

### 13.2 The intervention science perspective

The intervention science perspective recognizes the advantage of definitions, explanations, models, and language as possible channels for sharing experience; it also accepts that experience can be described but not defined because experience is continuous throughout a human being's lifespan (Lerchster & Heintel, 2019: 28–29). Spengler expresses experience as follows:

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: 300–303)

The intervention science perspective is rooted in the idea that not only individuals but also social systems need to be self-aware in order to improve their decision-making skills. Intervention research, the application of intervention science in the field, is used to develop decision-making ability (Heintel 2005b: 147). Heintel (2005b: 146) argues that intervention research is about self-enlightenment and that collectives – institutions, organizations – must learn to become aware of their particularity if they want to improve their decision-making abilities.

Intervention research aims to integrate concepts from other disciplines as well as the experiences of the practitioners and laypeople concerned. For this reason, in the context of teaching, intervention researchers need to involve learners as co-teachers in their teaching to enable the transfer of theory into students' practice. Education can be described as follows: submission, the practice of existing norms, and accompanied reflection (Schuster, 2016a: 58). An example of an act of submission by a person is when he or she signs a contract that establishes the basic framework for cooperation with the educational institution. The act of practicing existing norms can be measured by successfully passing a test that enables the next steps toward clearly defined goals. Students must align their actions with existing norms in order to succeed. Assimilated students are the result (Schuster, 2016a: 59–61) of such an alignment. It is important to note that reflecting on cases *there and then* is not an escape from normative education, because organizational presuppositions about the roles of lecturers, students, and institutions remain unconscious. However, an accompanied reflection of the *here and now* by students and lecturers on their own situations, roles, and tasks can be a way of reflection that allows for learning by experience (Schuster, 2016a: 62–64). For example, in the *Leadership & Motivation* course, students (in the same class) form groups, choose their roles as leaders or followers, and perform tasks provided by the lecturers. The course begins with the students recalling their experiences of cases they encountered *there and then*. While performing the task,

the students mutual experience the teaching process *here and now* (Schuster & Lobnig, 2017: 7). All of this takes place in the context of an educational institution. The process by which students reflect on their experiences of the *there and then* introduces different perspectives, changes the view of the case, and recalibrates the emotional and rational attachment. This process offers certain learning opportunities, but with the disadvantage that only one person is directly connected to the case. In contrast, the experience of the teaching process itself is shared by both students and lecturers. It is the experience of the *here and now* of mutual interaction where everyone is involved emotionally as well as rationally. In this situation, everyone is an eyewitness and a doer, and what happens is teaching practice. In addition, the organizational context of the educational institution also plays a role, as lecturers cannot avoid their authority by virtue of their position, and students cannot avoid their dual roles as subordinates and clients (Schöch, 2005).

To integrate the complexity of the transfer theory of leadership into practice, it is necessary for lecturers to address the institutional role of students and student representatives, and their own role. Lecturers do this in the plenary when they talk about the assessment criteria (Schuster & Lobnig, 2017: 5) and the course rules. Lecturers also inform students that questions, requests, and complaints should be brought to the plenary and will not be dealt with privately via email or during office hours (see Sequence 1). The classroom setting includes two modes: the plenary, where students and lecturers sit in a large circle; and groups of seven to eight students working independently. This teaching design challenges one of the tools of hierarchy, namely, *divide and rule*.<sup>2</sup> Experience showed that Study Program Director Y resolved a hierarchical contradiction by negotiating with one student individually (see Sequence 1c below). This is a workaround that functions when few students demand special treatment and when communication among students is weak or non-existent. This workaround is unfair, but it can make day-to-day administration easier. The paradox is that organizations cannot be run strictly by the book. In fact, strict adherence to the rules is often a threat that unions can use to influence companies. The teaching design uses real-life situations, such as the one with Study Program Director Y, to work with students in the *here and now*.

Bringing an individual student's problems to the plenary reveals painful and unavoidable contradictions. When organizational issues of an educational institution are raised, the authority of the lecturer by virtue of office, its reach and its limits, and the dual status of students as subordinates and clients become visible. It is important for lecturers to be able to distinguish the respective authority of their roles – individual, professional, and institutional – in order to address students' issues consistently. It is also important for lecturers to inform students about the role and authority that guides a decision in order to counteract an unconscious standardization of students' thinking (Schuster & Radel, 2018: 285–86). Figure 83 shows the differentiation of lecturers' authority, namely internal (individual), professional, and institutional.

Raising awareness about teaching is a sensitive issue because it involves aspects of power and domination. Fear and anxiety are also relevant. There is fear of talking about emotions, because of the anxiety of relinquishing one's power as a lecturer and hence losing one's authority over students (Schuster, 2018: 70). In addition, research has shown

2 The famous Latin expression is *divide et impera*.

that lecturers need to inform study program directors and coordinators that recurring student complaints about the lecturer may be an important part of the didactics. Without the support of superiors, this participatory format is difficult to achieve and maintain (Schuster & Radel, 2018: 309).

*Fig. 83: Detailed view of the authority of the lecturer(s)*

|                                                |                                                               |                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Internal<br/>(individual)<br/>authority</b> | <b>Professional<br/>(subject-<br/>specific)<br/>authority</b> | <b>Institutional authority</b><br>(authority by virtue of<br>office) lecturer(s) as<br>representative(s) of the<br>(UAS) system |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Source: Adapted from »A Reflection on the (Harvard) Case Method from a Group Dynamics Perspective« by Schuster & Radel (2018, 286)

Including a given situation and consciously recognizing, reflecting on, and working through necessary contradictions is the core of didactics inspired by intervention science. According to Krainer and Heintel, necessary contradictions are those “that are always given and always must be solved ... They produce conflicts in our everyday life, our organizations, and our global society” (Krainer & Heintel, 2015: 254–256).

### 13.3 The connection between experience, consciousness, feelings, emotions, and thinking

The connection between experience, consciousness, feelings, emotions, and thinking will provide an orientation for this study. Based on Nina Bull’s attitude theory of emotion (1968: 23), I will distinguish two opposing poles of human data processing – the Feeling-Thinking-Behavior (FTB) process and the FTB program. For the sake of clarity, the term “experience” will be used in a narrow sense in the context of this chapter. Specifically:

- (1) There is no other moment for experience than 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 entire body experiences. Consciousness is the result of a very complex metabolic process based on that experience.
- (4) Becoming conscious includes a very complex metabolic process and takes approximately half a second (Nørretranders & Sydenham, 1998: 213–250).
- (5) Conscious experience is a contradiction. It is not possible to experience the now without a metabolic process that takes time to unconsciously process an enormous amount of data.