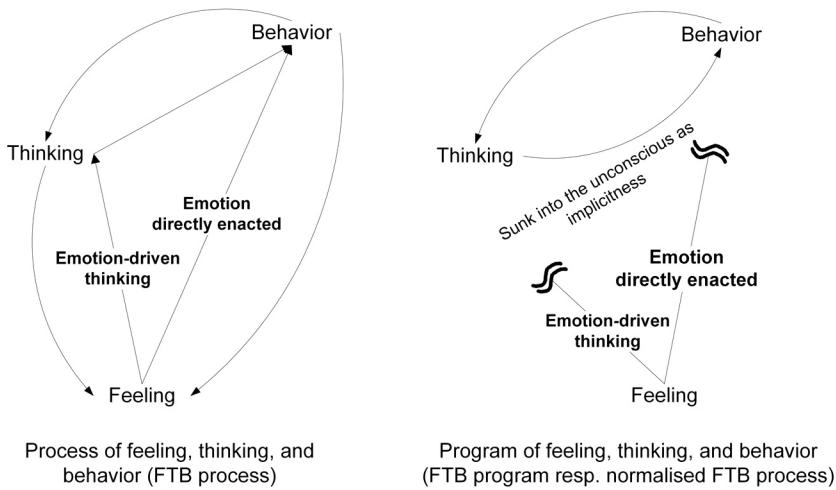


of the explorative process – both at the course level and at the educational institution level.

Fig. 86: The process and program of feeling, thinking, and behavior



Source: Adapted from »Lehren, Lernen und Emotion« by Schuster (2018, 68)

13.4 Exploring the boundary of unknown territory

To illustrate how normative teaching can be supplemented with explorative elements, the practice of experience-centered leadership education is described below (Schuster & Radel, 2018: 305–309). A total of three sequences (Seq. 1–3) are presented. Each sequence includes a table with the lecturers' intervention and the assumption for the intervention. Selected examples describe the effects of interventions in teaching practice. How the sequences relate to the lecturers' *scope of action* is presented later.

Sequence 1

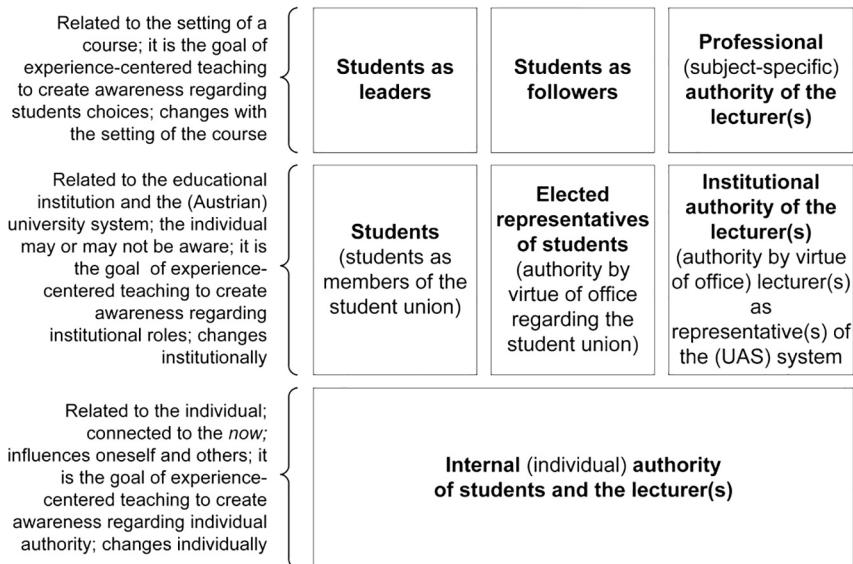
Regarding 1b: About a month before the first lecture, a student wrote an email to the lecturer introducing himself as a student representative and asking for information about the course. The email text ended with the line "I would then gladly share the information with my peers as the class representative" and was signed with the student's name and designation as class representative. I replied that course details would be discussed at the first meeting and invited students to read the required papers online before class. Immediately after sending the email, I uploaded the relevant papers for the course.

Table 5: Sequence 1

Lecturers' intervention (Seq. 1)	Assumptions for the intervention (Seq. 1)
<p>At the first meeting, the lecturers describe the assessment criteria to the students (cf. Schuster & Lobnig, 2017: 5) and explain that questions, requests, and complaints should be presented at the plenary and not privately via email or during office hours. If students have already sent emails with questions, the lecturers will answer them in the plenary.</p> <p>Students are told that general requests must be communicated through the student representative(s).</p>	<p>The intention is to confront students with the situation in the educational institution, to define the boundaries of the course and the extent and limits of the lecturers' institutional authority (Figure 87).</p> <p>By requiring that individual student questions be brought to the plenary, the following can happen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The questions disappear because individual students do not want to share their questions with the plenary. b) The questions are asked and reveal inherent conflicts between individual desires and institutional constraints. c) Students turn to the next level of the hierarchy (i.e., the study program director) or complain about the lecturers' approach.

Source: Self-created

Fig. 87: Differentiation of authority within student and lecturer roles



At the first class meeting, a question was asked about the reading material. The lecturer mentioned the email, and it turned out that the student representative had not informed his/her fellow students of the lecturer's instructions. Nor did the fellow students know that this »official« email had been sent to the lecturer. This shows that the student

contacted the lecturer to satisfy an individual need, using his official role as class representative. This was a very interesting learning experience for everyone in the class.

It was also the beginning of a conflict involving the lecturer, the student representative, a second lecturer, and Study Program Director X.

Regarding 1c: One semester, a student disappeared after the first class meeting. Investigation revealed that Study Program Director Y had retroactively recognized credit points for this student. This was despite a verbal agreement between Study Program Director Y and the lecturer that the lecturer would decide whether or not to recognize the credit points. Study Program Director Y did not mention his action to the lecturer. It is assumed that after attending the first class of the course, the student convinced Study Program Director Y to grant him/her recognition of the credits earned.

Examples ib and 1c above show that lecturers need to be aware of and prepared for hierarchical power plays.

Sequence 2

Table 6: Sequence 2

Lecturers' intervention (Seq. 2)	Assumption for the intervention (Seq. 2)
At the first meeting, students are told that they will earn points toward their grades by attending the class. Lecturers emphasize that there is no requirement other than being in the classroom.	The paradox of an unconditional requirement is used to (d) confront students with institutional authority, (e) prevent them from behaving as if, and (f) create an environment that is to some extent free of institutional and professional authority, thus giving students room to maneuver. The requirement of attendance without an assigned task is based on pure institutional authority. Experience shows that this requirement is a challenge for students who prefer to work toward predetermined goals, but is appreciated by students who enjoy the freedom.

Source: Self-created

Regarding 2d: The lecturer once spotted a student typing on her cell phone. He asked her what she was doing. It turned out that she was looking for a particular reference that the lecturer had mentioned a few seconds earlier. Since students sometimes go into passive-aggressive mode by chatting and reading and not paying attention in class, the lecturer had assumed that was what the student was doing. As a lecturer, it is important not to make assumptions, to contain any emotions stirred up by the student's behavior, and to calmly explore the behavior by asking the student why he or she is talking and not paying attention.

Regarding 2d: A group of students continued to talk among themselves and ignored the lecture. When the lecturer asked if the group wanted to share anything with the class, the students just laughed and said »no.« This student behavior continued until the lec-

turer, in an angry voice, told the students how annoying their chatter was and how fake their friendliness seemed to him. Experience shows that sometimes an authentic expression of a perceived offense is necessary to restore healthy boundaries. This is especially true in situations where the lecturer's individual authority (Figure 87) is all that is left to him or her in a professional setting.

Sequence 3

Table 7: Sequence 3

Lecturers' intervention (Seq. 3)	Assumption for the intervention (Seq. 3)
At the first meeting, students are instructed to form groups of no more than eight people and to choose a leader. The rules for group formation are to maximize the diversity of the group and minimize the inclusion of acquaintances as members.	<p>This intervention shifted the focus from the institutional to the professional authority of the lecturer(s). Students' questions about the intervention are answered according to intervention science theory.</p> <p>(g) This is necessary to counterbalance the more disruptive and confrontational first step described above (Sequence 2).</p> <p>(h) This condition maximizes diversity and leads to a reciprocal communication process because students need to explore their diversity to get to know each other.</p> <p>(i) The condition of minimizing the involvement of acquaintances splits routine relationships and reduces the potential for defensive behavior with respect to learning.</p> <p>(j) The task of choosing a leader requires a group decision and is used to explore the groups' ability to cope with the requirement.</p>

Source: Self-created

Regarding 3g: The first lecturer began by setting strict attendance rules and challenging the students with his institutional authority. This led to a situation in which the students refused to complete a task assigned by this lecturer. The second lecturer intervened and was able to communicate his perception of the sequence to the plenary, present an objective view of the lecturer's institutional authority, and cool the emotional heat. In doing so, the second lecturer redirected the relationship between the first lecturer and the students in a fruitful way. This situation demonstrates the need for a team of two lecturers for about 40 students in the plenary. Lecturers need mutual feedback to maintain balance in the plenary and for their own mental health. In addition, the presence of two lecturers makes it easier for students to recognize and accept authority.

Regarding 3h: While exploring diversity in a lecture, the students noticed that two students in the class did not speak any German. The official language of the master's program was English, and all of the students in the class, except for these two, spoke German as a first or second language. This is an interesting finding because it reveals the superficial level of communication among students – that it took a diversity exercise for students who had spent three to four days a week in the same classroom for over two semesters to learn who among them did not speak German.

Regarding 3i: As student groups are formed, lecturers interview members and ask questions about diversity and how well students know each other. One lecturer recalled a group consisting of students who had worked together in the previous semester and who revealed that they had ignored the requirement to work with students with whom they had no previous acquaintance. This shows the nature of resistance within social processes, but also that this resistance can be addressed through communication, as demonstrated by the finding in 3h. Again, it was the plenary process that made this revelation possible.

Regarding 3j: Once each group has selected its group leader, they will work on their tasks as a group. Since this is an exploratory process, the requirement is to choose a leader. However, no advice is given on how students should fulfill this requirement. After each group has completed its task, the process of choosing a group leader is reflected on in the plenary. Below is a collection of flipchart notes from various groups showing how and/or why the group leader was chosen for courses offered in 2017 and 2018.

Table 8: *Flipchart notes 2017*

<p>Group 1 of 6 (2017) flipchart notes</p> <p>The leader was nominated by one person based on previous leadership.</p> <p>There were no other nominations or volunteers.</p> <p>Acceptance was quick.</p> <p>Challenges or issues: low student participation, whispering in smaller groups, conflict avoidance.</p> <p>Outcome: One female leader.</p>	<p>Group 2 of 6 (2017) flipchart notes</p> <p>The chosen leader was already an established leader and no one else wanted to do it.</p> <p>Issues: the situation was clear and the decision was quick.</p> <p>Outcome: One male leader.</p>
<p>Group 3 of 6 (2017) flipchart notes</p> <p>Trust in her experience as a student representative in the past.</p> <p>Proposed and accepted by all group members.</p> <p>Leader issues: leader absence, lack of orientation and motivation.</p> <p>Outcome: One female leader (former student representative).</p> <p>Comment: The lack of orientation and motivation was probably due to the absence of the leader when the reflection took place and when the flipchart comments were recorded.</p>	<p>Group 4 of 6 (2017) flipchart notes</p> <p>Nobody else wanted to be the leader→she wanted to do it.</p> <p>Outcome: One female leader, rotating leaders.</p> <p>Comment: The rotation of leaders proved to be stressful because it was difficult to keep the other groups and the team of lecturers in the loop about who was leading at any given time.</p>

<p>Group 5 of 6 (2017) flipchart notes</p> <p>Representation of the group's interests. Communicative, experienced (international). Previous group work. Assertiveness, responsible allocation of tasks, emotional intelligence, temperament & passion, promotion of fairness/equality. Beautiful & charismatic.</p> <p>Outcome: One female leader</p> <p>Comment: This group gave no indication of the process by which the leader was chosen.</p>	<p>Group 6 of 6 (2017) flipchart notes</p> <p>Asked if anyone wanted to be the leader and no one responded. Wrote down all the members. Selected a member from another group to pick a name blindfolded. Z was chosen as our leader!</p> <p>Outcome: One female leader.</p>
---	---

Source: Self-created

Table 9: Flipchart notes 2018

<p>Group 1 of 5 (2018) flipchart notes</p> <p>Student representative→authority, instant collective decision – “We all know who it is going to be”→everyone had the same assumption. Issues: + mutual agreement/+ quick decision/+ positive feelings about the decision/– no criteria used/– no real discussion (quick assumption). Open discussion (no anonymity).</p> <p>Outcome: One male leader who was also the student representative.</p>	<p>Group 2 of 5 (2018) flipchart notes</p> <p>Immediate nomination of two people→discussion & avoidance→letting the coin decide. Issues: group pressure, decision by group members, not leaders, we let the coin decide (2 choices).</p> <p>Outcome: One leader and one deputy leader (both female).</p>
<p>Group 3 of 5 (2018) flipchart notes</p> <p>Suggestion→voted→accepted/fast decision-making. Issues: + fair decision/+ group agreement by mutual consent, decision was too quick, more of a gut feeling.</p> <p>Outcome: One female leader.</p>	<p>Group 4 of 5 (2018) flipchart notes</p> <p>The group offered a member the position of the leader→the member rejected the offer→the group tossed pieces of paper with names on them into a hat→random selection (coincidentally, it was the member who was asked at the beginning). Issues: This is not the most professional way to choose a leader. The leader might not be happy with the choice→not the most effective way/+ democratic & anonymous/+ less time-consuming</p> <p>Outcome: One female leader.</p>
<p>Group 5 of 5 (2018) flipchart notes</p> <p>Self-exclusion of those not interested→two members wanted to try the leadership role→discussion of who should be the leader→suggestion to have a team of leaders was accepted. Issues: + gender mix/+ increased objectivity, flexibility, creativity/+ shared responsibility.</p> <p>Outcome: One female and one male leader.</p>	

Source: Self-created

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-