



Making Research Count

Evaluation Training

The task

Evaluation of benefits and difficulties of collaborative working with reference to:

- Inter-agency collaboration
- Benefits of a learning culture
- Barriers to achieving this
- Potential for ‘embeddness’

Original aims

- **Original aims:**
 - **To Develop learning opportunities**
 - **Foster interagency collaboration**
 - **Seek ways to embed learning in care organisations**
- **Two-Site project**
 - **Different organisational aims & ways of working**

Realistic Evaluation

- ‘What’ change has taken place
- ‘Why’ has it taken place
- ‘How’ has it taken place
- For ‘whom’ has it taken place



Learning in Care Settings

The Evaluation

November 2002-September 2003

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Dr Pat Chambers

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Introduction

- Monitoring, consultation and evaluation
- Action research
- Two sites; two approaches

Method: A Mixed Methods Approach

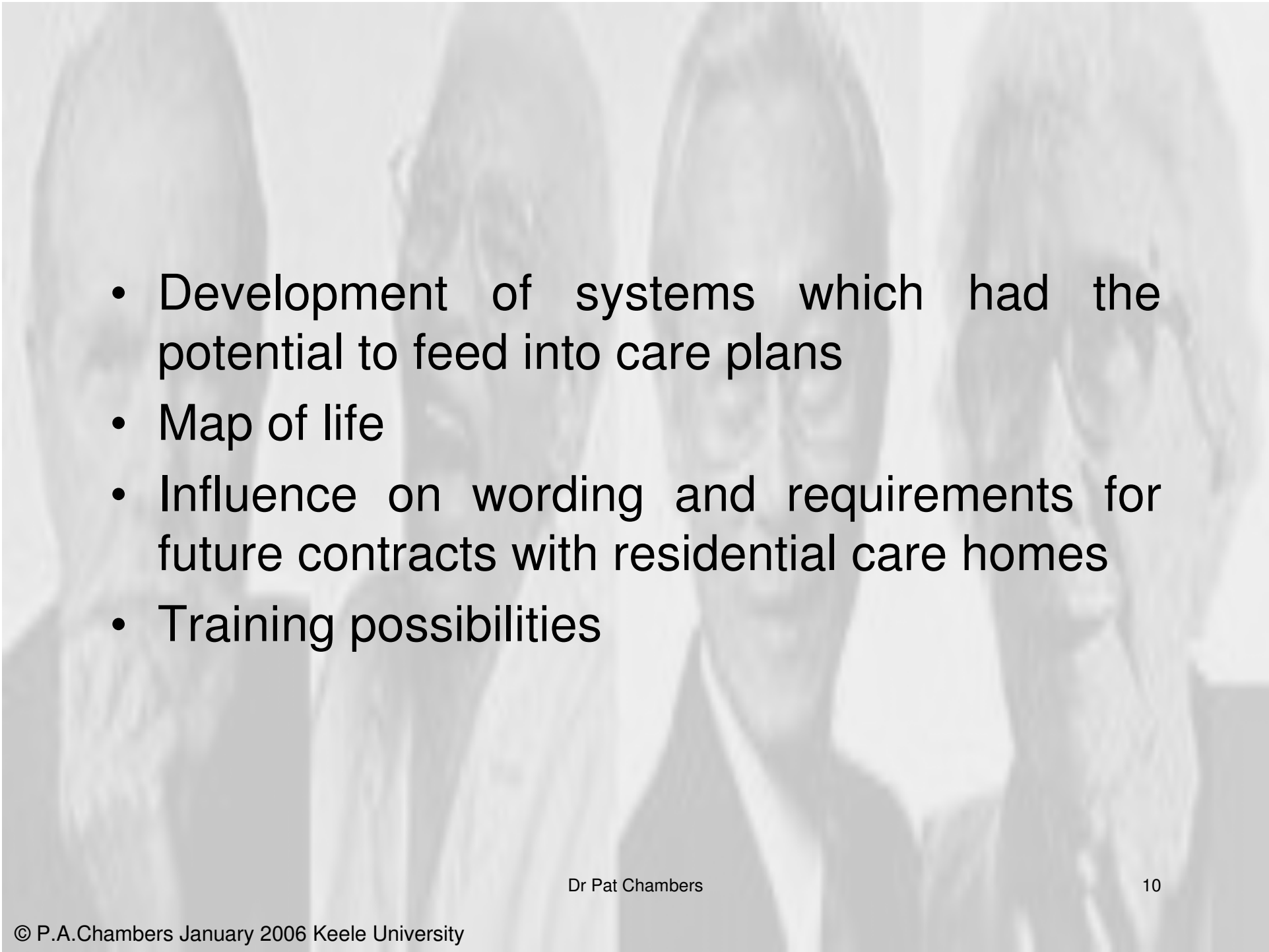
- Paper audit
- Testimonies and video
- Participant and direct observation
- Interviews and conversation

Findings

- Bromley Adult Education College
- Successes
- Barriers

Bromley: Successes

- A strategic approach to work with, and change the culture of ONE key provider
- The transformation of a traditional day centre
- Challenged preconceptions of frail older people
- Introduced a 'learning culture'
- Demonstrated possibilities for care staff
- Committed and experienced adult education tutors

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- Development of systems which had the potential to feed into care plans
 - Map of life
 - Influence on wording and requirements for future contracts with residential care homes
 - Training possibilities

Bromley: Barriers

- Overload of work and stress levels of Home Managers
- High turnover of care staff and staff sickness
- Rigid shift patterns
- Poor communication between staff within care homes
- The meaning of lifelong learning
- Narrowly conceived care plans
- Resistance to joined-up practice

Bromley: Barriers

- Recognition but little action by senior management of BUPA Partnership Care Homes
- Lack of interest by PCT in Bromley

Findings

- Age Concern Calderdale
- Successes
- Barriers

Successes

- ‘Well-being’ of frail older people enhanced through short term learning opportunities
- Change of climate within Age Concern Calderdale.
- Raising the profile of lifelong learning for frail older people

Successes

- Working relationship with Adult and Community Education Services
- The potential for 'joined-up' practice identified
- Cultural diversity and appropriateness crucial to lifelong learning

Barriers

- Strategic approach of short term engagement with a multiplicity of organisations mitigated against development of systems to embed lifelong learning, and/ or cultural change, and/or ownership by organisations
- A focus on ad hoc ‘activity’ rather than incorporating values of lifelong learning into care practice

Barriers

- Organisational and structural barriers
- Narrow vision of 'care' by care staff and managers
- Commitment to the concept of lifelong learning, but a lack of commitment of funding towards future development from the local authority

Barriers

- Uncertainties and changes within the care home sector in Calderdale and within individual care homes
- A culture of stress in some care homes meant that education and learning is an 'add-on'.
- Extremely restricted interpretation of 'lifelong learning' from the local LSC

Analysis and Discussion

- Inter-agency collaboration
- The benefits of a 'learning culture' for older people in care settings, those care workers who support them and the organisations in which that learning takes place
- The barriers to achieving a learning culture
- The potential for embedding opportunities to 'Carry on Learning' in care 'systems'

Inter-agency collaboration

- Strategy adopted in each site was different and rooted in own organisational structure
- Development of partnerships at different levels; front line staff; middle management; senior management; and agency.

The benefits of a 'learning culture' in care settings: for older people

- Enhanced self-esteem and 'wellness'
- Increased sociability
- Improvement in motor skills
- Maintenance and/or improvement, of communication and memory
- Skill development and maintenance
- Something to look forward to and to talk to others about

The benefits of a 'learning culture' in care settings: for care staff

- Increased self-confidence
- Skill development
- Learning from and with others
- Better communication with residents
- Increased job satisfaction
- Motivation to promote learning opportunities.

The benefits of a 'learning culture' in care settings: for adult education tutors

- Getting beyond the mask of 'frailty'
- Skill development in working with physically and mentally frail older people,
- Developing a curriculum to meet the needs of older learners
- Overcoming the barriers to working in settings where structures and organisational practices often mitigate against learning
- Joint working with care workers

The benefits of a 'learning culture' in care settings: for organisations

- Extra resources
- Examples of what is possible
- Improved well-being and life satisfaction of older people
- Enhanced opportunities for staff development
- Interagency co-operation
- 'Best' practice with older people.

The Barriers to Achieving a Learning Culture

- Activities & entertainment are not automatically 'lifelong learning'
- Resistance to a cultural change of lifelong learning for all in the organisation
- Undervalued staff with narrow training

The potential for Embedding Opportunities to 'Carry on Learning' in Care 'Systems'

- Dependent on a culture of care which is holistic and embraces the care and development of staff and residents alike.
- Requires flexibility of adult education providers in non-traditional sectors
- 'Joined up systems': care plans; monitoring and evaluation
- Wider culture in which work with older people is so often devalued and old age = decline

Conclusion

- Dissemination, of successes AND barriers, is vital
- ‘Learning organisations’ and ‘lifelong learning’
- Partnership and shared goals
- Celebration of lifelong learning

And finally

- Acknowledgements and recognition of achievements
- A considerable commitment of time and energy by the project managers has been required to maintain the momentum of the project, support tutors and care staff and keep going in the face of barriers



Evaluation of An Action Research Project

Loneliness and Isolation

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