

SAMPLE ESSAY

The essay which follows is not perfect! It was, however judged to be an excellent essay and was given a mark of 74%. It is presented here as an example of first class work.

The mark reflects some weakness in content particularly in the second part of the question. The essay was also well over-length (4650 words for a 3500-4000 word essay.) N.B. word count does not include abstract or bibliography. The mark sheet is attached at the end. Please note that this has been amended for academic year 2003-2004. The occasional citation errors are pointed out but were not penalised.

It is a well presented essay, with a clear structure. Points are well supported from the literature and there is some critical discussion of what the student has read. The essay showed evidence of very wide reading (nearly 40 items in the bibliography) but the writer could have achieved the same mark with a lot less. There was a heavy reliance on some basic reading list material in places that did not do justice to the amount of independent research.

There are marginal comments throughout the essay. Passages referred to are marked in red.

"As new strategies are implemented in any organisation, tension and conflicts are likely to arise ... such conflicts must be confronted, no matter how uncomfortable it may feel to operate in such a situation. " Discuss in relation to LIS organisations and examine the management strategies which attempt to confront the problem of conflict.

Note how the writer has analysed this question by looking at his side headings. These reflect the title closely: a) Organisational change, b) Sources of conflict during organisational change. c) The need to confront tensions and conflict, d) Management strategies for dealing with conflict

Abstract

Conflict in organisations arises when people perceive things differently or want different things. Conflict is particularly likely to arise during change because it is at such times that established ways of working are challenged. Libraries and Information Services (LIS) are undergoing a period of considerable change in which tensions are unavoidable. Most arguments regarding change and conflict apply generally because they reflect the human factors common to most organisations. Therefore, illustrative examples from LIS are used within the context of the more general argument. A discussion of the nature and types of organisational change is followed by an examination of how such disruption can generate resistance and conflict. A dichotomy arises because, whilst recognising that conflict can become destructive and undermine organisational performance, most commentators argue that a degree of conflict is both inevitable and healthy, if channelled productively. Five strategies for conflict resolution are discussed: collaboration; competition; accommodation; avoidance and compromise. It is argued that a collaborative and participative approach is the most likely means of securing co-operation, and that a manager needs to be able to deploy a variety of approaches to conflict resolution, depending on the circumstances.

Abstract initially reads too much like an introduction. The abstract should simply state what the essay sets out to do, what it covers, and its conclusions

Introduction

The Oxford English Dictionary¹ defines conflict as "a state of opposition ... the clashing of opposed principles...the opposition of incompatible wishes or needs".

Change is "the act or an instance of making or becoming different." It is not surprising, then, that organisations experience tensions when new strategies are introduced, as it is at just such times that established principles and methods are most likely to be challenged, altered or jettisoned. The present environment in which LIS are operating is one of rapid technological development, increasing competition and social change (**Bluck, in Pinder and Melling, 1996**). Like many other organisations, they have had to reassess conventional practices, are adopting new structures, strategies and values, and are developing new skills amongst their staff.

For a manager, dealing with change presents a dichotomy. **Buchanan and Huczynski** (1991) point out the paradox that differences are essential to change but that it is these differences which can generate disputes. As Deutsch (in Vayrynen, 1991) points out, conflict is likely if there is a perceived incompatibility or if the participants perceive that there is utility in conflict, that is, something to be gained or less to lose than by remaining passive. However, many writers, including Handy (1993), Mullins (1996) and Edelman (1993), argue that a certain amount of conflict is both inevitable and healthy, provided it is directed positively. The danger is that conflict can become personal and negative, and undermine individual and organisational performance. Striking a balance between the two is easier said than done and a manager will need to employ a variety of methods in attempting to do so. For the most part, the strategies for managing change and conflict in LIS are no different to those which apply to organisations in general because, essentially, they all deal with human reactions to a changing environment. Indeed the LIS literature on the subject reflects these general themes (for example, **Eggleton, 1979; Allred, 1987; Baker, 1989; Buch, 1997; Pettas and Gilliland, 1992**). Therefore, the framework for this discussion will be a general one, with examples from LIS where appropriate.

¹ 1995, Concise, 9th ed. Oxford, OUP.

Note use of footnote. Sometimes useful but this one is unnecessary. OED should be in bib.

Citation correct but. Bib. entry is under Bluck – should match text citation - Pinder – the source referred to

Citation error. Entry in bib. is Huczynski and Buchanan.

Long paragraphs like this could be split up more for easier reading.

Note the excellent support from multiple sources

Organisational change

According to Daft (1994), managers sense a need for change when they perceive a performance gap, that is, a disparity between existing and desired levels of performance. It seems a somewhat narrow definition in that it implies that all change is planned and positive and seems to ignore the possibility of unplanned and potentially negative change - for example, unexpected budget cuts. This said, most change is planned, is intended to be positive and arises from the need to respond to new challenges and opportunities (Mullins, 1996).

Organisational change may be incremental (linear) or radical (discontinuous). It may be a reactive response to external, environmental factors or generated proactively in anticipation of future trends (Hamel, 1998). Both, however, are a response to how an organisation perceives its current or future environment. Indeed, one can detect a Darwinian 'adapt or die' thread running through many authors interpretations (Goble, 1997; Hamel, 1998; St Clair, 1996), a concept summed up pithily by Handy (1993, p.291) with "change is a necessary condition of survival".

Environmental factors include technology, government, the economy and societal values and behaviour. For instance, in recent years, LIS have had to adapt to the rapid development of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and the Labour government's plans for national computer networks in public libraries and schools. **As Goble (1997) notes, they** also face competition from external providers in an increasingly commercialised information services market where there is rapid price inflation for both printed and electronic sources, adding pressure to already tight budgets. Further, in a service economy, consumers have become more demanding and, lastly, the composition of the workforce is changing, with an ageing population, more women, plus more part-timers and job sharing (Mullins, 1996).

In response to, or in anticipation of such factors, organisations may initiate change. This can incorporate both structure (hierarchy and division of work) and culture (how things are done - values and norms), and such change may involve, amongst other things, costs, job design, staff development and training, working conditions and new services or products (Cornell, 1996).

Good use of side headings to lead the reader through the arguments

Note use of citation as part of sentence. Helps flow of sense.

Citation following a sentence. Note stop comes *after* citation.

Implementing such changes is not easy. Likert, in Cornell, (1996) identifies three styles of managing change: authoritative (imposed by management); consultative (discussed with staff but still decided by management) and participative (involving staff in decision- making). Further, Lewin's widely cited model breaks the management of change into three phases. First, unfreezing - diagnosing problems and an awareness of the need to change. Second, changing - the breaking of old habits and adoption of new skills and behaviour and third, refreezing - evaluating and consolidating the changes (Daft, 1994; Cava, 1990; Cornell, 1996; Mullins, 1996).

Good use of evidence to support points although the writer is beginning to rely too heavily on three reading list items: Daft, Handy and Mullins.

However, Handy (1993, p.292), doubts whether change can be 'managed' at all:

"To 'manage change' is wishful thinking, implying as it does that one not only knows where to go and how to get there but can persuade everyone else to travel there."

Nicely presented 'long' quote. Reduced point size, separated from text and indented. Note page number after author. Page no, could just as well have been placed after the quote.

He continues that change can at best be 'cultivated' through channelling and learning, not controlling. Fundamentally, what Handy is advocating is Likert's (*op.cit.*) participative approach or what Senge (in Goble, 1997) describes as the 'Learning Organisation'. This is an organisation in which change is welcome and accepted and which never 'arrives' but constantly seeks to improve. Senge stresses that people are the most important element in change, not technology or processes. This model also emphasises the need for clarity of purpose, and for dialogue and discussion through teamworking and empowerment, that is, a participative management style. It is reasoned that by involving staff in decisions which affect them and giving them greater responsibility for their work, they will become 'empowered', will 'own' solutions and accept change more readily (*ibid.*). There is general agreement with this view (amongst others - Underwood, 1990; Cornell, 1996; Hamel, 1998; Mullins, 1996).

Reality, of course, is somewhat removed ~~form~~ academic models. To return to Handy's (1993) evolutionary analogy, ~~I would argue that~~ Change is not always a condition of survival - successful genes, such as those in crocodiles or, more pertinently, humans, have remained stable over geological time spans.

Typo not picked up by spell checker. Read your essay! Good critical comment. Writer could have avoided personalisation as shown by strikethrough

Moreover, the norms and mores which our society conditions us to aspire to - family values, owning a home, upholding the law - are based upon stability and, as Duening (1997) notes, most people are creatures of habit and crave a sense of belonging. This is not to say that change is bad or unnecessary. Rather, it is an observation that, participative or not, change goes against the grain for many because it upsets the psychological *status quo* (Baker, 1989). As such, a fear of change is rational and even change that is commonly agreed to be for the best can be unsettling and generate conflicting feelings of loss and discomfort (*ibid.*). Where there is disagreement over change, resistance will be greater and Smith in Buch, (1997) contends that a startling 80% of organisational change efforts fail. Therefore, understanding how and why organisational change is likely to generate such tensions is clearly of considerable importance.

Sources of conflict during organisational change.

Cornell (1996) identifies four responses to change: withdrawal (including resignation), resistance, acceptance (a reluctant bowing to the inevitable) and embracing (welcoming change and the opportunities it brings). The first three of these indicate conflict. DeBono (1985) provides a simple framework which helps to explain why such reactions occur. He states that people disagree because they want different things or because they perceive things differently. Organisational change provides ample opportunity for either or both of these scenarios to cause conflict.

The style of change

As discussed above, participation, provided it is genuine, is widely regarded as the most effective way of introducing change with minimum of resistance. (it is also seen as one of the more productive strategies for dealing with conflict should it arise (Baker, 1989; Mullins, 1996; Handy, 1993 - see below: **Strategies for managing conflict.**) Nevertheless, Mullins, (1996) points out that it also requires time and patience to establish, especially where, historically (as in many LIS), there has been a hierarchical and bureaucratic culture where everyone 'knows their place' and is not used to being consulted. In practical terms, it is more decisive, quicker and therefore tempting to impose change with little or no participation (*ibid.*). In addition, Duening (1997) warns against the

Useful side heading keeps the writer on the subject and signpost the direction of the argument for the marker.

Note how writer has flagged second level heading by using italics. Good practice.

dangers of what he calls 'catastrophist' management theories with their emphasis on short-term

discontinuous change and the latest management fads. Whilst much is made of the 'information age' and the 'knowledge economy', it should not be forgotten that the human brain's capability to process information is unchanged (ibid.). Sykes and Gerrard (1997), although writing in the context of the convergence of LIS and ICT services, make the general point that change is unlikely to work if it is too great a departure from existing practice and culture. Trying to change too much too quickly is likely to be counter productive as people will not be able to deal with it effectively. As Mullins (1996) observes, the adoption of an autocratic approach to change, or an over-ambitious one, shows a failure to appreciate the human aspects of change and is likely to generate fear, uncertainty and hostility.

Poor Communication

Closely linked to the style of management is communication. Managers who do not communicate effectively run the risk that their plans and motives will be misunderstood and generate resistance. If the reasons for change are not justified and explained, rumour and speculation can fill the void (Daft, 1994) and undermine the credibility of the project. Further, Clampitt (1991) remarks, that informing people of an idea is not the same as persuading them that it is a good one. Likewise, Mullins, (1996) warns that managers who are enthused and motivated by proposed changes must beware of assuming that staff will automatically be similarly engaged simply by the prospect.

Structure and Culture

Communication is both a contributory factor and a product of an organisation's structure and culture. To focus on LIS once more, Prince and Burton (1988); St Clair (1996) and Greenhalgh and Worpole (1995) all note that in recent years there has been a move away from traditional structures and cultures which were hierarchical, bureaucratic and function-based. In their place have come flatter structures, convergence with computing services and more service- orientated, entrepreneurial cultures which emphasise team-working, multi-skilling (reflecting the growing use of ICT) and more participative management (Greenhalgh and

Note that in this para the writer is making a point and then supporting it from the evidence rather than just saying what the 'experts' think. This is how the literature *should* be used.

Worpole, 1995; Buch, 1997; Shaughnessy, 1996). Librarians and LIS managers in all sectors must now possess a wider range of educational, financial and management skills than was the case when the more passive, ² bureaucratic models prevailed (Greenhalgh and Worpole, 1995; Kinnell, 1991; St Clair, 1996; Heery, 1993).

Good use of footnote for a definition that would have disrupted the flow of an argument. The footnote ref. still needs to be in the Bibliography.

There are many, including Fisher (1998), Heery (1993), Greenhalgh and Worpole (1995) and St Clair (1996), who believe that the changes to structures, cultures and skills, plus the development of the concept of Knowledge Management², represent a major shift in LIS provision. **By contrast, there is a minority, and it must be said that the argument seems to have gone against them**, who argue that the new LIS models simply represent acquiescence in the face of financial restraint (Roberts, 1992). Ratcliffe (in Roberts, 1992, p.170) states that the innovators are operating under

A good example of the writer discussing conflicting viewpoints

"...the delusion that librarianship has undergone a fundamental change, instead of recognising merely that libraries have benefited from new techniques in retrieving information."

There seems to be something of the ostrich with its head in the sand about this view. ~~I would argue that~~, Acquiescent or not, the changes are significant and, as discussed below, can and do generate tensions in a number of ways.

A good example of a student's critical comment about what they have read. Again no need to personalise.

Threat

First, such changes may be perceived as a threat to the established order and specialisms. For example, placing previously independent subject specialists into a liaison team with joint responsibilities may be regarded by some as de-skilling and a loss of status. Multi-skilling and the current debate about the validity of the professional-paraprofessional division (highlighted, for example, by the 'Fielden report' (John Fielden Consultancy, 1993)) may be perceived similarly. In my own library experience, plans to train paraprofessional staff in basic cataloguing were perceived by professionally qualified cataloguers as a threat to their status, despite the fact that the intention was to release them to concentrate on the more demanding and interesting work.

² Knowledge management: the analysis and planning of work, learning, available and required information in order to maximise an organisation's knowledge resources (Information Outlook 1998)

Fear of the unknown

As touched upon previously, a natural fear of the unknown can be a source of tension. Staff may have to deal simultaneously with the 'loss' of familiar working relationships and duties at the same time as trying to learn new skills and adapt to new ways of working (Bridges in Buch, 1997). Examples include the re-skilling required to support ICT in LIS, the convergence of LIS and ICT and attempts to create more flexible team cultures. Therefore, in addition to feelings akin to grief, staff may perceive a loss of competence, expressed as anxiety and/or resistance to the new regime (ibid.). Sykes and Gerrard (1997) record that initial resistance to such changes at Liverpool John Moores University (JMU) was considerable, the more so because change was imposed with little initial staff involvement.

Roles and Resources

Change may also create conflict over resources and roles. Individuals and departments will each perceive change from within their own context. A certain degree of parochialism and what De Bono (1985) calls 'local logic' is inevitable. If departmental briefs and individual job descriptions are not carefully updated and clarified, re-structuring can provide ample opportunity for turf-wars between departments, ambiguity over responsibilities, and workloads which are too great or small (McGurn, 1990; Eggleton, 1979). Split or dispersed sites, a feature of many LIS, present a further problem, and attempts to iron out cultural **idiosyncracies** or a perception that one site receives preference can also cause confrontations (Bryson, 1990).

Personalities, Values and Priorities

Perceptions and values permeate an individual's view of their environment (**Lippitt in Bryson, 1990**). Since everyone is different, it is therefore not surprising that much organisational conflict arises from clashes of personalities, opinions, and priorities which may be projected into the wider organisational context (**Bundy and Wasserman in Allred, 1987**). With the challenges facing LIS, such clashes are unavoidable. Thus, at organisational level, issues such as charging for services (and which ones); the potential conflict between providing services to core users and the need to generate income; private finance initiatives in the public sector, and the use of paraprofessionals in previously professional roles, all have conflict potential. Indeed, the entire professional-paraprofessional

Spelling error. Use Spell/grammar check + a good dictionary for those words Spell check doesn't recognise

Note correct citation of an author referred to by another.

distinction has been criticised as divisive, inflexible and likely to create frustration amongst paraprofessional staff by restricting career development (Bundy in Allred, 1987; John Fielden Consultancy, 1993).

At a less fundamental level, conflict during change may arise from differences in age and experience, from general bureaucratic inertia to innovation and from a straightforward clash of personalities (Pettas and Gilliland, 1992; Rotondi in Eggleton, 1979).

The need to confront tensions and conflict

In dealing with this issue, one must return briefly to the dichotomy identified previously between constructive and destructive conflict. It follows that managers need to be aware of what is going on if they are to distinguish between the two and intervene if necessary. Among the advantages cited for a healthy level of organisational conflict are that open conflict resolution and a robust difference of opinion are beneficial in improving trust and working relations and that more creative solutions are produced because the issues are explored openly and fully (Eisenhardt *et al*, 1997; Edelman, 1993; Allred, 1987). The techniques which seek to achieve this are discussed in the next section. However, during organisational changes, managers are more likely to face the symptoms of negative conflict, especially if the changes are major.

Resistance to change may take a number of forms. Where change is successfully implemented, the initial disorientation and sense of loss staff may feel will be overcome in time. However, if communication is poor; if managers fail to convince staff of the validity of change; fail to address their concerns or provide adequate training and support, then Cornell's (1996) negative responses may result. To recap, these are reluctant acceptance, resistance or withdrawal. With the former, symptoms may include grumbling and reminiscing about how much better things were before. 'Resistance' may take active or passive forms

(Feldman in Baker, 1989). Strikes or sabotage, in extreme cases, or a refusal to co-operate with new procedures, are examples of active resistance. Task avoidance or postponement and doing the bare minimum may indicate a non-confrontational **but, in my experience (both LIS and non-LIS), far more common type of resistance**. Whilst there may be other causes, absenteeism and a high turnover of staff are possible indicators of a conflict which has reached such a pitch that individuals have withdrawn from it rather than continue to face it (Bridges in Buch, 1997).

Such conflicts incur costs for an organisation - individual stress, diversion from organisational goals, interpersonal or inter-group hostility, distorted communications, distrust and damaged working relationships, all of which may contribute to decreased productivity and poor performance (Allred, 1987; Baker 1989). Successful conflict resolution strategies and, where possible, the prevention of destructive conflict are, therefore, important to all organisations.

Management strategies for dealing with conflict

In dealing with conflict, especially during change, strategies fall into two broad areas. First, there are those techniques which may be used to try and channel conflict constructively and prevent negative confrontations and second, there are strategies for dealing with conflict once it has arisen. A manager's attitude will depend largely on his/her own perception of conflict. Three perspectives are widely identified in the literature (for example, Mullins, 1996; Buchanan and Huczynski, 1991; Allred, 1987). The traditional (unitary) view of conflict sees it as entirely negative and arising from management failure or the presence of 'trouble-makers'. Therefore, conflict is viewed as a phenomenon to be resolved and eliminated (*ibid*). In contrast, the interactionists have argued that conflict is an inevitable fact of human and organisational life, is linked to change and that, sensitively managed, a level of conflict can be a good thing (*ibid.*). The latter is generally regarded as the most productive (Handy, 1993; Mullins, 1996; Buch, 1997; Eisenhardt et al, 1997). Nevertheless, as Maslow (in Allred, 1987, p.8) points out, many people retain from childhood:

“,a fear of conflict, of disagreement, of hostility ... there is much emphasis on getting along well with other people...”.

Writer uses their own experience effectively and succinctly.

Therefore, overcoming a natural instinct to regard all disagreement as a failure to be 'managed' is essential to an interactionist approach.

Seeking to prevent destructive conflict involves good planning, good communication, clarity of purpose and participation. Before any of this, as St Clair (1994) observes, managers must evaluate the need for change - What is the goal? Is it justified and a priority? Is it worth the cost? How will it affect the organisation and individuals? Cava (1990) stresses that timely and clear communication with the staff affected is vital in order to justify and 'sell' the changes, and address their concerns, fears, objections and needs.

During change, clear job descriptions and adequate training are important to reduce confusion and anxiety (Pettas and Gilliland, 1993). This participative approach is favoured by, amongst others, Baker (1989), Cava (1990), and Mullins (1996), on the grounds that involving staff early on will help to overcome natural resistance, anticipate and address potential problems, reduce fear based on ignorance and encourage staff to 'own' the changes because they have been involved in the process. It also recognises the need for managers to empathise with the feelings of staff and accept that a sense of 'loss' and the associated emotions, including anger, are a natural part of change (Mullins, 1996). Clearly, some changes are more controversial and difficult to introduce than others and will not be without upset. For instance, a library closure is never popular whereas a staff training programme in ICT may well be welcomed. However, research by Simmons and Proctor (1998) into public library closures suggests that, even in apparently dire circumstances, by planning ahead to address issues such as job security, by making senior management visible and adopting a timely and honest approach to information, co-operation can be secured and negative reaction reduced.

Good critical comment but highlighted phrase should be replaced with e.g. 'it can be argued' to avoid personalisation

Such a participative approach may serve to reduce the potential for damaging conflict but, **I would contend**, human nature and 'Murphy's Law' will ensure that managers will have to deal with conflicting interests and parties when change is introduced. Pettas and Gilliland (1992) observe, and commonsense dictates, that before attempting to resolve any conflict, a manager must seek to

determine its history, who the stakeholders are and identify the real and dominant issues which may underlie the apparent cause. The terminology varies but five basic strategies are identified for dealing with conflict (Handy, 1993; Bryson, 1990; Thomas in Buchanan and Huczynski, 1991). Thomas (op.cit.) describes these as collaboration, competition, accommodation, avoidance and compromise. Which strategy to use, and when, depends upon the circumstances.

Collaboration is the participative, interactionist approach applied to conflict resolution and the general arguments rehearsed previously do not require repetition. It is also the approach favoured by advocates of maintaining a healthy level of organisational conflict. As Eisenhardt *et al* 1997, p.77) put it, "the absence of conflict is not harmony, it's apathy". The emphasis is on designing solutions through teamwork and shared information, within a balanced power structure which discards domination as a tactic (Graham, 1998).

Good use of a 'short' quote as part of the text. Note addition of page number in citation.

Collaborative conflict resolution is based upon an appeal to the common goals of the organisation, and stresses that it is in the self-interest of all the parties to come up with a solution which works towards institutional goals (Handy, 1993). De Bono (1985) and Gourlay (1987) both argue that by starting with such goals in mind and working back, conflicts can be more effectively resolved because the negotiation will become more problem-centred and constructive rather than conflict-centred and selfish. Moreover, by initially ignoring a central sticking point and working on other issues, the central point may either become irrelevant or resolvable as other options are generated (De Bono, 1985). Sykes and Gerrard (1997) note that involving staff in the design and development of new job descriptions and competencies was a crucial factor in overcoming resistance to convergence, particularly at Liverpool JMU. A manager may also act as an 'honest broker' in such situations and mediate between two conflicting views in an attempt to reach a resolution (Edelmann, 1993). Such a role depends on the manager being perceived as credible and neutral and in some instances it may be necessary to bring in an arbitrator from outside the department concerned or, in extreme cases, from an external organisation (Eggleton, 1979).

Again, the writer very effectively makes his own points and supports them from the literature - rather than simply saying Bryson says this, Mullins says that...

Good use of own experience to question the view from the literature. Could have avoided personalisation by simply saying 'However, work experience shows...'

So, there is general approval for collaboration and what Bryson (1990) calls the win-win approach. On the down side, it is more time consuming than other methods (Mullins, 1996). Under the reality of day to day pressures this is not an insignificant point, and may lead to other, more expedient but less effective strategies being employed (Whetton and Cameron in Allred, 1987). Moreover, what seems to be lacking at times in the literature is an appreciation that individuals do not all respond the same way. Perhaps it is unavoidable in general texts and articles (for example, Handy, 1993; McGurn, 1990) but there seems to be an unstated assumption that, once introduced, participation and collaboration will be universally appreciated. However, in each of the four organisations of which I have experience, there have been those who would have no desire to be 'empowered' - they just want to do their job and go home. Every organisation also has its habitual 'doom-merchants' who respond negatively to everything. Inculcating a participative culture in which collaborative conflict resolution is the norm is a long- term process (Mullins, 1996), requiring both persistence and patience from a manager.

The second of Thomas's (op.cit.) categories is competition or forcing. Essentially this is the exertion of the manager's legitimate power. It has the advantages of being quick and decisive and may be appropriate when a manager is certain he or she is right on an important issue or when disciplinary action is necessary (ibid.). However, it also a technique which is a blunt instrument. Described as the win-lose or zero-sum approach, forcing creates winners and losers in a conflict, can store up potentially damaging resentment and does not 'resolve' problems in the way that collaboration does (Allred, 1987). Despite this, research by Whetton and Cameron (in Allred, 1987) found that it is the most commonly used approach because it is expedient. They also found that forcing is the tool most used by unsuccessful managers who are unable to solve conflicts in other ways.

McGurn (1990) summarises accommodation as appeasement or compliance. This may be because one party realises it is wrong or is losing anyway. A manager may also use this method if the issue is clearly more important to the injured party than to the manger or the organisation, if the need for stability

outweighs the value of prolonging the dispute, or perhaps to allow staff to develop and learn from experience (Thomas, *op.cit.*).

In some respects avoidance resembles accommodation. Accommodation at least acknowledges that a conflict exists, though, whereas avoiding a conflict implies a refusal to deal it. It is not a strategy to be used readily because if the dispute has any substance then suppressing it will simply make things worse (Allred, 1987). Indeed there are probably only two instances where it is of use. First, if the conflict is trivial or secondly in order to let people cool down and allow the manager to assess the situation calmly (McGurn, 1990). Compromise has been described as a lose-lose strategy and yet still holds wide currency as an effective conflict resolution strategy (Graham, 1998). It is most likely where the conflicting parties carry equal weight and is a trade-off, with each making concessions but neither achieving its original aims. It is for this reason that the lose-lose tag applies - the conflict has not been resolved because differences are not fully explored and each side generally seeks to concede as little as possible (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, as a fall-back position or as a means of creating a temporary settlement to allow time for a more collaborative solution to be found, compromise can be a helpful strategy (Thomas, *op.cit.*).

Conclusion

Change and how people react to it are important features of organisational life. Conflicts can arise at any time but because it derives from people wanting or perceiving different things, a period of change is, by its very nature, likely to provoke mixed reactions, ranging from enthusiastic acceptance to overt resistance. As discussed above, interpretations about the scale of the changes currently facing LIS vary. My own view is that whilst much change, especially in the public and academic sectors was initially driven by the political and economic realities of Thatcherism in the 1980s, the rapid development of ICT represents far more than "new techniques in retrieving information" and is generating both new services and new approaches to the delivery of LIS.

Such changes cannot occur without creating feelings of anxiety, tension, fear and loss. For management, the challenge is not so much how to 'avoid' or

Don't use *ibid* and *op cit*. Writer could have moved 'Graham' to position of *ibid*. Thomas should be given full citation to avoid reader having to refer back.

The conclusion is too short and does not do full justice to the body of the essay. The entire second part of the question is covered by only one sentence (the last).

suppress conflict as these changes occur, but to try and understand them and provide effective support and mechanisms through which conflict can be directed into productive channels. Whetton and Cameron's research (in Allred, 1987), indicates that effective managers will employ a variety of techniques when dealing with conflict, depending on the circumstances. There will always be some who will respond negatively to change as a matter of course but, as Edelman (1993) states, if a genuine attempt to resolve tensions and conflict is made then a manager should not blame him/herself if it is unsuccessful. Whilst there is no perfect solution, collaboration and participation represent the most effective techniques at a manager's disposal for securing co-operation and confronting negative reactions during change.

Word Count 4,652

Remember to add your Word Count to each piece of work. (Don't count the abstract or bibliography). This essay is well over-length. This does not necessarily mean that marks will be deducted but the writer could have achieved the same mark with much less work. By writing at such length the writer also risks hiding his arguments in too much detail and including irrelevant material. If he had done this he would have had marks deducted.

Bibliography

An attractively presented bibliography. Items are easy to find and bib. conventions are followed – i.e. titles of monographs and journals in italics.

There is a good mix of book and journal items.

This essay was written in 1999 - so there is a high proportion of recent material amongst the writer's sources. The date explains the lack of electronic resources.

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Baker, S. L. (1989), "Managing resistance to change", *Library Trends*, 38 (1), Summer, pp.53-61.

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Department of Information Studies: Coursework Report

Name:	XXXXXXXXXX
Programme:	XXXXXXXXXX
Module Name:	INF6170 Human Resource Management
Title of Coursework:	“As new strategies are implemented in any organisation, tensions and conflicts are likely to arise...Such conflicts must be confronted, no matter how uncomfortable it may feel to operate in such a situation” Discuss in relation to the impact of change on LIS organisations and examine the management strategies which attempt to confront the problem of conflict.
Unconfirmed Grade:	74%

Content

	100-70	69-60	59-50
Interpretation and scope	Excellent. Scope appropriate. Almost all significant points covered.	Good attempt to reflect scope of essay. Most key points covered.	Attempt to cover scope of topic but some omissions and/or misunderstandings.
Understanding of topic	Excellent understanding and exposition of relevant issues. Insightful and well informed. Good awareness of nuances and complexities.	Clear awareness and exposition of relevant issues. Some awareness of nuances and complexities.	Shows awareness of the issues but no more than to be expected from attendance at classes.
Use of literature	a) Excellent use of evidence to support arguments/points. b) Significant independent research.	Good use of evidence to support arguments. Some evidence of independent research.	Insufficient evidence of independent research.
Evaluation and synthesis of evidence	Substantial evaluation and synthesis of source material.	Some evaluation and synthesis of source material.	Insufficient evaluation of source material.
Critical analysis	a) Outstanding standard of critical analysis. b) Questioning, unbiased approach. Clear evidence of independent thought	High standard of critical analysis using appropriate conceptual framework. Some questioning of written sources	Uses appropriate conceptual framework. Attempts analysis but some omissions and/or errors.
Structure, logical development	Credible case made. Aims, arguments and conclusions compatible	Arguments clearly structured and logically developed.	Arguments reasonably clear but undeveloped.
Abstract	Very clear definition of subject.	Defines subject but summary of aims, approach and conclusions incomplete	Not clear.
Conclusion	Excellent. Draws together various points. Identifies key issues, solutions.	Summarises most key points/issues/outcomes	Conclusion does not do justice to body of essay. Too short.

Presentation

	100-70	69-60	59-50
Spelling, grammar and syntax	High standard. Negligible errors.	Acceptable standard. Negligible errors.	A few errors - punctuation, misuse of words, spelling, sentence construction..
Style	Very effective use of English. Clear and easy to read.	Effective use of English. Clear and easy to read.	Style acceptable.
Presentation of data and references	a) Excellent use of relevant data and examples, figures, models. b) References accurately cited and listed.	Relevant data and examples, all properly referenced. References accurately cited and listed.	Some good use of relevant data and examples but incompletely referenced. Occasional errors in citation missing or incorrect citations and/or bib. entries.
Overall presentation	Excellent presentation. Well organised and presented. Students' Handbook followed.	Carefully organised and well presented. Students' Handbook followed.	Presentation generally satisfactory. Some elements not as per Students' Handbook.

Comments:

An excellent essay which omits very little of significance. It is well written and sensibly organised, following the framework of the essay title. Your essay contains a commendable level of critical comment. Your analysis of ways of managing conflict would have benefited from a look at Organisational Development literature. You used a wide range of sources both book and journal and related the general management material very well to the professional literature. Beware of using too much LIS material in management essays. It is often derivative and short on insights. Your conclusion did not really do justice to your essay. This is where you summarise the main points made in the different parts of your essay and come to some conclusions about e.g. the problems of managing change, the chief causes of conflict and the most effective ways of managing it.

Presentation. Excellent. You made good use of side headings and there were negligible typos. One or two might have been picked up by reading your essay rather than relying on spell checker.

Bib. citations. Text and bib. Citations accurate. Just an occasional inconsistency: If text is Bluck in Pinder and Melling (1996) then bib. entry should be under Pinder and Melling, not Bluck. i.e. you should reference the source in which Bluck appears. Occasional citation errors: Huczynski and Buchanan/Buchanan and Huczynski.

Tutor:

Date: