard to the actual involvement of these participants in the implementation of the merger, their input may have been limited considering the fact that they had confirmed that they had no previous knowledge of change management.

#### **4.14. Relationship between Teachers' Attitude to Change and how they perceived their involvement in the Merger**

The data was interrogated further to ascertain whether there was a link between teachers' attitude to change and how they felt about their involvement in the merger. Table 4.17 indicates a close link between the two variables. 12 (30%) participants with a negative

attitude to change disagreed that they were involved in the merger. This figure is quite high compared to those with a positive attitude to change who felt that they were involved in the merger. Nine (22%) of the participants who were indifferent to change also disagreed about their involvement in the merger. The result shows that even those who had a positive attitude to change did not feel that the college involved them during the merger process. This group of participants would have been motivated to drive change because they have accepted the fact that educational change is inevitable considering the nature of their jobs. They would have valued the opportunity to contribute to the strategic goals of the organisation. Although it was not feasible to engage all teachers in a strategic change such as a merger, inviting those who were keen to be part of the process would have shown that the college was keen to engage with teachers during periods of change because teachers understand the education setting and the needs of their learners better.

**Table 4.17: Teachers' attitude to change and involvement in the merger**

		teachers involvement in merger				Total
		agree	strongly agree	disagree	strongly disagree	
Teacher attitude to change	Positive	0	0	2	4	6
	Negative	4	2	3	12	21
	Indifferent	2	0	2	9	13
Total		6	2	7	25	40

#### **4.15 Teachers' desire for change management training compared to their attitude to change**

It was important to ascertain whether participants' attitude to change was closely linked to the desire to gain change management skills. The results in Table 4.18 indicate that 19 (48%) of the participants with a positive attitude to change were keen to gain change management skills. Six (15%) of the participants with a negative attitude to change were equally keen to gain change management skills. Even those six (15%) participants who were indifferent to educational change responded positively to the prospects of obtaining such management skills.

Overall the result suggests that a high percentage of the participants, even those with a negative or indifferent attitude to change were still interested in gaining relevant skills if given the opportunity. It could well be that those with a negative attitude to change and those who are indifferent have cultivated their attitude over the years as a result of the non-inclusive approach adopted in the college. This result could have an impact on the

professional development of teachers and may well influence their acceptance of change as crucial to their profession but only if support for such training is provided by the institution.

However, the chi-square test carried out on the data in Table 4.19 was insignificant showing a result of 2.827, (*df* 2,  $p = .243$ ). This shows that there was no relationship between teachers' attitude to change and their enthusiasm to gain change management skills.

**Table 4.18: Teachers' attitude to change compared to interest for change management training.**

		Teacher attitude to change			Total
		Positive	Negative	Indifferent	
Should teachers gain change management skills?	No	2	3	4	9
	Yes	19	6	6	31
Total		21	9	10	40

**Table 4.19: Chi-square test on teachers' attitude and training needs.**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.827 <sup>a</sup>	2	.243
Likelihood Ratio	4.134	2	.127
N of Valid Cases	40		

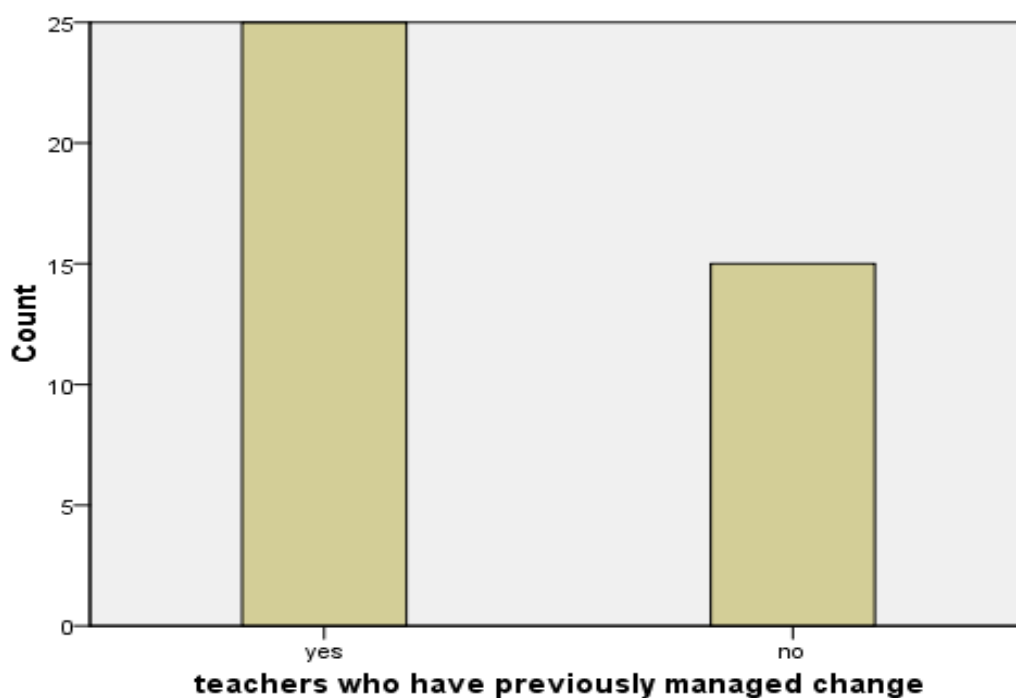
#### 4.16 Teachers' experience of managing change

The very nature of a teacher's job involves change. They have to embrace change as part of their profession and as one of the inclusive roles of teaching (Bascia and Hargreaves 2000). This means that teachers may actually be managing change without realizing that they are doing so (Kimble, Hildreth and Bourdon 2007).

As a result of the number of unsuccessful change programmes previously initiated in College A, it was important to identify the number of teachers who had previously managed change and, if so, whether they had undergone any training or used specific change management strategies or skills during the process.

Change agents require specific skills (Buchanan and huczynski 2010), which most teachers have not acquired, even though they voluntarily initiate and drive change within their learning environments. In response to this question, Figure 4.4 shows that 25 (63%)

of the participants confirmed that they had introduced change within their learning environment (Rahman 2012). Such changes may include the introduction of a new curriculum, programme or teaching methods. Figure 4.4 also shows that 15 (37%) of the participants said that they had never managed change in the past. For this group of respondents, they might have undertaken some responsibilities which involved managing change within their learning environment but without realising that they were doing so. This again emphasizes the fact that the demands and expectations of teachers have continued to grow over the last decade, making their jobs more complex (NFER 2012; Donaldson 2010). The implication is that some teachers may have undertaken responsibilities involving change management as part of their normal duties which in turn increases their work load and stress often associated with teaching. This, in fact is perceived as a major reason for the high rate of attrition and stress in the teaching profession (Kyriacou 2001, Kyriacou and Sutcliffe 1978; Wilson and Hall 2002).



**Figure 4.4: Previous Change management Experience**

#### **4.17 Teachers' Roles as Change Agents**

As one of the key stakeholders, teachers contribute to the implementation of change in their institutions (Campos 2005). One of the subsidiary questions in this study was to



establish whether teachers consider themselves as change agents. There are two main reasons for asking this question. Firstly, to ascertain whether those who had previously managed change utilized specific change management skills usually associated with change agents. Secondly, to establish whether there is a convergence with existing literature on educational change (Fullan and Hargreaves 2005). Change agents are used in this context to describe any person who initiates or contributes to change (Huzinski and Buchanan 2012).

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development:

‘Unless teachers are actively involved in policy formulation, and feel a sense of “ownership” of reform, it is unlikely that substantial changes will be successfully implemented’ (2005:12)

This statement reinforces the central role that teachers ought to play in educational change. Teachers have control over their learning environment and are in a position to effect positive changes on their student but they have no say in changes affecting their professional lives (Rahman 2012).

There was a general consensus in response to the question regarding the role of teachers as change agents. From the initial survey as shown in Table 4.20, 36 (90%) of the participants perceived their roles as closely linked to being a change agent but four teachers (10%) disagreed with this statement.

**Table 4.20: The role of teachers as change agents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	4	10.0	10.0	10.0
Valid Yes	36	90.0	90.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**4.18. Teachers’ Attitude to Change Compared with their Perception of their Role as Change Agents.**

Teachers’ perceptions of their roles as change agents may be influenced by their attitude to change. Those with a positive attitude to change may be more receptive to change and they are more likely to value their role as a change agent compared with those who have a negative attitude or are indifferent to change. To establish whether such a link existed, a simple statistical test was carried out to test both variables. Table 4.21 shows that six of the participants with a positive attitude to change viewed their role as change agents

compared to two (10%) who had a negative attitude to change and did not consider themselves as change agents. The participants who perceived their role as change agents may have done so because they conceived and developed ideas to improve the learning environment for the benefit of the students and they felt that they were equally responsible for implementing change at grass-root levels. It was interesting to see that 19 (91%) of the participants with a negative attitude to change still viewed their roles as change agents. Two (15.4%) of those who were indifferent to change did not consider themselves as change agents whereas 11(85%) who were indifferent to change still considered themselves to be change agents. This result clearly shows that a high percentage of the participants considered their role in educational change as crucial. Even those who had a negative attitude to change still believed that they had a role to play in the change process. Another conclusion that can be drawn from the result is that the participants' views of their roles as change agents tended to override their attitude to change. This reinforces the need to enhance the role of teachers during major change initiatives and equip them with necessary skills and knowledge to manage change effectively.

The chi-square test carried out on the data in Table 4.22 was insignificant showing a result of  $1.091$  and  $(df), p=.580$ . Even though the sample size for this study is quite small, this result indicates that teachers' attitude to change does not influence their perception of their role as change agents.

**Table 4.21: Relationship between teacher attitude to change and their role as change agents**

			Teachers as change agents		Total
			No	Yes	
Teacher attitude to change	Positive	Count % within Teacher attitude to change	0 0.0%	6 100.0%	6 100.0%
	Negative	Count % within Teacher attitude to change	2 9.5%	19 90.5%	21 100.0%
	Indifferent	Count % within Teacher attitude to change	2 15.4%	11 84.6%	13 100.0%
	Total	Count % within Teacher attitude to change	4 10.0%	36 90.0%	40 100.0%

**Table 4.22: Chi-square test – attitude to change and the role of change agent**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.091 <sup>a</sup>	2	.580
Likelihood Ratio	1.636	2	.441
N of Valid Cases	40		

#### **4.19 Responsibility of the college to provide change management training**

The participants were asked whether the college had an obligation to provide training and equip teachers with change management skills as part of their professional development. In response to this question, Table 4.23 shows that 22 (55%) of the participants felt that, whilst it was not mandatory, this would amount to taking positive steps to enhance teachers' professional identity, which might eventually impact on their attitude to change. 18 (45%), however, did not feel that it was the responsibility of the college to provide change management training for all teachers in the college. Some had previously expressed concerns about the number of unnecessary training sessions they had attended in the past which, in their view, did not seem to add value to their job. They seemed to have a view that the training opportunities provided in the college were mere routine, meaningless activities provided for the sake of compliance and that they did not meet the professional development needs of individual teachers.

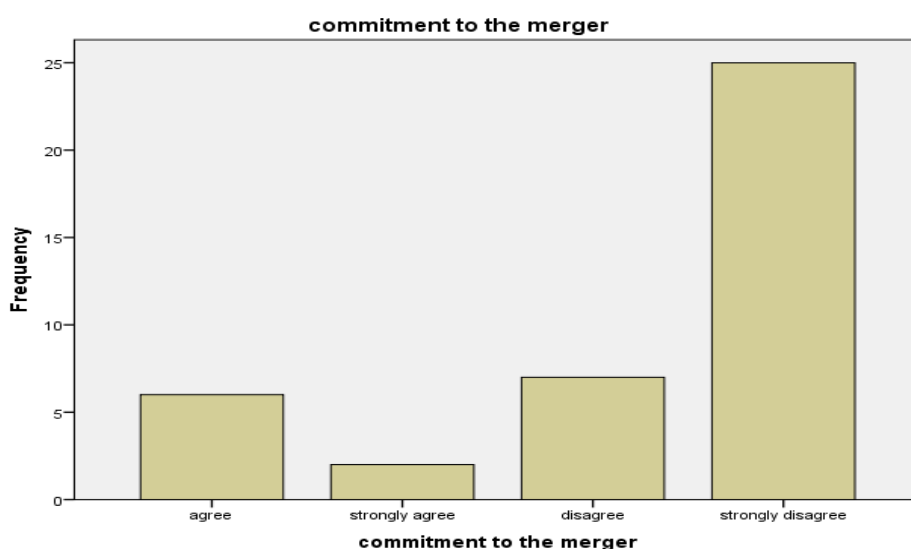
**Table 4.23: The provision of training by the College**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	18	45.0	45.0	45.0
Valid Yes	22	55.0	55.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

#### **4.20. Commitment to the Merger**

The participants' attitude to change and the poor implementation of change may have affected their commitment to change and to the merger in particular. Although the merger was necessary in order to ensure the survival of the institution, it could be seen as a forced change. Evidence from the literature (Hargreaves 2004) suggests that individuals are more likely to be antagonistic to change and unwilling to accept it if it is forced.

Participants were asked to rate their level of commitment to the merger. In response to this question, Figure 4.5 shows that 25 (63%) of the participants strongly disagreed that they were committed to the merger while seven (18%) disagreed that they were committed to the merger. The total number of teachers who felt committed to the merger was six (15%) while two (5%) agreed to be strongly committed to the merger. This result is not too surprising, considering the number of participants who indicated in Table 4.7 that they had a negative attitude to change. This revealing lack of commitment to a major change initiative in the college could have wider implications with regards to teachers' morale, performance and job satisfaction level. Apart from the fact that this particular change was imposed, there may be other factors that could have contributed to low level of commitment amongst participants. These factors will be explored in the next chapter.



**Figure 4.5: Commitment to the Merger**

#### **4.21 Analysis of Qualitative Data**

In this section data obtained through interviews with 6 teachers / curriculum managers is analysed to see if it shows a similar pattern to the quantitative data and to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences of the merger. The focus is on teachers' experience of managing change, their involvement in the merger, the impact of the merger, the change management skills that they had gained, their attitude and perception to change and how these impacted on their role as change agents.

#### **4.22 Knowledge of Change Management**

Data obtained from six respondents during the interview revealed a similar pattern to the initial survey, with two out of the six respondents confirming that they privately funded

change management training as part of their professional development. It was during their studies that they were exposed to change management. One other respondent confirmed that he had been trained on change management in his previous role as a Project Manager.

Their unique experiences can be illustrated in the following examples:

‘I learned about change management as part of a programme that I attended at the Institute of Leadership and Management. I think the training was good, and gave some insight into organisational change, the impact on individual and the organisation as a whole. There were some interesting case studies and examples of why people resist change and suitable strategies to incorporate during the change process. I learned about the change management process, how to adapt, and maybe respond to change better. As teachers, I think change is part of our professional life and we need to know more about it’. (Respondent 2, College A)

‘Change management was properly covered during my MSc Education Management degree and prepared me better than the others to manage and cope with change. I manage a large team and it is imperative to understand the change process and how it can be implemented without causing so much resentment and frustration’. (Respondent 5, College A)

‘I have been teaching for a while and I don’t think change management has ever been offered as training for teachers in the college but I had the training as part of my professional development in my previous job as a project manager. The knowledge that I gained has obviously been useful in my role as a teacher’ (Respondent 6, College B)

The above comments indicate that those who have knowledge of change management tend to develop a more proactive and pragmatic attitude to change and may have accepted and adapted to the merger more easily when compared with their colleagues, who did not have such knowledge as that derived from their training on change management. Respondent 6 reinforces the point made earlier that change management is often incorporated into the training of other professions. It was interesting to see another dimension: that even those who had not been trained still perceive such training as crucial to teacher development. This was clearly articulated by another respondent:

No, I have never attended any professional development programme on change management, seriously I don’t think it has ever been considered for teachers but I have read articles and case studies on how change have been successfully implemented in education. I think it is important to understand these processes. (Respondent 1, College A)

The above respondent emphasises the need for teachers to be prepared and equipped with the right skills to manage change. This is not surprising considering the fact that teachers are usually the implementers of educational change and always in the ‘firing line’ (Smit

2003). Teachers also play a role in ‘converting paper policies into courses, curricula and purposeful activities in classroom’ Coffield (2008). This means that teachers who instigate and manage change that lead to positive outcomes within the learning environment and particularly for students (McGrath and Morrow 2009) need effective planning and preparation in order to achieve the desired outcomes (Maughan, Teeman and Wilson 2012).

#### **4.23. Continuous Professional Development Records of Teachers in the College.**

A review of the continuous professional development (CPD) record of teachers (Table 4.24 ) who completed the initial survey confirmed that change management or leadership skills have never been included as part of teachers’ ongoing professional development. In the current study, this analysis provided an opportunity to corroborate whether the respondents have had any training on change management and how this may have prepared them for the merger or any other change initiative in the college.

**Table 4.24: Example of Continuous Professional Development Programme undertaken by Teachers**

	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Room</b>	<b>Date / Start</b>	<b>Date / Finish</b>
Facilitator:	Course Genie	Professional Development Centre (PDC)	11/06/2012 09:00	11/06/2012 10:00
Facilitator:	Smartboard - Lesson Activity Toolkit session	Smartboard - Lesson Activity Toolkit session	11/06/2012 14:00	11/06/2012 15:00
Facilitator:	Columbus	PDC	12/06/2012 11:00	12/06/2012 12:00
Facilitator:	Progressing with PowerPoint	PDC	12/06/2012 14:00	12/06/2012 15:00
Facilitator:	Individual Performance Review (IPR) Workshop	PDC	12/06/2012 15:30	12/06/2012 16:30
Facilitator:	Employer Engagement	PDC	13/06/2012 10:00	13/06/2012 11:00
Facilitator:	Access for Beginners	PDC	16/06/2012 10:00	16/06/2012 11:00
Facilitator:	Photoshop for beginners	PDC	16/06/2012 12:00	16/06/2012 13:00
Facilitator:	Logging Support Calls	PDC	17/06/2012 09:00	17/06/2012 09:30
Facilitator:	Oculus Navigation	PDC	17/06/2012 10:00	17/06/2012 11:00
Facilitator:	Employer Engagement	PDC	17/06/2012 12.00	17/06/2012 13.00

As shown in Table 4.24, the CPD sessions for teachers are usually very short (just an hour in all cases except for one of only 30 minutes). These sessions are also very practical and instrumentalist, focused on functional tasks such as basic IT, with the exception of the Employer Engagement sessions, which seem focused on how to engage and provide training for employers (as an additional source of revenue for the college). There is usually nothing on the ‘soft’ skills or any scope for interaction between teachers, which confirms the findings of a survey conducted by Maughan, Teeman and Wilson (2012) that the CPD training provided for teachers lacked focus on management training.

The professional development of teachers in this study was viewed by respondents as routine and irrelevant practices aimed at maintaining their licence to practice which was the requirement by the Institute For Learning (IFL 2009:14).

The respondents felt that these sessions were repetitive, generic in nature and usually irrelevant as indicated below:

‘Knowledge of change is good but we are already inundated with too many compulsory training courses, some of which we don’t really need for the job. Personally, I am not too keen on more training’  
(Respondent 6, College B)

The CPD sessions for teachers in the FE sector have been noted as an area for concern (Mather and Seifert 2014). This seems to be a widespread problem as noted by the EU Maastricht Communiqué (2004: 4) which stated that it is essential to examine:

‘the specific learning needs and changing role of vocational teachers and trainers and the possibilities of making their profession more attractive including continuous updating of their professional skills. Teachers and trainers should be supported in their essential role as innovators and facilitators in the learning environment. A coherent framework should be envisaged to support the improvement of the quality of vocational teaching and training’.

Fairman and Mackenzie (2012:4) also suggest that the professional development of teachers should enable them ‘learn how to be a collaborative leader’.

The respondents’ views are consistent with the literature (Mizell 2010) on the professional development of teachers which states that those responsible for organising professional development do so in ways that alienates educators. The general idea of ongoing professional development in FE is perceived as a something positive but the lack of emphasis on what constitutes effective professional development or what it should entail (Orr 2011), means that teachers were placed on courses which did not add value to their jobs. A study conducted by Mather and Seifert (2014:103), also showed that FE

teachers had a general lack of interest in college-based ‘tick box’ approach to professional development and most staff did not take those training seriously.

The negative view about CPD exhibited by most of the respondents contradicts ‘The Green Paper’ (1998: 43) which states that

‘CPD ought to take three elements into consideration: ‘national training priorities, school priorities and individual development needs’.

It was evident during the interviews that teachers are interested in gaining change management skills as it might help them cope better with the frequency of change in the sector. The need for such training was also summed by respondents as follows:

I think it is absolutely important for teachers to gain knowledge of change management, but I am not sure what this would entail in this college because change management in my view is a very broad subject. If it is part of teacher education, maybe it will help some of us appreciate change better. (Respondent 5, College A)

‘Change is a very complex subject that requires tact and particular skills to manage if results are to be achieved. As agents of change I believe it may be necessary for teachers to gain this type of knowledge. Above all, it may help them respond better to change if they have a role in it’. (Respondent 3, College B)

One respondent provided an interesting alternative perspective on the issue of change. He felt that although training teachers on change management was a good idea but it was more important to promote good leadership during periods of change. He summed it up as follows:

‘Although change is important, teachers need good leadership. Good leaders will explain change clearly to their team, they will be able to sell the idea and steer everyone towards the specific outcome. That is what really matters’. (Respondent 6, College B)

The above respondent has highlighted the importance of leadership in combination with change. Effective leadership can impact on the successful implementation of change. If teachers are to be correctly described as educational leaders (Donaldson 2010; Liberman 1998; Sergiovanni 1987, Boyd-Dimock and McGree 1995), then they have to be proactive, anticipate and recognise where change is needed within their learning environment in order to respond accordingly. One of the respondents who has already acquired change management skills indicated that although, acquiring knowledge of change management was useful, it may not guarantee a change in attitude.



‘I think this will depend on the individual. If we just make an assumption that all teachers need knowledge of change management then it would be misleading. There are people who do not like change because of the fear and uncertainty usually associated with change. For such people, it doesn’t matter if training is provided, their attitude and response to change will not make any difference as they will always find something negative about changing the status quo’ (Respondent 2, College A)

Data obtained from the survey presented earlier in Figure 4.2, showed that the college did not provide any training to prepare teachers adequately for the merger. The interviews provided detail insights into their experiences regarding the level of preparation and engagement during the merger. Two respondents relived their experiences as follows:

‘I attended a one day training in the summer. It was provided by an external consultant after the merger had taken place. I don’t think there was any reference to how change can be managed. In fact it wasn’t about change strategy, it was more focused on the acceptance of change, looking forward to the future and adapting to our new working environment. There was a lot of confusion at the time not just about staffing issues but also the resources we needed to do our jobs properly’ (Respondent 3, College B).

‘Post-merger, I attended a four day management training session with other curriculum managers and it was specifically aimed on management functions such as finance, people etc. There were a few occasions during the session when change management was mentioned but not in detail. There was also one other opportunity when all members of staff attended a CPD session on change but it was more about the importance of change and why we should embrace change. I can’t recall any mention about managing change’ (Respondent 5, College A).

The second respondent had over 22 years teaching experience and is also a curriculum manager and Advanced Practitioner. Her role involved leading excellence in teaching, monitoring and enhancing the performance of teachers. Most of her responsibilities would have involved initiating change even though she had no previous training in the area of change management. Like most teachers and senior managers in the college, there is a possibility that she would have encountered some challenges or resistance when introducing new initiatives to teachers. This, again, reinforces the point made earlier, that the roles and responsibilities of teachers evolve but without the support or adequate training to enable them fulfil the requirements of the job.

The unpreparedness of teachers for change could also have amplified the negative attitude to change acknowledged by respondents in the survey. The stories of the respondents give

an impression that the preparation and readiness of teachers to cope with change may not have been of paramount importance to the college.

#### **4.24 The impact of the Merger on Teachers**

There are generally two main reasons for mergers in the FE sector. Firstly, mergers occur when one institution is struggling financially. Secondly, mergers may take place when colleges believe that they can optimise their performance if they combine resources (LSIS 2011; FEFC 1998). The cuts in funding left most of the colleges with no other choice but to merge with one another. Respondents felt undermined that their input and opinions were not required when the merger process eventually commenced. This supports evidence in the literature that change is usually imposed on teachers (McGrath and Morrow 2009; Hargreaves 2004). Although the experience of each individual respondent was unique to them, the fact that they were in the same environment and may have experienced similar situational conditions and contextual factors might explain why most of the respondents had a negative response regarding the impact of the merger with the exception of one respondent who is a curriculum manager. The respondents commented on the implementation process and they certainly felt that it was not managed very well because of the negative impact on both their personal as well as professional lives. Their experiences were re-lived as follows:

‘There were far too many speculations about the merger, we felt insecure and no one was willing to give us any information about our jobs or the possibility of redeployment. Everything was done in secret.’ (Respondent 1, College A)

‘Departments were merged too soon and new processes introduced. This required adjusting to new policies, processes and ways of working. Looking back now, I don’t think it was clear what the college was trying to achieve since we didn’t know what was going on’. (Respondent 4, College A)

‘I have been through some changes here and somehow we struggle and get through it but this was completely out of our hands we didn’t know whether we were coming or going. What I mean is that no one had any useful info about our jobs. That was my main concern. It was as if they were all maintaining a tight lip, not wanting to say much. There was also an atmosphere of fear and insecurity’ (respondent 2, College A)

‘New processes introduced during the merger were very confusing, in most cases, no one knew what to do and information wasn’t forthcoming’ (respondent 6, College B).

‘Yes, I was getting too many conflicting information about what to do, whether to start looking for new a job or not, it was worrying’ (respondent 3, College B)

The comments from these respondents show that the process was not transparent. Merger successes are usually guided by the way staff respond. If they feel positive then the process is more likely to be successful. From these accounts, it is evident that the human factor was not carefully considered. It seems that the systems of both colleges were not compatible which could have created some operational or tactical problems during the merger. This seems to indicate that essential data could have been lost during the harmonisation process, an issue quite common with mergers in the FE sector (Calvert and Posner 2010).

#### **4.25 Teacher Involvement in the Merger**

The qualitative data on teacher involvement in the merger showed a similar pattern to that obtained during the survey. The respondents were asked whether they or their teams had any role during the merger process. Even though individual responses were unique, there was more emphasis on the non- involvement of teachers in the merger. The only exception was a curriculum manager who said she contributed to the process by identifying the operational and staffing needs for her department. She gave the following response to the question:

‘I guess I had a role to play by providing information about the staffing requirement for my department. There was very little information but I gave as much as I could during the merger process’ (Respondent 5, College A)

Apart from this respondent, the other five respondents felt that their involvement or input was not important.

‘We were all affected by the merger, the actual process had nothing to do with me. (Respondent 1, College A)

‘A decision had to be made by senior management. Teachers usually do not have any say in such decisions’ (respondent 4, College A)

‘With regards to the merger, I think teachers should have been involved in the process. There should be some form of dialogue. I understand that there are a number of teachers who are happy with the status quo and want to get on with

their job without any involvement in change but there are also others who are eager and such people should be given the opportunities. There was a lot of speculation about the merger before it eventually took place. I don't really think that teachers input were required. I certainly didn't have one, it was a decision that had to be made top-down and as usual, we had to comply.' (Respondent 2, College A)

It was an unsettling time with so much speculation and insecurity. As far as I am concerned, the process was not properly coordinated. Even line managers didn't seem to know what was happening so it was just a waiting game, and impossible to update staff. Morale was seriously affected'. (Respondent 6, College B)

The lack of teacher involvement in the change process seems to have affected their commitment to the merger. It was not only their professional input that was ignored during the process, the emotional impact was equally ignored at a time when they were helpless and unable to make the right decisions regarding their careers.

The lack of collaboration, with and involvement of teachers in change management brings its own challenges, as mentioned by the Principal of a college involved in a merger. According to him:

'In hindsight we should have involved others in defining values and behaviours'.  
(Hay Group 2010)

The above statement is an indication that the non-involvement of teachers in a change process is seen as the norm in some colleges and it seems to reflect the experiences of the respondents in this study.

One of the objectives of the merger was to enhance provision for students. However, the data obtained in this study has shown that teachers, who are leaders of the learning environment, who could have enabled the college to fulfil this objective, were alienated from the change process. As Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009: 2) noted:

'With every school there is a sleeping giant of a teacher leadership that can be a strong catalyst for making changes to improve student learning'

It seems therefore, that the college did not recognise the contribution that this key human capital, who are the closest to the students, could have helped to fulfil this particular objective of the merger.

From the accounts of respondents, it seems that they were expected to react to change rather than being proactively engaged in it. The respondents' perceptions of how organizational change is mediated in the college implies a 'them and us' (Tearke 2000; Jameson 2008) atmosphere in the college. The different views expressed by the respondents during a major change initiative such as a merger is not surprising and may have affected their motivation and commitment to the college.

#### **4.26 Attitude to change**

Earlier in the chapter, results from the quantitative analysis indicated that over 50% of the participants had a negative attitude to change. In response to this question, they described their attitude as positive, negative or indifferent to change. It may well be that their previous experience of change initiatives in the college may have influenced their attitude to change according to the following respondents:

'People do not like change generally because it can put you in a vulnerable position. I am not too keen about change but if you are in this business, then you really haven't got any choice. So, I have accepted it as a way of life here. Also, my attitude will depend on how change is managed. I like my role to be clarified rather than been dictated to all the time. But sometimes I react to change simply because the position I hold in the organisation doesn't enable me engage with changes as I would like to and we are not kept up to date, we have no control on how change will affect us. As a consequence, I tend to be more reactive by dealing with day to day operational issues as an when they arise. Sometimes we just have to get on with things whether you like it or not' (Respondent 2, College A)

'If it is something that is going to affect my work, then I am likely to take an interest. I don't search for these opportunities. I already have too much to do' (Respondent 1, College A)

One of the respondents has identified a major factor often associated with employee resistant to change. The respondent is keen to partake in change initiatives but the opportunity and support is not available. Such an experience can influence how he responds to future change initiatives in the college. The second respondent seems to demonstrate an indifferent attitude to change. However, if the opportunity arises, with support and encouragement, he is likely to develop a more positive attitude to change. The non-involvement of teachers seems to have tainted their view of educational change and would have given them the perception that change is interference to their career that threatens their professional identity (Veen and Slegers 2006). In contrast, a well-resourced and participatory approach to change management would have created a more

positive impact (Cardoso 2008; Rucinski et al 2009). However, ten (25%) of respondents (Table 4.10) who are indifferent to change may be used to change as a 'top down' phenomenon in which they have no input (as mentioned by respondents, page 101). This group of respondents may believe that the management of change is outside their remit and have learned to accept that they have no input but to do 'as they are told' by those who occupy powerful positions in the institution.

Teachers' attitude to change is quite significant in this study because it could have influenced how respondents perceived the change process. For example, those who have a positive attitude to change would argue that the college at least made an effort to inform staff about the merge as indicated by the respondent below:

'They told us about the merger at two briefing sessions. I suppose this is a good thing. At least they kept us informed and we kind of knew what to expect'. (Respondent 4, College A)

Unlike other respondents, this respondent seems to take a slightly different view. She values the effort of the college in communicating with staff about the merger.

#### **4.27 Experience of managing change**

As implementers of change in the institution, it was important to gain some insight into specific examples of change initiatives that respondents may have managed or introduced in the college. The objective was to ascertain whether they considered this as an additional responsibility, or, as a normal part of their job. Three of the respondents said that they had managed change, though on a small scale. This may well be due to the fact that they had acquired the relevant knowledge and skills:

'I have made changes within the learning environment to suit my learners and I was also part of a team that developed and introduced the new initiative: task-based learning. The change involved the whole team and was planned and anticipated even though the implementation took place within a short period of time'. (Respondent 6, College B)

'I have been involved in managing change: Both at my place of work and as a senior examiner for AQA examination board. This includes organisational structure, staff re-skilling/training, managing staff attitude, employment pattern, employment conditions and internal procedures. Currently we are in the middle of BTEC changes from predominantly coursework-based to part exam and part coursework' (Respondent 4 College A)

‘I have made some changes that affected my students. Anything that makes the learning environment more effective for me is change. I think I have been able to do that. In the class room, (micro level) one of the changes I am currently pushing forward is for a more flexible approach in the delivery of our courses particularly through e-learning and, as such, I have developed my knowledge in this field. This will give our students the opportunity to learn in different modes’ if change is going to affect other people, then it is only fair that you involve them. I made sure that I kept other teachers involved in the picture. I think change management requires a lot of tact and the ability to convince people why change should be introduced. Once I faced this challenge I was able to go ahead but there were usually challenges’.  
(Respondent 2, College A)

These three respondents seem to have fully embraced change as a crucial part of their job. The fact that they have knowledge of change management may have given them an advantage over others who may have experienced similar challenges within their learning environment but lacked the skills to manage the change process. One other respondent said that he had never managed any form of change. He did not quite see the point of being involved in the process because he is always:

‘Told what to do amidst confusion in some cases’ (Respondent 3 College B)

When probed further and asked to clarify his point, he mentioned that he was part of the team of teachers who implemented ‘curriculum 2000’ in his area of learning. The comments from this respondent highlight the point made earlier, that teachers are given additional responsibility involving the management of change whether or not they have the skills to cope with, or manage the process. Evidently, teachers have accepted change as an intrinsic feature of their job.

#### **4.28 Agents of Change**

With the rapid rate of change that they have to cope with, teachers are beginning to see the need to acquire change management skills. Teachers entering the profession know that they have a big mandate to make a difference. They can only achieve this by working collaboratively with other teachers and leaders in their institutions. Despite the fact that teachers are constantly referred to as change agents in the literature (Lukacs and Galluzzo 2014; Fullan 2003;2007; Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler 2005), their training and professional development does not provide the skills they need to fulfil this particular management function as revealed so far in this study. It can be concluded that teachers are change agents but without power and authority to influence change. This probably

explains why respondents indicated that change management should be incorporated into their professional development to enable teachers optimise their skills and competencies as change agents. The quantitative data showed earlier that teachers' perception of their roles as change agents was independent of their attitudes to change. Those who were more positive to change valued their role as change agents because it enhanced their professional identity. Even those with a negative attitude still perceived themselves as change agents. It can be assumed therefore, that those with a negative attitude to change are likely to adjust their attitude to change if they are equipped with the skills and encouraged to take part in the change process.

In relation to their role as change agents, respondents made the following comments:

'I agree that teachers are change agents because they have to deal with change all the time most especially within their learning environment. Sometimes they have control over minor changes they want to introduce in the learning environment but there are times they have to adjust to change imposed from the top. I do see myself as a change agent because I have a vision and make some effort to improve my current practice. So, I am proactively looking for ways of making improvements within the learning environment (Respondent 2, College A).

'Teachers effect change, and for that reason they should be classified as change agents. They are internal change agents. If they are involved properly during change, they can help guide and advise the change process as they are in forefront of the change' (Respondent 4, College A)

'Teachers are always affected by change anyway. May be this makes them a change agent. I see myself not just as a teacher but someone who constantly wants to be on top, someone who comes up with good suggestions and look for ways to make sure the department functions effectively. Maybe that makes me a change agent'. (Respondent 5, College A)

'I think they are and I agree with the statement but I am not sure whether I will describe myself as such. Because I introduce change and have been affected by change doesn't really make me a change agent. I think this is a role often associated with experts'. (Respondent 3 College B).

I believe that we have a role to play in managing change in the college after all, we are the people who work with students and understand their needs better. Even when change is introduced by management, we have to implement it. (Respondent 1 College A)

'Some of us want improvements but with collective views and shared values. Teacher attitude to change would be more receptive because they get to know that it is part of their remit'. (Respondent 6, College B)



The overwhelming positive response indicates that even those without change management experience or those with a negative attitude to change still considered themselves as change agents. The reason for such a response may be linked to the acceptance by teachers that change is intrinsically linked to their career and they have learned to accept it. Overall, the result reinforces evidence in the literature which describes teachers as agents of change (Fullan 2003). Yet, ironically, contradicting this ideal, it appears that in reality teachers are treated as ‘passive bystanders not active participants’ during periods of change (Campos 2005). The views expressed by the respondents reinforced the findings of Walters, Marzano and McNulty (2007:9), who suggested that, as change agents, teachers should:

‘Acquire the will to change and actively challenge the status quo’

Ignoring the input of teachers who are internal change agents during periods of transition could even make the entire process more challenging for external change agents. Change agents make a difference to successful change implementation. This fact is yet to be acknowledged by leaders in educational establishments. Without adequate preparation and training, teachers may not even be aware that they are fulfilling this role and they will continue to struggle with their own confidence and ability to cope with change (Price and Valli 2005). Although some of the respondents confirmed that they had implemented change at micro level within their learning environment, they might still benefit from a thorough understanding of the concept of change (Rahman 2012) in order to develop the confidence they need. Two of the respondents who have gained such knowledge, said that it was in fact, a positive experience that enabled them prepare for change better (page 97). The points made by these two respondents on the importance of acquiring knowledge of change management can be encapsulated in the following quotation by Fullan (2006:13), who said:

‘Change knowledge does matter. Ignore it at your peril’

He went on further:

‘Don’t go on this journey without being equipped with an active and open-ended grasp of change knowledge’

Teachers who are skilled at managing change are more likely to be in a better position to judge whether change is desirable or not. They are also better equipped to develop the capacity to cope with change. This, however, is not the case for other teachers who lack change management skills but still have to cope with the challenges associated with

change particularly in a complex environment. The increasing demand on teachers should create an opportunity for them to develop their knowledge and partake in the decision making processes. This is crucial in enhancing their role as change agents. The qualities and characteristics of a change agent are similar to leaders who have transformed their organisations as discussed in the literature review. Such leaders have a vision, they are proactive and strongly believe in making continuous improvements (Boddy 2014). This clearly sums up the teacher's role as an agent of change even though they are not recognised as such by their institutions. The role of change agents was widely embraced by 36 (90%) respondents who took part in the initial survey (Table 4.20).

#### **4.29 Conclusion**

This chapter has reported on the findings from the data, and, in this process, has brought to light some of the factors that influence the effective implementation of educational change, with particular reference to the merger between two further education colleges. It has also evaluated the impact of change on teachers and their role as change agents basing that discussion on the detailed views of 40 respondents from the questionnaire and six interviews. Both qualitative and quantitative data have shown that, although the merger was essential to ensure the existence and survival of both colleges, the likely impact on teachers was not divulged to staff at the outset of the merger. This seem to have reinforced the negative attitude to change demonstrated by over 50% of the respondents. From the outset, the lack of preparation of teachers to cope with change has been the main theme emerging from the analysis of data. The theme was further developed to encapsulate the acquisition of change management skills and how this was likely to impact on teachers' roles as change agents. Some trends were clearly evident: respondents reinforced the crucial role they need to play in educational change but confirmed that they were not usually involved in the change process as they ought to be. This partly explained the high percentage of teachers who had a negative attitude to change, as revealed in the data and the literature on educational change. The respondents, however, maintained a positive stance about their roles as leaders and change agents not because it enhanced their professional status but because of the opportunity it created for gaining valuable skills and knowledge of change management. Most of them were particularly keen for such training to be included as part of their CPD programmes. The data and literature have also shown that although the roles of teachers have continued to evolve to include change management, neither college undertook the responsibility to

equip them with the skills they need to cope with change. However, those teachers who privately funded their own training seem to have coped better with the merger.

Although each change situation is unique, and the challenges it brings are context specific, some factors are necessary to ensure that change proceeds successfully. Change involves people, culture and processes but the people who are the most valuable and responsible for implementing change at 'grass root' level are often ignored during the change process. In most cases, some of the individuals may even possess vital skills which could contribute to the effective implementation of change.

Even though respondents acknowledged their role as agents of change, the skills they require to fulfil this role are not a natural ability and need to be developed (Snoek 2010). This may include training that focuses on change itself or the change process. They still need to understand how change should be introduced and cascaded within teams and the organisation as a whole.

The data captured in this study has also highlighted how the merger impacted on teachers as a result of implementation and management of the process. It is evident that the erratic pace, poor communication and non-involvement of teachers influenced their perception of the process. This seems to be congruent with the literature on educational change. The findings also suggests that teachers are aware that change is an intrinsic part of their job and they are quite willing to respond positively, provided the rationale for change is explicit and all efforts are made to include them in the process. Several themes emerged during the data analysis which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5      DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Previous studies on the role of teachers in educational change have focused on the emotional impact of change and non-involvement of teachers in the change process (Fullan and Hargreaves; Fullan 2003; 2007; Liberman 2001). This study, however, has not only looked at the role of teachers during change, but it has also examined how they are prepared to participate and manage change particularly during a merger. One unique finding of this study is the fact that teachers themselves have acknowledged that change is an intrinsic feature of their job and they have specifically identified the need to gain change management skills as part of their professional development.

Data analysis from the previous chapter provided a good indication of how teachers perceived and experienced change, and in particular, how the merger impacted on them individually. The nine overarching themes that emerged from the data are discussed below.

### **5.2. Emerging themes**

The common objective of any merger is to develop a strategy that combines resources and enhance the competitive position of both organisations by transferring complimentary skills (LSIS 2010, Scholes et al 2007). Even though mergers between organisations in the FE sector in particular have become prevalent over the past decades, they do present some challenges (DfES 2003; DIUS 2008; FE News 2013; Marmenout 2010). If mergers were conducted based only on rational or economic factors that are measurable such as the financial position of an organisation, this particular merger would have been effective and straightforward. However, the fact that organisation are social units (Huyzinski and Buchanan 2012) and, as a result, have to deal with human beings who are influenced by a wide range of social factors and have their own personalities and beliefs makes merger processes more complicated. The nine themes emerging from the data analysis (see Appendix 6) include culture, communication, lack of trust, power, motivation, leadership and the emotional and psychological impact of change are discussed below.

### **5.3 Integrating Conflicting Cultures and Systems**

Culture is as much an individual, psychological, as well as a social construct (Spencer-Oatey 2012). Cultural differences have been acknowledged as a primary reason for merger failures (Davenport and Barrow 2012). If culture is not carefully managed, it could impact negatively on value creation, which is usually the aim of a merger. This study has highlighted the internal differences between both colleges prior to the merger.

Mergers between organisations operating in the same sectors tend to experience similar difficulties because of differences in cultures and the need to adjust to change within a relatively short period of time (Stewart 2003; DfES 2003). The culture of an organisation is multi-faceted and complex. Culture is a notion that lacks clarity and is often loosely defined as ‘the way of doing things’ in an organisation (Boddy 2012; 2014). Other writers have described culture as a ‘set of values that determines beliefs, attitudes and behaviours’ usually deeply entrenched within the organisation. A common theme seems to emerge from all definitions of culture (Woodside 2010). There is a connotation that an organisation has a ‘personality’ that determines how people behave (Hofstede 1994). How culture develops is, therefore, predicated on the climate of the organisation. Although not always visible, culture exerts an influence on employees and can impact on decision making process, leadership styles and the overall performance of the organisation (Pikula 1999).

Both colleges had their own unique ‘personalities’ which was reflected in the way they did things as highlighted by the respondents. An attempt to combine two divergent cultures could have created difficulties during the merger as there was no clear indication of the proposed new culture that was to emerge from the merger as indicated in respondents’ comments on page 116. Introducing a new culture in organisations without a clear direction for staff is known to c (Cheng 2009; DIUS 2008; Stafford and Miles 2013; Holbeche 2007).

Although the objective of both colleges was to increase capacity and create opportunity for progression (LSIS 2012), each had its own unique identity and culture which was deeply entrenched within its environment. There was an opportunity to engage with teachers during the merger process to enable them gain an insight into the proposed culture of the new institution but such an opportunity was missed. From all accounts, it seems that teachers were apprehensive and anxious about what the new institution would be like or what was expected of them.

From the accounts of the respondents, it seems that too much emphasis had been placed on the financial and operational aspects of the merger and, as a direct result, the likely impact of the merger on two divergent cultures was not carefully considered as part of the due diligence (DfES 2003; Stewart 2003). According to one respondent:

‘There were differences in the way we did things. There were a few suggestions on quality improvement. Teachers in both colleges did things differently. It was difficult because we had our own way of doing things. It was difficult to know which campus students were going to be based’  
(Respondent 2, College A)

Another noted:

‘Some of us wanted to find out how they did things over there. I wasn’t even sure of the courses they run maybe we’ll continue teaching the same thing’  
(Respondent 3, College B)

The comments above highlight what could be classified as significant differences in the cultures and systems of both colleges. The issue of culture is often associated with strategy implementation in organisations where senior managers visualise a new culture but fail to convey it in measurable and achievable terms to those who are most likely to be affected and who are equally responsible for the successful implementation. Yet, DIUS (2008) identifies this as a crucial stage during merger implementation. The importance of culture in educational mergers was put into context by one of the principals who took part in a study conducted by the Hay Group (2010: 6) on successful college mergers in the FE sector. He said:

‘We tried to force a culture, but it didn’t work. A big bang can’t force culture. Instead we focused on some principles like excellence, support, experiment, peer observation. Suddenly this created a different kind of energy’.

The above quotation reinforces the importance of integrating the cultures of two different organisations without due consideration for the time such integration might require. To gain an insight into the cultures of both colleges, it is imperative to examine them prior to the merger. The behaviour, perception and attitudes of members of each institution were usually evident from their ‘ways of doing things’ (Boddy 2012; 2014). In terms of similarities, both colleges provided the same courses, had similar objectives of maximising student achievement and performance and retaining a positive image within their environment. However, their day to day operational strategies and management processes differed, as revealed by respondents from both colleges during the interviews.

The management style of College A could be described as 'laissez faire' management style compared to College B, where respondents described the setting as 'autocratic'. College B had a more strict management process, clear lines of authority, a strict approach to teaching and learning and a more robust way of monitoring students. College A, in contrast, adopted a more relaxed approach to learning which led to high levels of disruptive behaviour and very low attainment levels. The marginal performance of College A and its reputation around the local community was believed to be one of the reasons why students had previously opted for College B, which was then a major competitor. This in turn had a significant impact on enrolment figures. Whereas College A experienced a decline in student numbers, its then rival College B, expanded its curriculum area to cope with demand.

The clash of cultures of both colleges was also evident with regards to learner selection processes particularly when students were enrolling on similar courses. College A was more relaxed with its entry criteria and attendance, whereas College B had more stringent controls and only accepted students on courses if they met the requirements and were more likely to achieve. Although both colleges had completely different cultures, they had their own unique features about the way they did things in the past prior to the merger. Respondents from College A anticipated how they were going to fit into the culture of the new institution. Referring to the Principal, One respondent from College B described her as:

'Tough even with senior managers' (Respondent 3, College B)

Another respondent from College A said

'You can tell from the way she spoke at the full staff meeting that she is in control' (Respondent 4, College A)

The management and leadership style adopted in an organisation is one of the crucial factors likely to shape its culture (Handy 1985). Interview data emphasised a causal link between the management style and the poor management of the merger particularly because the merger process or the likely impact were not clearly articulated. Like any social system, both colleges prior to the merger, had levels of hierarchy where people exerted control over others. With regard to this study, it was quite evident earlier in the merger process that College B was the dominant partner in the relationship. Staff in

College A felt like they were the actual victims of the merger. Another respondent, a senior director who had attended leadership meetings prior to the merger, described the principal of College B as:

‘Difficult to work with, and must always have her own way’.

This view was corroborated by another respondent who described the principal of College B as ‘fearful’. It would seem that respondents were constructing their own image of the merged organisation based on their perception of College B as having a dominant culture. The views of these respondents raised the issue of power which is often associated with mergers and acquisitions (Pikula 1999). Such negativity could have been minimised if teachers had reliable sources of information or reassurance about the merger.

Respondents’ perceptions of College B raised a vital issue about the significance of power relations and how this can influence management styles particularly during mergers. The college could have resolved this earlier on in the merger process by clarifying and identifying individuals who were in charge of the merger. The lack of up-to-date relevant information about the merger raised further concerns particularly for teachers in College A who were concerned that they might be subjected to the autocratic leadership style of the managers which they perceived was prevalent in College B.

Handy’s (1985) analysis of organisational culture provides some insight into the relevance of the cultural differences between both institutions in this study. Handy identified four main types of cultures prevalent in organisations which include: Role, Power, and Person and Task culture. Role cultures are usually autocratic and often associated with clear division of labour. Power cultures are mostly common in organisations where power resides among a group of individuals. Person cultures tend to nurture and support the individual whereas a Task culture focuses on the accomplishment of the task. Based on the stories told by the respondents, it would appear that College B had both power and role cultures, which were clearly reflected in its autocratic style of leadership. College A, on the other hand, had a person culture which was more accommodating and tolerant, particularly in its relationship with students. The fact that one of the merging partners had a power and role cultures while the other had a person culture could be seen as a potential source of problem from the onset. Assimilating both cultures appeared to have presented some challenges and was possibly a reason for the high staff turnover rate, particularly for senior leaders of College A, who left the



organisation voluntarily (Cartwright and Cooper 1993) pre and post-merger, possibly because they could not envisage their future in the merged institution.

Cultural differences coupled with the inadequate focus on human resource issues have been reiterated as some of the reasons for merger and strategic failures (Cheng 2009; Stafford and Miles 2014). According to the respondents, the merger process would have been more effective if teachers were encouraged to contribute and develop the values of the new organisation and new ways of working. This would have given them the opportunity to embrace and take ownership of the new culture. What emerged with clarity from respondents showed that they were keen to be part of the change process if the opportunity existed.

Colleges in the FE sector that have successfully merged identified the integration of both cultures as crucial in the merger process. This point was reiterated by another Principal who had previous experience of a merger (Hay Group 2010). He said that discussing the anticipated business model of the merged institution was not enough to gain support of staff and that there is a need to create a shared culture. According to him:

‘Not by preaching about business models and efficiency. This is necessary but not sufficient. Give a sense of identity, joint projects and mutual involvement. Ask people how the business should be – they build the culture’ (Hay Group 2010:7).

This clearly highlights the importance of collaborative working and developing systems of shared basic assumptions (Schein 2013; Boddy 2014) which is the main purpose of organisational culture. With regard to the merger under investigation, the cultures of both colleges were intense and deeply entrenched, which made it difficult to change people’s attitudes and ways of working.

Mergers between two organisations are known to create insecurities which, ultimately may inhibit productivity and lead to competition among staff (Firth 2014). The process of integrating senior leaders and managers in an institution is crucial to successful integration during a merger because they can help facilitate the process and raise morale within their teams. There was limited evidence to suggest that such integration had taken place during the merger. Data obtained in the course of the study indicated that the senior managers in College A may not have envisaged their future in the merged institution. Also, the lack of teacher involvement during the merger meant that there was limited opportunity to work collectively and identify positive features of both College A and B

that could have been retained. The extent of cultural differences between both colleges became apparent during the interviews when two respondents disclosed that some senior directors from College A had to resign pre and post-merger. One of the three directors was said to have hastily arranged a staff meeting during which he confirmed that the merger was going to lead to a 'tough regime' and 'difficult times'. This was an indication that some senior directors were already feeling insecure and anticipating a culture clash as a result of the merger (Buono, Bowditch and Lewis 1985; Cheng 2009). Other directors who stayed on post-merger resigned at short notice when it became apparent that they could no longer adapt to the new ways of 'doing things', particularly after their positions had been deleted from the new organisational structure. The perception and feelings exhibited by the managers in College A and the unexpected resignation is not common during mergers (DfES 2003; Calvert and Rosner 2010). The pattern of events leading to the resignations of senior managers in College A seems to be convergent with the findings of a study conducted by Walsh (1989) which indicated that turnover of senior managers post mergers and acquisition was usually over 25%.

The lack of cohesion between senior management staff was cascaded further down their teams particularly after senior management staff in college A had overtly exhibited a negative feeling about the merger. Such feelings were cascaded further down their teams. This, in turn had a major impact on teachers who were not only struggling to cope with the uncertainty of the merger but also found themselves in situations without line managers to support and encourage them during the transition. The competition and resentment between teachers from both colleges was evident post-merger as indicated in the following comments from one of the respondents:

'I think at some point people were just looking out for themselves'  
(Respondent 2, College A).

Working under conditions as described by the above respondent could possibly have led to anxiety, stress and breakdown in communication among teachers. It would seem that teachers were competing with each other (Buono, Browditch and Lewis 1985; Payne 2008) to fill up their courses to prove that there was demand for their courses. Competition among teachers during periods of change can be intense as articulated in a study conducted by Elliot (2006: 7) on the impact of changes on teachers in FE sector. According to him:

Competition had a clear effect upon staffs' relationships with each other, and promoted "challenges about resources and about which area's more important".

#### **5.4 Communicating Change**

One of the key strategies cited in the literature as paramount during periods of change in general, and mergers in particular, is the communication strategy (FEFC 2000; Boddy 2012, 2014; Cheng 2009; Moran and Panasian 2005). Lack of transparency and use of technical language were two key issues that emerged within the theme on communication. Communication is important from day one of the merger process and should be believable (KPMG 1999; Stewart 2003; Davenport and Barrow 2012). Communication does not merely involve passing information: it should focus on 'reducing uncertainty, should promote integration, build trust and commitment and be capable of managing expectations' (Davenport and Barrow 2012:9). The communication strategy is in fact the main method of sharing knowledge and ensuring that employees are adequately prepared to cope with a merger. If not managed properly, the communication process can be a major source of stress as evident amongst FE teachers during periods of change (Kinman and Wray 2013:8). The importance of engaging and communicating with teachers during periods of change is perhaps summed up by Maughan, Teeman and Wilson (2012:3) who proposed that effort should be made:

'To ensure that teachers are on board with the planned changes – leaders can avoid criticisms by making clear their aims and intended outcomes of any change processes'

With regard to the current study, the initial proposal to merge was shared by management earlier on in the process. However, the implications and process of managing the change were not clearly articulated. There were issues during the merger regarding the content of information shared, the medium and language used. This in turn created a platform for mistrust between management and staff. Teachers had to develop their own mental models of the merged institution (Davenport and Barrow 2012). According to the respondents, teachers relied on the grapevine as a source of information. Rumours from unreliable sources raised false hope among those who assumed that they were going to retain their jobs whilst others became anxious that they were going to lose their source of livelihood. It would seem that senior management did not provide relevant information to enable teachers make informed decisions. This further instigated a negative attitude towards the merger.

Respondents were informed that the merger was going to be a type B merger which, at that point was not very clear to most people. The use of technical language and lack of clarity of such terms may have fuelled speculation that College A would be taken over by a competitor. Although teachers knew that the merger was imminent, the communication process generated negative reactions according to the respondents:

‘They told us why change was necessary – that is it! How it was going to be implemented or how it was going to affect us was kept a secret. I personally don’t think it was managed well’ (Respondent 5, College A).

Another respondent said:

‘Periods of change can be very unsettling for all stakeholders. In my view, it is the most important aspect of the change process and they got it so wrong. We didn’t even know what was happening. (Respondent 4, college A)

‘Although we had two briefing sessions where attempts were made to share some information about the merger – that it was going to be a Type A merger. I don’t think they told us everything. Most of our questions were unanswered and there was nothing about the sequence of events or how the new structure will be initiated to ensure smooth transition’  
(Respondent 2, College A)

The above responses highlight the need for clarity of information from senior management regarding working arrangements particularly during a major transformation. It seems the messages from management during the merger process were inconsistent and may have contributed to a lack of readiness and preparation for change (Weiner 2009). There may be two reasons why the communication strategy was not effective during the merger. Firstly, it could be that the college management had failed to recognise the positive impact that the teachers could have made during the change process. Secondly, the lack of adequate information during the merger may be attributed to lack of relevant change management skills and experience of those who conducted the merger process.

Apart from the personal impact of the merger, the inadequate communication process also meant that the long term staffing issues were not clarified, leaving very little time for planning as the merger and redundancies continued even at the start of the academic year. The involvement of teachers in the process would have been crucial in curriculum planning to ensure that the needs of students were adequately met. Teachers could have been in a better position to ensure lasting change if the visions of the new college had been shared with them (Lattimer 2012). More importantly, it may have given teachers more confidence to cope better with the merger.

The perception of the respondents seems to be convergent with the view that mergers in education have always been seen as difficult for staff because of the minimal consultation and lack of information regarding key staffing issues (Calvert and Rosner 2010; Stewart 2003).

### **5.5 Lack of Trust**

Organisational change presents its own challenges and the process of internal adaptations can be particularly difficult when employees are suspicious of management tactics. Despite evidence in the literature that highlights the importance of building trusting relationship between management and staff during periods of change, this crucial issue which can determine the success or failure of a merger is not often addressed. Trust between employees and management acts as a catalyst that can foster a positive attitude during periods of change (Zayim and Kondakci 2014; Holbeche 2007) and mergers in particular. Stahl and Sitkin (2005:84) suggested that trust is crucial in so many ways:

‘it can improved the quality of employee work performance, problem solving, and communication, and can enhance employee commitment and citizenship behaviour.

However, in the case of this merger, the lack of consistent information created fear and mistrust among teachers according to the respondents. Drawing from the literature (Heskett 2012), as well as the data obtained in this study, the theme of trust deficit becomes very significant particularly when the merger consultation document seems to contradict what the incumbent principal of College A had presented to teachers at a meeting as a reason for the merger. He confirmed that the college was not financially stable to sustain its operations and that a merger was the only option. However, the merger consultation document gave a rather contradictory assessment of the situation:

‘It is not a merger driven by negative factors such as a failing college or a college with financial problems, nor is it being forced by one of the partners’ (consultation document, page 4).

The two conflicting reasons for the merger presented to staff could have fuelled suspicion and may have impacted negatively on their attitude and commitment to the merger.

Mergers and acquisitions are known to reveal problems of dominance and subordination in organisations (Vaara 2003) which eventually creates alienation and a ‘them and us’ attitude between management and employees as revealed in the following comments:

‘Although we had two briefing sessions where attempts were made to share some information about the merger, I don’t think they told us everything. Most of our questions were unanswered and there was nothing about the sequence of events or how the new structure will be initiated to ensure smooth transition. What I mean is that no one had any useful information about our jobs. That was my main concern. It was as if they were all maintaining a tight lip, not wanting to say much’  
(Respondent 2, College A)

‘It was an unsettling time, with so much speculation and insecurity. As far as I am concerned, the process wasn’t properly managed. Even line managers didn’t seem to know what was happening so it was just a waiting game, and impossible to update staff. As far as I am concerned, morale was affected seriously’ (Respondent 3, College B)

‘There was clearly something they were not telling us at the time’  
(Respondent 5, College A)

Respondents were equally suspicious of the merger arrangement when they were informed that College A would be dissolved and then incorporated into the merged institution for one year, while College B retained its name and assumed full control of the merged institution. This move led staff to perceive it more as a takeover than a merger. One respondent who had been teaching in College A for 18 years described how she felt when she heard the announcement that College A was going to be dissolved:

‘It was like mourning a loss’ (Respondent 1, College A)

The above respondent seemed to be attached to the college. Her comment reinforces the point made by Cartwright and Cooper (1990) who compared employee experiences of a merger to bereavement of a close friend. This analogy is quite relevant particularly when there is a high degree of uncertainty and can lead to human and social issues which are often ignored during mergers. Respondents made reference to other colleges that had embarked on similar mergers but were able to retain their identity and names. Suspicion from staff could have been avoided if management had clarified from the outset that the property, rights and liabilities of college A would be transferred to college B rather than using technical terms such as Type A and Type B mergers which may not have made any meaning to some staff at that point in time. There was a sense of false hope that both colleges would be working together to develop a bigger and more successful institution. This, however, was not the case as it turned out to be what staff described as a ‘covert takeover’ because college A had a significantly higher number of redundancies compared to College B. This apparently is a common tactic used during college mergers (Lashbrooke 1995). What is clearly an acquisition is often disguised as a merger to make it more palatable to those concerned (Hay Group 2010). As one respondent commented:

‘We didn’t know what was happening over there. People were losing their jobs here especially during students enrolment. If you didn’t get enough students on your course, then your place was not secured’ (Respondent 1, College A).

The experience of this respondent reaffirms one of the key features of the ethos of the FE sector, which is to compete for the available student cohort (Shadwick 2007). The lack of transparency during mergers is known to impact on staff morale and it seems to be the case in this particular study.

### **5.6 Power, Micro and Macro Politics of Change**

Mergers can be complex social issues which inevitably brings people together usually under uncertain conditions (Vaara 2003). Politics and power are embedded within organisational systems (Alexiadou 2001) particularly during mergers. The impact of politics and power during mergers have been emphasised by Cartwright and Cooper (1990: 69) who asserted that mergers are mostly about

‘power, differing perceptions, cultures and definitions of the situation, and so are potentially conflictual; the social and cultural ramifications extend beyond the boardroom’

The theme of power and politics emerged in this study as a result of frequent references by respondents about been told ‘what to do’ and the fact that College B was the dominant partner in the merger which meant that it had a higher bargaining power. Also pertinent to this theme, is the description of the principal by respondents as someone who must ‘always have her way’ and the decision by senior directors of College A to resign from their posts (Page 118). This seems to suggest that power, influence and control were exerted during the merger. The evidence obtained from respondents also suggests a culture of dominance, control and non-inclusive approach to decision making which meant that they had to accept and comply with the merger even though the process was not clearly articulated.

Various aspects of organisations including structure and culture are designed to reflect positions of authority and power and, as a direct result, can be used to influence the outcome of a merger process. With regards to this particular merger, there was an interaction of micro politics between individual staff and departments as they strived to retain their positions using their clout. Macro politics existed at the organisational level as the dominant power in the merger, College B, was able to set most of the conditions

under which the merger was agreed particularly, the retention of its existing IT systems which was less superior compared with College A. The powerful position of College B could have also influenced the decision to retain most of its own senior managers in the merged institution. These changes were reflected in the new organisational structure.

According to the respondents, some senior positions in College A were deleted or merged with College B and more senior positions were assigned to managers in College B. This was seen as a major reason why some Directors in College A decided to resign from their posts. One of the respondents, a curriculum manager, lost her job to another manager occupying a similar position in College B. Another respondent, a head of department in College A, lost his position and had to compete for his job with another member of staff from College B. With regard to the impact of the merger he said:

‘I had no input in the merger. I was affected by the redundancies and had to apply for my job as the head of department three times’. (Respondent 5, College A)

While the merger process was ongoing, some members of staff who had access to confidential information had already disclosed the names of those likely to be made redundant a few months before the formal redundancy process had commenced. According to the respondent below:

‘It was difficult to understand what was happening. It looked as if some people had been earmarked to go’ (Respondent 1 College A)

In major change initiatives of this nature, people who are more powerful get to decide what needs to be changed, how it needs to be changed, and who will be involved in creating the change (Branston 2010).

The implementation of change in any organisation without the involvement of staff is one of the key reasons why mergers are not often successful. The decision to merge is usually driven by senior management. Although teachers did not have any such roles during the merger, they felt that the top-down decision making process of college B in particular (as described by the respondents on page 105) could have influenced their perception. There seem to be a convergence between the literature (Preedy et al 1997; Branston 2010) and the experiences of respondents in this study. Both seem to suggest that there is always an element of power and politics during periods of change as a result of the drive by certain



individuals to change the status quo, which eventually leads to conflict (Morrison, 1998; Gleeson and Knight 2008). Mergers are often associated with winners and losers with one of the organisations usually benefiting more than the other. In this study, College B happened to be in a stronger and dominant financial position and was therefore, able to retain its name and most of its employees when compared with College A. A similar relationship is also reflected in the context of individuals. In the context of this study, it could be assumed that the power exhibited by key individuals during the change process seems to have taken away the rights of teachers in contributing to decisions that affected them.

Elliot (2006: 21) reinforces the fact that politics and power are deeply embedded in the FE sector and in most cases the impact is usually felt by teachers:

‘The political context of further education is indeed one of hegemonic influence and control, where debate is constrained within a technocratic market discourse, to the point where many lecturers are experiencing the fundamental contradiction of educational practice’

The respondents recognised that, as teachers, they are implementers of change. They were also aware that they lacked the power to voice any dissent against this particular change but to conform as is usually the case in further education. The negative attitude could have been mitigated if teachers and staff from both colleges had been encouraged to ‘buy in’ and contribute to the merger (Lee and Teo 2005). Teachers’ views are critical to the successful implementation of the change (Weiner 2009). The uncoordinated and fragmented approach adopted may be attributed to the limited opportunity for teachers to engage in dialogue and enquiries (Holbeche 2007).

Horsley and Kaser (1999) reiterate the importance of leaders in educational establishments paying attention to the process and content of change management because these are the key determinants of success or failure of any reform.

People generally tend to show commitment to change, particularly if they have participated in decisions relating to their work (Branston 2010). However, in this study, only one of the respondents had an input during the merger process, even though her involvement was limited (see page 106). As an experienced senior member of staff responsible for an entire curriculum area, she understands the needs of the students in her curriculum area and would have been in a better position to engage with the change process particularly in curriculum design. In this case, however, her only role was to

identify the staffing needs of the department. This must have been a major setback as she did not have enough information to update her staff about the proposed changes and the likely impact on the department. This, according to Stewart (2003) is not uncommon during education mergers and leaves most managers feeling uncertain about what to say.

As mentioned previously, change is usually associated with resistance, power (Pieterse, Caniels and Homan 2012) and emotional issues (Pikula 1999). Dealing with these requires unique skills. Although the idea of merging two colleges into a single entity had been achieved, the wider issues, particularly the expectations of teachers who were key stakeholders, were not managed effectively. What has been demonstrated so far in this study is that teachers are keen about change but not one that has been imposed or ignores their input (Swanepoel 2009). As one of the respondents commented:

‘I am for change, we have to, but it will make more sense if we know what is happening and why’ (Respondent 2, College A)

Rather than focus on the technical and political aspects of change process in which only some individuals or groups can have their own way (as the principal was described by the respondents on page 118), emphasis needs to shift towards a cultural approach that embraces and value people in the organisation (Stafford and Miles 2014). This, however, would involve an overhaul of the existing change management strategy in the college.

## **5.7 Motivation**

As mentioned earlier in the literature review in chapter 2, anyone who takes up teaching as a career knows that it is an ethics-laden profession and therefore, should be keen to make improvements (Fullan 2007). Such improvements can be made when teachers have an enquiring mind and are willing to make some adjustments in order to adapt, develop and meet the needs of learners. This seems to suggest that change is an intrinsic feature of a teacher’s job (Travers and Cooper 2006), therefore, knowledge of change management is required (Papastamatis 2009). Respondents in this study were keen about this aspect of their job. Motivation emerged as a theme in the study as a result of the respondents’ willingness to initiate change and make continuous improvements within the learning environment. There was a general consensus amongst both experienced and novice teachers that change is ingrained in their jobs and they seem to be keen to partake in the process. As indicated by the following respondents:

‘Like other colleges, this college is involved in other transformation projects. I opted to be on one of these projects (employer engagement), despite my effort to be part of that process, I think the transformation is happening but we have not been kept informed – as a result, I don’t think that I have been at the forefront of the change process which is unfortunate.

I have also put myself forward to be one of the IT champions in the college. The idea was to encourage teachers to use more interactive teaching techniques and to promote the use of moodle which most of them were not too keen to use at the time’ (Respondent 2, College A)

‘Change is a unique feature of a teacher’s profession. The environment in which they work changes constantly which means that we have to be prepared to respond to change and in some case be pro-active to change’ (Respondent 4, College A).

The comments from both respondents clearly show a passion and commitment to change given the challenges faced by educational establishments both at micro and macro levels. These respondents have accepted that change is inevitable in their jobs. For these teachers, the willingness to be part of the process is of paramount importance. The college, therefore, should have a moral responsibility to engage with them during periods of change. By ignoring the motivation and commitment of teachers during the recent merger, the college failed to deploy one of its most valuable human capital for the benefit of the organisation.

Despite the positive attitude to change demonstrated by respondents during the interview, when decision making and change management is constantly initiated top-down, it could eventually lead to low morale and failure of strategy as evident in the comments from the respondent below. This respondent appears to have lost her enthusiasm to engage in change initiatives in the college due to her previous experience of how change had been managed in the college. As a result, she has cultivated a rather passive and reactive attitude to change. Such sentiments and feeling of apathy may have been shared by other teachers. The reaction of this respondent reinforces the importance of integrating human resources during change:

‘I don’t think I engage too much in change initiatives. My area of responsibilities is a bit restrictive in terms of what I can do. So you can see we don’t have much control over things that happen here. As a result, I try to adjust whenever a new initiative is introduced’ (Participant 3, College B)

The comments from this respondent seem to conflict with one of the key attributes of effective teachers: to be proactive managers and leaders of the learning environment

(Alexiadou 2001). It could well be that the complete lack of power in decision making has made teachers consider themselves as 'passive bystanders' (Sikdar and Balwariya 2013) who only do what they are told. This partly explains the consistent pattern of negativity expressed in relation to the non-involvement of teachers in change management which seems to be evident in this study (page 106). The long term implication is that educational establishments will end up with human capital resources particularly teaching staff who are undervalued and inadequately deployed.

Apart from the motivational impact, teacher involvement in change also enables them to reflect carefully on their role as change agents. A study referred to earlier (Hay Group 2010:6) indicated that colleges that implement mergers successfully do so by involving teachers and encouraging 'peer coaching' and helping 'teaching staff to build networks with each other across the two colleges'. Such networks would have been ideal for both colleges in this study in order to prevent teachers feeling alienated from the process. Evidence from the same study (Hay Group 2010) also indicated that because of their involvement in the merger process, opportunities were created for teachers to work across subject areas to share different teaching experiences. According to one of the Principals who took part in the study, their objective was to create 'friends' who could trust each other and share experiences and successes. In his view, this enabled staff to create a positive culture and take ownership of the change process which clearly depicts the role of a change agent.

Although the strategic decisions regarding the merger was made earlier in the process by senior managers, the later stage of the merger should have provided an opportunity to engage more and involve those who were keen to be part of the process.

### **5.8 Knowledge Acquisition**

In order to facilitate learning, teachers are expected to develop their own knowledge because the content of what they teach and the method of delivery may be subject to change (Bascia and Hargreaves 2000). Consequently, any change that impacts on their professional role should involve them. This, in fact, is a valid reason to offer teachers effective professional development to ensure that they have developed the core competency to instigate and manage sustainable change that contributes to the overall effectiveness of their institutions in general and students' learning in particular (McGrath and Morrow 2009).

Change, reform and improvement in education impact more on teachers than others, as teachers can be seen as both the subject of change and agent of change (OECD 2012; Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler 2005). Therefore, if teachers are committed and keen to be part of a change initiative as indicated in this particular study, their institutions have an obligation to prepare them for these. Teachers do not only need to respond to new policies introduced within their institution, they also have to develop their own personal strategies to respond to change (Bennett et al 1997), hence the need to support them through the process of change.

The link between teacher development and educational change has been widely discussed in the literature (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992; Caena 2011; Hargreaves 2005; Lu and Ortlieb 2009). Yet, very few steps have been taken to redress the gap in knowledge. The need to empower teachers with relevant skills is highlighted by The European Commission which stated that:

‘The initial training cannot provide teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for a life-time of teaching. The education and professional development of every teacher needs to be seen as a lifelong task, and be structured and resourced accordingly’ (Communication of the European Communities: p.12)

What this means is that teachers must have an ‘enquiry mind’ to be able to respond to the changing needs of their learners. The respondents who had been trained in change management seem to be more confident in managing change compared with those without such knowledge (see page 99). As leaders who lead the learning environment, teachers need to be empowered with the right skills to enable them fulfil this function as suggested by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009: 29):

‘Every classroom must be led by a professional teacher. In order to achieve this goal, attention must be paid to the identification, development and continued support of these valued educators. One of the benchmarks for determining professionalism is the individual’s responsibility to control her or his work’

The initial teacher training and development programmes particularly in the lifelong learning sector aims to encourage teachers to develop as reflective practitioners who evaluate and review their lessons, identify what went well and what could be improved (Harrison 2012). This, however, is no longer sufficient as teachers now need to be prepared for, and be proactive with change because of the changing content of their job

which requires new knowledge. Donaldson (2010) suggests that successful education systems around the world should consider teachers to be key actors in educational change and should be fully engaged with the complexity often associated with change. This can only be achieved if they have the knowledge and skills to do so. Five respondents interviewed in this study were in support of including change management training as part of their professional development programme. They felt that apart from preparing teachers to cope with change better, knowledge of change management was far more likely to create a positive attitude and acceptance of change (pages 102 and 103). The need to acquire knowledge on change management as a part of professional development is best summed up by Fullan (2007) who suggests that:

‘Mastery of change management skills can be developed by strong initial teacher education and ongoing professional development since this is the most effective way of developing expertise in successful change management’

And Papastamatis (2009):

‘With changes in the environment, it has now become imperative to ensure that the professional development of teachers to improve their practice effectively’

The negative attitude to change which was highlighted by some respondents in the survey (Table 4.7) is likely to continue unless teachers develop a good understanding of the change process (Zayin and Kondakci 2014; Fullan and Hargreaves 1996; Zimmerman 2006). This, at least would support and prepare them to work collaboratively during periods of change (Rouse 2008), as indicated by a respondent:

‘I think change is a very complex subject that requires tact and particular skills to manage if results are to be achieved. As agents of change it may be necessary for teachers to gain this type of knowledge. Above all, it may help teachers respond better to change if they have a role in it’. (Respondent 3, College B)

Teachers have been described in the literature as leaders (Donaldson 2007). A leader should have knowledge of the change process (Kanter 2007; Northouse 2012; Boddy 2014) but as this opportunity is not usually available to teachers, the assumption is that those who have previously managed change would have done so under challenging and extremely difficult situations. This, in turn raises the important issue of stress and anxieties often linked to teaching. Acquiring change management skills will instil

confidence and commitment among teachers and those responsible for managing change in education as noted by Fullan and Miles (1992: 745):

‘Serious educational reform will never be achieved until there is a significant increase in the number of people – leaders and other respondents alike – who have come to internalise and habitually act on basic knowledge of how successful change takes place’

They went on to say that:

‘The problem is not really lack of innovation, but the enormous overload of fragmented, uncoordinated, and ephemeral attempts at change’ (p.748)

Both these quotations tend to emphasise the importance of developing an appropriate skill set for effective change management. However, some writers (Sirkin, Keenan and Jackson 2005) have argued that change management skills are difficult to learn because each manager or leader examines change from their own view point and experience and merely respond to events as they happen. Despite this difference in opinion, it can be argued that change, being an emotive subject, requires individuals with unique skills to manage the transition process. With adequate support from their institutions teachers are quite capable of fulfilling such roles during major transition programmes in their institutions.

Drawing from the on-going, it could be argued that one of the biggest reforms that could make an impact on teachers in the colleges where this study was conducted and the sector as a whole, is to equip teachers with leadership skills including change management skills to enable them manage the change process more effectively. This is significant, particularly for those who intend to progress into leadership and management positions.

## **5.9 Change Process**

The process of managing change poses a problem in organisations and has been identified as a source of failure for most change programmes particularly mergers in education (Calvert and Rosner 2010; Stafford and Miles 2014). Those responsible for the implementation of mergers do not seem to possess the skills or experience to do so effectively. (Stewart 2003). A study (DfES 2003:14) commissioned to evaluate mergers in the FE sector also confirmed that the merger process appeared repeatedly to be an area of concern:

‘Some problems could have been more rapidly resolved had the due diligence process been extended to cover not only finance but also property and environment, and staffing and management structure’

Although several approaches to change management process have been advocated (Boddy 2014) and discussed in the literature review (chapter 2), there is no particular model that offers a complete solution (Branston 2010) particularly when the change involves a major strategic change such as a merger. Nonetheless, it is imperative to ensure that the planning and implementation of change should at least fit in with the context of the organisation.

Both the broad literature (Katzenmeyer and Moller 2009; Fullan and Hargreaves 2005; Zimmerman 2006; Branston 2010) and anecdotal evidence suggest that lack of collaboration during periods of change is perceived as a major reason why teachers are not usually committed to change. Major change initiatives such as mergers should promote collaborative working between those who are most likely to be affected by such change and those implementing the change. A study (Calvert and Rosner 2010) conducted on behalf of the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) suggests that there should be an opportunity to set up working parties to ensure effective harmonisation of the systems of both organisations during a merger. With regards to the current study, the systems of both colleges were incompatible as indicated by respondents. This led to major technical issues which also resulted in loss of confidential data with some students being placed on the wrong courses:

‘There was a lot of confusion at the time not just about staffing issues but also the resources we needed to do our jobs properly. It was difficult to obtain the right data especially when they combined student records for both colleges’  
(Respondent 1, College A)

An evaluation of FE mergers (DfES 2003:24) supports the point raised by this respondent. The study confirmed that:

‘Merger impacted on the general systems of operation in the college. It required careful rationalisation of curriculum in many instances and increased the uncertainty in the local population as to the curriculum offer’

The timing of change and mergers in particular is believed to be crucial in successful implementation. Evidence, however, suggests that the time needed to prepare for FE mergers was often under-estimated (DfES 2003). The period leading up to this particular



merger was quite short and unsettling. In addition, it led to changing roles and a pressing need to adjust to new realities and challenges, which is usually associated with change.

It may be that the short time frame leading up to the merger may have impacted on the due diligence or pre-deal process (KPMG 2003; 2009). The period between the confirmation of the merger and the actual implementation was less than nine months as evidenced in the merger consultation document. The short time duration could be one of the reasons why the culture of both colleges was not carefully evaluated and harnessed properly. According to one respondent, the merger was rushed leaving very limited time to evaluate the impact on teachers:

‘There was a long gap from the time they briefed us about the merger and the time it took place. Most people thought it was not going to happen again. All of a sudden, the whole process started again. It was hard to make any decision. I didn’t even know whether to look elsewhere’. (Respondent 2, College A)

A report from the Joint Steering Group of College Governors also confirmed that the merger was delayed for some time because the initial timing was not considered appropriate.

‘Although a merger of college A and college B would offer increased opportunities for students and employers and would benefit both Colleges, the current political and financial uncertainties pose too great a risk to proceed at this time’. (Minutes, 2010).

The above quotation clearly shows that both colleges may have underestimated the time required to complete the due diligence process and to harmonise their systems.

There is limited evidence in the literature about the most appropriate time to implement change, particularly if it is an emergent change (Stewart 2003). However, certain conditions are expected to be met to ensure a smooth transition. A major strategic change such as a merger requires careful planning in order to ensure that it aligns with the ideologies and vision of the organisations involved. Such a change also has to be carefully paced in order to minimise the negative impact both on employees and the organisation as a whole. The pace and timing of the merger between both colleges in this study seems to have conflicted with the values that were being promoted: ‘Opportunities for staff’ (Merger consultation document, page 9). Respondents could not relate with this particular value’. They seem to have lost confidence in the way the merger was conducted because of the feeling of insecurity which led some teachers to opt for voluntary redundancy. In

fact, some of those who had hoped to retain their jobs were eventually made redundant. The precarious nature of the merger meant that those who were retained after the merger still felt vulnerable. In the process of trying to speed up the merger process and drawing a list of staff redundancies, both colleges may have lost experienced and capable employees, who could have contributed to the achievement of the goals of the new institution. The short time frame was not sufficient for managers to assess the staffing needs of their departments carefully, especially when positions that had just been made redundant were then advertised within two weeks. This alone was sufficient evidence for teachers to conclude that there was in fact, a hidden agenda to get rid of certain members of staff particularly in college A (see page 139).

The limited time frame in which the merger was completed also meant that the IT systems were not properly integrated. This led to competition between teachers, as both colleges were running similar courses and there were desperate attempts to fill up courses. This created a very hostile and competitive environment for teachers. Courses that were not recruiting students at the time were closed down, leading to more uncertainties and redundancies. The comments from a respondent below indicate how competitive the environment was during the merger:

‘Student selection and admission was very difficult. Teachers were advising students to stay in their own campus rather than the other. On some occasions, we had students registered for courses on both campuses’  
(Respondent 5, College A)

This seems to have reinforced one of the objectives of the merger to:

‘Combine and build on the best of colleges, remove duplication and wasteful completion to create a stronger and more sustainable and responsive college for the future’. (Consultation Document 2011: 9)

The overall impact of the short time frame led to further problems, as teachers could not proceed with their annual curriculum planning or establish a fit between courses on offer and meeting the needs of students.

A previous study (FEFC 1998) indicated that successful FE mergers were able to set up work structures with teachers being the main focus. The objective was to set out specific targets and action plans to ensure the harmonisation of procedures. This, however, was not experienced by teachers in this study. Calvert and Rosner (2010) also indicated that

successful mergers involve staff from the corporation which had ceased operations. These employees were reassured that their views and suggestions would be taken into consideration during the implementation process. If a similar strategy had been adopted in this particular study, it would have been a perfect opportunity for teachers from the merged institutions to work together and familiarise themselves with the new areas of work and systems rather than compete with each other.

The process of change management starts with a decision to adopt a planned or unplanned approach. Considering that the type of change explored in this study was planned, there should have been a clearer strategy for evaluating the implementation process. The college should have considered the likely impact on staff and other operational issues. However, views expressed by respondents indicate that the change process was not properly coordinated and lacked coherence. Evidence from the literature suggests that a top-down, power cohesive approach (Benne and Chin 1985) is often adopted in education particularly when it involves policy, structural or curriculum changes (McCarthy 2009). The top-down culture of managing change in education may have influenced the approach adopted by the college during the merger. Those in leadership or management positions initiated and implemented the change while those with less power merely complied with the mandate for change.

Comments from respondents (see pages 105 and 106) raise questions about the way the merger was conducted. The description of the transition period by respondents tend to suggest a sense of alienation from the process and an almost despairing negativity about non-inclusion and the impact of the merger on both their personal and professional lives. The negative experiences of the respondents would have shaped the climate and culture of the merged institutions (Muller 2006).

Evidence also tend to suggest that the college may have attempted Lewin's three step model of change management (Boddy 2014; Buchanan and Huyzinski 2012) because it was in theory, a planned change. It seems all efforts were focused on unfreezing the status quo, moving to the desired change and refreezing. This approach, though rational, often attracts negativity because it 'forces' employees to the desired state of change without carefully considering how the change could impact on their state of readiness. The 'world' in which these change strategies are likely to be effective is different from that of the teachers because they develop their own view of change and how it could impact on their professional lives (Kelly and Berthelsen 1997). As the data obtained in this study

has indicated, this approach to change management is widely resented by teachers because it ignores their emotions and it is far more likely to contribute to a negative reaction or minimal effort (Boddy 2014) which in most cases leads to unwilling compliance (Gleeson and Shain 1999).

### **5.10 Emotional and Psychological Impact of Merger**

The emotional impact of change is widely acknowledged in the literature (Samad 2007; Kyraoih 2001; Hargreaves 2004). Individuals generally respond to change differently, depending on what meaning they make of it. With regard to this study, the impact of the merger on the personal and professional lives of respondents was highlighted. Due to the uncertainty often associated with educational change, teachers usually anticipate how the change will manifest and the challenges it brings. With regards to a change initiative involving a merger, Hay and Fourie (2002: 115) warns that

‘Careful consideration ought to be given to particularly personal factors and that staff fears will have to be addressed in the process to ensure effective merging.

However, the data obtained in this study tend to suggest that the perception or feelings of staff were not considered as a priority by senior management. This could be one of reasons why teachers are known to experience anxiety and ‘burn out’ (Farber 1991) during periods of change. Despite holding a one-day CPD session on change management post-merger as indicated by respondents (page 100), the issues that were of primary concern to staff were not discussed at the training, the session seem to have focused on the importance of change. The CPD session would have been more relevant if it was held prior to the merger.

The literature (DIUS 2008; Calvert and Rosner 2010; Mather and Steinert 2014) emphasise the importance of people issues in change management. Mergers often impact on both ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ issues, but there is often too much emphasis on financial gains which is usually at the heart of ‘hard issues’ (Coffey, Garrow and Holbeche 2012). The way in which ‘soft’ issues relating to people are managed shows the capability of managers and can also instil confidence in the change process. It seems like this critical factor that could determine the success or failure of any merger had been ignored by the college.

The impact of the merger on employees can be assessed at both personal and group levels. At both levels, the morale of employees is usually low, sometimes because job prospects are threatened. In addition, there were clearly issues of trust from the onset. Even after the initial round of redundancies, those who were reassured of their jobs in college A did not seem to have the confidence to stay on due to fear and insecurity. In a particular department, five out of 12 teachers were made redundant. As a result, even those whose jobs were secured still felt unsettled and a further three resigned as a result of the tension and fear of further job cuts. Two respondents capture this state of affairs noting that:

‘The thought of a merger sent a message to all staff that problems were approaching. Some of my colleagues were made redundant. My name was initially down for redundancy but for some reason, I was eventually spared. What I don’t understand is why they are still recruiting teachers. Not sure if this place is safe and I don’t want to feel too comfortable in case there is another round of surprises’ (Respondent 1, College A)

‘Not sure whether to remain here’ (Respondent 4, College A)

Managing the expectation of staff, and developing an effective strategy to deal with the emotional and psychological impact of change requires excellent management skills. This, however, may not have been demonstrated by those responsible for implementing the merger. It may be that their lack of expertise in the management and coordination of the change process was the reason why an external consultant was invited by the college to deliver a session on the importance of change in organisations after the merger had already taken place.

This training event have, in a way, highlighted a failure on the part of the college to deal with the emotional impact of change, as it provided an opportunity for staff to vent their anger about the way the merger had been conducted. The training also highlighted why major change initiatives like mergers should be managed by individuals who are ready to acknowledge how other ‘soft’ issues such as personality, gender and experience can influence individual attitudes to change. In this merger, it seems that the personal dimension of change was ignored (Morrison 1998). Reflecting this, one respondent said that the merger had created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity:

‘It was a much tensed period of time. There was something fishy whenever you walked into the building during the merger period. Not sure if you were going to last the day’ (Respondent 5, College A)

The feelings of uncertainty experienced by respondents echo the claim that negative feelings are usually associated with change, particularly when teachers do not have adequate insight about the change (Waugh and Punch 1987).

### **5.11 Leadership**

There is substantial evidence in the literature to suggest that leadership is one of the key variables likely to impact on change initiatives (Anderson and Ackerman 2010; Geribo 2011; Boddy 2014; Northouse 2013). Although a major reform such as a merger requires the expertise of external consultants, it should also have included leaders in the college with the capability to motivate and support teachers. In this case, their line managers and curriculum managers would have been better suited to this role. However, from all accounts, this category of staff did not have sufficient information to share with their teams (See response from a curriculum manager on page 105).

Whether a merger is deemed successful or not depends initially on the vision and direction of leaders and their ability to mitigate negative issues of the change process. Leaders have the responsibility to promote and share their vision with followers in order to fully achieve the objectives of the organisation. With regards to this merger, the principals of both colleges appeared to have shared the rationale for the merger and jointly proposed the overall vision. Naturally, they should also share the responsibility for convincing stakeholders of the need to merge and the likely benefits. It was the responsibility of the leaders to set up the interim structure of the organisation, academic programmes, and to communicate all merger information to staff. Respondents do not think that this particular objective was met, as they felt that those who were leading an entire department were not in a position to support their staff during the merger process. It seems that the process of achieving the vision of the merged institution was not shared with key stakeholders, particularly those who were keen to be part of the process.

Getting teachers involved in the process would have been a perfect opportunity to influence the activities of staff in the college. It seems that senior leaders did not identify the potentials of their followers who could have contributed positively to the change process. The ability to identify the potential of followers is a key leadership quality (Huczynski and Buchanan 2012). There is no evidence in this particular study to suggest that senior managers leading the change programme demonstrated this vital quality. One respondent indicated that there should have been a lead person in each department providing up to date information regarding the merger but instead, those in charge of their curriculum areas were not aware of the expectations from senior management:

‘We had curriculum directors, managers and coordinators yet not of them were able to provide detail information about the merger. These people are meant to lead and direct us’ (Respondent 3, College B)

Based on Mintzberg's (1990) classification of managerial roles, the lead person in this case, should have been the disseminator. They could have motivated and communicated useful information during the merger but they seemed to be ineffective. The merger was a major transformation for both colleges. Any change of this scope requires transformational leaders, who are able to influence the behaviour of followers, reinforce the values of the organisation and achieve the desired outcomes. Based on data obtained during the interviews, it seems that this important factor was not substantially considered.

### **5.12. Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the central themes that emerged from the data and how they impacted on teachers as a result of the merger. It has also highlighted some of the key issues associated with the implementation of mergers. Although respondents knew that the merger was imminent, they were not adequately prepared to cope with the challenges of the merged institution. There were commonalities between the themes developed in this chapter and the existing literature on educational change and mergers in the FE sector and elsewhere. Both seem to draw on the issue of imposed change, the role of teachers as initiators of change and the need for preparation of teachers to cope with change. However, there are specific issues that are pertinent to this study. This study has raised the importance of embedding change into the professional development of teachers as a strategy to ensure their readiness and empowerment for change. The study has also examined how teachers' role as change agents should be developed in order to enhance their professional status and self-development.

Successful mergers require careful consideration of both 'soft' and 'hard' issues of change but more effort seems to have been focused on financial issues and developing a new organisational structure. The time frame and other 'soft' issues particularly the emotional and psychological impact of change and the divergent cultures of both organisations were not accorded the same level of importance. Teachers expect support and attention from their managers during the periods of change if it is to be successful (Muller 2006). However, the managers in this case study were themselves not clear about the impending strategy or plans of the new organisation and, as a result, they were not in a position to provide support for their staff. From the respondents' perspectives, failure to mobilise and engage with teachers during the merger was a primary reason why they felt that the merger process was unsuccessful. This seems to be convergent with prior

literature (Pikula 1999; Hay 2010) that the lack of understanding of human resources during mergers is a primary reason for the failure of mergers between large organisations. The themes discussed in this chapter have highlighted some of the difficulties associated with mergers. Considering the number of senior managers, leaders and teachers who left College A voluntarily including after the merger, it can be concluded that the limited time frame in which the merger was implemented and the divergent cultures of both organisations were major triggers for some of the difficulties that emerged. Evidence from the literature tends to suggest that these soft issues usually take time to adjust to in order to assess the benefits of the merger. Based on the evidence obtained and explored in this chapter, some recommendations on how teachers can be better prepared to cope with change particularly mergers will be discussed in the next chapter.



## **CHAPTER 6      CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This concluding chapter sets out to examine whether the aims of the thesis have been achieved. I start by reflecting on the issues discussed in the preceding chapters. Chapter one provided an overview of the rapid rate of change in education particularly the FE sector and how change impacts on teachers. It also provided some background information on both institutions prior to the merger. Chapter two examined the existing literature on organisational change, change management in education and the role of teachers in change the process. Chapter three focused on the methodology adopted in the study. A detailed analysis of the data and the themes that emerged are presented in chapters four and five.

I will now reflect on each research question to ascertain whether the aims and objectives of the study have been met. Some recommendations are also presented based on the findings of this study. The limitations to this study and further area for research will be discussed.

The aim of this study was to examine how teachers in the FE sector are prepared for change with particular reference to a merger between two FE colleges.

To gain some understanding of how change was managed during the merger process, relevant data collection tools were used with the aim of gauging teachers' perceptions of the merger process and to find out whether they had been adequately prepared for this particular change. Another objective was to examine whether teachers have the skills to cope with, and manage change better.

In the course of this study, the literature on organisational change revealed that change is the only constant, as organisations respond to the changing needs of their environment. With regard to the education sector, the rapid rate of change tends to create even further challenges, as institutions have to consider the best approach for managing change amongst the array of systematic change models advocated by writers on change management. Despite the plethora of change management methods, there is still no definitive statement on the most effective change management approach to adopt in education (Bush 1996; Branson 2010).

## **Overarching Research Question**

How well are teachers prepared by the management of their college to cope with, and manage change during a merger?

This study has explored the wider problems often associated with inadequate change management in further education during a merger. The specific themes relating to this research question are motivation, leadership, politics and power. Teachers were keen to be part of the change initiatives and this particular merger, but as a result of the top-down leadership style and non-inclusive approach to decision making, it seems that the college did not ascertain whether they were able to cope with the merger. As evident from the survey and interview data, the non-involvement of teachers in educational change, coupled with the series of unsuccessful change programmes including three attempts to change the organisational structure and teaching and learning strategy (discussed in section 1) particularly in College A have culminated in a negative attitude to change. The perception of teachers in this study is that the rationale for change is often shared with them but the actual preparation that is crucial during the planning process is usually ignored. The findings of this study have shown a widespread discontent at the approach adopted by the college during the merger process. As indicated in the wider literature, this seems to be a widespread problem in education despite the vast array of literature advocating 'teachers as leaders' and the important role they play as implementers of change who are responsible for translating policies into action. Based on the evidence from this particular study, we can reach a conclusion that more emphasis was placed on the financial benefits of the merger, and as a direct result, the wider organisational issues including culture and personal factors which ought to be given priority were not adequately considered. There are comparable findings in the study and the literature to show that the non-involvement of teachers in education creates further complexity often resulting in emotional and psychological issues in a job that already presents its own challenges. What was clear in this study is that teachers, who are key stake holders in their institutions, will continue to feel alienated from the change process, as the respondents in this study have reported, as long as the incessant top-down, non-inclusive approach to change management continues to be adopted in education.

### **Subsidiary Research Question 1**

What strategies were employed by the college to involve and prepare teachers for the merger?

This research question sought to establish the specific strategies employed by the college during the merger to prepare teachers for the transition. 'Preparedness for change' has been used in the context of this study to encapsulate the type of support provided to teachers through relevant professional development programmes, creating awareness, developing a shared vision, involvement and collaboration between key stakeholders who are often affected by change in their institutions.

Themes relating to this particular question included the change process and communication. The lack of clear direction of how the merger would be implemented or the likely implications on staff led to too much reliance on the grapevine as the main source of communication.

The findings show that despite the fact that teachers are constantly referred to as agents of change in the wider literature there is no evidence in this study to indicate that they had been fully prepared by the college to cope with the merger. Although the college had informed staff that a merger was imminent, the actual transition process was not divulged. Figure 4.3 shows that an overwhelming 34 (85%) of the respondents said that they were not prepared for the merger. Although the college arranged a one-day CPD session on change management post-merger, the session was perceived as meaningless because it focused on the importance of change in education which respondents felt did not provide new knowledge. Teachers were already familiar with the increased competition between colleges in the sector and they were equally aware that a merger may be the only way forward to help address some of the organisational issues and the dwindling student numbers in some curriculum areas.

The two briefing sessions held by the incumbent Principals of both colleges had created awareness about the prospects of a merger and the vision of the merged institution was shared with staff. How that vision would be translated in practice was not clear, neither was the role or impact of the merger on teachers.

The experiences of the respondents highlight the importance of developing a sensitive and supportive environment during periods of change (Lassonde and Israel 2009). The findings from this particular study have shown that the level of teacher preparation for change was inadequate.

### **Subsidiary Research question 2**

What was the impact of the merger on teachers in the college?

The objective of this question was to examine the impact of the merger on teachers.

From all accounts, the college seem to have adopted a top-down, power cohesive and non-inclusive model of change management (Benne and Chin 1985; Huberman 1989; Greenlee 2007). Organisational change, particularly those involving mergers often lead to uncertainties. The two themes that were particularly relevant to this research questions were emotional and psychological issues which created a trust deficit.

Although the change was strategic in nature and required close supervision by senior leaders in both institutions, the fact that most of these managers were from teaching backgrounds and may not have had any training in managing change (Stewart 2003) could be a reason why the process was not managed effectively according to the respondents. The non-inclusion of teachers during the merger and the lack of timely information seem to have created a feeling of insecurity and fear during the change process. This in turn created further mistrust between management and teachers. Teachers also felt powerless and did not seem to have a 'voice' to participate in decision making on issues that affected their future. They were, however, assertive about their perception of the crucial role that they can and should play as implementers of change. Evidently, the organisation and management of the process was clumsy and neglected the needs and opinions of people who were valuable human resources and whose views are critical in the successful implementation of change (Weiner 2009).

### **Subsidiary Research Question 3**

Are teachers more likely to embrace change if they perceive change as an intrinsic feature of their role as change agents?

I sought to examine whether teachers were more likely to be receptive to change if they perceived change as an intrinsic feature of their role as change agents. It was established in the course of the study that teachers are aware that change is intrinsically linked to their jobs. The two themes that were particularly relevant to this question were culture and motivation. The respondents clearly had the desire to engage with change initiatives but the culture of the institution seems to reflect some degree of dominance and control which ultimately undermined and excluded teachers from the change process. One key finding of this study is the fact that the respondents acknowledged their role as implementers of change in the institution. This view was widely shared even amongst those who had a negative or indifferent attitude to change (Table 4.7). The respondents perceived

themselves as change agents and are keen to act as such because the success of the education system depends on teachers (Misra 2009) and the crucial contribution that they make during periods of change. However, the role of change agents requires specific skills and knowledge to facilitate the change process. Teachers in this particular study held the view that they lack such skills set.

#### **Subsidiary Research question 4**

Should change management skills be incorporated as part of the professional development of teachers in the FE sector?

I sought to establish whether the existing professional development of teachers equipped them with the essential skills to prepare, cope and manage change better and if not, how such skills should be incorporated. The theme that emerged from this particular question was the desire to acquire knowledge of change management. The findings indicated that there was clearly a gap between the expectation of teachers' jobs, some of which involve managing change, and the skills they needed to carry it out. There were, however, divergent views as to how such skills should be developed. 29 (73%) of the respondents felt that such training should be part of their CPD programme (Figure 4.1). This study has confirmed that amongst other skills, the development of change management skills should be seen as a core competence for teachers. The desire to gain such skills is paramount as evidenced by the two respondents who had privately funded their training in change management. These two seemed to be better prepared and confident to manage change within their teams compared with majority of the teachers who lack such skills.

If such training is cascaded further down the college, there is no doubt that it will make teaching more pleasurable with teachers going into the profession fully aware of change management processes rather than merely reacting as victims of educational change or complying with changes imposed on them which Shain and Gleeson (1999) described as 'unwilling compliance'. The need to include change management as part of teacher development is made apparent by respondents in this study, particularly because their pre-service training tends to focus more on pedagogical issues and ignores leadership and management functions (Institute for Educational Leadership 2001).

In summary, this study has shown that teachers are not usually prepared for change. It has also identified an opportunity for future teacher development programme because change is an essential and deeply embedded feature of teacher development which should be learned (Hitchingson 1991). The importance of learning such skills has been articulated by Inos and Quigley (1996: 1) who stated that:

‘Educators must become leaders in the change process if they wish to have a positive impact on their schools and classrooms and, ultimately, on students’ performance. Teachers can achieve this position of leadership through reading, observing and participating, and becoming familiar with all aspects of the change processes’

The next section offers some recommendations including a framework on how such training should be provided.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

Mergers between colleges in the FE sector will continue to feature in the literature and institutional practice as a result of the constantly changing external environment and other organisational factors. Any change of this scope will include both positive outcomes in terms of combining resources and negative outcomes with regards to redundancies, low morale and possibly an increased attrition rate among teachers. Bearing this in mind and drawing from the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

### **6.2.1 Recommendation 1**

**Educational institutions should develop and integrate a process for promoting change management training.**

It is important for the college to identify potential change coaches and mentors as set out in figure 6.1. Once the college has identified and secured the consent of coaches and mentors, a process should be developed to enable them promote the benefits of gaining change management skills. The opportunity to work with colleagues will instil confidence in new teachers as they take on a collective responsibility to manage and implement change. Introducing mentors and coaches who are themselves experienced change agents can promote a collaborative approach to learning and more likely to encourage professional growth. Teachers will have the opportunity to share their expertise and experiences and promote professional discussions within a safe ‘space’ (Hillier and Appleby 2012: 35). In such an environment, teachers will be more willing to identify areas in which they would like to develop without the usual hierarchical, top-down prescribed CPD sessions usually imposed on teachers. Developing a voluntary and collaborative training programme of this sort between teachers can create social professional knowledge exchange (Hillier and Appleby 2012: 36).

The coaches and mentors would also be the 'linking pin' (Balogun 2001) between leadership teams and teachers and they would be in a better position to identify the needs of other teachers and communicate the change process more effectively.

The training will not only enhance their professional identity, it will also enhance their competence, and equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to prepare for the challenges of the FE sector. The importance of equipping teachers with such skills is highlighted in a study (Greenlee 2007) to ascertain the impact of leadership training on teachers. The findings confirmed that teachers who had developed leadership skills including change management felt confident and empowered. This echoes the findings of a previous study reported in Greenlee (2005) in which the respondents confirmed that the programme had prepared them better to cope with management issues 'beyond the scope of their regular teaching duties' (Greenlee 2005: 48).

In order to facilitate the development and delivery of this vital training, I propose a framework (figure 6.1) which makes the training easier to develop, deliver and which can be adopted by organisations in order to improve the readiness of their staff for change management. The framework is by no means suggesting that senior management should relinquish power over decision making during periods of change. Rather, it is proposing an inclusive and participatory model that instils confidence in teachers. The framework will equip teachers with the knowledge they need to manage change effectively within the learning environment and participate in institution-wide changes if they are given such opportunities by management. What I am proposing is, therefore, a process that empowers and encourages teachers to develop as professionals, take ownership and embrace change positively.

### **6.2.2 Recommendation 2: Empower departmental leadership and management teams to propose and develop department-level change management training content**

The second recommendation is for the leadership and management teams to encourage experienced teachers to decide on a specific aspect of the change framework that will be best suited to their needs. Experienced teachers may have managed change in the past and may be more likely to resent the training particularly if it is delivered by coaches new to the teaching profession. Teachers are in a better position to evaluate their own skill set and identify areas for professional development.

However, for this to take place there has to be a complete change in FE culture and a system that supports and promotes teacher efficacy.

### **6.3 The Rationale for Introducing Change Management during Teacher Induction.**

The proposed framework (Figure 6.1) will start during teachers' induction process. This period, particularly for new teachers can be the most stressful and challenging as they begin their careers and adapt into new working practices (Brondyk and Stanulis 2014). Evidence (Commission for the European Communities 2007) suggests that there is very little coordination and investment into teacher induction programmes across Europe and the number of teachers who receive support during the early stages of their career is low. The working environment for new teachers can be challenging and in extreme cases according to Terry (2013:2),

‘They are often set up in such a way as to deny them a sense of efficacy, success, and self-worth. There is often too much isolation and surviving on ones' own’.

Introducing the change management training earlier will ease the feeling of alienation which most teachers experience when they come into the profession and it will create an opportunity to identify those who are taking up teaching as a second profession.

### **6.4. Potential Sources of resistance**

As examined earlier in this study, so many ‘faddish’ initiatives have been introduced in the college where this study was conducted and the FE sector as a whole, some of which have been rejected or abandoned after substantial investments. In most cases, these initiatives were imposed top-down and without clear objectives about the purpose of the change or the likely process and impact on staff. There are two potential sources of resistance in implementing the framework proposed in this study. Firstly, management may perceive the framework as an additional cost, particularly at a time when funding is minimal. The framework can also be seen by management as an intrusion by lower level staff in strategic decision making process of the institution. The other potential area of resistance could come from experienced teachers who are already fed up with incessant changes in their institutions. This framework is however, is different because it will be promoted by teachers although support from senior management is crucial. Another reason why the framework will be successful is the fact that it will be promoted during the early stages of a teacher's career and they are far more likely to embrace such initiatives compared to experienced teachers who are set in their own ways of doing things and may find it problematic to adapt to change. The inclusive and participatory approach of the framework also makes it relevant because it can lead to better coordination between



teachers during periods of change rather than adopting the usual top-down approach to change management which is peculiar in the FE sector.

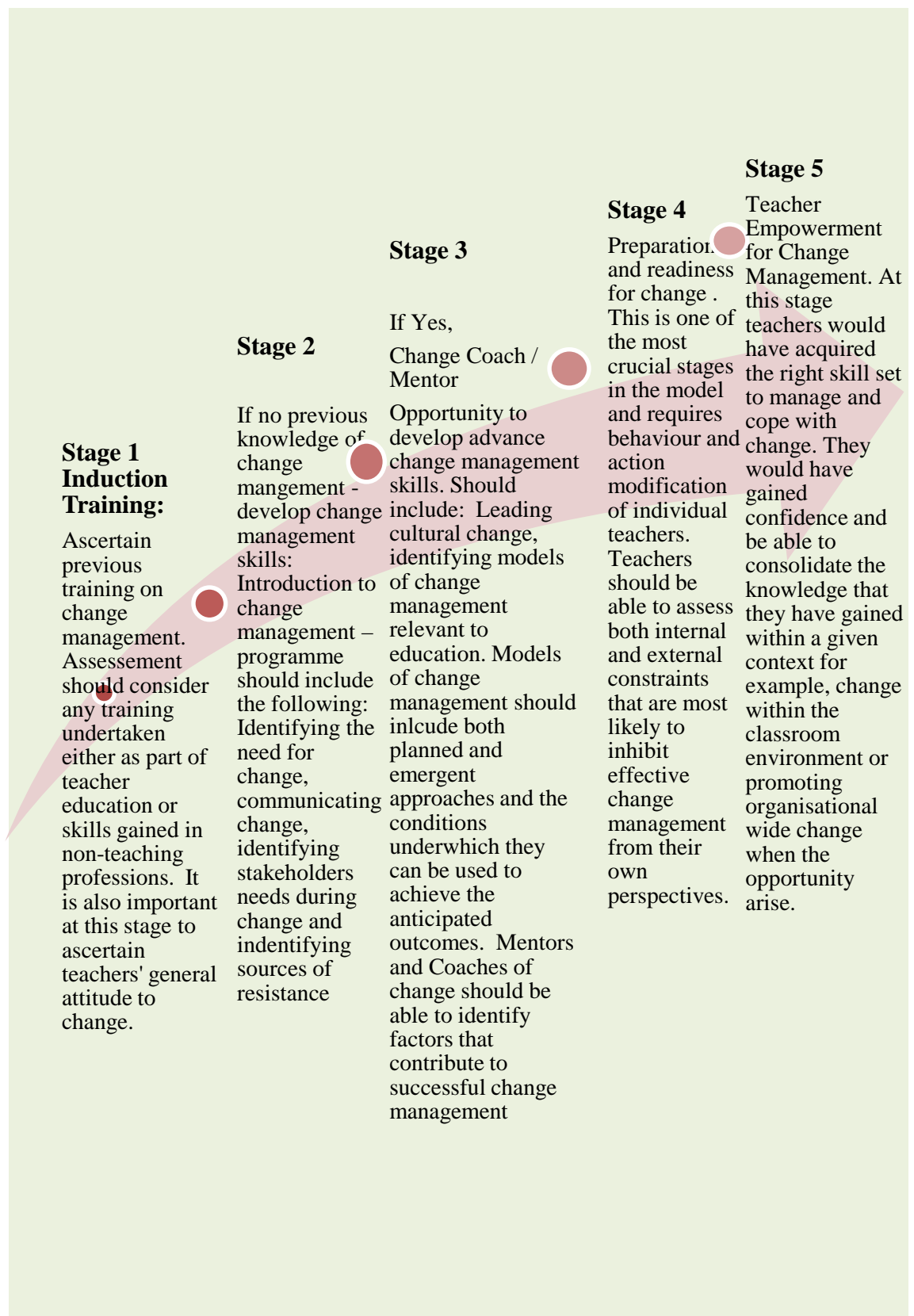
However, for the framework to be successful, it is paramount to encourage open communication and promote a positive approach to change management. This obviously will involve a change in culture.

### **6.5 Contribution to Knowledge**

This study has made original contributions to knowledge in a number of ways:

Firstly, a unique feature of the study is the development of an inclusive framework for teacher empowerment during periods of change, including mergers. None of the existing models for change management are designed to meet the needs of teachers. This framework however, is suitable for teacher development depending on their previous knowledge and experience of change management. The framework may, in the long term, impact on the curricula on teacher education or ongoing professional development. Although targeted at teachers in the FE sector, the proposed framework would be useful for other professions that require change management skills. The framework together with the relevant components is discussed in Figure 6.1.

The framework is designed to be delivered as part of teachers' induction programme. There is a fundamental skills gap between teachers' role as implementers of change in their institutions and their traditional role as facilitators of teaching and learning. An Introductory change management training earlier as teachers embark on their career is, therefore, required (MacPhail and Tannehill 2012).



**Figure 6.1: A Framework for teacher empowerment for change**

## **Components of the Framework for teacher empowerment for change**

### **Stage 1**

The first stage of the framework is to assess whether teachers coming into the profession have previous knowledge of change management and their general attitude to change. Evidence from the literature (Bathmaker and Avis 2005; Gleeson, Davis and Wheeler 2005) and the findings of this study suggests that most of the teachers taking up teaching are doing so as a second profession. There is likelihood that this calibre of teachers had previously been trained on change management as mentioned by one of the respondents who was previously employed as a project manager. The skill set of teachers coming from other professions can then be put into good use by encouraging them to become part of the colleges' change management Coaches or Mentors. They can be partially responsible for providing introductory training on change management for novice teachers or those without such knowledge in stage 2. Teachers who have such leadership skills can work well as change agents and they can help their colleagues prepare for change better (Brondyk and Stanulis 2014).

### **Stage 2**

At this stage, those teachers without knowledge of change management who were identified in stage 1 need to be encouraged to undertake a basic training on awareness of change and its relevance in education. The training will encompass a basic introduction to change including factors that trigger change. The importance of communication and teamwork during periods of change will be the focus. It is also imperative at this stage to explain how key stakeholders who are likely to be affected during periods of change can be identified.

### **Stage 3**

The third stage of the framework is to encourage those teachers with previous knowledge of change management identified in stage 1 to develop as coaches or mentors. They can then be given the opportunity to develop advance change management skills. At this stage, they will be able to recognise change management tactics, models of change both planned and emergent models. Training at this stage will also enable teachers identify and develop their leadership and influencing skills.

#### **Stage 4**

At this stage of the framework, teachers would have acquired knowledge of the basic requirements of change management not as a single event but as a process that should be clearly defined. This will be particularly relevant in their role as they have to respond to ongoing changes within their learning environment and the institution as a whole. Being prepared for change requires motivation and commitment and it is paramount to instil this earlier in a teacher's career. At this stage, teachers would have better understanding of change as a concept that is embedded within the profession.

#### **Stage 5**

At this stage, teachers should be equipped and empowered with understanding of the change management process. Empowerment has been used in the context of improving teachers' ability to become proactive during change rather than perceiving change as something that happens to teachers.

Apart from the framework discussed above, this study has also made the following contribution to knowledge. It has presented a unique set of data obtained from teachers from two different colleges who were able to relive their experiences of the merger. Studies conducted to date on college mergers (Hay Group 2010; Calvert and Rosner 2010) have mostly focused on senior leadership teams and their experiences of the merger process. Unlike the impact of educational change on teachers, the readiness and preparation of teachers to cope with change and mergers in FE sector have not been extensively researched.

The literature (Pantic 2014; Fullan 2003; 2007; Fullan and Hargreaves 1992) describes teachers as Change Agents because of their demanding roles as implementers of change initiatives, none to my knowledge, has so far considered the views of teachers on how they fit into this role. Finally, this study is not only unique in presenting a set of data from teachers who have experienced a merger and have also described themselves as change agents, but they have also identified the need to gain relevant change management skills and knowledge to enable them to meet the demands of their role as change agents.

#### **6.6. Limitations to the Study**

Firstly, it is acknowledged that the scale of this study was quite small. This limits the extent to which its findings can be generalised across the FE sector. Secondly, it would seem that there is a limitation in terms of leaving out some information on the overall

impact of the merger. To obtain a fuller view about the success or otherwise of the merger, some data post-merger would have been useful. Respondents' attitudes and opinions may have changed, thus leading to a situation in which the approach adopted by the college during the merger becomes justified. This, however, could be a foundation for future research.

Thirdly, my role as an insider researcher and a former Subject Learning Coach in the same institution led to unusual access to information which could have influenced respondents' perception of change. I could easily identify with the issues raised by the respondents because of my own experience of managing change. This, however, was mitigated, as most of the interviews and the initial surveys were conducted by third party, in order to obtain a balanced view of the data (see section 3.13 on ethical issues). Also, to address this particular limitation, respondents were offered the opportunity to verify the interview transcript. This contributed to the process of verification of the data and the validation of information. Participants were able to confirm whether what was reported was an accurate representation of their views or not.

Fourthly, the study is confined to two colleges only. A comparative analysis of other merged FE colleges would have given further insight into issues relating to mergers in the sector. Nevertheless, the issues raised in this study should be of interest to a wider audience, given that the impact of educational change on teachers remains a widely debated issue in the literature on FE. Mergers may continue to be the focus of colleges in the sector as they realise the importance of collaborative strategy.

Fifthly, there are inherent limitations with regard to the methodology adopted in this study. I have relied on the description of the respondents' social world, which can be subjective. However, this limitation has been addressed by applying a rigorous approach to data collection in order to avoid prejudice and ensure the validity and integrity of data. By combining different sources of data, a more holistic picture of teachers' experiences of the merger emerged.

Finally, this study was conducted at a time when teachers, particularly from College A, were experiencing low morale as a result of the redundancies and poor communication from the senior leadership team pre and post-merger. This may have impacted their judgement and how they re-lived their experiences of the merger.

## **6.7. Opportunities for Future Research**

The literature on educational change is inundated with comments on the non-inclusive role of teachers during the change process (Fullan 2003; 2007; Ash and Pershall 1999).

This study has, however, identified some of the potential problems likely to arise during mergers between colleges with diverse cultures and how this pitfall could be avoided. A major study (Hay Group 2010) has evaluated the impact of college mergers from the perspective of senior leadership teams across various colleges but none, to my knowledge has been conducted from teachers' perspective as in the current research.

This study therefore suggests three opportunities for further research. Firstly, further studies across different colleges are needed to reflect teachers' views about their roles during mergers and in particular, how teachers from merging institutions may collaborate and develop appropriate curriculum and effective teaching strategies that blends with the culture of the merged institution.

Another possible area for future research is to compare the experiences of teachers in similar departments across merging colleges. Such comparisons are likely to provide detailed understanding of human relations and emotional issues often linked to poor merger implementation. This was a contentious issue in this study because teachers felt that the senior leadership team focused more on the financial benefits of the merger while ignoring the human aspects which, respondents felt were equally significant.

Finally, further studies aimed at evaluating the skills set of senior leaders who implement mergers in colleges may be necessary in order to ascertain whether they have been prepared with the skills they need to manage and facilitate change programmes effectively.

## **6.8. Final Reflections**

In the process of writing this thesis I have explored some of the issues that have impacted on my role as a teacher. The teaching profession is one that comes with diverse roles and responsibilities, some of which are carried out by teachers on a day to day basis without realising they are doing so. As individuals who have attained a certain level of proficiency, teachers are capable of managing and leading their learning environment but they still lack the 'voice' to contribute to decisions that impact on both their personal and professional lives. In most cases, it would seem that everyone else, particularly those who are not in the teaching profession, know how best a teacher should adapt or function in their institutions.

This thesis has given me a different perception of how teachers view their roles. Although they recognise that the sector and indeed, their own institutions are not stable because of the changes usually imposed due to internal and external pressures, they want to be

engaged and be prepared to cope with such changes. To get teachers to the state of readiness particularly in the FE sector will require a change of culture and support from their institutions. This can be achieved by providing training and equipping teachers with relevant skills, at least for those who are keen to learn and develop such skills. Hopefully, this would place them on a similar platform as other professionals.

The purpose of any organisation is to achieve its aims and objectives. This, however, is not possible without the effective mobilisation of its resources. Yet the skills of individuals, who were the most valuable resource in the organisation where this study was conducted, seem to be underutilised. In the long term, educational institutions may end up with human capital that is undervalued and inadequately deployed. According to Maughan, Teeman and Wilson (2012: 17), 'institutions need to make use of resources they have to foster a culture that enables others to be agents of change too'. They went on to say that a leadership style that promotes collaborative working is far more effective in motivating, embedding and sustaining changes in practice. I hope the findings of this thesis could be a 'voice' to empower teachers and recognise the essential contributions they are willing to make during periods of change.

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## APPENDIX 1



### Participant Invitation Letter

20<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Dear Colleague,

**Title of the Research: An Exploratory Study on the Preparedness of Further Education Teachers to Cope with, Manage and Implement Educational Change during a College Merger.**

I would like to invite you to take part in a study on how further education teachers prepare to manage and implement educational change. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your consent at any time during the investigation. Please take time to read the details of the study below before you decide whether to contribute to the study. You will be required to complete a questionnaire and may be invited to take part in an interview. Any data obtained will be handled with complete confidentiality in accordance with the ethical protocol set by the University of Greenwich.

#### *Details of the study*

The purpose of the study is to examine the preparedness of further education teachers in managing and implementing change within their institutions. The study also intends to explore whether teachers need to be equipped with change management skills since this is an essential management skill which is not included in teacher training or ongoing professional development programmes. Research evidence indicates that the roles and responsibilities of teachers evolve particularly when they progress onto management position. According to Fullan 2003, Teachers need the tools to engage in change management and make improvements.

#### *Confidentiality*

I intend to publish the findings of the proposed study in my Educational Doctorate Research thesis but without the names of participants or institutions. Any data obtained will be handled with complete confidentiality in accordance with the ethical protocol set by the University of Greenwich. I will be grateful if you can contribute to this study.

**If you wish to discuss any concerns regarding the study, please contact me by email on: OM411@gre.ac.uk**

**Supervisors: Dr Gordon Ade-Ojo : G.O.Ade-Ojo@gre.ac.uk**

**Prof. Jill Jameson: J.Jameson@gre.ac.uk**

## APPENDIX 2

Consent Form

### **Participant Response Form**

Name:(optional)

College A

College B

**Please tick as appropriate**

I wish to take part in the study

I do not wish to take part in the study

<u>Date</u>	<u>Signature</u>
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### APPENDIX 3

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

I am carrying out a research on the preparedness of FE teachers to cope with, and manage change during a merger. I would be very grateful if you can take part in the study.

Gender

Male  Female

#### Theme 1 (teaching experience)

1. How long have you been teaching?

1 -3 yrs  3-5 yrs  5 - 10 yrs  10 yrs and above

2. What is your job title?

Lecturer/ Course Leader   
Curriculum Team leader   
Curriculum Coordinator   
Curriculum Manager   
Director

3. Which of the campus are you based at?

Campus A  Campus B

4. Which of the following teaching qualification do you hold?

PGCE  Cert Ed.  PTTLS  DTLLS

5. Do you hold a management position?

Yes  No

6. Have you been involved or consulted in a change programme in the college?

Yes  No



Theme 2: Experience of managing change

7. Have you been responsible for implementing change in the college?

Yes  No

8. Which of the following did the change involve?

Tactical i.e. Curriculum change  
Pedagogical change  
Strategic i.e. Organisational change or  
Others i.e. task based learning

9. Did you take part in the recent merger?

What was your role?

10. Where you given enough information during the merger process to enable you make informed decisions?

Yes  No

11. Have you had any professional development training involving change management?

Yes  No

How was the training provided?

(Internal) College  External (College)  Privately

12. Do you think that change management requires specific skills?

Yes  No

13. Do you think that teachers need knowledge of change management?

Yes  No

14. Do you think that change management should be incorporated into teacher training programme considering how frequent the sector evolves?

Yes  No

15. Do you consider change management as an essential leadership skill?

Yes  No

16. Do you think that managers should have change management skill?

Yes  No

17. Are teachers change agents?

Yes  No

**Please read the following statements carefully and tick the option which best describes your perception on change management.**

18. Change management is always linear.

Agree  Strongly agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree  Not Sure

19. Teachers should have change management skills.

Agree  Strongly agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree  Not Sure

20. Teachers are change agent.

Agree  Strongly Agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree  Not Sure

21. In my role as a teacher, I consider myself as a change agent and will like to obtain relevant skills to enable me manage change effectively.

Agree  Strongly agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree  Not Sure

Attitude to change

22. Change is inevitable in education

Agree  Strongly agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree  Not Sure

23. Change is an intrinsic aspect of my job

Agree  Strongly agree  Disagree  Strongly disagree  Not Sure

## APPENDIX 4

### Interview Questions

Do you hold any management position apart from teaching?

Have you managed change in the past? If so, what specifically did you do?

Did you adopt any specific strategy?

Were other people involved in planning this change with you? Did you encounter any particular difficulties (or resistance)? How did you deal with the challenges of managing change?

Do you think change is inevitable in further education?

How will you describe your attitude to educational change?

The merger was a major strategic change for the college. Please describe your experience

Were you at any stage involved in merger process?

How were you informed about the merger?

Briefly describe the type of information that you were given during the merger.

How would you evaluate the impact of the merger with regard to the involvement of teachers and how it was communicated?

How did you find the transition process from one college to another?

How would you describe your overall experience of the merger?

Have you had any change management training as part of your professional development?

Do you think teachers need to have knowledge of change management?

What in your view is the most important aspect in the change management process?

Teachers are change agents. Do you agree with this statement? How do you see yourself in this role?

If teachers are change agents do you think they need knowledge of change management?

How do you think teachers would respond if they are equipped with change management skills?

**APPENDIX 5**  
**Sample Interview Transcript**

Interviewer

**Interviewee: Respondent 2, College A**

<b>I:</b> Do you have any management role or function apart from teaching?	
<b>R:</b> Yes, my current role is fundamentally as a course leader, this means that I am responsible for the day-to-day running and monitoring of a number of courses in my area. It involves setting course objectives and working with teachers in the team to ensure that the course is delivered effectively to ensure student success. I am also a tutor for two student cohorts. I have also put myself forward to be one of the IT champions in the college. The idea was to encourage teachers to use more interactive teaching techniques and to promote the use of moodle which most of them were not too keen to use at the time.	5.7
<b>I:</b> Have you been involved in managing or implementing change in the college? Please give some examples.	
<b>R:</b> I have made some changes that affected my students. Anything that makes the learning environment more effective for me is change. I think I have been able to do that. In the class room, (micro level) one of the changes I am currently pushing forward is for a more flexible approach in the delivery of our courses particular through e-learning and as such, I have developed my knowledge in this field. This will give our students the opportunity to learn in different modes. But sometimes I simply react to change simply because the position I hold in the organisation doesn't enable me engage with changes as I would like to and we are not kept up to date, we have no control on how change will affect us. As a consequence, I tend to be more reactive by dealing with day to day operational issues as and when they arise. Sometimes we receive information from our line managers and we just have to act on it.	5.5 5.2 6.1 5.3
<b>I:</b> From what you said, it seems this would have involved other teachers. Did you adopt any particular strategy?	
<b>R:</b> If change is going to affect other people, then it is only fair that you involve them. I made sure that I kept those involved in the picture. I think change management requires a lot of tact and the ability to convince people why change should be introduced. Once I faced this challenge I was able to implement the change. I was deliberately looking for new ways of doing things in order to improve our practice.	4.1 4.4 6.5
<b>I :</b> In an attempt to introduce change did you encounter any difficulties?	
<b>R:</b> I have been here for 9 years and initially any suggestion for change was received in a hostile way. But I must say that recently, there has been a change of attitude not for me but for a number of key players in our	6.3 5.2

department. I communicate more and explain my ideas in the department. Effective communication during change	
<b>I:</b> Did you apply any particular strategy when you introduce change?	
<b>R:</b> I try not to change too much because of the time it takes to adjust and I try to involve all the teachers who may be affected. This is really about communicating with other people and selling the idea.	
<b>I: What is your general attitude to change?</b>	
<b>R:</b> People do not like change generally because it can put you in a vulnerable position. I am not too keen about change but if you are in this business, then you really haven't got any choice. So, I have accepted it as a way of life here. Also, my attitude will depend on how change is managed. I like my role to be clarified rather than been dictated to all the time. We have no control on how change will affect us. As a consequence, I tend to be more reactive by dealing with day to day issues as an when they arise. Sometimes we just have to get on with things whether you like it or not.	6.3 7.2 5.3 4.4
<b>I:</b> Do you think change is inevitable in further education	
<b>R:</b> Oh yes! Things are always moving. For teachers it is important to be able to adapt to change if you are in this sector due to the following reasons: to meet the changing needs of our customers ie students. Previously, academic qualification was the norm, now more emphasis is placed on vocational qualification and most of these issues are policy driven for example the government is introducing the new diploma, as a result, teachers have to adapt to changes within the institution. Also global competition in terms of industry has also contributed to changes in education. Other factors that influence change in education are technology and competition.	5.4 6.4 6.5
<b>I:</b> Have you been involved in any change management process not just in the classroom?	
<b>R:</b> Like other colleges, this college is involved in other transformation projects. I opted to be on one of these project (employer engagement), despite my effort to be part of that process, I think the transformation is happening but we have not been kept informed as a result, I don't think that I have being at the forefront of the change process which is unfortunate.	5.2
<b>I:</b> What role should teachers play during the change process in the college?	
<b>R:</b> If it is something that will affect them, I think they should be involved in the process; there should be some form of dialogue. I understand that there are a number of teachers who are happy with the status quo and want to get on with their job without any involvement in change but there are also others who are eager and such people should be given the opportunities.	2.3 3.4

<b>I:</b> The merger was a major strategic change for the college. What was it like for you?	
<b>R:</b> I have been through some changes here and somehow we struggle and get through it but this was completely out of our hands we didn't know whether we were coming or going. What I mean is that no one had any useful info about our jobs. That was my main concern. It was as if they were all maintaining a tight lip, not wanting to say much. There was also an atmosphere of fear and insecurity	2.3 2.4 8.1 8.3
<b>I:</b> You mentioned they – who are you referring to?	
<b>R:</b> Management, even colleagues who had inside information were not willing to share anything. It was just uncomfortable	9.3 7.2
<b>I:</b> Were you at any stage involved in this merger process?	
<b>R:</b> No	
<b>I:</b> How would you evaluate this particular process of change with regard to the involvement of teachers and how it was communicated?	
<b>R:</b> I think the merger was a major change that was necessary at the time. Most colleges were doing it. I believe it was right for the colleges to come together. I don't think teachers had any role in this. I certainly didn't have one it was a difficult time for all. It was a decision that had to be made top-down and as usual, we had to comply. Although we had two briefing sessions where attempts were made to share some information about the merger – that it was going to be a Type A merger. I don't think they told us everything. Most of our questions were unanswered and there was nothing about the sequence of events or how the new structure will be initiated to ensure smooth transition. I think at some point people were just looking out for themselves. With regards to the change process, it was not very clear how things were going to unfold. There was a long gap between the time they briefed us about the merger and the time it happened. Most people thought it was not going to happen again. All of a sudden, the whole process started again. It was hard to make any decision. I didn't even know whether to look elsewhere. Everything just looked confusing with different managers, new positions and so on. Several departments were merged and people had to get used to new set of procedures and policies but there was also an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. They started by telling us that our jobs will be secured, that the merger was going to create more opportunities as they expand some curriculum areas and invest in staff development programmes. But not long people started losing their jobs, some without notice.	7.2 2.2 7.5 8.4 7.4 7.3 1.5 8.2 8.3 1.3
<b>I:</b> How did you find the transition process from one college to another? Did you experience any difficulties integrating with staff from the other college?	

<b>R:</b> There were differences in the way we did things. There were a few suggestions on quality improvement. It was as if our quality control systems were not good enough. Teachers in both colleges did things differently. It was difficult because we had our own way of doing things. Student selection / admission became difficult teachers were advising students to stay in their own campus rather than the other. On some occasions, we had students registered for courses on both campuses. It was difficult to know which campus students wanted to be based. Data was not accessible both on Columbus and Sharepoint etc. I think it was particularly difficult when the IT systems of both colleges were merged. We were doing very well with our system here, it was much better.	1.1 1.2 1.5 7.2 7.1
<b>I:</b> Have you had any training in change management as part of your teacher training programme or continuous professional development?	
<b>R:</b> No, but I have done one with the Institute of Leadership and Management.	
<b>I:</b> What did the training cover?	
<b>R:</b> I learned about change management as part of a programme that I attended at the Institute of Leadership and Management. I think the training was good, and gave some insight into organisational change, the impact on individual and the organisation as a whole. There were some interesting case studies and examples of why people resist change and suitable strategies to incorporate during the change process. I learned about the change management process, how to adapt, and maybe respond to change better. As teachers, I think change is part of our professional life and we need to know more about it	5.5 6.2 6.5 6.6
<b>I:</b> Was that the only training you had?	
<b>R:</b> No, I attended a one-day training on change after the merger.	
<b>R:</b> What was it about?	
<b>I:</b> Why it was important to accept change	
<b>R:</b> How did it help you cope with the merger?	
<b>R:</b> The training was provided after the merger had taken place. I don't think there was any reference to how change should be managed. It was more focused on the acceptance of change and adapting to the new working practices. May be it would have been more relevant to our circumstances if they had done it prior to the merger.	7.3 7.1
<b>I:</b> How was the training provided?	
<b>R:</b> By an external consultant	
<b>I:</b> Teachers are believed to be change agents. Do you consider yourself to be a change agents and why?	

<p><b>R:</b> Yes, I agree that teachers are change agents because they have to deal with change all the time even within their learning environment. Sometimes they have control over minor changes they want to introduce in the learning environment but there are times they have to adjust to change imposed from the top. I do see myself as a change agent because I have a vision and make some effort to improve my current practice. I am proactively looking for ways of making improvements within the learning environment.</p>	<p>6.6 6.3 4.2 6.1</p>
<p><b>I:</b> If teachers are change agents do you think they need knowledge of change management?</p>	
<p><b>R:</b> I think this will depend on the individual. If we just make an assumption that all teachers need knowledge of change management then it would be misleading. There are people who do not like change because of the fear and uncertainty usually associated with change. For such people, it doesn't matter if training is provided, their attitude and response to change will not make any difference as they will always find something negative about changing the status quo'</p>	<p>5.3</p>
<p><b>I:</b> Do you think that change management is an essential management skill that should be acquired by people with management responsibility?</p>	
<p><b>R:</b> Yes, if one's role involves managing any resources then they should develop this skill. Our environment moves quite quickly and we need to learn how to respond and adapt. I think this is particularly relevant for those who are keen to move into senior management roles in the college.</p>	<p>6.2 5.4 6.6</p>



## APPENDIX 6

Themes and categories emerging from the qualitative data.

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Categories:</b>
1.Integrating cultures and systems	1.1 Internal differences 1.2 Management Style 1.3 Insecurity 1.4 Competition 1.5 Lack of cohesion
2. Communicating Change	2.1 Timing and Pace of communication 2.2 Lack of clarity 2.3 Lack of transparency 2.4 Grapevine
3.Lack of Trust	3.1 'Them and Us' culture 3.2 Hidden Agenda 3.3 Inconsistent information 3.4 Consultation
4.Power, Micro and Macro Politics of Change	4.1 Non-inclusive approach to decision making 4.2 control and threats 4.3 Undemocratic culture 4.4 Dominance and subordination 4.5 Uncertainty
5. Motivation	5.1 Passion and Commitment 5.2 Keen to share vision of the organisation 5.3 Possibility of developing a passive attitude to change 5.4 Fast changing environment 5.5 Competency
6. Knowledge Acquisition	6.1 Improve practice 6.2 Teacher development 6.3 Change is ingrained in the job 6.4 Adaptability 6.5 Enquiry mind 6.6 Change agency
7.Change Process	7.1 Poor planning and harmonisation of systems 7.2. non-inclusive strategy to change 7.3 Lack of relevant change management skills 7.4. Pace and Timing of the merger 7.5 Failure to clarify stages in the change process
8.Emotional and Psychological issues	8.1 fear and negative emotions 8.2 fear of losing job 8.3 unmanaged expectations 8.4 Competition 8.5 Conflict
9.Leadership	9.1 Communication 9.2 Lack of shared vision 9.3 Inadequate support for staff