

# 13 Learning by experience; emotions as border guards and signposts regarding unknown territory<sup>1</sup>

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## 13.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is *facilitated learning by experience*. It is thought that joint reflection on current action leads to learning by experience (Krainz, 2008: 13). This assumption is based on the perspective of intervention science (Schuster, 2016a: 56–68). The challenge for the lecturer is then to enable and facilitate the process of action and reflection. They are, together with the curriculum, an integral part of the learning/teaching endeavor. The intervention science perspective suggests that in addition to teaching styles and content, the organizational context (i.e., the educational institution) can provide insight into how learners and teachers are affected by the organization. In doing so, learners and teachers can (1) improve their coping strategies in organizational settings and (2) practice consciously acting within the boundaries of their organizational roles (Hirschhorn, 1985; Krainz, 2011). Gagnon and Collinson (2014: 664) also emphasize the importance of recognizing the “broader organizational and discursive conditions, effects and implications” of leadership and its development.

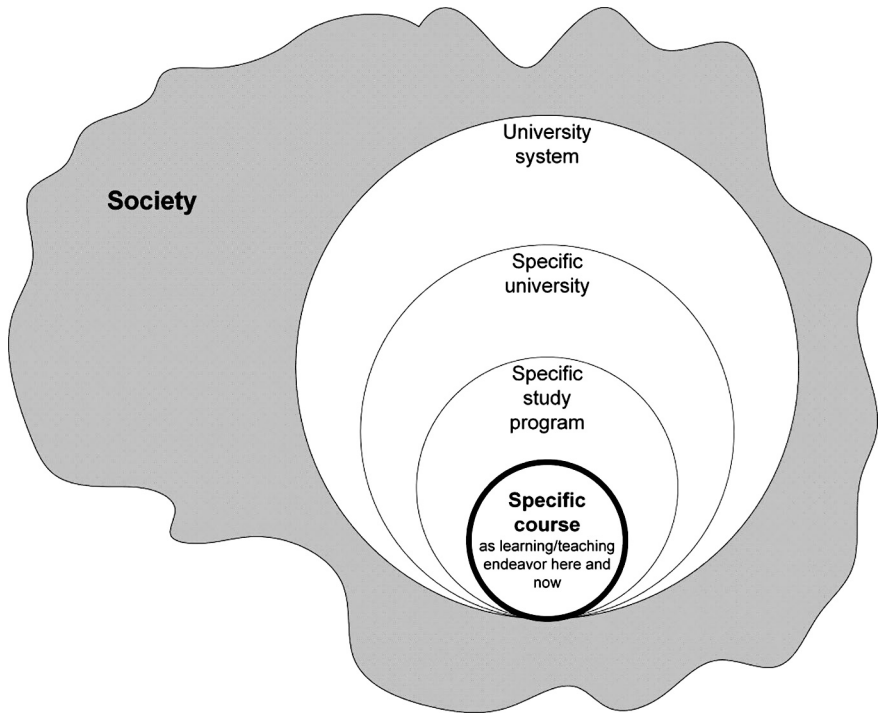
One goal of this chapter is to show how learning can take place through mutual reflection of lived experiences in the *here-and-now* situation of a teaching process. In addition to reflecting on the *here and now*, lecturers offer students explanations, theories, and/or concepts on a given topic, and invite them to share their perspectives, experiences, and knowledge. Another goal is to provide opportunities for students to engage in reflection on their individual experiences of the past *there and then*, combined with reflection on the

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actual experience of the teaching process *here and now*. The phrase *there and then* means that a student presents a story in the classroom that he or she experienced somewhere else.

Fig. 82: Context of the course chosen as an example



Source: Schuster 2021, 94

Figure 82 shows the context of a specific course. The innermost sphere, *specific course*, represents the shared *here and now*, while the spheres radiating outward – *specific study program*, *specific university*, *university system*, and *society* – represent the abstract *there and then*. The phrase *here and now* means that attention is based on ongoing communication and that everyone present can observe and contribute in relation to the ongoing communication. The stories, examples, and theories mentioned in this ongoing communication signify the *there and then*. The challenge and the reward of reflecting on the *here and now* lies in the emotional involvement and the opportunity for students and lecturers to address that involvement directly. It is this individual emotional involvement that transforms abstract theory into practice.