

These findings facilitated plenary discussions about the selection of group leaders and provided the lecturers with empirical data to support theories of group and organizational dynamics. It was also the first step in a process that evolved over time, allowing groups to experience the impact of their choices and to reflect on subsequent events and their possible connection to their initial choice of leader.

Regarding 3j: Group 3 of 6 expressed their lack of orientation and motivation, which may have been related to the absence of their chosen leader during the reflection period. The lecturers used the followers' experience and emotional response to theorize about leader-follower relationships. In addition, the experience provided the members of Group 3 of 6 with an individualized and deep understanding of what the leader's absence meant to them. It was possible to connect the theoretical concept with their unique, individual experience.

Regarding 3j: Group 1 of 5 was missing its leader at a subsequent class meeting, and none of the members knew where he was. This was annoying for the group members because when the lecturers called a meeting of the group leaders to inform them of an upcoming assignment, Group 1 of 5 was excluded from participating in the new assignment because of their leader's absence. The leader of Group 1 of 5 did attend the next plenary meeting, where he explained that he had intended to miss two of the course meetings, but had not shared this plan with the members of his group. The members of Group 1 of 5, who had chosen this student as their leader because of his reliability and commitment as a student representative, also did not discuss the details of the course with each other. As the flipchart notes from Group 1 of 5 above show, the group reflected on the fact that they were not having a real discussion, but to everyone's surprise, this insight was not used to then start a real discussion. It seems as if the group thought that by choosing a leader, all the upcoming tasks related to the course would be magically solved. The lecturers interpreted this finding as resistance to the challenges of the course and as an indication that Group 1 of 5 was avoiding reality by believing in a magical approach to solving the problem of choosing the right leader (Stokes, 1994: 21).

### 13.5 Scope of action of sequences (1-3)

*Sequence 1* shows how lecturers focus on the rules of the educational institution, the pre-defined roles of students and elected student representatives, and the institutional authority of lecturers (Figure 87). The aim of this approach is to create an awareness that education is connected to a larger system and is grounded in (Austrian) law. In this approach, changes are slow and take place at the institutional level. The rules are binding on both students and lecturers. This is in line with Bendell, Sutherland, and Little's (2017: 433) third recommendation for sustainable leadership, in which they state "... consider the political and moral aspects of authority and basis 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."

*Sequence 2* shows how lecturers offer students the opportunity to leave the normative arena and explore unknown territory. Students are free to express their own opinions, regulate their participation according to their needs, and set their personal bound-

aries; but they must attend lectures. This can be a painful process for lecturers because of the phenomena of counter-dependence (also found in adolescents) that the students can display in the plenary (Heintel & Krainz, 2000: 106–107). But this state of counter-dependence is precisely why the exploratory process offers excellent potential for learning experiences. This premise fits with Bendell et al.'s (2017: 433) first recommendation for sustainable leadership, where they state:

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 organizational aims, to support a more holistic assessment of personal and organizational performance.

*Sequence 3* shows how lecturers initiate student self-organization. The emphasis on institutional authority of the previous 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. To keep the process within tolerable limits, it is important to use facilitation to compensate for emotional reactions to a strict bureaucratic stance. A successful process leads to an objectification of the authority complex represented by the lecturers (Fig. 83). This sequence also marks the step where the plenary is dissolved by the formation of groups that work separately. After this, course-setting enters the sphere of indirect communication, the political sphere (Heintel, 1977b: 93). Communication now takes place in parallel, and groups must communicate both internally and externally in order to keep track. By establishing leaders and setting up exclusive meetings for leaders, the lecturers introduce hierarchy into students' relationships (Schuster & Lobnig, 2017: 8). This leads to the hierarchical differentiation of students within the microcosm of the course. In this approach, the follower students are confronted with the institutional authority of their group leader. In addition, both lecturers emphasize their professional authority and focus on facilitating the communication processes between the groups and the group leaders. In this phase, the conditions for learning by experiencing leadership, hierarchy, leader-follower exchange, direct and indirect communication, and organizational and group dynamics are established (Schuster & Lobnig 2017: 6). This aligns with Bendell et al.'s second recommendation for sustainable leadership, which states:

Recognize that organizational 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, Sutherland, & Little, 2017: 433)

Figure 88 shows the lecturers' scope of action regarding the experience-centered teaching approach (ECTA). Based on the lecturers' institutional authority, their professional as well as their individual authority is consciously used to address the feeling-thinking-behavior program as well as the FTB process. By presenting transcendent leadership knowledge, lecturers as *professional authorities* provide structure, guidance, and orientation to

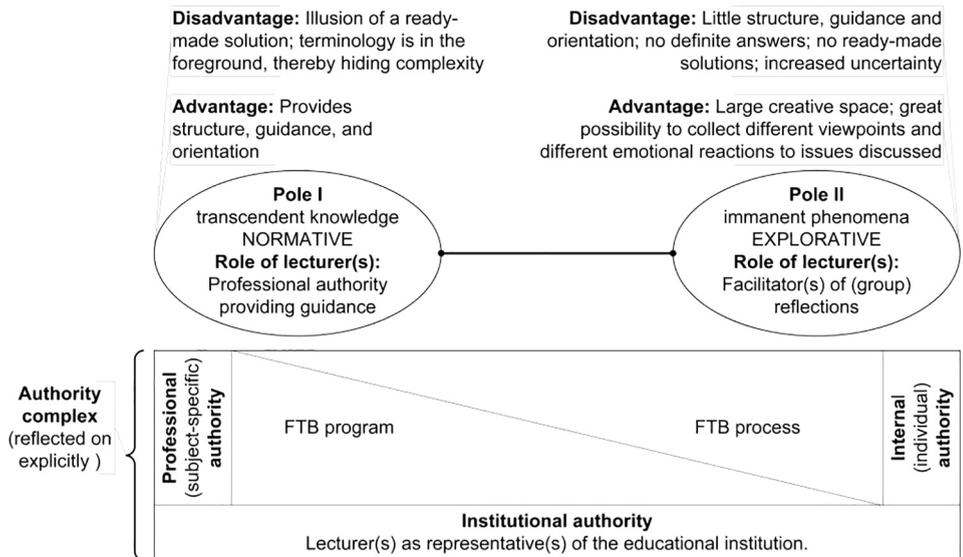
students. In contrast, lecturers as *facilitators* invite students to enter and use a large, creative space together. The difficulty lies in balancing these two contradictory poles.

### 13.6 Discussion

In this study, I explored an experience-centered teaching approach (ECTA) that places students and lecturers in a situation of *not* knowing. This is because ECTA is based on the premise that the future can never be fully known. So far, universities of applied sciences (UAS) in Austria have continued to accept the normative approach to education. However, the idealization of the benefits of the normative approach to education may well be a fallacy and may even have complicated the students' learning process.

The intervention science approach seeks to balance the best aspects of the normative and explorative approaches to education (Schuster, 2015: 227). A major challenge for lecturers is to use this paradoxical teaching to show that certainties are illusory (Liesmann, 2014: 175), and that the normative approach to teaching is an illusion that allows society to function with a degree of predictability. Such an approach to teaching can weaken the institutional authority of lecturers (Fig. 88) and push students into normative schools of science rather than emancipating them from conventional learning.

Fig. 88: Scope of action of lecturers



Source: Adapted from »A Reflection on the (Harvard) Case Method from a Group Dynamics Perspective« by Schuster & Radel (2018, 305–8)

The success of the emancipatory, experience-centered teaching approach depends on the culture of the educational institution. This includes the inevitable political power