Implementing Concepts of Learning Community and Person-centered Education: Some Practical Remarks

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Agenda

- Defining the Problem: Emerging Challenges
- Traditional Responses
- Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
Defining the Problem: Emerging Challenges

- Climate Change
- Growing Gap in Income Distribution
- Insufficient Institutional Control of Capital Concentration (MNC)
- Industrial Revolution 4.0

=> Innovative Solutions <= Creative Human Capital (HC)
Traditional Responses

Over 50 years of academic experiences on three continents in 12 countries => **academia does not respond effectively** to those challenges:

1. Too much concentration on Knowledge transfer => processor-centered approach
2. **Insufficient resources** allocated to Building Practical Skills
3. Undervalued or **Ignored Social Competences** - Soft Skills
4. **Disciplinary Fragmentation** => Weak Interdisciplinary teaching
5. **Limited contacts with real life** with business or public or civic organization => “Ivory Tower”
6. **Marginalization of Ethical & Civic Responsibilities**
Innovative Responses (1)

We need to reversed the old Approaches and deeply rooted academic Conservatism by:

1. Introducing a balance in education process – within Knowledge-Skills-Attitudes
2. Moving toward Student-centered Approach
3. Overcoming disciplinary fragmentation
4. Introducing Ethics & Civic Responsibilities
5. Developing curricula in close collaboration with major Stakeholders: business, public and civic organization
6. Expanding Case studies & Action Research with students’ Team projects
Innovative Responses (2)

7. Introducing a community learning concept as examples of organizational learning (OL).


10. Transforming academic organizations from “Ivory Towers” to Learning Organizations (LO) responding actively to their Stakeholders Needs and Challenges.
Innovative Responses (3):

In order to proceed with the proposed response, we need to understand few concepts introduced by Peter Senge – keynote speaker at the 2nd Intl. Conference on Future Education in Rome:

The LO is „an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (2006, 14).

In order to became such LO is necessary to apply – at personal or organizational level - five disciplines (practices responding to: what we do and how we do it) and principles (why we do it) => continue study and practice.
Innovative Responses (4):

The five disciples include:

1. Personal mastery;
2. Mental models;
3. Team learning;
4. Shared vision;
5. System thinking (ibid, after Oncica & Candea, 2016).
Table 2.1.1. Contrasting concepts: organizational learning and learning organization. Summarized from Ortenblad (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING</th>
<th>LEARNING ORGANIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TYPE (CHARACTER) INCLUDED</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes</td>
<td>Organizational form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NORMATIVITY DEGREE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>Normative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- exists naturally</td>
<td>- requires activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- neutral</td>
<td>- preferable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- necessary</td>
<td>- not necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- achievable</td>
<td>- ideal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TARGET GROUP</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Practitioners, consultants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2.1.1.3.1. Single-loop and double-loop learning. Source: Argyris, Putnam and McLain Smith (1985)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCUSSION / DEBATE</th>
<th>DIALOGUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different ideas are presented and defended, and this may provide a useful analysis of the existing situation</td>
<td>Different views are presented, as means/resources to discovering new, different ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In a debate alternative views are evaluated and one gets to be selected</td>
<td>In a dialogue complex issues are explored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When they are productive, discussions converge on a conclusion or course of action</td>
<td>By its nature dialogue is diverging; it does not seek agreement rather a deep grasp of complex issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Innovative Responses (5):
In order to create a Learning Community (LC) we need both – OL & LO.

LC based on the principle that everybody contributes according to his/her knowledge and experiences, everybody is equal but the roles are different for professors, students and guest speakers.

LC assumes Student-centered approach: Student = center of educational process discovering theoretical and methodological concepts.
Professors = facilitators, couches or guides.

Guest speakers = resource persons and/or mentors
Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases

A. Warsaw School of Economics 1985: Master Seminar combined with Internship: *Resolving Pollution Problems from Warsaw Steel Mill*:

1. **Organization**: Two-person team
2. **Objectives**: Collecting accurate pollution data => critically assessing => elaborating policy recommendations => completing master thesis => sharing with the residential community through Polish Ecological Club (PKE).
3. **Implementation**: Breaking confidentiality barriers within the Mill in collecting data; student injured by car accident at the Mill – coincident or threat – never explained.
4. **Output**: Team Master Thesis completed; Brief version Report elaborated & disseminated by PKE.
5. **Impacts**: Increased pressure from the local communities on the Mill and Government => Privatized by Luccini, principal change of technology and became the cleanest Mill in Poland in the 1990s
Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases

University of Minnesota (UMN): Humphrey School, Minneapolis, USA 1987 – 2006

Programs/courses:

- The main goal of these programs was providing the knowledge, skills and social competencies necessary to sustain business, public or civic organizations in global competition and create positive sustainable impacts on their organizations, regions or countries.
- Participants: Over 380 graduate students & executives
- Output: Over 100 + 15 projects developed and delivered to SHs.
- Selected Impacts: UMN Waste management System designed & implemented,
- SD Strategy elaborated for a big corporation => VP for Corporation
Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases


Programs/courses:
1. MOC & Competing for Prosperity (CFP) – 40 graduate students (2007-2015)
2. Strategies for Sustainable Development - 20 graduate students (2009-2010)
3. Comparative International Environmental Policies (CIEP) – 30 grad. students (2011-12)

Objective: The main goal of these programs was providing the knowledge, skills and social competencies necessary to sustain business, public or civic organizations in global competition and create sustainable impacts on their organizations, regions or countries.

Participants: 115 graduate students
Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases

University of Washington (UW): Evans School, Seattle, USA (2007-2015) (2)

- **Output**: 25 students completed their MS thesis requirement and with others developed & delivered to SHs over 40 projects.

- **Selected Impacts**: a. **Business Plan on Second-hand Med-equipment Delivery to Developing Countries** => Collins Award => Raised about $1M => Pilot Project implemented in Mozambique;
  - b. Introducing **Congestion Pricing in Seattle Metropolitan Area** => implemented by step-by-step => graduate hired by local gov.
  - c. Growing **biomass for fuels – ethanol or diesel – at WA freeways** => not implemented yet => graduated hired by natural resource department of the State Government.
Innovative Responses: Polish & U.S. Cases

Kozminski University (KU) in Warsaw, Poland 2016 - 2018

Programs/courses:
1. **MOC** for Ph.D. students (2016 & 2018)
2. **Building Sustainable Enterprise** (2017 & 2018)
3. **Economic Competition and Innovation** (2018)

- The main goal of these programs was providing the knowledge, skills and social competencies necessary to sustain business or public organization in global competition and create positive impacts on their organizations, cities, region or countries.
- **Participants**: 50 Ph.D. students, 52 graduate students & 15 undergraduate students.
- **Output/Impact**: 28 projects developed and delivered to stakeholders.
Conclusions (1):

1. The project-based courses for **graduate students** => the best opportunities to **verify their investments** in new HC & SC, build **professional confidence** by elaborating a “Signature Product” showing their **entrepreneurial credentials**, and to follow their **passion** – emotional attachment to the project ‘ idea.

2. For business, public and civic organizations such programs offered **high returns on investment** by getting young dynamic professional reviewing the status, **resolving** their problems and providing fresh & sustainable prospects for their organizations, and potential for **new employment**.
Conclusions (2):

3. These are challenging programs to build initial confidence with business, public and civic partners to conduct collaborative student projects = Action Research <= the academic credentials are very important asset.

4. It is not easy to find dedicated and experiences faculty members who will provide such demanding services => special efforts needed to mobilize such group.

5. Community learning in designing & delivery projects is a great tool for education, as well as effective approach in building sustainable entrepreneurship.
Conclusions (3):

6. **Student-centered** approach boosted **critical thinking** and demonstrated **creativity** associated with the concept of LO in practical cases.

7. Sharing the Action Research results with their SHs at the end of the program/course contributed to **building students responsibilities for quality work** and to **strengthening their professional credentials** within their peers & SHs, and to giving them **opportunities for sharing fruits of their project success** with their communities.
Thank you!

Questions please...