Facilitated learning by experience - exploring the boundary to unknown territory

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Abstract
Leadership is a unique challenge for teaching. One difficulty is, that the teaching situation itself inevitable includes leadership. Another difficulty is, that education includes inevitable a socializing effect on the concerned individuals. Finally, teaching in general as well as leadership teaching, are confronted with the paradox question: How is it possible to educate today’s students for an unknown future within a structure rooted in the past? (cf. Kraler et al. 2012, p. 8) This paper addresses the difficulties by introducing an experience centered teaching approach regarding leadership. At first the scientific foundation is presented, followed by a description of a course setting and a detailed analysis of a sample of lecturers’ interventions. This teaching approach is embedded in ongoing intervention research, according to that, the paper finishes with a discussion on results to date and a future perspective.

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Introduction

The focus of the paper is on facilitated learning by experience. Based on an intervention science perspective (Schuster 2016, p. 56-68) organizational facts regarding the educational institution, concerning students, lecturers and the syllabus can and should be utilized as an integrative part of the learning/teaching endeavor. Simply put this scholarship perspective is that any organizational context as such can be used to gain insight on how concerned individuals are affected. In doing so those individuals can (1) improve their coping strategies within organizational environments and (2) practice to consciously (Krainz 2011) act within the boundaries of their organizational role (Hirschhorn 1985). This is according to Gagnon and Collinson (2014, p. 664) who emphasize the importance to recognize ‘broader organizational and discursive conditions, effects and implications’ regarding leadership and its development. The here presented theory on learning by experience is illustrated by an actual course on leadership (Schuster/Lobnig 2017, open access). Facilitated learning of the students and the lecturers based on the reflection of the actual process here and now is the goal. Additionally lecturers offer explanations, theory and/or concepts and also invite students to share viewpoints, give their input of individual knowledge and experience. It is the basic idea that the transfer of existing theoretical knowledge about leadership can be optimized in enabling the students to individually integrate theory by participating in mutual reflection (1) on individual experiences in the past there and then and (2) on the actual experience of the process here and now.

Figure 1 Context of the course chosen as example

Figure 1 depicts the context of the specific course chosen as an example for the argumentations within this paper. The mutual process within the course itself is the
shared here and now, while the other spheres, namely the specific study program, the specific university, the university system and the society are the rather abstract there and then, although connected to the here and now of the course. The challenge and the reward of reflecting the here and now lies in the unavoidable emotional embeddedness of the people concerned. It is the individual emotional involvement that transfers rather abstract theory in the practice of living systems.

**Intervention Science Perspective**

‘Certain ineffable stirrings of a soul can be imparted by one man to the sensibility of another man through a look, two bars of a melody, an almost imperceptible movement. That is the real language of souls, and it remains incomprehensible to the outsider. The word as utterance, as poetic element, may establish the link, but the word as notion, as element of scientific prose, never. […] To attempt to get an “exact” science out of the ever-mysterious soul is futile. […] A soul image is never anything but the image of one quite definite soul. No observer can ever step outside the conditions and the limitations of his time and circle, and whatever it may be that he “knows” or “cognizes,” the very cognition itself involves in all cases choice, direction and inner form and is therefore ab initio an expression of his proper soul.’ (Spengler 1918, p. 300-1, p. 303)

Intervention science perspective is rooted in the idea that (social) systems need to become self-aware to achieve decision-making ability. Intervention research, the application of intervention science in the field, is applied to acquire this endeavor (cf. Heintel 2005, p. 147). Heintel argues that the process of intervention research is about self-enlightenment and that collectives have to learn to be aware of their particularity if they want to reach decision-making ability (2005, p. 146).

Inter- and transdisciplinary bias of intervention science and research requires to enrich its own core concept by concepts of other disciplines as well as by non-scientific knowledge of concerned practitioners and lays. Intervention research connects to didactics if it is an aim to have an emancipatory effect on students.

Education (Bildung) can be ‘[…] divided into the three aspects of (1) subjection, (2) the practice of existing norms, and (3) accompanied reflection’ (Schuster 2016, p. 58).

The act of subjection of the person concerned, is done by the performance of signing a contract that establishes the basic framework for cooperation with the education institution. The act of practicing existing norms is fixated on the measurement of the desired success by means of tests. This makes it possible to work towards a clearly
defined goal. Students have to align their actions according to existing norms. Assimilated students are the outcome. (cf. ib. p. 59-61)

It is important to keep in mind that even reflection on cases there and then is not enough to leave this area of normative education because of its unconscious acceptance of organizational pre-conditions regarding the roles of lecturers and students and the institutional context. The only way to finally achieve a reflective situation that allows learning by experience is the accompanied reflection of the here and now including the context, roles and task of the concerned people. (cf. ib. p. 62-64)

E. g. in the situation of the course Leadership & Motivation (Le&Mo) students of a year form groups, choose their roles as leaders or followers and perform tasks provided by the lecturers. The course starts with collecting cases students lived through there and then, in fulfilling the task, experience with the process here and now grows and is used to reflect on, shortly after it happened. (cf. Schuster/Lobnig 2017, p. 7)

The advantage is that all students present have the experience of the here and now and are passively and actively included in decision processes amongst themselves, regarding their course related roles and tasks. The context, namely lecturers’ authority qua office their and the students role within the education institution is not included so far.

Besides the task provided, it is necessary for the lecturer(s) to address the actual contextual roles of students, students’ representatives and themselves. This is done when lecturers talk about the assessment criteria and rules regarding the course in the plenary and when the students are told that questions, requests and complaints are to be brought in the plenary and will not be dealt with in private via E-mail or within office hours.

This blocks one of the detours of hierarchy, namely divide and rule. Experience shows that one way of hierarchy to deal with hierarchical contradictions and individual students involved is to bargain with those students in private. This makes

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2 In Austria every student is member of the student union (Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz – FHSIG, §4, subparagraph 10, 24 July 2018). Regarding Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) every year has its elected student representative.

3 The famous Latin expression is divide et impera.
everyday business easier and is probably necessary to run organizations, e.g. *to work to rule* is a common *threat* unions are applying.

In bringing individual students’ issues to the plenary those unavoidable, though painful contradictions become visible. The moment the boundary of the course is crossed and the context, namely organizational issues regarding the education institution is included lecturers’ authority qua office its reach and its limits become visible. It is important for the lecturers to differentiate their authority to be able to address students in a consistent way. It is also important to tell the students out of which authority a decision is taken to counteract an unconscious standardization of students' minds (cf. Schuster/Radel 2018, p. 285-86). Figure 2 shows the differentiation of lecturers’ authority, namely internal, professional and institutional authority.

| internal (individual) authority | professional (subject-specific) authority | institutional authority (authority qua office) lecturer(s) as representative(s) of the (UAS) system |

*Figure 2 Detailed view on the authority of the lecturer(s) (cf. Schuster/Radel 2018, p. 286)*

To integrate the education institution is very sensitive because it concerns aspects of power respectively domination. Fear and anxiety is relevant here, on the one hand the fear of confronting emotions, on the other the anxiety of relinquishing one's power of domination as a lecturer by relativizing emotions - including fear - and losing one's mastery over the students (cf. Schuster 2018, p. 70). Besides, experience with the here presented format has shown that lecturers need to inform study program directors and coordinators that it is a vital part of the didactics if students inquiries related to the course occur. Without the support of superiors this format is hard to realize respectively continue (cf. Schuster/Radel 2018, p. 309).

This is the core of didactics inspired by intervention science, namely to include the given situation and consciously detect, reflect and work through *necessary contradictions* (cf. Krainer/Heintel 2015, p. 254-56). According to Krainer and Heintel necessary contradictions are those ‘[…] that are always given and always have to be solved […]. They produce conflicts in our everyday life, our organizations and our global society’ (ib. p. 254).
The Connection of Experience, Consciousness, Emotions and Thinking

The term *experience* in the context of this paper is used in the narrow sense, that

1. there is no other moment for experience then the *now*. In addition the past can be remembered and the future can be imagined.
2. there is no way to repeat experience in this narrow sense.
3. the whole body is experiencing and consciousness is the outcome of a very complex metabolic process based on that experience.
4. becoming conscious includes a very complex metabolic process and takes – at least – approximately ½ second for production (Norretranders 1999: 213-50).
5. taking (1) into account, *conscious experience* is a contradiction because it is not possible to experience the *now* without a metabolic process that needs some time to happen and includes a huge amount of unconsciously processed data.
6. to become conscious of an experience is a massive reduction of data and thus strongly selective (cf. Zimmermann 1985, 82-139 (partially quoted in Norretranders 1999)).
7. the last step of human data processing regarding an experience is thinking (reasoning, conceptualizing). It is a biological fact that thinking is always about an experience in the past.

Damasio emphasizes the function of feeling regarding consciousness and argues that ‘[f]eeling is, in effect, the barrier, because the realization of human consciousness may require the existence of feelings. The ‘looks’ of emotion can be stimulated, but what feelings feel like cannot be duplicated in silicon. Feelings cannot be duplicated unless flesh is duplicated, unless the brain’s actions on flesh are duplicated, unless the brain’s sensing of flesh after it has been acted upon by the brain is duplicated’ (1999, p. 314-15).

Peter Levine, a Trauma specialist, points out the accuracy of a concept developed by Bull (1968) and emphasizes ‘[…] what Nina Bull has deeply grasped, is the reciprocal relationship between the expression of emotion and the sensate feeling of emotion. When we are “mindlessly” expressing emotion, that is precisely what we are, in fact, doing. Emotional reactivity almost always precludes conscious awareness. On the other hand, restraint and containment of the expressive *impulse* allows us to become
aware of our underlying postural attitude. Therefore, it is the restraint that brings a feeling into conscious awareness’ (Levine 2010, p. 338).

In Damasio’s view the brain is the ‘body’s captive audience’ and ‘[u]nder no normal condition is the brain ever excused from receiving continuous reports on the internal milieu and visceral states, and under most conditions, even when no active movement is being performed, the brain is also being informed of the state of its musculoskeletal apparatus’ (1999, p. 150).

Another interesting fact of the interaction of experience and human data processing is shown by Heinz von Foerster. This author argues that ‘[…] the synaptic gap can be seen as the “microenvironment” of a sensitive tip, the spine, and with this interpretation in mind we may compare the sensitivity of the CNS [central nervous system, R. J. S.] to changes of the internal environment (the sum total of all microenvironments) to those of the external environment (all sensory receptors). Since there are only 100 million sensory receptors, and about 10,000 billion synapses in our nervous system, we are 100 thousand times more receptive to changes in our internal than in our external environment’ (Foerster 2003, p. 221).

The above shows that emotions are an integral part of human bodies’ production of consciousness and have an impact on thinking. Based on Bull’s (1968) interpretations a concept of thinking is presented in the following⁴. Figure 3 shows, highly compressed and simplified, the evolutionary development of thinking.

(A) Due to a stimulus unconscious bodily processes cause a (postural) attitude, which ultimately leads to a purely instinctive action.

(B) As evolution progresses, the body begins to process changes of (postural) attitudes as well as e. g. the acceleration of the heartbeat and also the stimulus itself by means of feelings. This perception through feelings leads to the experience of emotion in the sense of “being-moved”. “Being moved” means that the decision in relation to the action is already anticipated.

(C) A corresponding expansion of social as well as individual complexity and the change in the quality of the stimuli lead to a complex of attitudes and the associated body reactions, thus also to a complex of resulting feelings. The

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⁴ The whole passage is a slightly further developed translation of Schuster 2018 chapter 2 (p. 65-9).
perception through the complex of feelings and the resulting emotions lead to the evolutionary development of further processing by means of thinking, which ultimately enables a resolution in action.

Figure 3 Evolutionary development of thinking (cf. Bull 1968, p. 23; resp. Schuster 2018, p. 65-9)

The argument in (C) represents the current state and is here, based on Ciompi (1997, 262 et seq.) referred to as process of feeling, thinking and behavior in general, or as program of feeling, thinking and behavior specifically. These are circular relations on an individual and between the individual and the collective level, with both levels influencing each other. In the practical didactic application, experiences on the individual level and the group level are reflected (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Circular coherences of feeling, thinking and behavior (cf. Schuster 2018, p. 67)

When learning a specialization, this process of feeling, thinking and behavior (ftb-process) becomes the desired feeling, thinking and behavior program (ftb-program). In this sense culture can also be viewed as ftb-program.
As ftb-program the connections between feeling→thinking and feeling→behavior become emotional implicitness's and sink into the unconscious, in a way similar to a daily tram passing by at certain intervals in front of our window, is no longer perceived at some point. This shows an essential contradiction, which lies in the fact that learning on the one hand leads to certain thought and/or action sequences being carried out more economically in relation to a goal, and on the other hand, learning inevitably acts as a restriction of possibilities (cf. Ciompi 1997, 275).

Figure 5 outlines this distinction of human data processing, namely ftb-process and ftb-program. The ftb-process is looking for a destination. The determination of the goal is the goal. The ftb-program works towards a presumed goal.

If the emotionally painful learning process is not reflected, because of overemphasizing the mediation of the normative component of knowledge – so the assumption – then the ability to use the ftb-process creatively impoverishes. In the extreme case, on the part of the ftb-program, the feeling and the associated emotion degenerate into destructive guards of the current norm. In contrast, the extreme case of the ftb-process would be a deadlock due to permanent changes of changes.

The assumption is that leadership skill has to include the ability to discriminate the ftb-program and ftb-process and, according to necessity to switch into either of the two modes. This can only be trained by complementing normative teaching with explorative elements. That means for the lecturers involved, to leave normative certainty and necessarily be confronted with uncertainty regarding the outcome of an explorative process. This includes not only the course but also the education institution.
Exploring the Boundary to Unknown Territory

To exemplify the theoretical approach above, the praxis of experience centered teaching of leadership is looked at in detail (cf. Schuster/Radel 2018, p. 305-9). A sequence starts with the description of lecturers’ intervention then a comment about the assumption for the intervention follows and finally examples about events in the course(s) are given. In total three sequences (I-III) are presented. In a following step it is explained how those sequences connected to the range of action of lecturers.

Sequence (I)

Lecturers’ intervention (I): The first meeting the lecturers tell the students the assessment criteria (cf. Schuster/Lobnig 2017, p. 5) and that questions, requests and complaints are to be brought in the plenary and will not be dealt with in private via E-mail or within office hours. If students already sent E-mails with questions the lecturers answer those questions within the plenary. Students are told that common requests have to be communicated via students’ representative(s).

Assumption for the intervention (I): It is intended to confront students with their situation in the education institution, to define the boundaries of the course and the reach and limits of lecturers’ institutional authority (Figure 6). In requiring that questions of individual students have to be brought to the plenary (a) questions disappear because individual students don’t want the plenary to know about, (b) questions are asked and show inherent conflicts between individual wants and institutional restraints and (c) students address the next level of hierarchy i.e. the study program director.

Figure 6 Differentiation of students and lecturers roles respectively authority
Event(s) (I): (b) Approximately 1 month before the first meeting a student wrote an E-mail to the lecturer [R. J. S.] introducing himself as student representative, asking for information regarding details for the course. The E-mail-text ended with the line “I would then gladly share the information with my peers as the class representative” and was signed “[Name] class representative”. The lecturer answered that details will be discussed at the first meeting and invited students to read online provided papers upfront. Immediately after sending the E-Mail the lecturer uploaded papers relevant for the course. On the first meeting a question regarding reading material occurred. The lecturer mentioned the E-mail and it turned out that the students’ representative did not inform the fellow students about the answer. Neither did fellow students know that this “official” E-mail was sent to the lecturer. It showed that the particular student contacted the lecturer regarding individual needs by using the official role as representative. This was a very interesting learning for everybody in the plenary. It also was the beginning of an annoying conflict, including the lecturer [R. J. S.], the students’ representative, later on another lecturer and the study program director X as well. (c) One semester a student disappeared after the first meeting. Investigation of the lecturer showed that the study program director had granted this particular student a recognition of acquired credits retrospectively. This was done in spite of an oral agreement between the study program director and the lecturer [R. J. S.] that the lecturer decides on his own whether to recognize acquired credits or not. The study program director Y did not mention his action. It is the assumption that the student, after the first meeting of the course, addressed and somehow convinced the study program director. The examples regarding (b) and (c) show that lecturers using this approach always have to be prepared regarding hierarchical power plays.

Sequence (II)  
Lecturers’ intervention (II): Within the first meeting students are told that they earn points, relevant for grading, by attending the course and lecturers emphasize that there is no other condition than being in the classroom.

Assumption for the intervention (II): This paradox of a requirement, free of conditions is used (d) to confront students with institutional authority, (e) to prevent as if behavior and (f) to establish an environment that is, at least to a certain degree, free of institutional and professional authority thereby opening leeway for the students. Especially for deeply assimilated students this leeway can be very stressful.
Event(s) (II): Experience shows that the requirement is especially a challenge for students who prefer to work towards predefined goals. On the other hand it is appreciated by students who enjoy the enlarged leeway. (d) Sometimes students switch into passive aggressive mode by chatting, reading, etc in the plenary. Here it is important as a lecturer to contain the emotions stirred up by that behavior and to investigate the behavior calmly in asking the student why he or she is chatting, obviously doing something else etc. (d1) The lecturer [R. J. S.] spotted once a student typing on her cell phone. He asked her what she was doing. It turned out that she was looking for a certain literature the lecturer mentioned a few seconds before. (d2) Once a group of students did repeatedly chat. On the repeated question of the lecturer [R. J. S.] whether the group want to share something with the plenary, the students just laughed and answered with no. This went so far that the lecturer said to the students in a very angry voice how annoying their chat and how phony their friendliness appears to him. Experience shows that sometimes an authentic expression of a felt insult is necessary to reestablish healthy boundaries. This is especially true in situations where lecturers’ individual authority (Figure 6) is the only one left (f).

Sequence (III)
Lecturers’ intervention (III): Still within the first meeting students are told to form groups of maximum eight and to choose a leader. The conditions for the groups are to maximize diversity and to minimize acquaintance of members.

Assumption for the intervention (III): This intervention shifts the focus away from the institutional to the professional authority of the lecturer(s). Questions of students regarding the setting are answered by using background theories. (g) This is necessary to counterbalance the rather disturbing and confrontational first step described above. (h) The condition “maximize diversity” leads to a mutual communication process because students need to investigate their diversity. (i) The condition to “minimize acquaintance” splits routine relationships and lowers potential defensive behavior against learning. (j) The task to choose a leader requires a group decision and is used to investigate the different groups’ coping with that requirement.

Event(s) (III): (g) The first lecturer started by outlining strict rules regarding attendance and confronted the students with his institutional authority. This led to the situation where students refused to fulfill a task provided by this lecturer. The second
lecturer intervened and was able to communicate his perception of the sequence to the plenary, to objectivize lecturers' institutional authority and to cool down the emotional heat. In doing so the relation between the first lecturer and the students could be recovered in a fruitful way. This situation shows clearly that it is necessary to have a team of two lecturers for approximately 40 students in the plenary. Lecturers need mutual feedback, to keep the overview and for their mental hygiene. In addition it is much easier for the students to perceive different authorities of lecturers presented in more than one person. (h) It happened in the third semester of a master program that, by investigating their diversity students realized that there was a couple in class that did not speak German at all. The official language for the master program was English and all of the attending students except the couple did speak German as a first or second language. One can see that within a social system it is not self-evident that fellow students do communicate in a way to become acquainted with one another in depth. This is an interesting fact especially if considered that those students together spent three to four days a week in the same classroom for over two semesters. The open discussion of diversity in the plenary led to that common learning. (i) When the groups of students are formed lecturers interview the members and ask questions about diversity and acquaintance. On one occasion one of the lecturers remembered that within a group there were students that he already saw working together the previous semester. In telling his observation it turned out that those students ignored the requirement. This shows how resistance happens within social processes and that it can be addressed by communication. Again it was the process within the plenary that emerged the learning. (j) When the groups decide about their leader they work separated. After the groups finish their task the decision process regarding the leader's choice is reflected within the plenary. Figure 7 shows flip-chart notes of different groups regarding their process of choosing a leader.
Figure 7  Examples of different groups’ leaders choices

This input enabled discussions within the plenary regarding leader choices and it
gave the lecturers plenty of possibilities to include theory e.g. on group and
organizational dynamics. Furthermore was this the first step of a process that
developed over time and let the groups experience the impact of their choices.
Finally it was possible to reflect later events in connection with their initial choice. (j)

One example is the flip-chart of group 3 of 6 (Figure 7) where the group expresses its
lack of orientation and motivation which was connected to the fact of the absence of
their chosen leader at the time of the reflection. The lecturers utilized the experience
and the emotional reaction of the followers to theorize about leader-follower relations.
In addition the experience provided for the members of the group 3 of 6 a very
individualized deep understanding of what the absence of the leader means for them.
It was possible to couple the general theoretical sense with the unique individual
experience. (j) Group 1 of 5 (Figure 7) was missing its leader at the next meeting of
the course and neither of the members did know where he was. This was annoying
for the group because the lecturers called in a meeting of the leaders of the groups to
inform them regarding an upcoming task and the group 1 of 5 was excluded. An
investigation in the plenary at the following meeting, where the leader of group 1 of 5
was present, showed that he knew from the very beginning that he would miss two of
the course meetings. What happened was, that the group 1 of 5 choose this student
because he was well known for his reliability and his engagement as student
representative. On the other hand group 1 of 5 did not discuss the situation of the
course, nor did it exchange individual knowledge regarding upcoming presence and
absence of members respectively the leader. As the flip-chart shows (Figure 7) the
group was reflecting about the fact that it did not have a “real discussion” but to
everybody’s astonishment the insight could not be utilized to engage in a real
discussion. It seemed like the group had the idea that choosing the leader would magically resolve all the upcoming tasks related to the course. Lecturers interpreted this as a resistance against a controversy about the challenges of the course and the part of self-responsibility of the group 1 of 5.

**Sequence (I)** shows how lecturers focus on the rules of the education institution, the predefined roles of students, elected student representatives and the institutional authority of the lecturers (Figure 6). The goal is to create awareness that this is connected to a larger system and grounded in (Austrian) law. Because of that fact changes are slow and on an institutional level. The rules are binding for students as well as lecturers. This fits to the third recommendation for sustainable leadership of Bendell, Sutherland and Little: ‘(3) Consider the political and moral aspects of authority and bases for legitimacy of leadership acts. By doing so, encourage a focus on how one’s potential actions relate to the needs of the collective, stakeholders and wider society.’ (Bendell et al. 2017, p. 433)

**Sequence (II)** shows how lecturers offer the opportunity to students to leave normative area and explore unknown territory. This is realized by the paradox of a requirement free of condition. Students are free to express their own opinion, regulate their participation according to their needs and set their personal boundaries. This can be a painful process for lecturers, because of phenomena of counter dependence similar to those of adolescence occur within the plenary. (cf. Heintel/Krainz 2000, p.106-7). Precisely for this reason, this exploratory process offers excellent potential for learning experiences. This fits to the first recommendation for sustainable leadership of Bendell, Sutherland and Little: ‘(1) Explore purpose and meaning as central to personal and professional action. By doing so, enable individuals to clarify their provisional understanding of personal aims and how they may, or may not, relate to existing organisational aims, to support a more holistic assessment of personal and organisational performance.’ (Bendell et al. 2017, p. 433)

**Sequence (III)** shows how lecturers initiate student’s self-organization. The emphasis on the institutional authority of the preceding sequences is now extended by the introduction of the professional authority of the lecturer(s). This is achieved by dividing the roles of the lecturers. One lecturer emphasizes institutional authority, the other focuses on facilitating the process. In order to keep the process within tolerable
limits, it is necessary to compensate for emotional reactions to a strict bureaucratic stance by moderation. In case of success this leads to an objectification of the authority complex represented by lecturers (Figure 2). This sequence also marks the step of enlarging the plenary, by forming groups that work and communicate, different to the plenary, divided from each other. Thereby the setting of the course enters the sphere of indirect communication, namely the political sphere (Heintel 1977, p. 93). Now communication happens parallel and to keep track the groups have to communicate in- as well as externally. By establishing leaders and exclusive meetings for leaders the lecturers bring hierarchy into the students relations (cf. Schuster/Lobnig 2017, p. 8). This leads to a self-similar configuration of the principle of hierarchical organization within the micro cosmos of the course. Suddenly students in their roles as followers respectively group leaders are confronted with institutional authority of the group leaders. In this situation both of the lecturers emphasize their professional authority and focus on facilitation of the communication processes regarding the groups and the group of leaders. Now the condition for the possibility of learning by experiencing leadership, hierarchy, leader-follower exchange, direct and indirect communication, organizational and group dynamics etc. is established (cf. Schuster/Lobnig 2017, p. 6). This fits to the second recommendation for sustainable leadership of Bendell, Sutherland and Little: ‘(2) Recognise that organisational or social change is affected by people at all levels and through social processes, so knowledge about collective action is key. By doing so, encourage people to learn more about how groups can function more effectively through enhanced collaboration.’ (Bendell et al. 2017, p. 433)
Figure 8 shows the range of action of lecturers regarding the experience centered teaching approach. Based on lecturers’ institutional authority their professional as well as their individual authority are consciously applied to address the feeling-thinking-behavior-program as well as the ftb-process.

Figure 8 Range of action of lecturers (cf. Schuster / Radel 2018, p. 305, p. 308)

By presenting transcendent knowledge, structure, guidance and orientation are provided to students. On the other hand lecturers as facilitators invite the students to enter and utilize a large mutual creative space.
Discussion

By introducing an explorative component to teaching that does put students as well as lecturers into a position of *not knowing*, the experience centered teaching approach implicitly admits that future can never be known in detail. Existing, necessarily normative knowledge is seen as the best solution found so far. On the other hand it is accepted that an over exaggerated extrapolation of existing normativity is a fallacy, leading into increased self-complication ending in idealization. It is the assumption of intervention science that it is not about favoring the normative or the explorative approach but to balance them (Schuster 2015, p. 227). The greatest challenge for lecturers is to teach their students the contradiction that the certainty of a time is illusory (cf. Liessmann 2014, p. 175) and that normativity, based on that illusion is necessary for the functioning of societies. This perspective weakens institutional authority and can open up doors for scholarship perspectives that favor the normative approach and thus focus on assimilation of students rather than emancipation. The application of the emancipatory experience centered teaching approach is highly dependent on the actual culture of the education institution and does inevitable include political power play. It is also a certain style of leadership, that is taught here, which might come into conflict with authoritarian ideas of leadership.

The foundation of the explorative approach is group dynamics in general (cf. Bion 2013; Miller 1987; Colman et al. 1975; Cytrynbaum et al. 2004; Schindler 2016) and the *Klagenfurter School of Group Dynamics* in particular (cf. ÖGGO 2013; Duwe 2018). The most known formats are the T-groups, the Organisational Training and the Group Relations Conferences (cf. Schuster / Radel 2018, p. 303). E. g. Shapiro and Carr describe the setting of the Tavistock-style group relations conference as follows: ‘Within the conference institution as a whole, the entire membership – in separate groups, one large group, and varying inter-group events – begins to shape its dynamic interaction with the staff they have authorised to lead the learning task. A temporary institution is being created for the purpose of studying itself’ (Shapiro / Carr 2012, p. 77). It is evitable that the described conference is mainly explorative. The location, a retreat where the staff as well as the participants are located for 14 days and the sophisticated arrangement of a plenary, several groups of varying sizes and spaces for relaxation time help to contain the massive uncertainty of the
common exploration (ib. p. 74-5). Since the boundaries within the education routine of the UAS system are not that definite the explorative part had to be counterbalanced by normative components and – compared to the formats mentioned above – rather intense guidance by the lecturers (cf. Schuster / Radel 2018, p. 304-5).

Ongoing intervention research is applied to generate data regarding the effect of the described teaching approach and to refine lecturers’ intervention. On the other hand there are efforts to find lecturers with a rather normative background that are interested in widen their teaching approach by using experience centered parts. It is important to differentiate intervention research from field experiments (cf. Eden 2017). Intervention research is, by definition a particularization and the results are unique and strongly connected to the researched microcosm - Heintel called that ‘collective individuality’ cf. 2005 p. 146 - and therefore not comparable. What is generalizable is knowledge about the design of the research process, which forms the intervention science body of knowledge. Nonetheless it might be interesting to join forces and to combine intervention research and field experiments, in the here presented context of teaching leadership.
Literature


