Session 2

Understanding change
Learning Objectives

• To present the concept of change
• To establish an understanding of planned change in the organisational setting
• To introduce theories and models of change
• To present the general model of planned change
• To critique planned change
Theories of Planned Change

Lewin’s Change Model

Action Research Model
  The action research cycle

Contemporary adaptations to the action research model
  The Positive Model

Comparison of planned change models
Lewin’s Change Model

• Change, for Lewin, is the result of forces that strive to maintain the status quo and forces that push for change.

• An early model of change developed by Lewin described change as a three-stage process:
  – The first stage he called ‘unfreezing’. It involved overcoming inertia and dismantling the existing ‘mind set’.
  – In the second stage the change occurs. This is typically a period of confusion and transition.
  – The third and final stage he called ‘freezing’. This is often now called ‘refreezing’ (see Lewin K., 1947, *Frontiers in Group Dynamics*).

What do you think about change? Can it be planned or does it just ‘happen’?
Figure 1. Lewin’s change model
Action Research Model

- This model is very popular in OD as a way of planning and implementing a change.
- In this model, the planned change is seen as a cyclical process where action is guided by preliminary research about the development needs of the organisation.
- Feedback loops allow it to be an iterative process between gathering information, making changes and then gathering more information.
The Action Research Cycle

1. Problem/issue identification
2. Consultation with the OD consultant
3. Data gathering and preliminary diagnosis
4. Feedback to key client/group
5. Joint diagnosis of the problem
6. Joint action and planning
7. Action
8. Data gathering after action
Contemporary Adaptations to Action Research

• Moving from smaller sub-units to total systems and communities: more complex and multiple stakeholders
• Being applied internationally: needing to find its ‘cultural ‘fit’
• Being applied to achieve positive social change: community development and global social change movements

Can you think of any examples of a global social change movement that might be using Action Research? Is change seen differently in different cultures?
The Positive Model

- Fundamentally different to Lewin’s theory of change and the action research model
- Rather than focus on what is NOT working, it focuses on what IS working
- Uses an approach known as Appreciative Inquiry (AI)
- Everyone is involved in creating the ‘positive vision’ and so is more motivated to be committed to making the change happen
1. Initiate the inquiry
2. Inquiry into best practices
3. Discover the themes
4. Envision a preferred future
5. Design and deliver ways to create the future

Figure 3. The Positive Model
Comparison of Planned Change Models

**FIGURE 2.2** General model of planned change

- Entering, contracting and diagnosing
- Information gathering, processing and feedback
- Design, implementation and evaluation
Critique of Planned Change

• In conceptualisation
  – Limits to our knowledge about how to change behaviour
  – Context is an important variable and current models are limited in adapting to context
  – Change is not linear or rational – emergent conditions make planned change chaotic
  – Evaluation methods are imprecise

• In practice
  – Limitations in OD practitioner skill
  – Failure in diagnosis
  – Unrealistic expectations within the organisation
The Contingency Approach to Change Management

• Dunphy and Stace criticise planned change models that try to determine the outcome through a fixed process.
• The theory is situational because the changes are contingent on how “to achieve optimum fit with the changing environment” (Dunphy & Stace, 1990, p.82).
• They identify two aspects of change that will assist in deciding what type of change needs to be made: scale of change; and management style needed to achieve a change.
Two Aspects: Scale of Change and Style of Management

Scale of change
• Does the organisation need:
  • Fine-tuning
  • Incremental adjustment
  • Modular transformation or
  • Corporate transformation?

Style of management
• Does it need to be:
  • Collaborative
  • Consultative
  • Directive or
  • Coercive?
Four Types of Change Strategy

- Participative evolution
- Charismatic transformation
- Forced evolution
- Dictatorial transformation
Summary

- Theories of planned change
  - Lewin’s action research model
  - Action research model and its adaptations
  - The positive model
  - Comparisons of the planned change models

- General model of planned change
  - Evaluating, diagnosing, planning and implementing, evaluating and institutionalising

- Different types of planned change
  - Magnitude, degree of organisation and location

- Critiques of planned change
  - In conceptualisation and practice
  - Contingency theory