Organization Development and Change

R. Wayne Boss, Editor | Summer 2006 | Published by the ODC Division

ODC DIVISION PROGRAM NEWS

Michael R. Manning
Program Chair
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A big *thank you* to everyone who helped create the Atlanta ODC program. Your efforts as submitters and reviewers have been unparalleled. Because of this we will offer an awesome slate of papers and intriguing symposia that should capture the interest of everyone at the August meetings. Below is a sampling of the ODC program for this year's conference with the theme "Knowledge, Action and the Public Concern" (August 11-16, 2006).

ODC Theme and Distinguished Speaker Sessions

I'm really excited to announce that Chris Argyris, Bill Starbuck, and L.David Brown will be our invited guests and speakers for this year's ODC Theme and Distinguished Speaker Sessions. Professors Argyris and Starbuck will anchor the theme session that they have entitled "How Can We Make ODC More Useful? Learning, Participation, and Humanism." This will be an exciting session. Chris and Bill have promised to challenge our Division to think beyond our current views and ways of researching and practicing organization development and change.

It is also a great honor to have Dave Brown as the ODC Distinguished Speaker. Dave's well-known writing, teaching, and practice in international change makes him the best person in our division to talk with us about this year's conference theme. The title of Dave's address is "Changing Organizations in a Globalizing World." This session promises to be full of good stories and great insight and is meant to honor and celebrate Dave for his gracious contributions to the ODC Division and our literature. Dave has been an active member of the ODC Division for many years and is also a former Division Chair.

Symposia

We are sponsors of seven showcase symposia. In addition, there will be seven other symposia sponsored

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THE FOLLY OF BLENDING STRATEGIC WITH OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES: REFLECTIONS OF AN ODC DIVISION CHAIR

George Roth
Division Chair
MIT

One of the privileges of being on the board of ODC is a closer connection to the members of this division, and learning about the varied work that you are all doing. Everyone that I have met in ODC strives to be constructive, even nice, which is often a welcome relief from the more status-conscious and critical nature of many other Academy of Management sessions. I gather that people involved with the ODC division continue to promote, and not just study, many of the core values associated with organization development. Those attitudes and approaches make this division a welcoming place for regular members and newcomers. I hope that my efforts over these last five years have contributed to the continuation of our congenial culture.

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by our division, four in collaboration with other divisions and three sponsored exclusively by ODC.

Showcase Symposia:

- Lived-Experience and Professional Work: Learning from OD Scholar-Practitioners
- Discourse Perspectives on Organizational Change
- Where's the Reflection in Action Learning?
- Bringing the Design Sciences to Organization Development and Change Management Consulting
- Transformative Business Innovations for Mutual Benefit: The Role Business as an Agent of Benefit
- New Forms of OD Consulting
- The Pacing and Sequencing of Organizational Change

Paper Sessions and ODC Award Winners

Ninety-nine papers will be presented. As in the past the paper sessions include presentations in three different formats: regular paper, interactive presentations, and visual paper sessions.

This year's award winning papers are as follows:

Best Competitive Paper:
"Lessons Learned and Lessons Lost: A multi-method field study of vicarious team learning behavior" by Henrik Bresman, INSEAD.

Rupert F. Chisholm Best Theory to Practice Paper:
"Culture and Organisational Improvisation: Somne Conceptions Informed by UK Financial Services" by Steve Leybourne, Plymouth University.

Best Interactive Paper:
"Technological Discontinuities & Organizational Adaptation: Exploring the Role of Organizational Identity" by Ricardo Flores, University of Illinois.

Best Visual Paper:
"Radical Strategic and Structural Change: Occurrence, Antecedents and Consequences" by Daniel Wischnevsky, Farleigh Dickinson University and Fariborz Damenpour, Rutgers University.

Best Doctoral Student Paper:
"Social Influence Effects on Commitment to Change and Implementation Behaviors" by Lisa M. Jones, University of North Carolina.

There was no award for Best Action Research Paper this year.

Most all ODC sessions are scheduled to take place at the Hilton Atlanta in three rooms (Jackson, DeKalb, or Carter). Here are some special division sessions to mark on your calendars:

- ODC Welcome and Continental Breakfast: Monday, August 14, 8:00 am at Hilton Atlanta in Jackson.
- ODC Theme Session, William H. Starbuck and Chris Argyris, How Can We Make ODC More Useful? Learning, Participation, and Humanism: Monday, August 14, 8:30 am at Hilton Atlanta in Jackson.
- ODC Distinguished Speaker, L. David Brown, Changing Organizations in a Globalizing World, Tuesday, August 15th, 4:10 pm at Hilton Atlanta in Jackson.
- ODC Business Meeting and Awards Ceremony: Tuesday, August 15th, 5:30 pm at Hilton Atlanta in Jackson.
- ODC Social, immediately following the Business meeting at Hilton Atlanta poolside.

A Great Big Thank You!

I would especially like to thank David Fass, doctoral student from New Mexico State University. David and I worked collaboratively every step of the way to organize this program. His assistance was critical to these efforts and I could not have organized this program without him. I would also like to thank the present and past ODC executive board for helping out in extra reviews and selecting our best papers. Special mention goes to George Roth, Ram Tenkasi, Frank Barrett, Ann Feyerherm, Gavin Schwartz, Ian Palmer, Wayne Boss, Sandy Piderit, Anat Lechner, Eric Goodman, Jose DelaCerda, David Fass, Linda Sharkey, Gretchen Spreitzer, Peter Sorensen, Therese Yaeger, Chris Worley, Rami Shani, Julie Wolfram Cox, Glenn Varney, Jean Bartunek, Eric Neilsen, and Larry Greiner.

Finally, a big thanks to all the submitters, reviewers, and other volunteers who contributed to the development of the program. 132 papers and symposia were submitted to the division. For the first time all reviews were conducted via the web. And there was an enormous outpouring of support as 516 individuals registered to review for ODC. We didn't need all of this help, but did end up eliciting 337 individuals to review for ODC. A special thanks to these individuals. In addition, I want to thank those who also volunteered to be session chairs and discussants for the August sessions. All of these efforts are what makes the ODC Division of the Academy of Management truly outstanding! Thank you all very much and I look forward to seeing you in Atlanta soon.

The ODC Division Thanks the Following 337 Reviewers

I'd like to formally thank the following reviewers: Aamo Bjorn, Bodo Graduate School of Business; Garry Adams Auburn U; Bryan Adkins, U of San Francisco; Meenakshi Aggarwal Gupta, KJ Somaiya Institute of Management Studies and Research; David Albritton, Northern Arizona University; Karen Alexandre, Capella U.; Susan Alvey, University of Phoenix; Wolfgang Amann, IMD; Brett Andersen, Brigham Young U.; Don Antunes, IMD; Teresa Aprigliano, Molloy College; Chris Aquino, Fielding Graduate Institute; Jyoti Bachani, University of Redlands; Heather Banham, Okanagan College; Deborah Barrett, Rice U.; Frank Barrett, Naval Postgraduate School; Kenneth Bartlett, University of Minnesota; Jean Bartunek, Boston College; Cynthia Bean, University of South Florida; J. Bret Becton, Winthrop U.; Mario Benassi, University of Milano; Suzanne Benn, U. of Technology, Sydney; John Bennett, Queens University of Charlotte; Cecile Betit, Independent Researcher; Constant Beugre, Delaware State U.; Dong Bian, IESE Business School; Hans Björkman, SIF; Janice Black, New Mexico State U; Jacqueline Blackwell, ACM; Harry Boer, Aalborg U.; Jennifer Bott, Ball State U.; Neil Boyd, Pennsylvania State U.; Ashley Braganza, Cranfield U.; Wayne Boss, U. of Colorado; Christophe Bredillet, ESC Lille; Ebony Bridwell-Mitchell, New York U.; David Bright, Case Western Reserve U.; Fiona Broadbent, U. of Western Australia; Melanie Bryant, Monash U.; Barbara Bunker, U at Buffalo; Ronald Burke, York U.; Laura Caccia, Bocconi U. and U. of Valle d'Aosta; Antonio Caetano, ISCTE- Instituto Superior de Ciencias do Trabalho e da Empresa; Steven Caldwell, University of South Carolina Upstate; Kelly Campbell, Arizona State University; Phyllis Campbell, Bethel College; Tracey Cantarutti, Benedictine U.; Marilyn Carter, Benedictine U.; Susan Cartwright, U. of Manchester; Margaret Case, University of Phoenix; David Chambers, National Institute of Mental Health; Albert Chavez, University of Phoenix; Nita Chhinzer, McMaster U.; Jin Nam Choi, McGill U.; Chee-Leong

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To avoid complacency and make progress, we need to balance our nurturing environment with thoughtful reflection and new action. I hope that in my reflection on these last five years, I can inspire and welcome division members to propose and carry through ideas that will continue to support our hospitable culture while advancing our scholarship. I see two primary issues facing our division and the ODC board: operational challenges and setting strategic directions.

Although these two issues are completely different, they become intertwined in the ODC board.

Operational Challenges: I view our primary responsibility as encouraging and developing scholarship that informs practice through what the ODC division does at the annual AOM meetings. If the ODC board can do that well, then we can, and probably should, take on other tasks. What few people outside the board may not realize is the amount of activity and effort that goes into just "running" the activities of the division for the annual Academy meeting.

The people that serve on the board all have significant demands from their jobs, and take on ODC board responsibilities in addition to other commitments. Because we elect our board members, we select people that are well-known, high-achievers, and hence, often already overcommitted. The good news is that these people, as a function of their accomplishments, are highly capable and well organized. The bad news is that we have annually changing responsibilities. Hence, once you have done and learned a role – elections, PDW chair, program chair, the doctoral consortium organizer, and division chair – you move on to the next role (see Gretchen Spreitzer's "A day in the life of a program chair," ODC Summer 2005 newsletter, for a review of the progression of responsibilities of a division chair). Although we try to mentor and teach our successors, it is difficult because finding the time for two busy people that are not co-located to talk is not easy and because the environment upon which we depend to do our jobs continually changes. In the last years, AOM has moved from paper to partial to all electronic submissions. Each year "the system" has been different and largely untested in August. Hence, we really do not fully know when we are writing the calls for workshops, symposiums or papers exactly how the systems that will be use in December and January for submitting and reviewing papers will actually work.

I share of these tales to provide you as members a bit of insight into the operations of the ODC board – largely headed into an unknown territory, and helping each other out in roles whose requirements change annually. The good news is that always does work at out in the end. The board members pull together and help each other out in dealing with the "kinks." It does work out as well as it does with all the changes because AOM provides good support, and the people involved, at the Academy and divisional levels, all give it their highest personal commitment.

The ODC board efforts remind me of what it feels like to be a participant in a production-distribution simulation developed at MIT called the Beer Game (Sterman 1992). In this game, it is common for participants to become so busy just making needed moves that they unable to deal with more strategic challenges. It is a bit like real life in organizations, and on the ODC board. We seek and strive to do more for the field of organization development and change but get so busy with the ad hoc needs of the division and requirements of the annual meeting that we are limited in our abilities to undertake very much in the way of strategic initiatives.

Strategic Challenges: What we would like to spend more time on is thinking, talking and helping to develop the field of organization development and change. The question is, "What can the board do for our field of study?" What are the greatest challenges facing our field? I have attended several Academy of Management sessions where the focus has been the future of OD, or, whether or not the field of OD is "dead." I think that we are often caught in too much introspection, for more broadly seen, there is a great need for better change practices and plenty of research work to be done. The business environment seems to be changing as fast and as dramatically as ever, and organizations continue to seek need to adapt, change, and develop.

Our scholar-practitioner, Phil Mirvis, in his last board session, passed out the first book he had a role in writing, *Failures in Organizational Development and Change* (1977, now out of print). It is an edited volume of scholars writing about organizational change not going as planned. Scholarly books on failures in organizational change are a rarity. We should have twice as many volumes of failures as of successes, given that 70% of change initiatives fail or do not accomplish their intended outcomes (Beer and Nohria, 2000). We seem to have a largely repeated result: Most managers are unable to effectively guide organizational change efforts! The situation is disquieting, as there are many hundreds of books on change management, all claiming to be guides for paths to success.

The reality in business organizations is that managers do not seem to understand and manage change very well. Another startling finding from the perspective of change management is that Collins (2001) found so few companies – less than 1% – that went from being good to great (i.e. they outperformed their industry by a factor of three for 15 years). Of the 11 firms in the sample of 1435 firms in the Fortune 500 over 30 years, none of them used any one of the following practices:

1. becoming an outspoken and charismatic company and industry leader
2. paying-for-performance to ensure results
3. emphasizing good strategy and well articulated long-term plans
4. creating a relentless focus on “what to do”
5. using technology to drive change
6. letting your mergers and acquisitions ignite change
7. a management team that focuses on managing change, motivating people, and creating alignment
8. developing convincing names, tag lines, and launch events for change programs
9. positioning your company in promising, high-growth industries

Without the context for this list, most managers quickly respond that these nine items are a set of recommended best practices for change management (I have quizzed managers with this list and, indeed, this is the case). Clearly, if the best companies and leaders do not use these practices at all, the state of practice for managing change has lots of room for improvement! If these practices are not what managers should be doing to change their companies into great performers, what are they to do?

This situation should be a challenge for ODC members. I am certain that nearly every member of ODC could provide some good insights into what managers should be doing to improve their change practices. Good research work is needed to improve the poverty of managers’ change knowledge. We need to look beyond conventional planned change models and look at new conceptions of change and its development. (My dissertation research involved ethnographic study in two companies where I planned to describe the humanistic work conditions of the 21st Century paperless office. Well, it was not the fault of technology’s capabilities, although they were somewhat inadequate, but the change process that revealed cultural conditions as inhibiting a future utopian work vision. Hence, I’ve been studying and working to produce learning-based change within and across organizations.) Why do most change efforts meet so much resistance, languish, include backsliding, and have unintended consequences? Are there ways to approach change that are generative and self-sustaining? What can we do about it? In the organization of a field that includes management practitioners, educators, experts, consultants, and researchers, can we work more innovatively together to create better theory and more reliable change results? Why are we not seeing more action research (see Hilary Bradbury’s article in this newsletter)?

One of the advantages that we have as the ODC division of the Academy of Management is our membership and our culture. We need a collective effort to address the vexing issues that are behind the poor management change performance. As a board, we do our best to run the AOM division events, and support the great group and culture that we have inherited from our esteemed predecessors. Can we use our heritage to support each other and a collective scholarship that will address the challenges managers face? We need some change too, and given the AOM charter and venue, to use the process of research, presenting, and writing to advance our scholarship and practice.

We need our members to help the division by proposing and taking up new initiatives. The initiatives should push the division forward into trying new approaches and supporting new research activities. As I reflect, I want to note that I had expected to find and contribute to more innovation emanating from the ODC board. We have tried a number of times during these last five years to take on efforts as a board, but have been overcome by the needs of just running the division. What seems to work best is when the energy and drive for an initiative comes from a group that can dedicate their time and effort to that end, and not depend to upon the ODC board to lead the effort. As examples of efforts that followed this progression, and what to illustrate a range of what you might propose and organize, consider the following:

- *International ODC meeting:* We have long worked as a board, helped by Raymond Saner, our international representative at the time, to have a meeting that draws together ODC scholars outside the US. We did not get far, other than agreeing that it should happen, when it was a regular board agenda item. With the continuing, dedicated efforts of Raymond Saner, Peter Sorenson, Therese Yaeger, and Henri Savall, ISEOR and the University of Lyon are hosting an international doctoral consortium meeting co-sponsored by ODC in April 2006.
- *OD Competencies:* A long running discussion hosted by Glenn Varney at AOM PDW sessions on the research and list of competencies for OD practitioners and educational programs has become an initiative to form a permanent group. It is still in

the formation stages, but it has a governing board, and will soon have the support and approval of AOM for starting an endowment (contributed to by schools for now and soon to be solicited from corporations) to encourage and support new research in this area.

- *Action Research Group:* Long before PDW became so fashionable, a group interested in developing and promoting action research started meeting before the official AOM meetings started. This effort has been joined by and merged with a Practitioner interest group, and continues to provide an innovative way to branch beyond traditional scholarship and engage across the boundaries of researcher-manager-consultant professions.

- *Dynamic Time and Creative Inquiry Conferences:* Following his time on the ODC board, and perhaps with the tacit knowledge that I am trying to make explicit, Ron Purser organized a conference focused on time-related ODC research. ODC helped to co-sponsor the first conference outside of Boston in the summer of 2002, a second meeting took place at INSEAD in the summer of 2004, and a special journal issue was written.

I invite you, as members of the division, to talk with board members and propose ideas for special projects that develop ODC scholarship. As you can see from the activities of the board, we need you to go beyond proposing ideas to being ready and willing to lead in carrying them out. We can help with support and connections, such as establishing smaller working groups to carry out the ideas that you propose. The upcoming AOM meetings, particularly the division social events, welcome breakfast, theme session, distinguished speaker, and business meeting are great places to find and talk to the people you have elected to the board. It is also a supportive venue in which to find like-minded people to share your interests and passion. I hope my reflection on these last five years will inspire and welcome members of the division to take initiative and carry through new ideas for advancing our scholarship. In the end, we need actions in and from our membership to do research, build theory, and give managers the better roadmaps that they need for managing organization change.

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ODC 2006 PDW PROGRAM AT THE AOM "KNOWLEDGE, ACTION AND THE PUBLIC CONCERN" MEETING

The ODC 2006 pre-conference Professional Development Workshops (PDWs) will again offer the Academy membership wonderful learning opportunities. The PDWs are designed in a workshop format, of varying lengths from one to eight hours, and are taught by colleagues with the objective of sharing what they do and exploring questions and issues of common interest. The pace is slower than the main academy paper/symposium sessions and thus the chance for developing different perspectives, creating new experiences, and deeper understanding is greater.

The sessions start Friday, August 11th and run until Sunday at noon (when the regular Academy meetings start). Sessions are aimed at research, teaching, practice as they relate to knowledge, action, and the public concern.

The ODC is lead sponsor in six sessions that we hope you will find particularly interesting. In addition, we have joined in collaboration with 24 other academy divisions to co-sponsor 37 other sessions. That means that ODC is actively involved in creating and offering 43 PDWs. In addition, we will have an International Reception on Friday evening as well as a Doctoral Student Reception Saturday evening that all our members are invited to attend. A quick overview of the ODC lead sponsored sessions follows:

The program begins Friday afternoon with one PDW: “Cultural Due Diligence: A Key to Successful Post-merger/Acquisition Integration.” This workshop will offer insights into the cultural dynamics behind mergers and acquisitions to understand the reasons for failure rates. Also, in the evening ODC will sponsor the International Reception – a chance to connect with old friends and meet new ones while appreciating our international colleagues who have traveled great distances to join us.

On Saturday ODC is lead sponsor for two exceptional workshops. “Values and Ethics in Human System Development” is an invitation to an open dialogue about the state of values and ethics in change work. “Promoting OD and Change Processes Through Socio-economic Evaluation of Their Impacts” will explore the financial impact of change processes and raise important questions about the need to demonstrate economic results through OD interventions. And again Saturday evening, ODC will sponsor a reception for doctoral students.

Sunday morning will conclude the PDW program with three more sessions. Ian Palmer and colleagues promise to entertain and enlighten us with their workshop “That Was Great! High Impact Activities, Exercises, and Approaches for Teaching or Consulting on Organizational Change.” Larry Starr, Glenn Varney and colleagues will re-convene their eight-year project on the application of individual competencies for creating organizational change. Their session is entitled “Building ODC as an Academic Discipline.” A workshop entitled “Political Savvy in Organizational Politics” challenges the negative stereotypes surrounding organizational politics and offers effective and ethical ways to deal with politics.

As mentioned above, ODC has also joined with several other Academy divisions to co-sponsor 37 additional sessions that will be of interest to many. Just a short enticing list of some of the titles of these sessions includes: “Exploring Qualitative Research Methods,” “Working With Multiple Perspectives on Change,” “Process Research,” “Sustainable Practice,” and “Contributions to Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS).”

For more details please see the website or the Academy of Management program. We look forward to seeing you at a PDW in Atlanta.

OMT/ODC/MOC
DOCTORAL STUDENT CONSORTIUM
AUGUST 11-13
ATLANTA, GA

Please join us for an exciting and energetic mix of presentations, roundtable discussions, and research dialogues that are designed to address many of the concerns that are common among advanced doctoral students: How do I conduct high-impact research that generates a “buzz?” How do I manage work-life balance? How do I manage research collaborations?

The Consortium is organized by Cynthia Emrich (College of William & Mary, MOC), Ram Tenkasi (Benedictine University, ODC), Mary Tripsas (Harvard University, OMT), and Pablo Martin de Holan (Instituto de Empresa).

We have a terrific group of panelists who have committed to sharing their insights over the course of four sessions that will be held on Friday evening (5:00 to 8:00) and Saturday (8:00 to 5:00): Stuart Bunderson (Washington U.), Jackie Coyle-Shapiro (London School of Economics), Tom Cummings, University of Southern California; Marlena Fiol, University of Colorado, Denver; Gerard Hodgkinson, University of Leeds; George Huber, McCombs School of Management, UT Austin; Karen Jansen, University of Virginia; Michael Lounsbury, University of Alberta; Sharon Matusik, University of Colorado, Boulder; Elaine Romanelli, Georgetown; George Roth, MIT Sloan School; Sim Sitkin, Duke University; Toby Stuart, Columbia/ Harvard Business School; Dick Woodman, Texas A&M.

On Sunday morning, from 8:00 to 9:50, editors from many of leading journals will share their advice for crafting top-notch submissions and navigating the review process.

One highlight of the Consortium will be a Research Roundtable, to be held from 10:30 to 12:30 on Saturday. This session is patterned after the MOC Division’s popular “Cognition in the Rough” Professional Development Workshop. Roundtable participants – four students and two faculty panelists per table – will devote 20 minutes to providing feedback, advice, and ideas regarding each student’s research project.

We encourage schools to nominate students for the Consortium. To keep the faculty-participant ratio to an optimal size, the number of participants will be limited. This has been a very popular program, so apply early!

The deadline for receipt of nominations is June 1, 2006.

To apply, interested students must be nominated by their schools. No university can nominate more than two students, and each doctoral program is limited to one nomination. Universities with multiple departments seeking to send students need to coordinate their nominations. In making the decision to accept students, preference is given to those who have made the most progress toward completing their Ph.D. program. The Consortium is not open to those who have already completed their Ph.D., as it is designed for students. New faculty will find the Junior Faculty Workshop appropriate for their interests.

Applications should be sent by the department representative who nominates the student and should include in the body of the e-mail the nominee's name, address, e-mail address, phone and fax numbers, and name of affiliated school and university and a statement by department certifying nominee's completion of doctoral coursework and comprehensive exams by August 1, 2006. We request that you attach the following three items in your e-mail: 1) letter from a faculty member providing a general appraisal of the nominee, including an assessment of his/her progress toward a dissertation defense, expected defense date, and subject of dissertation; and 2) one-page bio summarizing the nominee's contact information, research and teaching interests, and publications. This one-page bio will be distributed among consortium participants. 3) A 3-5 page (typed and double-spaced) summary of the student's research project. This summary should include: research question, rationale, hypotheses/propositions, (proposed) methods (if applicable), and results (if applicable). Once roundtable assignments are made, the Consortium organizers will distribute research summaries to members of each roundtable.

Please send nominations and supporting materials by electronic mail to ONLY one of the following conference organizers by June 1, 2006. The conference organizers are: (MOC) Cynthia Emrich (*cindy.emrich@mason.wm.edu*), (ODC) Ram Tenkasi (*Tenkasi@ben.edu*), and (OMT) Mary Tripsas (c/o Debra Kendall: *dkendall@hbs.edu*).

INTERNATIONALIZING THE ODC DIVISION: IT'S MORE THAN JUST GROWING THE NUMBERS!

Ian Palmer
International Representative
University of Technology, Sydney

It has been a privilege to work as the International Representative for the past two years with the people who make up the Board of the ODC. I am impressed by their talent, concern and commitment, not just to ODC issues but to ensuring that as a Division ODC does have an international perspective. Indeed, during my time on the Board three members have come from outside of North America.

At the end of March 2006 of a total 2,702 ODC members, one-third were international (900 internationals; 1,802 domestic). What is interesting is comparing these figures to ODC in 2000. At that time ODC had 2,081 members, of whom 36% were international (552 international; 1,529 domestic). What this shows over this six years is two things. First, that ODC as a Division is growing strongly, with a 23% increase in total membership over the period. Second, the international profile of the Division has kept pace with this growth.

But what does this growth in international membership really mean? A few years ago a North American colleague recounted to me his experience of being invited to an overseas university to lead doctoral presentations and participate in faculty seminars. This person lamented their disappointment in finding that the style of education appeared to lack substantive contact with the local context in which it was located – the dominance of a North American syllabus, approach and methodology was pervasive. It was like he had never left home! In relation to the growing international profile of ODC this story raises the question of what impact does this growth have – or should have – on the change field which we study and research?

On the one hand, growth can be seen as a celebration of consensus in the field of change, a spreading of dominant, tried and proven approaches to change beyond the borders of North America to wider parts of the globe. You will recall the debates between Pfeffer (1993) and Cannella & Paetzold (1994) about how bodies of knowledge mature and develop. For Pfeffer, a key problem with the study of organizations is that, unlike economics, he views it as a garden bed of diverse approaches and assumptions which need weeding.

Knowledge will only be advanced when there is consensus around core concepts and methodologies. The implication of this argument is that if ODC is a mature field of study then this should be represented by broad agreement not just nationally but internationally about core concepts, approaches, values and philosophies relating to our field. Consistency and pervasiveness rather than diversity and regionality is given emphasis in this view of what internationalizing might mean for a mature field of study such as ODC.

On the other hand, Cannella & Paetzold (1994) view construction of fields of knowledge from quite a different perspective. For them, knowledge is, itself, socially constructed; indeed, the concept of knowledge being “developed” relies upon an image of linear, causal paths which fails to appreciate how new knowledge can emerge from “fuzzy boundaries and a tolerance for (if not acceptance of) a plurality of paradigms” (Cannella & Paetzold, 1994: 332). This suggests quite a different view of what internationalizing ODC might mean. Rather than a spreading geographic consensus, internationalizing enables new approaches to change to be considered, indeed celebrated. It accepts that one impact of internationalizing our field is that innovation in ideas and practices can emerge and thereby alter how we approach the field of change.

Applying this debate to internationalization of the ODC Division makes us reflect on which of these two arguments is most representative of what has been happening. Here we enter the realm, largely of speculation and anecdote – but that is what newsletters enable us to do! I invite you to log on to the website for the 2005 Academy of Management conference and browse through the list of papers that were scheduled for presentation. One thing that is very striking is the number of authors from outside of North America who presented papers. What does this mean in terms of the debate outlined above?

The “consensus” view of internationalization might interpret this situation by describing these authors and researchers as being the ones who have adopted a dominant, North American perspective to the field and in so doing made it through the various academy reviewing and other gate-keeping processes in order to be invited to present their work. But this argument strikes difficulty in two ways.

First, is there a dominant North American perspective to our field? Some might respond in the affirmative and point to OD, and its variants, as occupying this ground. The same people might find support for this view in the current attempts to identify and codify OD competencies in our teaching programs as if they represent the dominant approach. However, others would disagree that there is one dominant perspective on organizational change which is in need of developing. For example, they would point to the healthy debate that we have seen in the last few years between OD adherents and change management adherents (e.g. see Worren, Ruddle & Moore, 1999, 2000; Farias & Johnson, 2000; Hornstein, 2001) about the relevance and standing of these differing approaches.

Second, peruse again those entries for the ODC division listed on the 2005 program. What is striking about them is not just the international names, but the diversity of topics and approaches to change that are embedded in those papers. One approach does not seem to dominate, at least based on first impressions. This might provide “evidence” in support of the second view of internationalization of our division – that it has not adopted the approach as outlined in the story above. Rather, internationalization has expanded our appreciation of alternative perspectives and paradigms of change, hopefully enabling new and novel lines of enquiry to emerge. At least this is what I hope is – and will remain to be – the case. Certainly, this perspective of permeability and openness is one that I think is present in the majority of ODC Board members (and hopefully the wider ODC membership). I see this perspective being present in three different ways.

The first is in the domain statement under which they operate. While you’ve still got that AOM website link open go to the Domain Statement for ODC. The very first line is instructive, starting out describing our Division’s interest in “the development of theory and innovative practice relevant to organization change.” It is instructive for what is both present and what is absent. Present is the desire for innovation; absent is the mention of any one particular approach to change that should be “developed”. Between that which is present and that which is absent in this domain statement is a lot of room for maneuver in terms of being open to new international perspectives on change.

The second is the international networking practices of the division. Once again, the 2005 annual conference in Hawaii is a nice example. The ODC Social Hour was sponsored by the London office of the McKinsey-Change Practice management consultants. This international linking of the field to change management and consulting shows an openness beyond any one dominant view of the field. It also reflects the profile of our division more generally. For example, consider the other AoM divisions that our ODC members belong to concurrently: of the 23 other Academy divisions, ODC members belong, in order of priority, to OB (894 members), OMT (676 members) followed by Management Consulting (565 members). As the last category demonstrates, change management consulting is of key interest to many of our members. Providing international networking opportunities such as the Social Hour enables an appreciation of what different approaches have to offer – and in any case seems like a sensible way of reflecting the interests of our Division's members.

The third is the emergence of an international partnering approach. As also referred to in this newsletter by George Roth, the International Conference and Doctoral Consortium held at Lyon in April 2006 is the first international conference of this sort, organized by the ISEOR Research Centre, University of Lyon in partnership with the ODC Division. The Doctoral Consortium, aimed at bringing together over 100 European doctoral students with their counterparts from the US, provides an opportunity for co-creating international perspectives on ODC as well as strengthening ODC's international reach. One challenge is for international members to suggest to the ODC Board other such events that they might like to plan in their own regions, in partnership with the ODC division.

In closing, internationalizing the ODC Division represents "more than just growing the numbers." If it is to have real meaning it should represent a philosophy of permeability, openness, learning and innovation. These, I would argue, are the hallmarks of a healthy field of knowledge, one in which debate is celebrated and diversity of approach embraced. I wish incoming ODC Board members well in reaffirming such a philosophy. I also urge international members to reaffirm the need for this philosophy by continuing to produce rigorous research on change that employs a variety of perspectives and explanations, entertains novel treatments of traditional topics and seeks to balance a focus on relevance and practice with critical appraisal.

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ODC DIVISION – 21st CENTURY REFLECTION ON OD AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE WORKPLACE

Linda D. Sharkey
Executive Scholar-Practitioner
GE Commercial Finance

The passion for Organization Development and Change has long been an interest of mine and progressed through all aspects of my career. My first foray into the realms of OD and what it had to offer was in the context of Labor/Management relationships and their adversarial nature. As a union organizer, it became clear to me that adversarial relationships in the '70s and '80s benefited no one. The costs in terms of human capital and trust were huge. The long-term impact of this deep distrust, eat up energy otherwise available for productive, interesting and challenging work.

My early experiences in OD centered on Quality of Work life initiatives (QWL). This is where I first met my predecessor on the ODC Board, Phil Mirvis. He was a consultant at the time to a small team trying to drive cooperative relationships between the Public Sector Unions in New York and the Governor's Office of Employee Relations. While this was an interesting and educational experience neither organization was mature enough to see the benefit of cooperation and sustain the behavior change that was necessary for success. Ultimately, the experiments ceased and both parties went back to business as usual. However, through this experience I was fortunate to be associated with the Work in America Institute and meet such venerable individuals as Eric Trist. Here I learned firsthand of Trist's cooperative labor/management experiments in England in the coalmines and met Stan Lundine who was instrumental in turning around the City of Jamestown. It was during this period that many of the handbooks on facilitation, team building and collaborative interventions came into the public domain. As I reflect on this period, it was about fundamental change in the relationships of labor and management. At this juncture though, OD had not yet associated itself strongly with change.

Participative management and the like were also taking hold during this same period. Ken Blanchard and others were making the executives' bookshelves with quick reads like *The One Minute Manager*. On a professional note, I also took a major departure from the Labor Management arena, as I did not see this approach as a long-term viable route to creating healthy and productive workplaces where all stakeholders could be successful. I was becoming particularly intrigued with Marvin Weisbord's work relative to *Productive Workplaces* and Peter Block's process consultation and notion of stewardship. Again both these authors' books were making the corporate rounds.

During this period I saw changing attitudes about how organizations should be managed and led – however it was definitely not mainstream. Places like ATT, IBM, Xerox and of course GM seemed to be on the cutting edge with deeply routed OD work. However, we all know, these companies have struggled at some juncture over the last 10 to 15 years. The perception of OD during the early '80s and '90s ran the spectrum from essential to a businesses success to a "flash in the pan." Often OD was associated with those "touchy feely types." In fact, it still does suffer from that perception in many places today.

That said, I believe that OD has had a profound effect on the workplace and let me cite a few examples from my own experience.

- When I first started out we had to teach people what the word facilitation meant. I'll never forget walking into a meeting suggesting we "brainstorm" some ideas and everyone stared at me not knowing what to do. This would never happen now. More collaboration and the understanding of the tools for collaboration is now by and large a significant part of American business approaches and growing worldwide.

- There is a proliferation of books, materials, and consultants, etc. on building high performance teams, understanding corporate culture, developing the "softer side" of leaders. Most companies spend significant dollars teaching managers leadership skills and how to engage employees. Most corporate education centers have programs on team building and whole businesses have been built around creating team-building events for leadership teams.

- Employee attitude surveys are common. Action planning to improve the organization based upon the survey data is central to building high performance companies. Companies like GE use this data regularly and track progress toward improving the culture and becoming an "employer of choice."

- We now take for granted that feedback and coaching makes a difference and the quality of the feedback if ever more constructive than it was years ago. GE uses a process called New Manager Assimilations to help bond new leaders with their team. This process has been widely benchmarked and used by other HR professionals outside of GE. Leaders also regularly get feedback at GE and we a process called Executive Assessments that essentially traces the life of the leader and his or her personal transitions to gain insights into their strengths and development needs.

- Organizations now take many tools from OD and Change and they are simply engrained into the day-to-day operation of a business – so much so that they are no longer identified as "OD Interventions." Team assimilation processes are common. Action learning is the norm. GE has a Change Acceleration Process (CAP) that was started by Steve Kerr, former President of the Academy. This process is just part of doing business at GE.

These are just a few examples of how mainstream OD has become. So, in my years of experience OD has come an incredibly long way in enabling organizations to be healthier for all concerned – customer, employee, shareholder and the communities in which they reside. All of the examples and historic progress discussed has been about change: changing how we lead, listen, build relationships and make profitable organization. In my mind OD is about change. Therefore I think combining

OD and C makes incredible sense not only from a theoretical perspective but most certainly from a practitioner point of view.

What does all this mean for the future of ODC and the importance of this Division to the Academy? As noted the notion of Change from my perspective has always been a hallmark of OD – although I am keenly aware from an academic perspective this has been a much-debated notion. Practitioners see the change in the workplace and see how OD can advance change in constructive ways – particularly with the advent of David Cooperrider's Appreciative Inquiry Model as a new construct for driving whole systems change. Practitioners understand the acceleration of the rate of change in the workplace because they live it every day. Change is upon us at the most rapid pace we have experienced yet. With the advancement of technology, the flattening of the world as Tom Friedman points out, the global nature of companies, the need for organizations to constantly be changing their business models to complete and the virtual nature of the workplace put nothing but change on the tables of practitioners and therefore on the research tables of scholars. A scholarly imperative for the ODC is to research new ways to further the values of OD – open communication, engagement, personal growth and organization effectiveness (Cummings & Worley). I contend that these values are critical in our changing world where it is no longer a "nice to have" engaged employees but a must; no longer a "nice to have" leaders exhibit emotional intelligence but a must; and no longer a "nice to have" organizations and leaders who are able to deal with ambiguity and change it is now a must to stay competitive.

We are experiencing challenging times and the forecasters are predicting even more challenge and change. The need for OD and C is therefore more profound than it was 20 years ago. We must step up to the plate and find better ways to help people and organizations through change; we need more rapid methodologies to define strategy, prepare leaders for the road ahead and build virtual teams. These are exciting times for those of us who hold the OD values dear. This division can and will be a critical part of the research and application that will help employees, employers and whole organizations through the times ahead. The table is set for our leadership.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE ON WORKPLACE DESIGN AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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Representative-at-Large
New York University

Workplace design can be thought of as a phenomenon strongly associated with organizational change. Often, organizations attend to the design of their work environment in conjunction with planning and/or responding to a change which is primarily strategic in nature. Typically such change, imposed or enacted, is managed with the intent to secure the company's competitive position, enhance efficiency and/or build greater capacity for collaboration and innovation to sustain the company's viability. Within this context the question arise as to what role should the design of the work environment play in supporting and further enhancing the efficacy of organizational change.

While change has become a central theme in today's organizations, workplace design literature treats change as a non-problematic contextual factor only briefly discussing ways in which the nature of work has changed over the past decades due to forces such as globalization, new technologies, and the overall increase in competition across industries[1]. Workplace design solutions, it argues, address these changes in contextual conditions to support organizations' needs to adapt and sustain their competitiveness.

To better assess the strength of the workplace literature in offering efficacious design solutions let's examine some of its propositions. Take for example "open space" as a design solution attempting to enable emergent interactions and teamwork as a means to enhance cross-boundary collaborations[2] for new knowledge development (Bencivengn 1998; Stone and Luchetti 1985). Since collaboration within and across disciplines is instrumental to organizational learning and innovation, workplace researchers embrace a variety of open spaces and communal solutions (Lohr, 1997; Kupritz, 1998; Ferguson, 2001; Duffy, 1997; Asirvatham, 1999; Milford, 1997) as design vehicles that enable teamwork, emergent interactions and serendipitous communication among people (Becker and Steele, 1995; Cantrell, 2001; Cohen, 1999; Loftness, 2001; Pollack, 2001; Degenhardt, 2001). To advance flexibility these open spaces are often furnished with mobile team office furniture that can be configured and reconfigured for continuous interactions (Veitch and Gifford, 1996; Wheeler, 2001; Cruikshank and Malcolm, 1994).

Implicit in this approach is the notion that design for collaboration will lead to greater idea generation which in turn will support the organization's pursuit of new knowledge development[3]. While these design considerations are clearly important to servicing the organization's change agenda, they solely address changes in the organization's task requirements while neglecting to address the well being of individuals reacting to, coping[4] with and participating in the change (Vince and Bourssine, 1996).

Individuals are now asked to function in an environment that has less stability and greater transparency. Increased transparency can serve the work needs associated with emergent interactions and resultant learning, but it can also be threatening and uncomfortable for individuals who thrive in private "I-spaces" and are less comfortable with the "openness" that "We-space[5]" brings. This workplace design solution, while effective in supporting organizational change goals, fails to recognize that employees are being asked to adopt a new work style while simultaneously adapting to a change in working conditions. As such, these design solutions might magnify discomfort and threat instead of easing the transition and supporting the effective adaptation to new work requirements.

Similarly, the continuous abandonment of hierarchical structures (Galbraith, 1995; Ancona et al. 1998) has exposed employees to increased levels of uncertainty (Chan, 2000). Employees that were always expected to follow within command-and-control relationships are now empowered to make decisions and are held accountable for their results. Expected to assume greater responsibility over their own employment fate, many employees find themselves inadequately trained to act effectively as decision makers and hold themselves and others accountable. Consequently, flattening the organization, while strategically necessary, is difficult to execute effectively mainly because employees may be uncomfortable with the accompanying empowerment challenges. The discussion of workplace solutions ignores the impact of uncertainty that this change brings to bear on people's emotional and cognitive states. Instead workplace literature advocates for solutions of the flat, collaborative kind that are aimed to support empowerment.

The question these examples help surface is essentially about expectations. What level of effectiveness can workplace design demonstrate given the change management challenges? Can workplace design be more than a tool to address the functional work needs of an organization's change agenda? Can workplace design make change more manageable, even desired, for the individual?

Clearly the phenomenon of change that workplace solutions attempt to support is dicey and appears far more complex, far less guidable and less manageable than initially thought. This challenging nature of change is evidenced through the majority of transformation efforts that fail to achieve their desired objectives (Kotter, 1995; Beer and Mitra, 2000; Pascale et al., 1997). Research suggests that the failure rate of organizational change programs is as high as 70 percent[6] (Beer & Nohria, 2000).

Among the prime reasons for these dismal results is employees' resistance to "own" change and to bear the associated emotional and cognitive burden (Skoldberg, 1994; Huy, 1999; Dirks et al., 1996). In fact, many develop symptoms of anxiety, fear, aggression, confusion, and frustration (Marks, 1991; Marks and Mirvis, 1985; Marris, 1986; Diamond, 1993; Hirschhorn and Gilmore, 1989) which manifest in resistance (Kotler and Schlesinger, 1979) and the increased use of defense mechanisms (Oldham and Kleiner, 1990).

Apparently, change is difficult. It triggers emotional and cognitive challenges and it triggers tensions between the attempt to strategically lead change and its emergent nature. The current workplace literature, seemingly oblivious to this complex web of intricacies, assumes a "functional design" view. That is, it tasks itself primarily with designing work environments that allow organizations to change and adjust to their environments and neglect to address the emotional needs of individuals in their effective adaptation to the resultant changing work requirements.

But can workplace design be supportive of both organizations and individuals, marrying what Metzger (1963) has termed "Reality1," the reality that is manifested through artifact design, and "Reality2," the one that is experienced and acted upon? We view the design of work environments as an opportunity to create a context for positive experiences that can marry changes in the way work gets done with positive emotions that invite engagement and participation instead of detachment and fear.

Managing Emotions through workplace design

Evidently, the emotional undercurrents[7] of change have a profound impact on individual behavior within organizations. Even though organizations undergoing transformation espouse positive pro-change rhetoric, they may evoke emotional dissonance in individuals that need to reconcile their naturally triggered negative emotions of fear and anxiety with the organization's change hype (Middleton, 1989).

The literatures on change and adaptation[8] (Walsh, 1995; Chan, 2000; Dirks et al., 1996) echo the criticality of managing emotions throughout change efforts arguing that change events are regarded as threatening stressors that are often perceived negatively by organizational members (Mossholder et al., 2000; O'Neill and Lenn, 1995; Kets de Vries and Miller, 1985; Oldham and Kleiner, 1990). Managing emotions however, especially negative ones, is no small task. Change literature focuses on the "recipients of change" (Jick, 1993) assuming simplistically that management knows how to treat defense, denial, and anger. In reality as the literature on Emotional IQ suggests, managers have substantial limitations when attempting to effectively manage people's emotions. Research by the Center for Creative Leadership found that the primary cause of derailment in executives involve their deficits in emotional competence. The three primary causes are: difficulty in handling change, not being able to work well in a team, and poor interpersonal relations[9]. Perhaps it is not realistic to expect mangers to effectively manage individual emotions?

Building off contemporary thinking in the field of design that views designing as a possibility-creating activity focused on the relationship between the user and the design (be it designed products, objects or environments) and the subsequent desired experience that is created (Hekkert, 2001), design clearly shifts from creating products to creating contexts for experience where the user is seduced to experience the designed object or reality with all his or her senses (Overbeeke et al., 1999).

By focusing on how organizational members experience the work space they inhabit, workplace design may create a context for desired emotional experience that supports people in managing their organizational change experience along with the organizational change goals.

What is the role that emotion should play in our approaches to design? "How do we design for emotion?" Good question, but it implies that one can identify emotion as a design target, then craft an artifact (an application, a device, a thing, for example) that meets this target (Norman, 2003).

But how is a desired emotional experience generated through workplace design? Desmet & Hekkert (2001) argued that of all affective states or experiences, the emotional experience is the most relevant for understanding product (or designed) experience because only emotions imply a one-to-one relationship between the experience and the object. If a design looks or performs in a way that corresponds with a concern of the individual, a pleasant emotional response will result and conversely, if it conflicts, the emotion will be unpleasant. Designs evoke emotions when they are perceived to touch upon individuals' concerns or preference (Frijda, 1986; Reeves & Nass, 1996).

As design creates a context for experience for individuals who interact with that design[10], the resultant emotions may enable or hinder adaptation to change. Framing the connection between positive emotions and adaptation to change Fredrickson (2000) develops an insightful argument emphasizing the significant role of positive emotions in broadening a person's thought-action repertoire and building that individual's enduring personal resources. Fredrickson provides a detailed account of the relationship that exists between negative emotions and the narrowing of one's thought process and action repertoire. In contrast, she points out that positive emotions may improve the ability to generate creative thought, develop relationship with others, and over all perform at a higher level. Lastly, Fredrickson proposes that positive emotions have an undoing effect on negative emotions. That is, positive emotions can counter the negative emotions associated with change and may enable creative thought which is critical to the ability to learn and effectively cope with change.

Supporting Fredrickson, Norman (2002) argues that positive affect enhances creative and breadth-first thinking, whereas negative emotions focus on cognition, enhancing depth-first processing and minimizing distractions. Therefore, Norman continues, it is essential that products/objects designed for use under stress follow good human-centered design, for stress makes people less able to cope with difficulties and less flexible in their approach to problem solving. Instead, positive affect makes people more tolerant of minor difficulties and more flexible and creative in finding solutions. Thus, Norman concludes, just as negative affect can make some simple tasks difficult, positive affect can make some difficult tasks easier, and both affects can be triggered and/or facilitated by design.

Evidently, the relationship between positive emotions and adaptation to change appears powerful, and the thought that such association can be triggered by designing workplaces that serve as context for positive experience is of even greater interest. The workplace design paradigm in its current state provides tremendous functional support to organizations as they undergo change. Its contribution might be further enhanced if it broadened its perspective and addressed the emotional needs triggered by the change generating "persuasive artifacts" (Latour, 1987) that invite people to engage in an experience, stimulate their interest and imagination, and facilitate and accommodate their contributions (Wagner, 2004). Designing work environments supportive of organizational change is, in effect, designing a context of positive experience for the members of this organization.

Footnotes

[1] For example, "Uncertainty is endemic and chronic in today's organizations. The reasons reveal themselves in daily newspaper and TV headlines: mammoth mergers and acquisitions, technology that changes with anxiety-provoking speed, a labor force for which demand greatly exceeds supply for qualified workers, fierce and unpredictable global markets and competition, and new products and services lead by e-commerce that rewrite the rules of the game with dizzying speed. All of these factors force organizations to rethink how they do business: how they manage their business, where and when they convene workers, and the manner in which work is done" (Becker and Sims, 2000:5)

[2] For example a 2002 award-winning facility, the Multi-use Center in Auckland NZ was designed to increase communication between call center employees in the information-system operations. Business units are spread out over five zones on three floors in the open-concept space. "The plan organizes around a central common area for meeting, work, and social gathering. The 'central' park idea and café are the hub for the office community…post occupancy evaluation has shown an increase in verbal communication, staff turnover reduction of 50% and a 10-15% faster software development delivery" (Kolleeny, 2002).

[3] See Nonaka and Konno's discussion of the concept of "Ba" (1998), a shared space for emerging relationships, where knowledge conversations can take place and consequently new knowledge can be created.

[4] Here, coping with change is defined as the exertion of behavioral and cognitive efforts to manage the internal and external demands of relationship with the environment that tax or surpass the person's resources (Folkman et al., 1986).

[5] I-Space and We-Space is terminology used by Steelcase (*www.steelcase.com*) to profile the various work needs of companies. I-space refers to individual workspaces while We-space refers to team and communal work environments.

[6] Beer, M. and in Nohria, N. 2000. Cracking the code of change. HBR May-June, 133-141.

[7] While the term "emotion" enjoys multiple definitions and views (see for example the works of Plutchik, 1962, Farijda, 1986, Lazarus, 1991) we follow Farijda's 1986 definition according to which emotions are tendencies to establish, maintain, or disrupt a relationship with the environment. Emotions might be defined as action readiness change in response to emergencies or interruptions.

[8] These fairly elaborated literatures can be found within various psychoanalytic and social psychology schools but rarely has their voice echoed in the business change management literature.

[9] *www.eiconsortium.org/research/business_case_for_ei.htm*

[10] While the design literature is not specific on its use of emotion terminology there is a reason to assume implicit attention to positive-negative typology.

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ACTIONABILITY AND THE QUESTION OF WHAT CONSTITUTES GOOD ACTION RESEARCH

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The ODC board requested a few paragraphs on the question of "What is a good action research paper?" The request came as the board sought to award the annual "best action research paper" prize at the annual AOM conference. The prize is offered by the international, peer reviewed *Journal Action Research*, for which I am founding co-editor with Peter Reason. The prize was instituted in 2003, and we have been pleased to see it bestowed upon two excellent action researchers to date. This year, while there were candidates for the paper, the problem was that too many qualifying papers merely stated that the reported work evolved in a context of action research and offered few details to support that claim. We know it is common, especially when writing for the elite organizational journals, that acknowledgment for the action research basis of the work is relegated to the footnotes or "disappeared" altogether. My hope is that this note acts as an invitation to write as "out of the closet" action researchers! A broader spectrum of research is considered acceptable at ODC. This is not a new message. Jean Bartunek, former president of both ODC and AOM, along with associates, has called specifically for gatekeepers of the Academy to consciously make room for the results of knowledge creation that goes beyond the conventional modes (Rynes, Bartunek & Daft, 2001). In embracing what may seem like a risk, we will likely find revitalization.

Definition and examples of good action research

Action research is an umbrella term for varied practices that, as the term suggests, include cycles of reflection on experience that lead to desired experiments and action. The intent of action researchers is to have knowledge develop in the context of practice so that theory is informed and better practice is internalized inside an organizational (or other social) system. In an often cited definition action research is described as:

> …a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes… It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people. (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 1)

Examples of action research practices have changed the world in great and small ways. One of my own favorite examples, for its momentous, positive impact, is that of Mohammed Yunus, whose action research effort resulted in the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh (*www.aworldconnected.org/article.php/378.html*). Grameen was the first to offer micro financing to desperately poor people. Returning after completing a doctorate in the U.S., Yunus was distraught by the poverty and helplessness in his native Bangladesh. He discovered that just a few dollars could change compatriots' lives but sought a sustainable solution. Rethinking the theory of how new enterprises are financed and why loans are repaid, he developed the new practice of micro-loaning. Beyond developing a new theory, the micro-loan practice has since profoundly influenced the lending practices of banks around the world, including inner cities of the U.S. His work in Bangladesh continues with the development of Grameen phone and Internet access.

In the business world, the "balanced score card" (Kaplan and Norton, 2000) whose impact has reverberated widely, was first developed as an action research project over a number of years by professors based in the Harvard Business School. Their work began as an effort to assist students and clients grapple with the need to account differently in the midst of organizational change. Their work brought multiple stakeholders' perspectives more directly into the financial decision making of the company thereby facilitating and enriching feedback mechanisms. New theory of accounting and practice have ensued and garnered significant support in contemporary companies.

Though the genesis of micro loans and balanced score cards may appear quite different, they both suggest core, ideal elements of action research. Action research is grounded in lived experience, developed in partnership, addresses significant needs, develops new ways of seeing/interpreting the world (i.e., theory), working with (rather than simply studying) people, thereby using methods that are appropriate to the audience and participants at hand. Finally action research seeks to develop needed structures to allow for follow up or institutionalization of new practices in its wake.

What might this mean for writing a good action research paper for AOM?

For action research to be deemed "good," or worth the time and trouble expended, it must contribute to desired or positive action by working at some level of partnership with those inside a system. Elevating what is useful is based on a philosophy of practice that makes "actionability" a core of quality in action research. Actionability distinguishes between people knowing about something to being able to produce what they desire, using their knowledge. We may say that the more actionable an action research project is, the more it has succeeded in helping people systematically meet their goals for changed practice. Simultaneously new theories of practice are developed.

Actionability however does not get much attention in conventional research, which is more often judged on its validity through a rigorous, usually quantitative, paradigm. Society has not always judged its research in this way. The Classical Greeks – who have had great influence on how we think and what we study today – operated with a holistic notions of "praxis," "phroenesis" and "poesis." Praxis, a term we have taken into our philosophical lexicon, joins reflection with an ability to produce desired outcomes. It lies at the heart of endeavors such as experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) or action science (Argyris, Putnam and Smith, 1985). Praxis is judged by the quality of the links created between experimentation with new ideas and their generation and conceptualization. The pragmatic tradition – a philosophy that Americans are credited with impressing upon the world – similarly works with notions of praxis as it equates truth with what truth can accomplish, rather an abstract conception of truth.

Action research is a way of working in the arena of social science that is fully consistent with and in many instances, (e.g., Lewin, 1951), is the direct result of a philosophically pragmatic orientation. Core to pragmatism are 1. the idea that the treatment of truth claims are contingent and contextual and 2. its practitioners always start with lived experience to shape their inquiry, more often in response to a need.

Table 1 summarizes the four dimensions of quality actionability derived from the praxis tradition and lists core components of action research.

Fundamentals of Pragmatism	Dimensions of Actionability	Action Research Component
Practical outcome, in response to human need.	Practical value	• Identifying and enjoining key stakeholders • Participants inform research questions
The reality of relations and context	Social interaction	• Sharing ownership • Insider/outsider team formation • Meeting design • Conversation
Reflection integrally intertwined with action	Action/reflection cycles	• Appropriate methods
Active experimentation	Active experimentation	• Validation • Dissemination • Designing infrastructure

So then, what makes for a good action research paper?

In honor of Kuhn one might explain that action research is of a non-conventional paradigm. Action research is oriented to being actionable, to making a difference rather than being, what Bjorn Gustavsen terms "merely very right" (Gustavsen, 2003). The components noted above in the table form the basis for quality criteria or choicepoints as we often describe them (Bradbury & Reason, 2001).

First what it is not. An action research paper is not a report of an intervention case study. It is not an action research paper if there is no reference to the intentional development of a relationship between the researcher and the client system. It is not an action research paper if everything about the action research process is "disappeared" behind the curtain of description of the client system, insights and outcomes. A minimally acceptable action research paper not only describes the change and its outcome, but includes the action research process, at the personal, interpersonal and larger system levels (Chandler & Torbert, 2003).

A good action research paper clarifies its purpose as its research question. It describes the relationship with the "client" system. It describes how the action research practice played out in the co-development of change and theory. The *Handbook of Action Research* (Reason & Bradbury, 2001; 2006) and the Sage *Journal of Action Research* are replete with examples. There are also wonderful examples in the so called "A" level journals – e.g., the work of Sue Mohrman and colleagues. Indeed even Ph.D. students have been known to work within the action research paradigm, write an excellent dissertation, get a good job and also publish their work in the elite journals (e.g., Perlow, 1997)!

In sum then, when reviewing action research papers, I suggest we look for information on the action research process in which participation with the development of the new theory and practice is clear. Additionally, we need to see evidence that appropriate methods were used, i.e., methods that meet the inquiry demands of the research partners. Finally, we look for a validation process that seeks to disconfirm findings and effort to institutionalize what is new and useful. Yes, that is a lot to accomplish in a paper!

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I thank my colleague George Roth for the invitation to write for the newsletter and for sharing his own insights in our conversations and action research together over the past decade.

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PUBLICATIONS

3. Please list below any recent or forthcoming publications by you or a colleague. (Indicate full citation.)

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