PAPER
06

Educating the change agents

Those who work as change agents with individuals may sometimes experience change in the present: they are able to bring it about as they intervene. Those of us who work with systems — organisations and communities and the like — know that almost all change is more difficult. The present is already determined by the past; and there are too many other things to be done first. In addition, social systems are so ambiguous that change requires multiple efforts on multiple fronts. Most change is future change. And even then the outcomes are predictable only in general terms.

Those of us who work as educators of change agents are at a further remove. The future change agents, at the moment novices in our care, will face ambiguity and uncertainty enough. What can we, who are so remote from the action, do to help them? That is the question I address here. To anticipate the conclusion, the skills include flexibility and confidence as well as the more obvious interpersonal and process skills and problem-solving.

I begin by addressing the more obvious skills required. I then describe one way in which these skills can be learned, using a fourth-year university course to

illustrate some of the methods and models. In particular, the course is characterised by its self-managed structure, experiential approach, focus on a wide range of skills, and the processes by which it has evolved and improved over the years. Later sections of the paper describe in more detail some of the more specific aims of the course, and the ways in which they are achieved. In all of this I write more as a practitioner than as an academic.

I could have chosen any one of a number of courses as an illustration. The one described below has the advantage that it is explicitly a course in change agency. Its title is *Advanced social consultancy*. In addition, it demonstrates more clearly than the other courses the processes for self-improvement, and the self-managed style which enables it to develop the important skills of confidence and judgment.

Skills for change agents

When it comes to helping people learn change skills, it is clear enough what is not useful. There is little point in teaching only universal principles or specific recipes: they lack flexibility. If you say to a group of novice change agents, "Have you noticed that wherever you start is the wrong place?" a response of recognition spreads around the room, for this accords with the novices' experience. As it happens, novices think that if only they knew more, the right starting place would become apparent to them. In reality change is too unpredictable for that. The art of system change is to act in such a way that, wherever you start, you eventually get to where you are going. Change is an iterative process which depends upon a certain amount of trial and error.

On the other hand, it is not hard to decide at a superficial level the skills change agents need to practise their profession. Ultimately, they bring about change through their own behaviour. That is the only part of the system they control directly. Through that, they can influence the relationships in which they

engage, and the processes used within those relationships. To change the world, they first change themselves: that is all they really have to work with.

Equipping change agents with change skills, therefore, equips them with sensitivity to processes and relationships, and the skills to change both of these.

There is a deeper issue than that, however. I can illustrate it with a model I gleaned from Edgar Schein when he visited Queensland in 1980. He was talking of educating managers, but the model is appropriate for change agents too. He classified skills into three categories which he named technical, interpersonal, and emotional.

For change agents the technical skills might include the various processes used in diagnosis and intervention: interviewing procedures, survey methods, or whatever it might be. The interpersonal skills are the skills at communicating with other people, and developing and maintaining effective relationships with them. I agree with Schein's contention that technical skills depend upon interpersonal skills for their use.

The emotional skills include the exercise of judgment, the willingness to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty, and the like. They might be summed up as courage. Certainly, in my own consulting experience, the failures are more often because I am not prepared to do what I know how to do, rather than because I do not know what to do. I find that most difficult situations are recoverable; the strategy is to do *something*, provided it is not self-defence. Then notice what happens. If necessary, experiment until the desired outcomes are achieved.

Schein also believed that tertiary institutions dealt at length, and well, with technical skills. In response to a question about the teaching of interpersonal skills, he responded that he did not think they were addressed often enough, or well enough, but that it was getting better on both counts. The emotional skills, he thought, were entirely neglected.

There were suggestions at the time that perhaps emotional skills cannot be taught. My own view, then and now, was that they can. If you learn to ride a bicycle by riding a bicycle, why not learn to make decisions by making decisions, or to exercise judgment by exercising judgment. It is in these terms that I can explain what I am trying to achieve in a university course which I coordinate.

A university course in social consultancy

The course which I will use as an illustration is a fourth year course in social consultancy. It comprises 20 per cent of a fourth year, or 30 per cent if you include an optional companion field project. It is part of a consultancy stream within an undergraduate and graduate program. At second and third level it is preceded by courses which develop some foundation communication skills and begin to involve class members in some degree of self-determination. It is followed by a coursework masters programme which provides more specialised skills in areas such as group facilitation, job design, intervention techniques, evaluation, and training and development, among others.

With the help of one or two other staff members, I conduct the first three weeks of the course. This is used for relationship building, forming groups, and setting goals. It also helps equip class members with the knowledge they need for effective planning of the course. In the second week, for example, they meet with practising consultants in class time. The consultants help them define the most important skills for change agents.

In weeks four and five we take the class through a detailed decision-making procedure. Within broad guidelines the class members decide the course content, and the course activities. They then assume most of the responsibility for conducting the class.

If you were to visit the class during a typical class activity, you would probably think it was more like an experiential workshop than a university class. You would be likely to find a group of class members conducting some experiential activity which they have designed to address some skills and concepts chosen by the class as a whole. Other class members would be coordinators for the day, to manage overall time-keeping and to facilitate the transitions from one group's activity to the next. Others are process observers, as part of a daily review process to be mentioned again below. For the most part the staff are participants during class time.

In its structure the course addresses both of the issues already raised: emotional skills, and the unpredictable nature of change. It allows people to practise emotional skills by providing them with the responsibility to make important decisions, and the support to be willing to do so. It deals with the ambiguity of change by continuously pursuing improvement.

I would like to be able to say that the course was set up to do these things. But in reality, in the first instance, it was a seminar-style course which tried to involve class members in a democratic way in helping to decide the course content. It has now developed well beyond those primitive beginnings. It is process-oriented, experiential, and for the most part self-managed. Despite the great changes over time, from any one year to the next the changes are usually trivial, and in response to some perceived problem. The course has become a self-improving system, and has evolved into what it now is.

In addition, the changes were driven by what happened, rather than by attempts at innovation for the sake of innovation. For the most part, as I usually do, I avoided reading about what I was doing until it was working reasonably well, and I thought I understood the dynamics. When I did read, it was to use the literature to challenge and enlarge the understanding I had already achieved. (I will have more to say of this later.)

In other words, the present shape of the course is as much a response to incremental improvement as to my deliberate planning. Usually, the changes occurred first. The explanation I now offer happened later.

To provide an example of the evolution... My early attempts at involving class participants in course design met with mixed success. As with the experiment in classroom democracy documented by Trevor Williams (1972), the participants reacted with anxiety. There were enough positive results to keep me going, but not enough to allow even mild complacency. The early years of development focussed on removing the anxiety.

Thinking that people might handle decisions more comfortable in small groups, I increased the use of small group work. When this helped, and the class members responded favourably, it was increased further. Substantial amounts of small-group work now characterise the class.

One of the most important features of the course, therefore, is that it does evolve over time in response to the problems which arise.

The course as a self-improving system

In retrospect, allowing for improvement throughout the year need not have been a problem. The number of processes for this has increased over time, but no one of them is a surprise. There are regular reviews of how the course is progressing. Participants then redesign the course in the light of the reviews. At the conclusion of each class session there is a weekly reflection period which feeds into a brief review session at the beginning of the next session. Spare slots are left in the timetable so that emerging issues can be dealt with. A major review at the end of first semester feeds into a design session at the beginning of second semester. Class members prepare weekly diaries which focus their attention on the class process.

Each year, however, the participants change. So that the experience from one year is not lost at the end of the year, mechanisms to retain the improvements are provided. Near the beginning of each year the participants from the previous and current year meet. They talk together about how the current participants can get most out of the course. The end-of-year review is often fed into the succeeding year as a set of suggestions, captured on butcher paper. Instead of being faced with the task of designing a course from scratch, the current participants encounter a "standard package" for renegotiation; this standard package contains the suggestions from previous years.

Cyclic in operation, and set up as a self-improving system, the course amounts to an informal and long-running action research study. In effect it provides an informal experiment on some of the characteristics of consultancy training.

A second important feature of the course is that it is to a large extent self-managed. This is the feature which allows the creation of an environment within which people can practise the skills of judgment, decision-making and responsibility: Schein's emotional skills.

An arena for practising emotional skills

The course at first glance appears unstructured. A closer examination shows a complex structure. A series of activities of different lengths are run by groups of class participants. Most of these activities are experiential, and directed towards skill development. Other class participants coordinate the overall class time and manage time-keeping and housekeeping. Yet others act as process observers so that, during the end-of-day reflection, we have detailed information available about what actually happened.

A typical first impression is that there is almost all practice, and little theory. I do give lectures, but they occupy about 15 minutes a week in an 8-hour class. That is about three per cent. But this is to misjudge the nature of the course. To think of the balance between theory and practice as an issue is to treat theory and prac-

tice as separate. In fact, the focus of the class is on the point of contact between theory and practice. Theory and practice are interwoven so that they inform and enhance each other.

Class participants are therefore required to plan what they do before they do it, and evaluate it afterwards. The planning and review help to ensure that class members develop concepts to accompany the skills they acquire. Review sessions provide a conceptual analysis of what has happened in the class. There are written assignments which require the application of theory to practice, or the explanation of practice with theory. A mentor scheme complements the other work: participants meet regularly with practising change agents, to learn what they actually do and often to observe the change agents at work. As already mentioned, there are weekly diaries in which participants document what they learned, how they learned it, and what use they intend to make of it. The emphasis is on learning theory and practice as a single package.

In all of this, participants are encouraged to use the literature, but only after they have thought things through for themselves. The intention is to encourage people to develop familiarity in the use of their brains and their bodies together. Their use of the literature can be more critical and useful because they have already thought an issue through in terms which make sense to them.

This is an important point. Most of my academic colleagues seem to think that theory leads practice. In consultancy I don't believe this is so. Most experienced consultants I know use methods which are not yet documented. Practice leads theory. Further, the theories which people use confidently are the theories which they have devised for themselves, out of their practical experience. This explains why we suggest to class members that they think first, and read later. It is also the reason for my own use of the literature after I have reached some conclusions of my own, not before. Provided people search out disconfirming evidence, the literature can then be used to refine their own ideas.

Analysed in terms of Schein's typology of skills, most of the participant-run workshops are skills-oriented. Some of them approach the skills as technical skills: as formulas to be learned. But in managing these workshops, participants exercise process and interpersonal skills. In taking responsibility for course design and conduct, they have to make decisions which have important implications. In this way they practise emotional skills.

The initial aim of the course has changed little over the last decade. It is to help class participants develop good interpersonal skills, good process skills so that they can apply their interpersonal skills flexibly, and emotional skills so that they can act when action is needed. The ways in which these aims have been pursued have changed substantially over that time.

The result has been a course which looks almost as if it were modelled on Knowles (e.g. 1984) or other works in the adult learning literature. In the use of small groups where people help each other learn from actual problems it is not unlike action learning (Revans, 1980). The emphasis on small group learning is not unlike that of Brewer (1985). The emphasis on cyclic action and review is consistent with the views of Schön (1983, 1987) on what he calls the reflective practitioner. There is explicit autonomy in all three senses in which David Boud (1988) uses the term: as learning goal, as classroom style, and as acknowledgment that effective learners inevitably make autonomous decisions in the course of learning.

Considered as an informal experiment the course's evolution provides some confirmation of these literatures.

The staff role

I have two colleagues who assist me with the course. As mentioned previously, we use the first three weeks primarily for establishing individual and collective goals and building relationships, and the fourth and fifth weeks for course design. We also form people into small "home groups" which function similarly

to learning sets in an action learning approach: that is, as groups whose task is to help group members to learn from their experience. Then we turn the process over to the class. From then on we adopt the role I prefer in consultancy: to assist the client groups to manage their own process.

Within the class we join in the activities, and play very nearly the same role in reviews as anyone else. On occasions we may stop the action and coach whoever is trying to facilitate the process at that time. This is always done in "time out" so that the normal class process remains in the control of class members.

Outside class we still evaluate most of the assessment (though as mentioned elsewhere, class participants must also evaluate their own work). Most of this is ungraded. With graded work there are opportunities to resubmit work. We would prefer not to grade the course, so that participants could give more of their attention to learning. We also spend a lot of time in a coaching role with individuals and small groups outside class time, acting as a sounding board for their ideas. In this role we help them learn from their experience, and build their confidence.

The assessment is negotiable, so that people can contract to work towards individual or group learning goals. There is a standard assessment package which can be taken as the starting point for negotiation; it has the same focus on combined theory and practice that characterises the course generally. We have tried to make each of the items in the standard assessment package a learning device as well as an assessment device, and one which addresses integrated theory and practice.

Apart from that, we mostly do approximately what the class members ask us to do.

Underlying values

I suspect that many of the underlying values are apparent from the account so far. I have a strong commitment to my own autonomy and to consensual decision-making. This is partly for practical reasons: at their best they are effective and satisfying. It is also partly because I think the social structures of the future will be characterised by this combination. Together they provide what Tim Dalmau and I called "cooperative individualism" (Dalmau and Dick, 1987), and what Bert Cunnington and David Limerick (1987) independently named "collaborative individualism".

Above all my commitment to autonomy is derived from my own needs. I have a high need for personal freedom, and out of a sense of equity I try to extend it to others. To do so, I need an understanding of the people I am working with, and a willingness to enter into consensual decisions with them. A similar focus on participation is to be found in the consultancy training I provide elsewhere, and my own consultancy and research work. In general, my work is in the same tradition as participative action research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). This is the role I play in the class: as a consultant who is there to help people achieve their own goals.

A further value, important in my conception of the course, is that of sceptical empiricism. I encourage constructive self-criticism, hence the emphasis on evaluation and review mentioned above. On the other hand, I do not subscribe to narrow views of either scepticism or empiricism. There is more to reality, I think, than can be captured easily in a correlation matrix or an experimental laboratory. I think that there is a place for both statistics and experimental laboratories, but I do not believe that on their own they are sufficient to develop an adequate body of theory and practice of change agency.

If modelling is important, and I believe it is, then there are forces which encourage class participants to take on these values. It is true, therefore, that class mem-

bers will often internalise the values which the class embodies. That is not my intention, however. I wish to help them find their own values and models and practices, not to educate them in my image. In any event, I think they will do better as change agents if they learn to work from their own strengths and preferences, rather than try to become what they are not. To this end, in the early weeks of the class we use instruments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers and McCaulley, 1985) and the Team Roles Questionnaire (Belbin 1981) which encourage them to recognise, accept and value the diversity in the class. It is only within a class that explicitly values autonomy that people can easily be free to make their own choices.

In the account so far, the course has been described in broad terms. In what follows, a somewhat more detailed account of the course content and process is given.

Concepts

There are concepts which underpin much of what happens in the class, and which are used there both implicitly and explicitly. Foremost among them are those of process, action research, systems theory, and the work of Argyris. In general the concepts are those of practical consultancy, and therefore easy to convert into action. They are not those of the psychological laboratory. You might describe them as akin to grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), derived from and informing action. They are concepts which I draw on in other consultancy work, and find valuable. As I also use them widely in helping experienced consultants develop consultancy skills, they are tested against experience other than just my own.

Process

The central focus of the class is on process. The approach adopted by most class participants is close to that described by Schein (1988) in his book *Process consultation*. For some purposes I think it is useful to draw a distinction between proc-

ess and metaprocess, by which I mean processes for managing processes. I use this terminology to differentiate the workshops (which are process sessions) and the review sessions (which are metaprocess). Metaprocesses are what help the participants to understand the processes.

My reasons for favouring process or metaprocess approaches to consultation do not arise primarily from any ideological position, except that they leave a client freer to make her or his own decisions. Desperate clients sometimes require a content solution which spells out how they can deal with a problem, and in these circumstances I am not averse to providing it. But mostly, in the style of consultancy I usually use, process and metaprocess approaches work better. The clients know their community or organisation better than I usually can; but I can guide them through processes which allow them to do better diagnosis and problem-solving.

In addition, process skills do not come easily to most learners, so there is justification for concentrating on them. Process is often invisible to those immersed in it, and it takes a typical learner some time to learn to observe it. This emphasis on process is probably the single most important theme threading together the whole stream of courses in consultancy, from second year and into the course-work masters programme.

So some learners find the concept of process initially difficult. That it is almost invisible in everyday life provides some of the explanation. Part of the confusion, however, can be understood as a reaction to a label which has to describe a variety of phenomena. There is one term in common use to describe within-person processes, interpersonal processes, and system processes, and over time spans ranging from momentary to substantial.

We encourage the emphasis on all these forms of process in a number of ways. The weekly process diaries are expected to describe something which people learned from the class process. In addition, the class as a whole exercises respon-
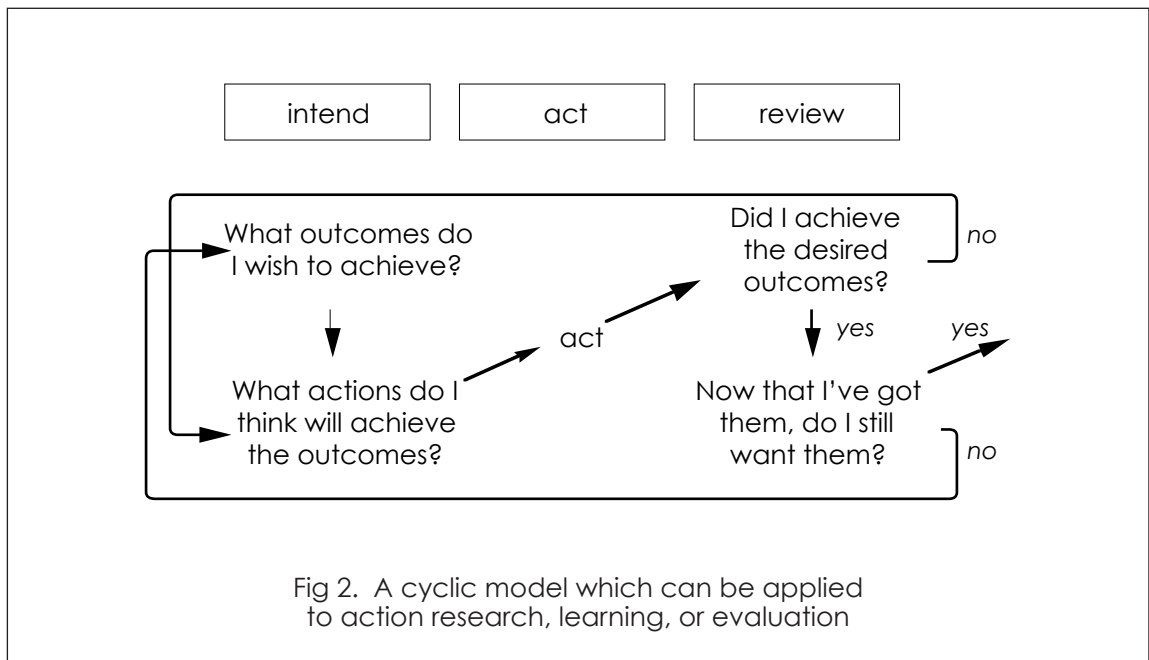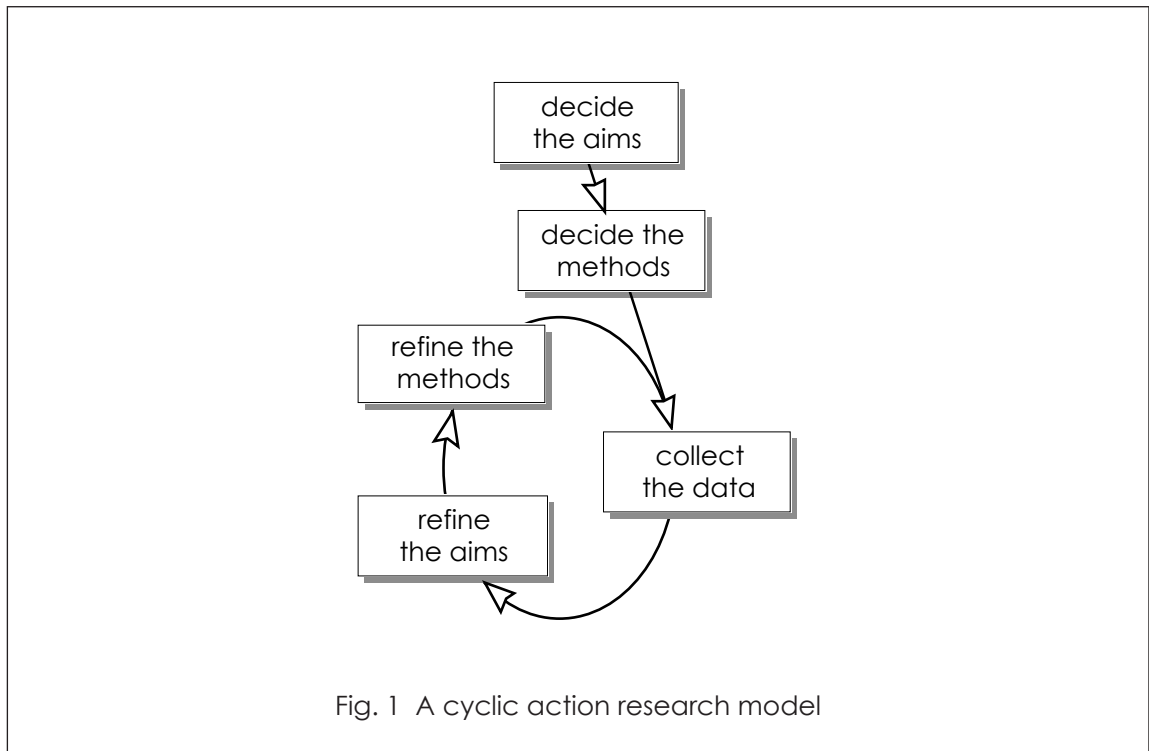
sibility for its own process. This begins in the planning stage, where the class as a whole decides the types of process to be used within the course. There are case study assignments where class members are required to design processes for diagnosis and intervention, and analyse their designs for their strengths and weaknesses. In other assignments class members are asked to focus on process issues.

Action research

Class participants can hardly avoid encountering the concepts of action research. French and Bell (1990), in perhaps the best-known text in the field of organisational development, write from an explicit action research perspective, as do some of the other books in that field. In a tradition which goes back to Kurt Lewin (1946) I think this is appropriate. In any event, I provide some lecture input on action research in earlier courses at second and third year. I introduce this by explaining that "fuzzy questions and fuzzy methods provide fuzzy answers", but that even very fuzzy answers allow you to refine the questions and the methods. If you are unsure what you face, this is safer than choosing question or method which will bias the answer you get. Iterative procedures provide their own rigour. A formal version of this cycle is shown in Figure 1.

This is later expanded into a model which combines action research, a learning cycle, and an evaluation model. I use it myself for these purposes in other consultancy work. My intention is to help people overcome the compartmentalisation which threatens to subdivide the field of system change into numerous sub-disciplines and techniques. The expanded model may be summarised as *intend → act → review,* and is depicted in Figure 2.

Other aspects of the course also draw upon similar approaches. The model of figure 2 functions well as a learning model. With the addition of an explicit *generalise* component the action research cycle becomes a model almost equivalent to Kolb's (1984) learning cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation,

Fig. 1 A cyclic action research model

Fig 2. A cyclic model which can be applied
to action research, learning, or evaluation

abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. *Act* is equivalent to concrete experience, *review* to reflective observation, and *generalise* to abstract conceptualisation. The fit between *intend* and active experimentation is less exact. In use, I encourage participants to regard any of the four components as an appropriate starting point provided they close the circle by returning to the first component.

Experience has shown that this is perhaps the most easily applied model for the design of experiential workshops, a useful consultancy skill. After a brief overview of the model, followed by two brief demonstration workshops, groups in a third year class are able to design experiential workshops.

Some third-year groups with no prior experience actually use designs which develop concepts entirely from participant-generated information. For example, a recent workshop used scenarios to involve class members in role play. By analysing what was effective and what was not, they were then collectively able to develop usable principles of counselling. I know many professional trainers who would be reluctant to use this type of design; yet it takes place in a class where participants in some semesters number over 100. It demonstrates the value of processes which are robust or fail-safe, a topic I revisit below.

Systems concepts

Systems theory plays its part in two forms. One form envisages systems as any complex which converts inputs into outputs. It helps people think about interactions and transactions, and is a useful framework for understanding people or social systems during diagnosis or evaluation.

The second form of systems theory is more a notion than a model. It includes the ideas of emergence (that different qualities, not easily predicted from a study of the components, emerge at each level of systems complexity) and equifinality (that many means exist for reaching a given end). My intention is to draw to the

notice of participants that systems are complexly interconnected, and behave in ways which are only partly predictable.

The two forms of systems theory are both to be found in recent developments in what is sometimes known as soft systems methodology (for example Checkland, 1981), itself a valuable diagnostic tool. I use models such as those of Checkland in the class, and often suggest the associated literature for people to use in their assignment work. The standard assessment package includes an assignment which requires people to analyse and explain a small social system in terms of individual-system interaction. In other assignments, and in associated field work, we steer class members into taking the wider environment into account. They are able to use models such as those of Checkland in this work.

To practise what we preach

If I look back over my career as a change agent, the two books which have had the greatest influence on my approach to practice are *Theory in practice* by Argyris and Schön (1974) and its companion *Organisational learning* (Argyris and Schön, 1978). Their distinction between espoused theory (what we think we believe) and theory-in-use (what an observer might deduce from our behaviour) is central to consultancy work. Inconsistency between the two provides the greatest challenge to a consultant's credibility, which is the source of her or his influence. At the same time it is the most promising lever for helping others change their behaviour. The recent development of these concepts by Argyris, Putnam and Smith (1985) into what amounts to a full scientific paradigm adds to its value. That it is generally consistent with an action research framework is a further bonus (though see also Argyris and Schön, 1989).

As with systems theory, Argyris and Schön's concepts can be applied at any level of human system, from individual to humankind. They also allow the link between system and individual dynamics to be analysed. Their concepts thus

are useful in allowing within-person processes to be related to those between people, and in social systems as a whole.

The miniature lectures I give in the class are often related to current issues in the class decision-making, and framed in terms of Argyris' concepts. At a two-day camp early in the year, I also use processes derived from Argyris' work for relationship building and for helping people improve their personal effectiveness. These processes make explicit the connection between a person's internal beliefs and feelings, and the actions and outcomes which result between people. They therefore also reinforce the process focus of the course.

The processes

Reading through the descriptions above, it occurs to me that it sounds very much as if the participants are thrown in at the deep end. This is true; but there is more to it than that. In particular, the participants for the most part work in teams. This provides them with an important source of moral support. They are also encouraged to review and evaluate their every activity. Most situations, then, come to be regarded as learning opportunities rather than situations where success or failure is the issue.

In addition, they are introduced to robust processes which are relatively fail-safe even in inexperienced hands, and which degrade gracefully. A substantial part of my own research has been directed towards the development of such processes. The original motivation for much of this was to make these approaches available to novice consultants. Since then I have found the benefits of using robust approaches in my own work. They leave me with more free attention and energy to watch for, and react to, the unexpected.

Although there is little explicit teaching of these processes in this course, the weekly miniature lectures in the second half of the year sometimes describe them. In addition, descriptions of robust processes for sensing interviews, goal

setting, conflict management, group facilitation and the like are provided as handouts or as documents which people can borrow from a "resource box"—a class library. The class is given a detailed reading list which includes "how to" literature such as Fordyce and Weil (1979). To help class members understand when different processes are appropriate, the descriptions given in miniature lectures or in documentation are related to an explicit change model. This provides an overall framework which class members use in the case study work which they do, and field work outside formal class time. The change model is shown in Figure 3.

Pre-planning	*Planning*	*Implementation*
relationships	goal setting	
processes	situation analysis	future actions
mechanisms	action planning	future review
culture	review planning	

Fig. 3   A three-stage model of the change process. Planning prepares for implementation. Pre-planning prepares for planning

This provides an overall framework to which class participants can relate other techniques they come across in their reading, and in contact with practising consultants. It also gives them a general-purpose suite of processes which they can use whenever they lack a more specific technique.

In the university class, written work includes case studies, which focus specifically on the earliest stages of consultancy: entry and contracting. In off-campus consultancy workshops I usually also give attention to these parts of the process. Entry and contracting demand flexibility and responsiveness, and cannot be done to formula. They help learners to develop a flexible approach which allows them to use any consultancy process with greater effectiveness.

Confidence in entry and contracting also makes it easier for novices to develop experience. In many situations they are unlikely to be allowed to carry out actual interventions. However, it is usually possible to negotiate to observe, and perhaps carry out some diagnosis. In negotiating their role they are practising their interpersonal and emotional skills, and applying them in a field setting. If they can negotiate entry well, they are probably capable of handling a range of diagnostic and intervention procedures.

Conclusions

I have chosen to use one particular university course as a vehicle for discussing the nature of change agency as I experience it. Other courses could have served the purpose; so could many of the consultancy assignments I have been engaged in over the years. In most of them the intention has been to create an environment in which those involved can discover how they and their colleagues achieve what they do, and how they might improve their achievement and enjoyment.

If I were to attempt to summarise from my experience the key attributes of consultancy, I would choose flexibility. Change, as I said, is mostly future change. It cannot be predicted with certainty. Treating the world as an unknown, leaving options open, choosing methods which do not presuppose a particular outcome... these are important parts of it. I try to make constant use of the *intend* → *act* → *review* cycle, in consultancy as in teaching, believing that even random trial and error is better than persisting with something which clearly is not working.

That flexibility, I think, is best developed upon a foundation of what Schein called emotional skills, with courage and self-acceptance as important components. Experienced consultants continue to learn from their experience, including about themselves.

The working skills of the consultant are process skills and interpersonal skills. (I use skills to include the concepts which allow one to choose an approach appropriate to the current intention and setting.) Consultants achieve through others, and therefore through relationships. Within those relationships the processes can be altered. And it is the changes in process which the system retains after the consultant has departed.

The concepts are those which help people to understand people and social systems. I have described them here as systems theory and the like; but these have most meaning for people who first re-invent them for themselves, out of their own experience. As I envisage it, the system and its members and the consultant are engaged in a mutual learning activity. It is therefore not surprising that a course in consultancy should have evolved to resemble a consultancy activity in community or organisational change.

Acknowledgments

References

Argyris, C. and Schön, D.A. (1974) *Theory in practice: increasing professional effectiveness*, San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass.

Argyris, C. and Schön, D.A. (1978) *Organizational learning: a theory of action perspective*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Argyris, C. and Schön, D.A. (1989) Participative action research and action science compared: a commentary. *American Behavioural Scientist*, 32, 612-623.

Argyris, C., Putnam, R. and Smith, D.McL. (1985) *Action science: concepts, methods and skills for research and intervention*. San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass.

Belbin, R.M. (1981) *Management teams: why they succeed or fail*. London: Heinemann.

Boud, D. (1988) Moving towards autonomy. In D. Boud, ed., *Developing student autonomy in learning*, second edition. London: Kogan Page.

Brewer, I.M. (1985) *Learning more and teaching less: a decade of innovation in self-instruction and small group learning*. Guilford: Society for Research in Higher Education and NFER-Nelson.

Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming critical: education knowledge and action research*. London: Falmer Press.

Checkland, P. (1981) *Systems thinking, systems practice*. Chichester: Wiley.

Cunnington, B. and Limerick, D. (1987) The fourth blueprint: an emergent managerial frame of reference. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 26-31.

Dalmau, T. and Dick, B. (1987) *Politics, conflict and culture: a journey into complexity*. Chapel Hill, Qld: Interchange.

Fordyce, J.K. and Weil, R. (1979) *Managing with people: a manager's handbook of organisation development methods*, second edition. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

French, W. and Bell, C.H. (1990) *Organisation development: behavioural science interventions for organisational improvement*, fourth edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory,* Chicago, Ill.: Aldine.

Knowles, M. (1984) *The adult learner: a neglected species*, third edition. Houston: Gulf Publishing.

Kolb, D.A. (1984) *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall.

Lewin, K. (1946) Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues*, 2, 34-46.

Myers, I.B. and McCaulley, M.H. (1985) *Manual: A guide to the development and use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*. Palo Alto, Ca.: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Revans, R.W. (1980) *Action learning: new techniques for management*. London: Blond and Briggs.

Schein, E.H. (1988) *Process consultation: its role in organisation development, Volume 1*, second edition. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

Schön, D.A. (1983) *The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action*. New York: Basic Books.

Schön, D.A. (1987) *Educating the reflective practitioner: towards a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Williams, T.A. (1972) *Democracy in learning*. Canberra, ACT.: Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University.