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Implementing Concepts of Learning Community and Person-centered Education: Some Practical Remarks

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Agenda

- Defining the Problem: Emerging Challenges
- Traditional Responses
- Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

Defining the Problem: Emerging Challenges

- Climate Change
 - Growing Gap in Income Distribution
 - Insufficient Institutional Control of Capital Concentration (MNC)
 - Industrial Revolution 4.0
- => Innovative Solutions <= Creative Human Capital (HC)

Traditional Responses

Over 50 years of academic experiences on three continents in 12 countries => **academia does not respond effectively** to those challenges:

1. Too much **concentration on Knowledge transfer** => processor-centered approach
2. **Insufficient resources** allocated to Building Practical Skills
3. Undervalued or **Ignored Social Competences** -Soft Skills
4. **Disciplinary Fragmentation** => Weak Interdisciplinary teaching
5. **Limited contacts with real life** with business or public or civic organization => “Ivory Tower”
6. Marginalization of **Ethical & Civic Responsibilities**

Innovative Responses (1)

We need to reversed the old Approaches and deeply rooted academic Conservatism by:

1. Introducing a **balance** in education process – within Knowledge-Skills-Attitudes
2. Moving toward **Student-centered** Approach
3. **Overcoming disciplinary fragmentation**
4. **Introducing Ethics & Civic Responsibilities**
5. Developing **curricula in close collaboration with major Stakeholders:** business, public and civic organization
6. Expanding **Case studies & Action Research** with students' Team projects

Innovative Responses (2)

7. Introducing a **community learning** concept as examples of **organizational learning (OL)**.
8. Replacing single-loop learning to **double-loop learning**.
9. Practicing both: **Discussions & Dialogue** in finding solutions
10. Transforming **academic organizations** from “Ivory Towers” to **Learning Organizations (LO)** responding actively to their **Stakeholders Needs and Challenges**.

Innovative Responses (3):

In order to proceed with the proposed response, we need to understand few concepts introduced by **Peter Senge** – keynote speaker at the 2nd Intl. Conference on Future Education in Rome:

The LO is „**an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future**” (2006, 14).

In order to become such LO is necessary to apply – at personal or organizational level - **five disciplines** (practices responding to: ***what we do*** and ***how we do it***) and **principles** (***why we do it***) => continue study and practice.

Innovative Responses (4):

The five disciples include:

- 1. Personal mastery;**
- 2. Mental models;**
- 3. Team learning;**
- 4. Shared vision;**
- 5. System thinking** (ibid, after Oncica & Candea, 2016).

**Table 2.1.1. Contrasting concepts: organizational learning and learning organization.
Summarized from Örtenblad (2001)**

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING	LEARNING ORGANIZATION
TYPE (CHARACTER) INCLUDED	
Processes	Organizational form
NORMATIVITY DEGREE	
Descriptive	Normative
- exists naturally	- requires activity
- neutral	- preferable
- necessary	- not necessary
- achievable	- ideal
TARGET GROUP	
Academic	Practitioners, consultants

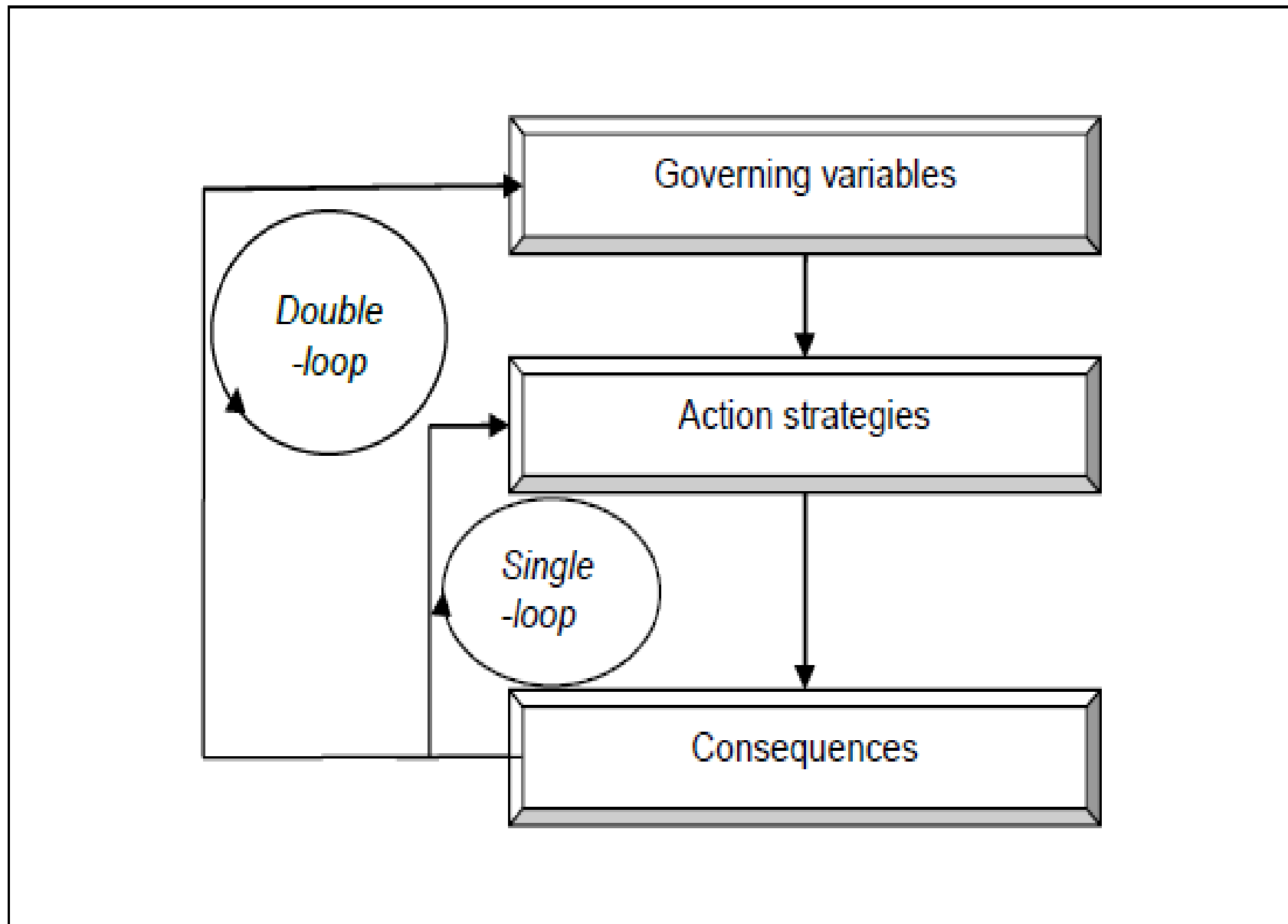


Figure 2.1.1.3.1. Single-loop and double-loop learning. Source: Argyris, Putnam and McLain Smith (1985)

Table 2.1.2.1. Dialogue vs. discussion/debate

DISCUSSION / DEBATE	DIALOGUE
Different ideas are presented and defended, and this may provide a useful analysis of the existing situation	Different views are presented, as means/resources to discovering new, different ideas
In a debate alternative views are evaluated and one gets to be selected	In a dialogue complex issues are explored
When they are productive, discussions converge on a conclusion or course of action	By its nature dialogue is diverging; it does not seek agreement rather a deep grasp of complex issues

Innovative Responses (5):

In order to create a **Learning Community** (LC) we need both – OL & LO.

LC based on the principle that **everybody contributes** according to his/her **knowledge** and **experiences**, everybody is **equal** but the **roles are different** for professors, students and guest speakers.

LC assumes **Student-centered approach**: Student = **center** of educational process **discovering theoretical** and methodological **concepts**.

Professors = **facilitators, couches** or **guides**.

Guest speakers = **resource persons** and/or **mentors**

Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases

- A. Warsaw School of Economics 1985: Master Seminar combined with Internship: ***Resolving Pollution Problems from Warsaw Steel Mill***:
 - 1. Organization: Two-person team
 - 2. Objectives: Collecting accurate pollution data => critically assessing => elaborating policy recommendations => completing master thesis => sharing with the residential community through Polish Ecological Club (PKE).
 - 3. Implementation: Breaking confidentiality barriers within the Mill in collecting data; student injured by car accident at the Mill – coincident or threat – never explained.
 - 4. Output: Team Master Thesis completed; Brief version Report elaborated & disseminated by PKE.
 - 5. Impacts: Increased pressure from the local communities on the Mill and Government => Privatized by Luccini, principal change of technology and became the cleanest Mill in Poland in the 1990s

Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases

University of Minnesota (UMN): Humphrey School, Minneapolis, USA 1987 – 2006

Programs/courses:

1. **Executive MOC** for the State Government – 77 participants (2006-2007)
 2. **Strategies for Sustainable Development** - over 300 students (1998-2005)
- The main goal of these programs was providing the knowledge, skills and social competencies necessary to sustain business, public or civic organizations in global competition and create positive sustainable impacts on their organizations, regions or countries.
 - Participants: Over 380 graduate students & executives
 - Output: Over 100 + 15 projects developed and delivered to SHs.
 - Selected Impacts: UMN Waste management System designed & implemented,
 - SD Strategy elaborated for a big corporation => VP for Corporation

Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases

University of Washington (UW): Evans School, Seattle, USA (2007-2015) (1)

Programs/courses:

1. **MOC & Competing for Prosperity (CFP)** – 40 graduate students (2007-2015)
2. **Strategies for Sustainable Development** - 20 graduate students (2009-2010)
3. **Comparative International Environmental Policies (CIEP)** – 30 grad. students (2011-12)
4. **Capstone Seminar (CS): Diploma Projects & Policy Clinic** - 25 grad. Students (2010-15)

➤ Objective: The main goal of these programs was providing the knowledge, skills and social competencies necessary to sustain business, public or civic organizations in global competition and create sustainable impacts on their organizations, regions or countries.

➤ Participants: 115 graduate students

Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases

University of Washington (UW): Evans School, Seattle, USA (2007-2015) (2)

- Output: 25 students **completed their MS thesis requirement** and **with others developed & delivered to SHs over 40 projects.**
- Selected Impacts: a. **Business Plan** on Second-hand Medical equipment Delivery to Developing Countries => **Collins Award** => Raised about \$1M => **Pilot Project implemented** in Mozambique;
- b. Introducing **Congestion Pricing** in Seattle Metropolitan Area => **implemented** by step-by-step => graduate **hired by local gov.**
- c. Growing **biomass for fuels** –ethanol or diesel – at WA **freeways** => not implemented yet => **graduated hired** by natural resource department of **the State Government.**

Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases

Kozminski University (KU) in Warsaw, Poland 2016 - 2018

Programs/courses:

- 1. MOC for Ph.D. students (2016 & 2018)**
 - 2. Building Sustainable Enterprise (2017 & 2018)**
 - 3. Economic Competition and Innovation (2018)**
 - 4. Sustainable Development: A Strategic Approach – 3rd year undergraduates (2018)**
- **The main goal of these programs was providing the knowledge, skills and social competencies necessary to sustain business or public organization in global competition and create positive impacts on their organizations, cities, region or countries.**
 - **Participants: 50 Ph.D. students, 52 graduate students & 15 undergraduate students.**
 - **Output/Impact: 28 projects developed and delivered to stakeholders.**

Conclusions (1):

1. The project-based courses for **graduate students** => the best opportunities to **verify their investments** in new HC & SC, build **professional confidence** by elaborating a “Signature Product” showing their **entrepreneurial credentials**, and to follow their **passion** – emotional attachment to the project ‘ idea.
2. **For business, public and civic organizations** such programs offered **high returns on investment** by getting young dynamic professional **reviewing** the status, **resolving** their problems and **providing fresh & sustainable prospects** for their organizations, and potential for **new employment**.

Conclusions (2):

3. These are challenging programs **to build initial confidence** with business, public and civic partners to conduct collaborative student projects = **Action Research** <= the **academic credentials** are very **important asset**.
4. It is **not easy** to find **dedicated and experiences** faculty members who will provide such demanding services => **special efforts** needed to **mobilize** such group.
5. **Community learning in** designing & delivery projects is a great tool for education, as well as effective approach in **building sustainable entrepreneurship**.

Conclusions (3):

6. **Student-centered** approach boosted **critical thinking** and demonstrated **creativity** associated with the concept of LO in practical cases.
7. Sharing the Action Research results with their SHs at the end of the program/course contributed to **building students responsibilities** for **quality work** and to **strengthening** their **professional credentials** within their peers & SHs, and to giving them **opportunities** for **sharing fruits of their project success** with their communities.

Thank you!

Questions please...