

Connecting organisational cultures and educational leadership in early childhood centres

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Presentation structure

- Background to reasons for present Master of Research study, including Australian education reforms
- Master of Research study details
- Organisational culture and leadership in EC, and multiple cultures
- Organisational culture/climate/ethos terminology
- Bolman and Deal's (2013) frames of analysis of organisational culture and leadership
- Metaphors of organisational culture and leadership
- Questions

Background study: Barriers to Participation (B2P)

Barriers to Participation:
The experience of disadvantaged young children,
their families and professionals
in engaging with early childhood services.

- Rebekah Grace, Jennifer Bowes, Michelle Trudgett, Andrea McFarlane, Toby Honig.
- Children & Families Research Centre, Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University.
- Funded by the New South Wales Department of Human Services, 2010.

Australian Government Education Reform Agenda

Introduction in 2009 of the
Early Years Learning Framework (ELYF)
(DEEWR, 2009)

A national EC framework
designed as a guide for staff in their practices
in working with children and their families

Links between B2P study and MRes study

1. How is the *EYLF* (DEEWR, 2009) being communicated among staff?
2. How do the structures and processes within centres support this communication?

Australian Government Education Reform Agenda

Introduction in 2011 of the
National Quality Framework (NQF) (ACECQA,
2011) and the
National Quality Standard (NQS) (ACECQA, 2011)

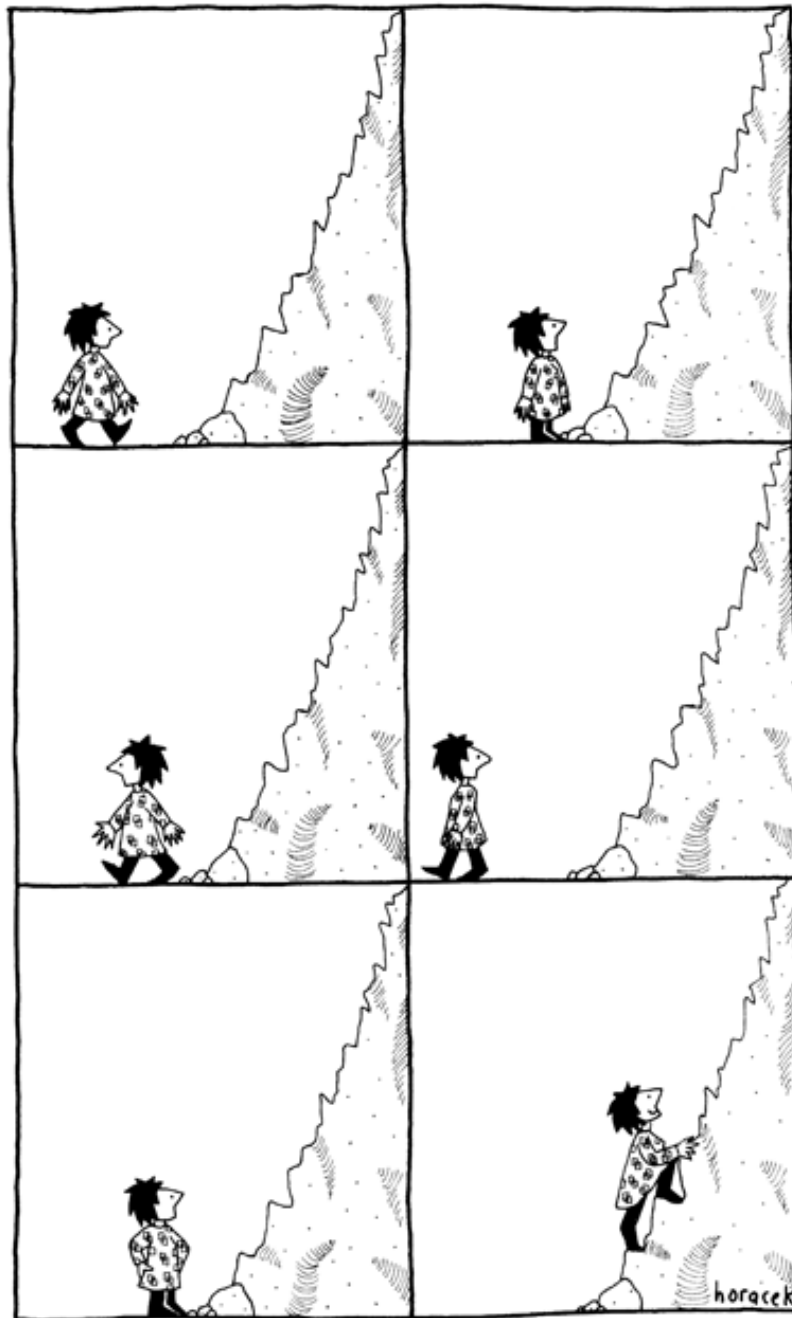
First national approach to assist in
the provision of quality EC education and care,
including a national EC accreditation system

Links between B2P study and MRes study

1. How is the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) being communicated among staff?
2. How do the structures and processes within centres support this communication?
- 3. How will the NQF (ACECQA, 2011) and the NQS (ACECQA, 2011) be communicated among staff?**

Theoretical conceptualisations of Australian EC sector today

- Reform agenda is an ‘historically significant marker’ for EC sector (Sumsion, 2009)
- EC sector is in a ‘liminal’ social state (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006)



Theoretical conceptualisations of Australian EC sector today

- Reform agenda is an ‘historically significant marker’ for EC sector (Sumsion, 2009)
- EC sector is in a ‘liminal’ social state (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006)
- **A transitional phase of interpreting, understanding and putting into practice regulatory requirements**
- **A practice of leadership addressing actual reforms, not simply following regulations is needed** (Rodd, 2013; Fenech, Giugni & Bown, 2012)

Connecting organisational cultures and educational leadership in early childhood centres

Two key research questions of the MRes study:

1. How are the requirements of the *National Quality Framework* (ACECQA, 2011) communicated within early childhood centres?
2. What factors influence the daily organisation of early childhood centres?

MRes Study Rationale

1. The type of leadership necessary for management of EC centres is integrally linked to positive organisational culture (Culkin, 1997).
2. Organisational culture is a relatively new notion in EC sector.
3. New focus needs to be applied to actual practice and processes of organisational culture and leadership, rather than individual traits and behaviours (Coleman, 2003; Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2004).

MRes Study Participants & Methods

- 3 Sydney metropolitan long day care centres.
- Semi-structured interviews with Directors, teachers and teaching assistants on everyday routines.
- Questionnaires completed by Directors, teachers and teaching assistants on demographics.
 - Analysis of duty statements, policy statements, daily schedules, staff rosters, staff meeting agendas and minutes, Annual Reports, etc.
- Analysis of head office and centre websites.

Structural & process-relational indicators

Structural indicators

Waniganayake et al (2013); Fenech & Sumsion (2007)

Staff:child ratios, group sizes, teacher qualifications, indoor and outdoor spaces, health and safety.

Process-relational indicators

Waniganayake et al (2012); Fenech & Sumsion (2007); Hay & Hodgkinson (2006); Sylva et al (2004)

Stimulating and developmentally appropriate programming, staff and child interactions, parental involvement.

Development of organisational culture & leadership thinking

- Schein (1992) – ‘culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin’ and development of organisational culture is a group activity.
- Culkin (1997) – the leadership that is required for management of EC centres is integrally linked to positive organisational culture.
- Nivala (2002) - harmony in organisational culture is more dependent on a commitment to the present leadership model than on the content or quality of the leadership ideology.
- Muijs et al (2004) - organisational climate is strongly influenced by the quality of leadership.

Organisational culture or organisational cultures

Aubrey et al (2013); Jorde Bloom et al (1991)

- Multiple cultures exist in EC centres with 'top-down' local authority hierarchy and 'bottom-up' participative internal culture of the practice team.

Haltunnen (2010)

- Integration plus differentiation in organisations enables a notion of 'subcultures' and opportunity for individuality and group activity.

Baker (2002)

- Cultural complexity needs to be identified with a recognition of cultural differentiation and no 'single overarching culture'.

Organisational culture terminology

Culture

Aubrey et al (2013); Colmer (2010); Hard et al (2013); Waniganayake et al (2012)

Actual work practices with an emphasis on flatter organisational structures with teamwork, collaboration, participation and learning.

Climate

Aubrey et al (2013); Bennett et al (2003); Fonsen (2013); Jorde Bloom et al, 1991; Jorde Bloom (1998); Rodd (2013)

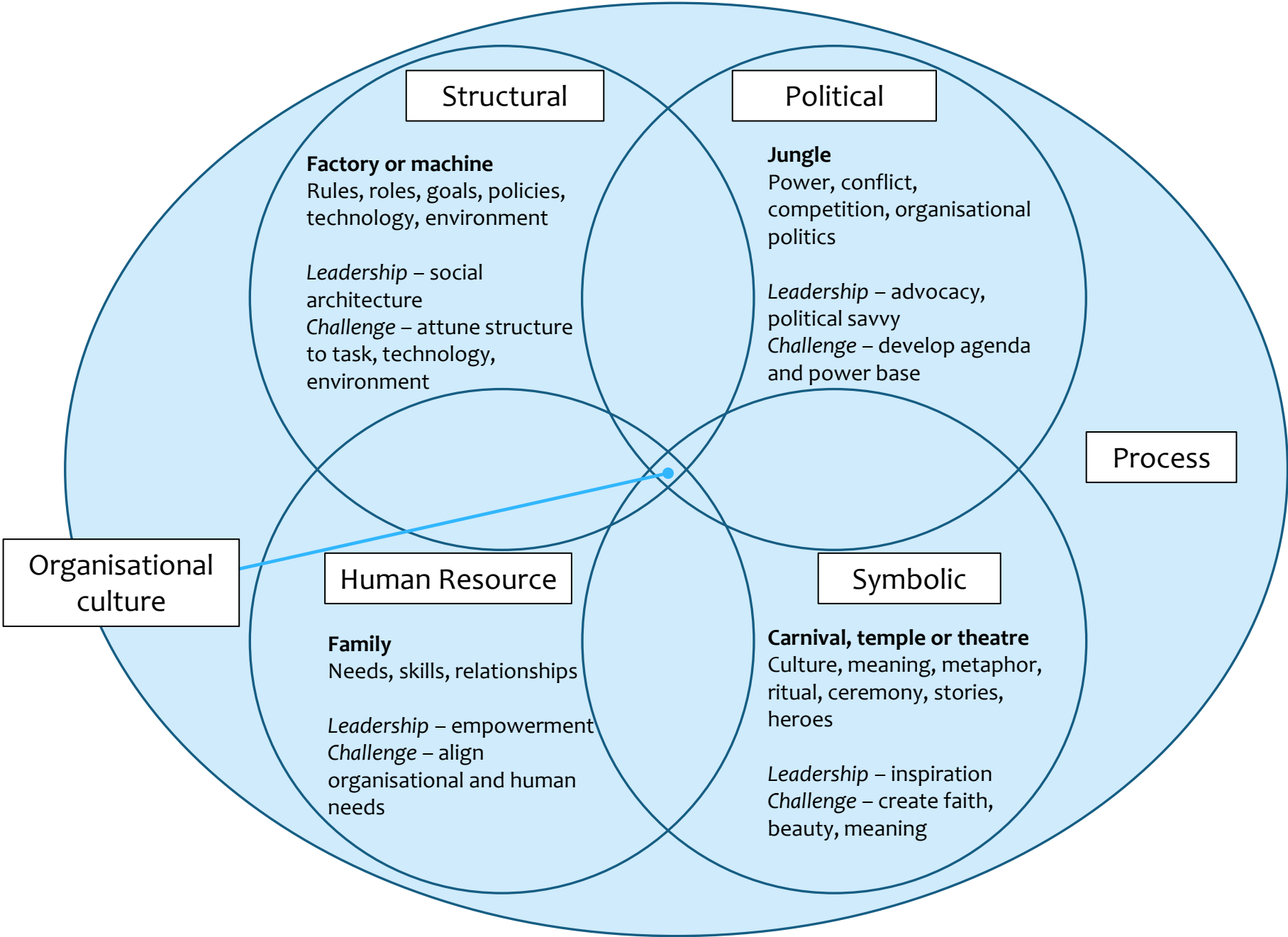
Mutual support and collective perceptions, attitudes, social attitude, beliefs and values which enable trust and openness.

Ethos

Aubrey et al (2013); Hard (2005); Hard et al (2013); Waniganayake et al (2012)

Shared visions, purpose and philosophical commitment in a context of advocacy and professionalism.

Four Frame Model: Adapted from Bolman and Deal (2013)



Metaphors in organisational culture

Jorde Bloom (1991)

Environment (outside world),
people (cast of characters),
structure (formal and informal
arrangements), processes (how
things get done), culture (what
makes it unique), outcomes (effects
of the program).

Karila (2008)

Hustle and bustle,
garden, second home.

Messenger (2013)

Symbols (language, uniform), heroes
(leaders, professional bodies), rituals (work
practice, protocols), values (view of children,
diversity).

Culkin (2000)

Family, activity,
entertainment,
resilient, connections,
change, growth,
nurturing, surprise.

Questions

1. Can organisational culture and leadership in EC centres be examined through frames alone?
2. Can organisational culture and leadership in EC centres be examined through metaphors alone?
3. Should organisational culture and leadership in EC centres be examined through frames and metaphors, with each informing the other?

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