Example 2

Dissertation

The Challenge of Managing Educational Change: Teachers' Perspectives on **Managing the Process of Change in Scotland towards Curriculum for Excellence**.

Introduction

1.1 Background

For any organisation that desires to thrive, change cannot be avoided. However, managing change and especially transformational change is always tough and challenging (Sirkin et al., 2005). A number of studies highlight that the majority of organisations introducing change initiatives fail to achieve the intended results (Kotter, 1996; Strebel, 1996). There is a consensus among management scholars and practitioners that the ability of an organisation to adapt to and manage the process of change is crucial to its effectiveness (Brisson-Banks, 2010; Bridges and Michel, 2000).

Bigger picture/context to the study: keys into debates and challenges related to change and its management.

This dissertation intends to examine the challenge of managing the process of educational change in Scotland. Using a case study of Lenzie Academy, the study will investigate the perspectives of teachers on the management of curriculum change that led to the introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The new curriculum which was launched by the Scottish Government (then Scottish Executive) in 2004 (Hulme, et al., 2009), went through a consultation process and engagement of various stakeholders including parents, teachers and other educational practitioners (Hulme, et al., 2010). It was hailed by the Scottish Government and other scholars and educational practitioners as a major transformational change in the history of Scottish education (Scottish Government 2008, Priestly, 2010). Priestly (ibid) notes that CfE is not just a tweak in policies and procedures but rather an overhaul of the entire curriculum with huge responsibilities handed to teachers. The formal roll-out of its implementation was in the 2010-2011 school calendar year.

Many voices of concern have been heralded by various stakeholders over the years. Reservations have varied from academics citing insufficient

capacity (Priestly, 2010, Priestly, 2011); to parents, councils and teachers concerned about inadequacy of new curriculum and the way it is managed (Denholm, 2012; Hepburn, 2011; Johnson, 2012; McGrath, 2011; Minty and Priestly, 2012). Although the majority of secondary school teachers welcomed the change on the aspect of methodologies, there were reservations on certain policies which were so confusing (Hulme, et al.; 2010). Studies on innovation and change in organisations clearly show it is commonplace for people to resist change preferring the status quo (Stokes and Wilson, 2005; Burns, 2011). It is unclear if the reservations raised by several stakeholders are based on their resistance to change or if they stem from management of the change process. This calls for an investigation and hence the rationale for this study. This research project will therefore seek to investigate challenges of managing the change process by exploring the perspectives of teachers on the subject.

perspectives, drawing on multiple sources to do so.

The writer provides these key link sentences that makes explicit why the study is being conducted.

1.2 Research Aim and Specific Objectives

The overall aim of this study is **to investigate teachers' perspectives on change management to CfE in Scotland in order to evaluate how the**

Narrows down to specific aim and objectives: the aim is a clear statement of what the dissertation is about

process of change is being managed and **thereby provide recommendations for improvement of its implementation**.

Research objectives are:
1. To <u>critically review the literature on management of change in organisations</u>.
2. To critically review managing the process of change in curriculum in general and CfE in particular
3. To investigate teachers' perspectives on management of the process of change to CfE using Lenzie Academy as a case study.
4. **To analyse the data through comparison with research to date on educational change**
5. To suggest recommendations on best approach for managing the process of change for CfE in Scotland.

The objectives then identify a clear breakdown of how the aim will be achieved. Each objective can identify the key stages of the research process: <u>Secondary research i.e. the literature review;</u> primary investigation i.e. identify data collection processes; **analysis of the data collected** and making recommendations.

Research questions: questions relating to these objectives are identified as follows:

1. *Is the resistance surrounding the current curriculum due to its content or management of the change process?* Answering this question will assist in achieving the overall aim and specifically objectives 2 and 3. Reasons for possible resistance to change will be considered in the questionnaire that will be administered to selected teachers at Lenzie Academy.

2. *What are teachers' perspectives on the management of change to CfE and what factors influence these?* The answer to this question will help in addressing objective The perspectives of teachers in relation to managing the change process will be highlighted in both the interviews and questionnaires administered to selected subject teachers at Lenzie Academy.

3. *What else needs to be incorporated in the process of change to make the curriculum a success?* Answering this question will assist in achieving objective 4 by informing the nature of recommendations to be suggested to improve and make the change succeed.

This writer has chosen to provide more detail on how her research was directed and developed: she identifies **three main research questions** and explains what she will achieve by addressing these. This adds further clarity for the reader.

1.3 Significance of the Research

This research is on the management of the process of change in Scottish educational curriculum. The change is significant and transformational (Priestly, 2010). The CfE model makes a far-reaching departure from the old top-down style of curriculum development prescribed by the government. It combines both the top-down and bottom-up approaches. Moreover, the new curriculum is said to be school-based and empowers teachers by viewing them as both curriculum developers and change agents (Minty and Priestly, 2012). Such major changes impact on all kinds of roles and responsibilities and relationships among stakeholders including teachers, students, parents and employers. Bennett et al (1992) highlight that putting policies and procedures in place is as important as the management of the process of that change. Therefore, investigating the management of the change process of CfE in Scottish schools is of paramount significance. Failure to managing properly the process of change can lead to the collapse of the policy even if it were good

You may be directed to include a specific section like **1.3** in your introduction. It explicitly sets out why your research is important

1.4 Dissertation Structure

Chapter 1: *Introduction*

Chapter one of this study provides background information in relation to management of change in the wake of the implementation of CfE in Scotland. The chapter highlights the motivation for the study and provides the rationale behind the study. The research aim is clearly stated and specific objectives outlined. Furthermore, the chapter provides the reader with an overview of the research plan and structure.

Chapter 2: *Critical Review of Literature in Management of Change in Education*

This chapter critically reviews relevant literature on issues pertaining to trends in the management of change in education globally and in United Kingdom and Scotland in particular. Published empirical findings and ideas from the literature reviews in similar studies are crucial in shaping and validation of this study.

Chapter 3: *Research Methodology*

This chapter outlines research strategies and techniques employed in the study and their justification for investigation of the particular issues highlighted in the literature review. It provides the description of data collection techniques, framework for data analysis and discusses the limitations of the research. The validation of these methods is crucial as it informs the reader how conclusions in this study have been arrived at.

Chapter 4: *Findings and discussion*

This chapter presents the case study findings from the interviews and questionnaires with teachers from Lenzie academy. Empirical findings from reviewed literature are also presented in this chapter for comparative purposes with the case study data and the discussion thereof.

Chapter 4: *Findings and discussion*

Chapter 5: *Conclusions*

This chapter concludes by reflecting on the extent to which the objectives of the study were achieved given the data collected and analysed. Based on the findings and the analysis thereof, recommendations are formulated to help rectify the identified problem.