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## Introduction to Linking Theory & Practice Section

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We have a special treat for readers in the Linking Theory & Practice section of this issue. Not only do we have two in-depth articles – actually, research cases – that examined Lean change processes in two different organizations with contrasting outcomes, but also reflections of the authors on each others' findings.

Both groups of authors provided excellent insights in examining processes and outcomes of the two organizations. First, the Hartwell and Roth case uncovered four themes in effective Lean transformations – “Conditions for Lean,” “Continual improvement,” “Lean Change Methods,” and “Ongoing Challenges.” Instead of a top-down driven change process, these themes involved member activities such as generating change ideas, implementing change, learning from intermediate results, and improving on them, from organizational members across all levels of the organization. In contrast, the Turesky and Connell study pointed to the importance of clear leadership and a strategic vision that is truly shared among all organizational members as pillars of successful change. Both cases also showed the importance of communication and employee training in such change efforts.

In reflecting on each others' findings, both groups of authors provided many thoughtful comments. It is interesting to note that many of the components in the Turesky and Connell model were pointed out by Roth and Harwell to be present in their Lean Transformation experience. Turesky and Connell also called attention to the effort needed in maintaining success for both the short-term and long-term time frames of their Lean Manufacturing initiative.

There are many excellent pointers and lessons for researchers and practitioners in these two articles. Readers are welcomed to email their comments and insights to [omj@wnec.edu](mailto:omj@wnec.edu) as part of an ongoing dialog on Lean Manufacturing research and practice. You may address any of the authors in your comments. Do let us know whether we can publish your comments, if we wish.