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Kurt Lewin on Reeducation

Foundations for Action Research

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In the acknowledgements of Lewin's place as the father of action research, his work on reeducation is rarely cited. Yet it is clear that much of what he understood to be central to the complex process of reeducation is critical to the process of change and underlies the philosophical principles and practice of action research. This article presents Lewin's generally neglected paper on reeducation to enable action researchers to build on and use this important paper of Lewin's.

Keywords: Kurt Lewin; action research; reeducation

Lewin's contribution to social psychology has been well documented and described (Burke, 2002; Burnes, 2004; Coghlan & Brannick, 2003; Moreland, 1996; Patnoe, 1988; Weisbord, 2004). Lewin's work inspired and directly initiated the creation of an approach to learning about groups, participation in groups, interpersonal relations, and change through action research through the T-group and its development into laboratory learning, which is a primary antecedent of organization development. For Lewin, it was not enough to try to explain things; one also had to try to change them, and one had to involve others in that process of understanding and change. It was clear

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to Lewin and others that working at changing human systems often involved variables that could not be controlled by traditional research methods developed in the physical sciences. These insights led to the development of action research and the powerful notion that human systems could only be understood and changed if one involved the members of the system in the inquiry process itself (White, 2004).

One particular paper of Lewin's, written with Paul Grabbe in 1945, contains 10 general observations about the process of reeducation (Lewin, 1997c). These observations grew out of his reflections on work he was engaged in with Alcoholics Anonymous and other training programs. This paper has received relatively little attention, apart from Benne's (1976) exposition that reflected on it in the light of the T-group and laboratory learning and from Coghlan's (1994) and Bruce and Wyman's (1998) respective applications to organization development. The two major treatises on Lewin's work, Cartwright (1959) and Deutsch (1968), exclude any discussion of this paper. Commemorative volumes on Lewin's work (Bargal, Gold, & Lewin, 1992; Patnoe, 1988; Stivers & Wheelan, 1986; Wheelan, 1996; Wheelan, Pepitone, & Abt, 1990) are equally silent, as are other works that include discussions of Lewin and his work (Hall & Lindzey, 1978; Segal, 1997). This article aims to redress the imbalance on the 60th anniversary of its publication by exploring how Lewin's observations on reeducation provide a basis for understanding the process of action research and by using an action research project in a health care provider to reflect on this exploration.

Reflecting on Lewin's famous Iowa studies (Lewin, 1948/1998), it is easy to see that his action research work with the women of Iowa was a process of reeducation. The critical task at the outset was to enable the women to unlearn their well-embedded habits with regard to the forms of meat they supplied to their families and to learn new habits by providing forms of meat they previously considered to be inferior and that they would not supply to their families. The participative process enabled the women to explore their own resistances to changing meat-eating habits in their families and to experiment with providing alternative meat. The outcomes of these experiments led to Lewin's conceptualization that people change when they experience the need for change (unfreezing), move to a new standard of behavior and values (moving), and stabilize the change in normative behavior (refreezing; Lewin, 1948/1998). He further asserted that change occurs given conditions that emphasize reduction of those forces restraining change rather than an increase in the forces driving change.

What does *reeducation* mean? Lewin did not define reeducation in any systematic way. Rather, he described it in terms of 10 observations. Benne (1976) expressed it in terms of people moving from patterns of thinking and acting, volition, or overt behavior by which they have previously managed and justified their lives. They would adopt patterns of thinking, acting, volition, and action that would be better suited to the realities and actualities of contemporary existence, both individual and social, and that would be more personally fulfilling and socially appropriate. Chin and Benne (1985) integrated Lewin's approach to change with other approaches under the heading of "normative reeducative." They described its characteristics in terms of change in attitudes, values, and behavior taking place in the context of the culture and the groups with which individuals identify. Thereby, a realignment of significant relationships and an emphasis on experienced-based learning occur. Peters and Robinson (1984)

listed reeducation as a characteristic of action research but did not elaborate what they meant. Argyris, Putnam, and Smith (1985) argued that reeducation involves unlearning patterns of thinking and acting that are well established in individuals and groups and operates at the level of norms and values expressed in action.

It may be argued that the term *reeducation* has connotations of “coercive persuasion” (Schein, 1961) and does not accord with the participative and democratic values of action research. From our knowledge of Lewin’s life and his work, we know that he was not authoritarian or totalitarian (Marrow, 1969). He was totally imbibed with the spirit of democracy and participation, which are the key characteristics of his contribution to social science (Argyris, 1993). What relevance does his observations on reeducation have to contemporary action research theory and practice? Indeed, contemporary action research does not use the term and is using terms such as *transformational* (Reason & Torbert, 2001). It is our view that transformation is inclusive of the process of reeducation and that the usefulness of exploring Lewin’s reflections on reeducation as foundations for action research is not diminished.

LEWIN’S 10 OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROCESS OF REEDUCATION

Lewin viewed behavior and change in terms of field theory, which is summarized in his formula, $B = f(P,E)$, where behavior (B) is a function of the person (P) and the environment (E) (Lewin, 1997b). Lewin took the middle ground between the individualists (where P dominates) and culturalists (where E dominates). For Lewin, instances of individual behavior had no intrinsic meaning. Their significance could only be assessed in terms of the situation in which they occurred. As Danzinger (2001) argued, Lewin had no equal in setting out the conceptual and research implications of this approach. Terborg (1981) pointed out that considering the person and the situation as joint determinants has relevance for research on the behavior of people in organizations. In our view, the interactionist approach has particular applications to action research as participants engage in cycles of action and reflection in social settings and do so from positions of engagement rather than from positions of detachment.

The 10 observations on the process of reeducation need to be seen in the light of Lewin’s interactionist formula. Although we discuss each observation individually, they cannot be viewed in isolation from one another.

1. “*The processes governing the acquisition of the normal and abnormal are fundamentally alike*” (Lewin, 1997c, p. 48). Lewin made two explanatory points regarding this observation. The first is that in line with his field theory, individual behavior is a function of the interaction between the person and the environment. The second is a social constructivist view that reality is shaped by what is socially accepted as reality. He pioneered the experiential workshop (the T-group) in which participants learned individual human relations and groups skills through a social learning process of attending to the “here and now” events of the group (Benne, Bradford, Gibb, & Lippitt, 1975; Schein & Bennis, 1965). The T-group models action research as participants

undertake a process of shared learning in and as a group. They openly share their experiences, observations, and interpretations of behavioral events in the group in which they engage as participants and observers. The development of learning comes about through continuing inquiry into the transactions between members and through the engagement in shared cycles of action and reflection through active engagement in the group process.

As the T-group has declined in popularity and as a common mechanism for change, its legacy continues to shape core processes of action research. Approaches such as cooperative inquiry and appreciative inquiry are built around participation in groups where dialogue is central to mutual inquiry and action (Heron & Reason, 2001; Ludema, Cooperrider, & Barrett, 2001). As Schein (1993) pointed out, the process of dialogue in groups builds on T-group processes while at the same time it develops its own particular focus on thinking and language rather than on feelings and emotions. It focuses on the task of the group rather than of the individual. The action researcher works in a similar manner to the T-group trainer, enabling the group to engage in action and inquiry. Finally, echoing Lewin's own point, the change model is fundamentally the same—individuals and social systems have to experience the need for change, create conditions of psychological safety, make the change, and ensure it survives and works (Schein, 1996a; Schein & Bennis, 1965).

2. *"The reeducative process has to fulfil a task which is essentially equivalent to a change in culture"* (Lewin, 1997c, p. 50). As Lewin argued in the first observation, if the processes that lead to illusions and prejudice and those that lead to correct perceptions and realistic social concepts are the same, then the process of reeducation must be a process that addresses changes in knowledge and beliefs, values and standards, emotional attachments, and needs and changes in everyday behavior. He provided as an example a carpenter who wishes to become a watchmaker. Such a change of occupation not only involves a new set of skills but also involves a new system of habits, standards, and values.

Lewin contended that effective reeducation involves acquiring values and new thinking to match changes in conduct and behavior (the integration of these he defined as "culture"). Lewin's use of the term *culture* in this observation is analogical. Culture typically refers to shared basic assumptions in a group or community, and so in effect, one cannot have a culture on one's own (Schein, 2004). The equivalence for an individual of change in cognition, values, and behavior to a group's change in cultural assumptions is in Lewin's words, "a basic and worthwhile insight" but only as a frame of reference.

The construct of first-person research provides an application of this observation in contemporary action research. First-person research is typically characterized as the forms of inquiry and practice that one does on one's own. It addresses the ability of the individual to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act out of awareness, and to act purposefully (Reason & Torbert, 2001). First-person research can take researchers "upstream" where they inquire into their basic assumptions, desires, intentions, and philosophy of life. It can also take them "downstream" where they inquire

into their behavior, ways of relating, and their action in the world. The integration of upstream and downstream research and practice impacts on cognition, values, and behavior (Fisher, Rooke, & Torbert, 2000; Marshall, 1999).

3. *“Even extensive first-hand experience does not automatically create correct concepts”* (Lewin, 1997c, p. 51). As Lewin pointed out, centuries of the experience of falling bodies did not create a theory of gravity. Experiencing alone does not create learning. He was challenging those who while reacting against the intellectual-lecture approach place the emphasis on experiencing only. For Lewin (1997a), learning involves “a spiral of steps each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact finding about the results of the action” (p. 146). The operational element of action research involves engaging in cycles of action and reflection. Reflection is the critical link between the concrete experience, the interpretation, and taking further action (Kolb, 1984). As Raelin (2000) argued, reflection must be brought into the open whereby privately held assumptions are tested publicly and made explicit so that how they are constructed can be seen and critiqued.

4. *“Social action no less than physical action is steered by perception”* (Lewin, 1997c, p. 51). The world in which we act is how we perceive it. Changes in knowledge, values, and beliefs won’t result in changes in behavior unless it is grounded in changed perception of the self and situations. For Lewin, the primary task of reeducation involves a change in the person’s social perception. Constructivist inquiry whereby people’s subjective experience forms the basis for shared inquiry and action by researchers and members of the system being researched is integrally linked to action research (Lincoln, 2001).

Appreciative inquiry is an approach within action research that is built on social construction (Ludema et al., 2001). It places strong emphasis on unconditional positive questions to stimulate transformational dialogue and action. In this way, it distinguishes itself from the critical modes of action research, which operate from the deficiency model. The unconditional positive questions are not just a technique but are in the words of Ludema et al., “an intentional posture of continuous discovery, search and inquiry into conceptions of life, joy, beauty, excellence, innovation and freedom” (p. 191).

5. *“As a rule the possession of correct knowledge does not suffice to rectify false perceptions”* (Lewin, 1997c, p. 51). Although Lewin was clear that theory alone does not bring about change and commented that resistance to change is often seen only in emotional terms, he was not underestimating the difficulties in changing cognition. He provided the example of a supervisor who continuously complained that older workers were no good despite having very efficient older workers on her staff. As we discussed earlier, the participative process of the Iowa studies in changing the cognition of the participating women with respect to meat eating was central to the unfreezing, moving, and refreezing of the attitudes of those participants.

Argyris et al. (1985) distinguished between espoused theory and theory-in-use and argued that theory-in-use is not changed by better or further espoused theory. The

action science approach works at enabling people to identify how their theory-in-use is based on questionable assumptions (what Argyris called Model I). The learning process is constructed around how to catch these assumptions in action and develop the skills of having consistency between what is espoused and what is enacted.

6. *“Incorrect stereotypes (prejudices) are functionally equivalent to wrong concepts (theories)”* (Lewin, 1997c, p. 52). Lewin was arguing in respect to incorrect stereotyping that experiencing as such is inadequate to change a person or group’s theory of the world. People move from a position of stereotyping when they involve themselves in a process of self-experimentation with regard to their own and alternative ways of explaining the world.

In action science, learning tools, such as the ladder of inference and the double column, are techniques that facilitate reflection on and change in theory-in-use (Argyris et al., 1985). In developmental action inquiry, strategies to help the development of personal awareness, personal systems inquiry, and the improvement of the quality and effectiveness of language provide ways of attending to experience and of self-reflection and learning (Fisher et al., 2000).

7. *“Changes in sentiments do not necessarily follow changes in cognitive structures”* (Lewin, 1997c, p. 52). In Lewin’s view, the individual’s real and total involvement in the change process is a significant factor in confronting this issue. He pointed out that reeducation is frequently in danger of reaching only the official system of values, the level of espoused theory in Argyris’s terms, and as such may create emotional tension and a bad conscience. Change in how a person feels about any situation is integrally linked to that individual’s degree of involvement. Thus, active involvement entails attitudinal, affective, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of that person.

Action research attempts to create a safe environment in which participants can explore their feelings, particularly those that are hostile and antipathic to the official values of the system in which they are members. Action researchers play an important role in safeguarding the psychological space to enable the group to explore the gap between what is espoused officially and what is experienced (Meehan & Coghlan, 2004).

8. *“A change in action-ideology, a real acceptance of a changed set of facts and values, a change in the perceived social world—all three are but different expressions of the same process”* (Lewin, 1997c, p. 53). Lewin was making the point that changes in values, perception, and behavior form an integrated pattern for the individual—what he called a change in culture. Because action is guided by perception, a change in behavior presupposes that new facts and values are perceived and that these values are not merely aspired to but are acted up (what he referred to as “action-ideology”). The reeducative process needs to support this integration of perception, values, and behavior and not create a tension between new and old values for the individual. The manner in which change is introduced is critical. If a new set of values and beliefs is autocratically enforced, loyalty to the old values and hostility to the new tend to be created. How then can the acceptance of a new system of values be brought about if the person is

likely to be hostile to the new values and be attached to the old values? For Lewin, voluntary attendance, freedom of expression in voicing opinions and disagreement, and avoidance of pressure are key issues.

The creation of a safe psychological space is essential to the exploration of change (Schein, 1996a). Dialogue-creating techniques such as creating appropriate physical space, checking for understanding, and nonjudgmental listening contribute to the psychological space for shared inquiry and reflection in and on action.

9. *“Acceptance of the new set of values and beliefs cannot usually be brought about item by item” (Lewin, 1997c, p. 54).* In Lewin’s view, methods and procedures to change convictions item by item are of little avail; they don’t lead to a change of thought, values, and behavior. Arguments proceeding logically from one point to another tend to drive the individual into a corner and so be more resistant. Although step-by-step methods are important, they must be conceived as steps in gradual change from defensiveness to openness rather than a conversion one point at a time. Accordingly, the approach to reeducation needs overall planning. A value system is a system with its own integrity. If it is to perform its function of helping people maintain their identity, then its integrity must be maintained.

Action research typically takes a systems perspective of situations and works from the big picture to the more detailed one (Gummesson, 2000). It can draw on a systems approach, systems thinking, and field theory to understand how values and beliefs hold systems together and how they may be changed (Flood, 2001).

10. *“The individual accepts the new system of values and beliefs by accepting belongingness to a group” (Lewin, 1997c, p. 55).* Lewin’s assertion was that the chances of reeducation are increased within the group context, whereby an individual’s identification with a group coincides with the group’s acceptance of new values and beliefs. For example, Schein (1996b) discussed how membership of occupational communities (e.g., executive or engineering) shaped the thinking and actions of executives and engineers, respectively. He illustrated a living example of how the electrical engineering subculture in DEC (Digital Equipment Corporation) shaped the direction of the company to the ultimate detriment of the company’s survival (Schein, 2003).

Action research is essentially a group approach. Although it has its first-person elements, they are exercised in downstream behaviors and in second-person practice. Particular approaches, such as cooperative inquiry and action learning, take a group approach specifically and use the structure and process of a group to support the action research and learning in which the individual group member engages.

LEWIN’S 10 OBSERVATIONS IN ACTION

Although the 10 observations individually provide insight into Lewin’s view on the process of reeducation, it is their interdependent relationship that provides the potential for this neglected paper of Lewin’s to be of value to contemporary action research. In this interdependent relationship, the process of reeducation is an iteration of cognitive and emotional constructive processes that are integrally linked to group member-

ship. We now introduce the case of the Omega Foundation with a view to seeing how Lewin's observations apply to an action research project.

The Omega Foundation

The Omega Foundation provides residential care in 14 centers for people with physical and sensory disabilities. It has currently about 300 places in its centers, with a total number of staff of around 400. The 9 larger centers have between 20 to 35 permanent places, whereas the 5 smaller centers provide independent housing in a quasi-apartment setting for about 10 tenants each. In total, Omega has 287 permanent places and 32 respite places. The service users are assisted by 353 permanent staff and 104 community employment scheme workers (an Irish government scheme whereby unemployed persons are employed by local organizations and their wages are paid by the government). Local managers of the centers report directly to the CEO, who is supported by a head office team that covers central function such as strategy and organization development, service user development, human resource management and training, financials, and administration among others. The board of trustees in which voluntary members from the wider community as well as service users and staff are represented has the accountability for ensuring a quality service delivery as well as the strategic development of the Foundation.

At the core of Omega's service provision lies long-term supported accommodation service, which until the 1990s took the form of a traditional residential care model. Over the course of the past decade and in response to requests by service users, Omega's model of service has changed from an implicit benevolent paternalistic care model to an explicit professional service provision. The Omega Foundation provides three distinct services in its centers. Besides (a) long-term supported accommodation services, recent developments include (b) respite services and (c) outreach services. Respite services are available to people who normally live in the community or with other voluntary agencies and within Omega as to provide short breaks to service users.

In 1997, Omega was going through a period of serious change. Internally, this resulted in a change in governance structure, policies and procedures, and employment and funding operations. A major internal force for change was identified in the service users' changing needs and expectations with regard to the service provided by Omega. In response to these forces for change, an organization development/action research project was initiated, with its agreed objective to build the capacity for change through creating a shared learning experience for participants that would be grounded in Omega values and mission, enabling it to develop capabilities and processes for continued organizational learning and change.

Action Research in Omega

The project constituted an organization development intervention in this organization (Jacobs, 2003). It aimed to create a structure to facilitate conversation about the present and desired future states of the organization, to enable stakeholders to take ownership of the change issues, and to begin to empower themselves to map courses of action (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005). As designed, a facilitator would work with each

local center for the duration of the project. His work would comprise several elements. First, he would approach each center in advance of the planned days and work with a local group to plan the meetings. Second, he would structure the space in which conversations would take place and would invite participants to explore the future of the organization together, and he would facilitate the meetings. The workshop sessions would be structured around the following three questions:

1. What do you really like about (your life, your work) in this center/home?
2. What could be done even better?
3. How do we get there?

The contributions would be shared and discussed and common themes extrapolated.

Most centers opted for separate group meetings on Days 1 and 2 and a joint session on Day 3. So on Days 1 and 2, the residents and staff held their own respective meetings. Typically, on Day 1 they talked about Question 1 and started on Question 2. On Day 2, the issues of Day 1 were revisited, and discussion on Question 2 continued and was completed. Then certain items that the group chose to share with the other groups on Day 3 were agreed. Day 3 itself was then mainly driven by Question 3: How do we get there? What are areas for improvement? What are next steps?

Residents first and foremost expressed appreciation for the safety of the centers. In addition to that, the service provided by staff was highly appreciated. Across all centers, residents faced a structural dilemma: There was a fear of giving even constructive feedback due to their high level of dependency or even vulnerability. As one service user put it, "You don't rock the boat with the people that you rely on!" Residents in most centers were concerned with staff training and induction as well as their own involvement in decision-making processes. They focused on specific issues relating to staff rostering, range of services, meal facilities, and menu.

The benefit of the project was in their view to eventually have a space where they were able to address these issues. Both issues, service quality as well as the dilemma of not being able to criticize the service quality, were voiced in a discursive arena where participants were able in a psychologically safe environment to discuss the validity and relevance of both points. Long-term residents, who felt a certain agony toward the service, were delighted to share their experiences with others.

Staff also expressed appreciation of the friendly and caring atmosphere. The top issue for staff in most centers was the staffing levels, namely, staff shortage. Fairness of pay was an issue as there didn't seem to be a uniform pay scheme. Empowering the residents on one hand and giving them freedom of choice without empowering the people that deliver that very service created certain tensions and frustrations in the centers ("Do staff have rights too?"). There seemed to be a tension between the independence philosophy of the organization on one hand and the medical model and/or ethos of care workers and nurses on the other. Staff also expressed concerns about role and responsibilities, rostering, relationship with management, and training.

The local managers proved to be crucial throughout the project as they are very influential in shaping organizational culture in the centers. Without their support, the impact and sustainability of the project would be very limited. There seems to be some

irritancies with regard to roles and responsibilities between central office and center manager. If the local managers are considered classical middle managers, it should be made explicit. But that might jeopardize some managers' commitment. In addition to that, some managers felt that the possibility to give input in terms of strategic decision making had been very limited.

Omega was going through the transition phase of change, having changed its governance structures, employment and funding operations, and policies and procedures. It was moving toward developing a strategic plan. The project opened up a new change. Unfreezing took place in the initial contracting and early workshops where participants articulated their vulnerability. Changing took place as they engaged in dialogue and began to effect changes in the operations of the centers and in establishing structures for continuing dialogue and conversation. The conversations in the workshops were always concrete and were relevant to the lives of the stakeholders. Communication between residents, staff, and management was acknowledged to be central. In some centers, a regular forum to continue conversation and dialogue was established and has continued since. In some centers, menus and meals times were reviewed and changed. Vulnerability and a fundamental dilemma of residents were rendered visible. At time of writing, initial structural refreezing has been initiated in the formal identification of listening as a key result area in the strategic plan. This institutionalization of listening as a key result area, although it needs time to see how it works, is an important forum for continuing change.

DISCUSSION

Lewin's notion of reeducation is that change that involves change in cognition, values, and behavior is intimately linked to membership and identification with groups. In our view, this is equivalent to contemporary notion of transformational change, which is itself a central element of understanding action research. Can Lewin's 10 observations on the process of reeducation illuminate the Omega story, and can the Omega story demonstrate Lewin's process of reeducation in action? In our view, all 10 processes identified by Lewin are present, though as we have argued, it is not the identification of each one individually that is important but rather how they work together.

The Omega Foundation went through a process of transformation. The change forces from the external and internal environment had led to changes in the philosophy of service delivery as well as changes in governance structure, policies and procedures, and employment and funding operations. The action research project was presented in terms of the big picture of Omega moving forward. Large-scale change through structures, management, and service delivery was a set of major changes, and although individual changes were taking place, it was the single overall change that was the ground for conversation in the project (Observation 9).

The organization development project aimed at transformational change by creating the setting and psychological space for the stakeholders to converse with and listen to one another about their experience of the organization and about the future (Jacobs & Coghlan, 2005; Marshak & Heracleous, 2005) (Observation 1). As the system had

not done this before, it opened up questions about how the service was currently being delivered. Residents were appreciative of the space and opportunity to discuss their experience and also fearful of possible consequences of criticizing those on whom they depended.

Membership of groups showed itself to be central to the process of change (Observation 10). Residents and staff members chose to work in their respective groupings prior to meeting together. It was important for them to feel safe in the groups to which they belonged, and it was in those groups that the initial conversations took place. In those group settings they articulated their experiences and listened to one another's perceptions of how they viewed life in the organization and what they thought needed changing (Observation 4). That sharing included sharing fears and anxieties (Observation 7). The intergroup meetings opened up ways in which each group began to understand the perceptions and experiences of the other groups and thereby confront any stereotypical or prejudicial perceptions participants had of one another (Observations 5 and 6).

In summary, the change process involved a movement from one model of service delivery and organization architecture to another. This transformation made demands not only on the formal organizational arrangement of strategy, governance structures, and policies but also on culture and shared perceptions of the organization, its mission, and future (Observation 2). The action research project created a setting and psychological space in which members of the organization, residents, staff, and managers explored their perceptions and experiences, listened to one another, and in effect, reeducated one another on how to adopt the new organization. The outcome was in Lewin's terms, a new action ideology, which comprised new thinking, values, and behavior.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a general resurgence of interest in action research, as evidenced by the burgeoning of books, journals, and journal articles that elaborate its theoretical foundations and present cases of its implementation (Cooke & Wolfram Cox, 2005). The resurgence is also reflected in the growing number of academic programs that specialize in action research. There are many ways in which action research may be conducted, which are reflected by the variety of settings in which it is enacted and by virtue of particular approaches that are adopted to suit the exigencies of a given setting (Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Yet across the variety of approaches that constitute the family of action research approaches, there are fundamentals that are common. Action research is engaged in action on real-life issues in a participative approach with those who experience these issues directly. We have argued that such fundamentals are in effect integral to the process of reeducation.

In Lewin's view, when a new system of values and cognition is actualized in behavior, a reeducative process has taken place. How this happens is a systemic combination of processes that enable people to change their values, perceptions, and behavior through a group process. The Omega action research project described in this article created a shared learning experience for participants that were grounded in Omega

values and mission and that enabled them to develop capabilities and processes for continued organizational learning and change.

In terms of theory, Lewin's notion of reeducation complements existing approaches to action research. The 10 observations provide a more detailed description of the three generic stages of Lewin's change theory. Moreover, they provide a more fine-grained and integrative notion of change that enhances our understanding of action research as a participatory method. For practice, the 10 observations inform change interventions because they provide a solid foundation for processes of change. Furthermore, these observations as we have discussed provide a useful heuristic for practitioners to structure organizational dynamics to identify suitable interventions. We anticipate that Lewin's notion of reeducation will provide a useful source for researchers and practitioners alike.

We have reflected that Lewin's paper on reeducation reflects the foundations of action research. As we have illustrated, action research is essentially a reeducative process whereby participants engage in cycles of action and reflection to change themselves and the systems in which they live and work and to contribute to knowledge about how systems change. We have presented action research as a process of reeducation and reflected on it in the light of Lewin's paper to reignite interest in this neglected paper and to illustrate its relevance to contemporary action research.

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