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## **Teaching Futures-Seeking Communicative Policy Process**

### **1. Introduction**

Our way of thinking and our way of perceiving the world and its ways is clearly but frequently furtively rooted in strategic thinking, planning and activity. Our world view guides our way of perceiving the course of development, the overall forces and actors having influence on it. It leads to the perceiving of some things and the non-perception of others.

Behind administrative and planning systems and procedures there is generally some sort of either conscious or unconscious mental model of the nature of development and the factors having influence over it. It does not directly refer to the nature of development as an absolute phenomenon. It arises from experience, education and expectations.

In this article I examine how teaching in regional planning at the Finnish University of Tampere Department of Regional Studies and Environmental Policy provides the students with such views on development and modes of thinking on planning which bound together futures-oriented strategic thinking and interactive communicative policy processes. To ensure that the practical presentation of the teaching has a firm foundation I first survey the ongoing change in policy making procedures with the help of the concepts of government of uncertainty and the governance of ambiguity. The attention is next focussed on futures seeking communicative strategy, which is one form of governance of ambiguity. Finally the practical course in regional planning is presented as an example of both innovative teaching methods and of the combining of policy processes and futures seeking strategic planning.

### **2. Setting the context - towards governance of ambiguity**

#### *Government of uncertainty*

When Finland became a welfare society according to the Nordic ideal the systems of public administration depended on an approach which can be called government of uncertainty. Its roots are to be found in the Age of Enlightenment, which left behind three phenomena which had a profound effect on Western societies; democracy, a belief in reason and a linear conception of time. Simultaneously thoughts arose on the possibility of planning social life, of exert-

ing influence over the future and of controlling it. Alongside this there developed one of the most highly refined arts of the modern West, the art of breaking things down. So skilled are we in this that we frequently forget to put the pieces back together again. Breaking things down relies on the conviction that social problems are 'tame', that they could be delineated, cause and effect identified and explained.

In the government of uncertainty the system became centrally coordinated and sectorized. It was assumed that goals could be clear, or that they could be defined and clarified in the preparatory work preceding the decision-making. In planning attention was paid to the process in which the best possible means were selected by decision-makers using consultation, mathematical models, reports and surveys etc. so that a precisely defined problem could be solved by the best possible means. It was believed that resources would be forthcoming in ever-increasing abundance, thus political attention centred on their allocation. Existing structures and functions were not called into question. In Finland the creation of the welfare society was governed by a rather strong shared vision of a desired future.

In the 1960s and 1970s the creation of the welfare state was not necessarily in practice perceived so much as government of uncertainty than as the administration of the channelling of ever-growing resources for the needs of the welfare state. However, examination of the basic theoretical assumptions in the background shows that planning was a means of eliminating uncertainty from activity, and uncertainty was ultimately seen as lack of knowledge and information. It was believed that development could be kept under control by goals and means derived from scientific deduction. However, as Dryzeck states, planning based on scientific objectivity is virtually impossible because 1) the general laws of society - on which it is believed the strategies of public actors can be based - are difficult to define in a watertight way, they are almost unattainable, 2) social goals are rarely pure and simple. Values are usually open to question, vacillating and many-sided. 3) the intention of actors may override the causal generalizations of the planner. People may simply decide to do things differently. 4) interventions aimed at the course of development cannot be empirically verified without the intervention being realised. (Dryzeck 1993, 218.)

The basic assumptions of government of uncertainty began to crumble in the 1970s and 1980s, but this process has gone even further in the 1990s. The 1990s have seen further emphasis placed on self-guidance, learning, interaction, communication etc. Although Finnish public administration has been taken closer to the new ideals through decentralised power and by emphasising the self-guidance on the one hand and cooperation on the other, the procedures of the government of uncertainty continue to have their effect in structures, processes and attitudes. The rigid attitudes and structures of government of uncertainty persist and cause problems because contemporary problems are the result of several inseparable factors and

their root causes cannot be traced back to individual factors. Many problems are common in one way or another, and no organization has sole power and means to carry through programmes to solve them. In order to really grasp the problems in the late 1990s and in the next century it will be necessary to be able to transcend various institutional, sectorial, territorial and mental borders as barriers.

It has been increasingly emphasized that there are various networks in society, i.e. entities composed of parts which are interdependent. The problem of the programs of centralised and sectorified government of uncertainty lies in the fact that the networks and contemporary wicked issues refuse to be bound by administrative limits. Decisions concerning one network or issue are made in several different organisations, both public and private. Different programmes and decisions may be contradictory because they split various networks without perceiving the whole.

### *Governance of ambiguity*

In the governance of ambiguity the point of departure is not necessarily the search for right answers, as it is in government of uncertainty, but rather how people contending against wicked issues from different sides and perspectives can join forces in the search for new questions and new answers. This entails the admission and recognition that power is shared. Bryson and Crosby (1992,13) describe a world of shared power and define it as “shared capabilities exercised in interaction between or among actors to further achievements of their separate and joint aims”. Actors may in this case be individuals, groups, organizations or institutions. Governance presupposes a striving on the part of those involved to a common understanding in a situation characterised by differences of opinion, different objectives, ignorance, different views of the future and lack of information. The ability for governance implies a tension between conflict and order, and that this tension be put to good use.

Despite this Western policy-making is still commonly perceived as planning procedure in which an effort is made to produce programmes guiding the development for various areas of society. The main tools for bringing influence to bear here are guidance, control and regulation. (Stenvall 1993, 64.) In the governance of ambiguity it is typical that faith in exerting influence on societal development by direct means has diminished, thus governance of ambiguity depends on the interaction of several actors and on a selection of combined indirect and direct means which are not planned in advance by any unit, but as Royall (1993,51) states, modern governance stresses supporting the emergent models. The forces constantly seeking for equilibrium are for most of the time self-sustaining without any need for special attention from public administration, or, as Dunsire (1994, 170) states, the total amount of governance is far greater than the total amount of administration. Thus governance of ambiguity should

not be seen as mere processes of public administration and planning. Leadership, management and planning through increasing interdependence and plurality presuppose the ability to act as part of a cooperation network in the midst of a pluralistic and overlapping field of actors which is no more private than public.

Governance of ambiguity can thus be seen as emerging from socio-political processes on the basis of interaction of relevant actors. Kickert (1993,195) states that in governance it is essential to see that the 'ruler' of the complex systems is not some external third party, an actor bringing to bear influence from above and outside, but the effect of different actors on each other and on themselves. Interaction does not only reflect complexity but also is in itself complex, dynamic and pluralistic. Thus in the old sense models of governance cannot be set up, they live and change with the situations. At the same time the challenge to futures research opens up to understand better than before both the policy processes of the present and their relation to possible futures.

As the government of uncertainty crumbles it would appear that in the 1990s we are moving from centralized, highly coordinated practices towards a more self-guiding, decentralized and pluralistic systems. It may be that we are witnessing the emergence of a system of governance that leads to a multiple overlapping negotiation system between various actors (both in the public and private sector) at different levels. It seems that the only way to cope with the current pace of changes is to accept and benefit from an increasing interplay between various actors at different levels. In this case there is no monolithic centre which exerts extensive governance over factors determining development, and thus formal and hierarchical policy-making no longer has such an important role in the formation of development as it once had. (see Table 1)

Table 1. Characteristics of government of uncertainty and governance of ambiguity (Sotarauta 1996)

	<b>Government of uncertainty</b>	<b>Governance of ambiguity</b>
<i>Development view</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Linearity, predictability and continuity.</li> <li>- Shared world views and conceptions of future</li> <li>- Cause-effect relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evolutionary view of development; complexity, discontinuity, unpredictability</li> <li>- Different world views and diverging conceptions of future</li> <li>- Cause-effect relations blurred over time</li> </ul>
<i>Structure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One dimensional</li> <li>- Centralized integration</li> <li>- Hierarchies</li> <li>- Division into units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multidimensional</li> <li>- Decentralized integration</li> <li>- Networks</li> <li>- Entities and parts</li> </ul>
<i>Governance processes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Top-down</li> <li>- Unilateral dependence</li> <li>- Strong “do-it-alone” dependence principal</li> <li>- State-dependent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Top-down and bottom-up</li> <li>- Multi-dimensional</li> <li>- “Do-it-together” principal emphasized</li> <li>- Dependent internationally, nationally, regionally and locally</li> </ul>
<i>Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal and hierarchical</li> <li>- Separation of planning and implementation</li> <li>- Approaches and analyses based on averages, from rules to exceptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Network management, communicative planning</li> <li>- Planning, decision-making and implementation differences blurred</li> <li>- Approaches and analyses for each situation, from exceptions to rules</li> </ul>

What is interesting in Table 1 is not the new forms and contents of public policy-making themselves, but the fact that the development view is changing, that entirely new qualitative relations are in the making between policy-making and communities. Moreover, the nature of linkages within administration is in a state of change.

As the century draws to a close we are faced with several social problems requiring fresh solutions. At the same time we are faced with the question what blocks intended strategies and visions from being realised, what blocks the desired future from emerging. It may be that the solutions to many of the contemporary social and environmental problems on one hand and success in economic competition on the other hand may not be found as directly as earlier believed in design of creative intended strategies or appealing visions, but in the quality of the processes of decision-making, policy-making, co-operation, knowledge creation etc. The core questions are how human beings are able to agree what is the issue and how to redefine it in order to work together, how to approach the redefined issue, from what direction to approach,

and with what framework approach is possible, and how to be able to create such an approach that empowers relevant actors having some kind of interest in the issue in question to participate in the policy process from their own standpoints.

### **3. Communicative planning as a form of governance of uncertainty**

Governance of ambiguity emphasizes interaction and thus communication. This results in seeking means of understanding and accepting different perspectives and seeking together for meaningful aspects of various issues. Achieving a common understanding may be more fruitful than directly implementing compiled visions. Healey states that in communicative planning knowledge of circumstances, causes and effects and moral values is not only calculation based on a predefined scientific approach, but knowledge is constantly created in the discussion on views, opinions and facts. As Healey holds, communicative planning places great emphasis on the interaction of different actors, and thus it is not, like its predecessors, *planning which defines the future*, rather it *constantly seeks futures*. Its images and metaphors are dependent on both the experience of those participating, on abstract knowledge, understanding and also on technical analysis. The pervading theme of solving problems is pursued through conflicting contentions and the juxtaposing of their reasons. (Healey 1992.)

This then highlights the notion that the claims of planners and analysts should not be accepted as received truths, nor that every claim is as valid as the next one. Various arguments may be rhetorical and intended as a defence of someone's own power and position. (Fischer & Forster 1993, 3.) Likewise various arguments about possible futures may be more part of the political game than objective analyses. It is no longer only a matter of asking what is said, but also of when it is said, to whom, in what manner and how. Throgmorton (1993) actually goes so far as to claim that all planning is rhetorical activity. Various scenarios, analytic methods, questionnaire surveys, computer modelling etc. are not methods of producing objective knowledge, but rather of rhetorical imagery. They yield power of persuasion. They are always aimed at some actors. Likewise all arguments connected with planning are responses to some other arguments.

Communicative planning at its best creates a lasting basis to understand the field of pluralistic values and objectives in which social problems are to be solved. At its worst it is a continuously revolving merry-go-round of talk and does not lead to action. However, in communicative planning, at all events, attention is also paid to discussions, quarrels, confusions, uncertainty, surprises, the real meaning of plans etc., and hence the skillful planner is the one who can identify the points of intersection of the various interest groups' and organizations' visions, goals, and strategies and also the links between the problem at hand and the strategies of the various organizations. The skillful planner is further the one who can extract the crucial

issue from this network and so arrive at achieving something. The main issue is thus not sought only in shared ideals but among ideals, actors' own interests and problem solution and also the calls of the 'common good'.

Simultaneously the basic questions to strategic planning and the essentially related futures research come full circle. Frequently the question behind strategic planning has been 'how to govern and reduce multidimensionality, ambiguity and short-term thinking with the help of strategic planning'. In the governance of ambiguity the question is 'how can multidimensionality, ambiguity and short-term thinking be harnessed to further the futures seeking strategy process'.

#### **4. Changing faces of strategic planning**

Once the basic question behind strategic planning has come full circle, strategy processes as a part of futures research are seen in a new light. Simultaneously there appears the challenging question as to how communicative processes and futures research can be linked together in teaching. This question is important because many studies have shown that in both companies and public administration strategic management does not control decision-making according to the ideals of the rationalistic model. Strategic decision-making is rather described as a political free-for-all with all its negotiations and wrangling of different interest groups (see Mintzberg 1994).

In the Finnish policy-making in the 1990s the emphasis has been on partnership, cooperation and coordination. The new thinking has carried the activities of Finnish public administration in the direction of governance of ambiguity. There is still some way to go. Despite the emphasis on interaction, behind the new modes of action the view of the role and task of strategic planning is *classical* (see e.g. Bryson 1988). This culminates in stressing the forming of a vision, setting goals, seeking focal points, analysing threats and opportunities, evaluating the environment, formal planning processes, programme documents. However, it can be said that classical strategic planning is a contemporary version of instrumental rationalism rooted planning (see Sager 1994). In practice in the public policy-making the issue is always also that of cooperation, discussion, quarreling, confusions, uncertainty, ambiguity, surprises, plans left on the shelf... If the classical view is overemphasized there exists the danger that a great planning machine will come into being whose main products are development programmes but not action. Plans formerly relegated to the shelf were full of details, now there is a danger that they will be full of visions, SWOT analyses and strategies.

Finland in the 1990s is in any case becoming inundated with strategic development programs. Modes of thinking and acting originally developed in the USA corporate sector have been ar-

iving in Finnish policy-making. In the 1980s it was the words and concepts which came, but modes of action did not actually change as much as vocabulary. Only in the 1990s did real strategic thinking and planning have the necessary conditions to take root in activity.

Strategic planning, however, has not turned out to be such an efficient producer of success as the handbooks and consultants indicated. At times it has been difficult to shape that very own, unique comparative advantage, scenarios have remained at too general a level divorced from action, SWOT analyses have been augmented by many important matters without an awareness of what was to be done with them. Strategic programs have frequently not progressed beyond the general level, simplicistically put, it has been decided in these “to support all that is nice and beautiful and to avoid all that is nasty”. Thus with good will almost all activity can be interpreted as supporting strategy or going over the lines depending on the perspective and goals of whoever is making the interpretation. This means that intended strategies are everybody’s and nobody’s. For this reason they do not embed themselves in the actions of the organizations. Strategies easily remain floating, they continue to be paper among more paper. The credibility of the main tenets of classic strategic planning is also undermined by the fact that very frequently in strategic planning existing and incipient patterns are recognized, to be legitimized with the help of strategic planning (see Sotarauta 1996; Sotarauta & Linnamaa 1997.)

Sometimes all unfinished business is compiled into strategy papers and futures oriented strategies have been implemented in a year. And, after all, when the time to make decisions comes, the strategy papers have been forgotten, the world has changed, “and now is not the time to make strategies, now is the time to balance next year’s budget.”

The brief introduction to fallacies of strategic planning given above is pessimistic, cynical but above all it is one-sided and narrow, partly wrong. Strategic planning has not produced only failure. It has caused actors to take a broader view of things from different perspectives; greater and more profound consideration than before has been given to futures; actors have recognized their own strengths and weaknesses and learned to understand them better; excessive preoccupation with detail has been avoided; sectoral boundaries have been transcended; activities have been pursued consistently and persistently etc.

Strategic planning as a part of policy-making is like human life itself - some good, some bad - and always plenty to learn.

Attempts to eliminate the problems of strategic planning have generally been made through developing new methods which take better account of the future, by making better analyses,

by being more creative, by refining reports, by committing better to the program development. The root of the trouble, however, is that:

policy makers' and politicians' ways of understanding themselves and their operations seem not to have changed as much as the general policy environment. Their view of policy-making is still dominated by rational planning models, models that draw on product, accomplishment, and goal-oriented approaches that operate within means-end structured problems, i.e. within instrumental rationalism.

the thought and strategic planning models developed for the private sector are not directly applicable to public purposes.

As such classical strategic planning do not suit the world of shared power, political game going on within policy-making in which there are no turns for making moves, in which teams and combinations change in the course of the game, and in which the difference between opponent and team-mate is fine indeed. The game requires the understanding of the logic of a pluralistic and multi-objective dynamic network. It requires the adoption of governance of ambiguity and understanding of the nature of interactive strategy processes.

The classical strategic planning in general use in Finnish public administration, with its visions, scenarios, strategic analyses and strategic goals is a shade too clearcut and bound as an approach. The problem is that strategic planning has been too narrowly understood. The focus has too often been on only a few core issues. All too often the focus is on *what is the desired future, what is to be done and in what situation*. Thus it happens that questions like *who will do it, how will it be done* and what is the quality of the process like, are neglected. New focus presupposes good quality processes, it presupposes soft strategy

Soft strategy recognises that we are always managing interorganisational and communicative processes and flux rather than stability defining the order of things, and therefore strategy cannot be merely a classical planning procedure. Strategy formulation, an artful design, is only a minor part of the overall strategy process, and intended strategies are always only abstractions in our minds, and in most of the cases they are focused on some other actor in the field. At the same time it is acknowledged that the visions, aims and strategies of other organisations do not necessarily resemble those of one's own organisation, and thus policy-making process is an art of reconciling and balancing a variety of goals and interests both within and cross organisations. The stand taken behind soft strategies is communicative, open and flexible. In this view soft strategies are not plans to rewrite, not plans to implement as such, but overall processes that provide decision-makers with strategic consciousness and a way to mirror single decisions and actions in proportion to both present situation, future and environment. (see Sotarauta 1995,1996 and 1997)

Even if the communicative process, and its quality is stressed, intended strategies are still needed. They provide the framework to continuously seek consistency in action, not only in classical tradition, but in an argumentative carousel.

## **5. Transforming theory into teaching**

### **Point of departure for teaching and overall objectives**

As stated initially, our way of thinking, our way of perceiving the world and its ways are frequently but furtively guided by a background of strategic thinking, planning and action. Organizations drawing on too rigid perceptions easily develop a surface tension below which the talk is only of matters within the dominant strategy. Nothing new arises, nothing is questioned. Silence reigns in the organization.

One of the purposes of communicative planning is to break the silence, make the surface tension tremble, break it, and to create chances for new issues to break through. In the training of leaders, planners etc. already active in practical working life the instructor's primary task is to provide such impulses which will bring about a rupture of the inculcated modes of thinking so that new modes of thought can be transformed into actions. With 'new' students the situation is different. They have not yet had time to evolve their own strong thinking model, their own view of planning and the surface tensions which maintain these has not yet been developed. The development is under way, and the task of education is to help students to evolve supple modes of thinking which leave room for continuous learning and for the recognition and acceptance of other, different modes of thinking.

In the 1990s the great challenge for teaching has become the linking together of the sometimes very rough communicative processes and sometimes rather idealistic strategic planning 'in search of a better world'. The following shows how this was attempted in teaching in futures-seeking regional development policy process in the University of Tampere, Department of Regional Studies and Environmental Policy, "On a practical course in regional planning".

On a general level the University's courses in Regional Studies can be divided into those which disseminate knowledge and those which teach skills. The former type includes courses on regional development and theory and practice of planning. Research skills are taught on the particularly extensive course on research methods, but planning skills have formerly been included in courses with a bias towards disseminating knowledge. In 1995 a new course was introduced<sup>1</sup> by which it was possible to extend teaching skills to cover strategic planning and regional development. When the course was planned the objective was to achieve a new kind of pedagogical entity through which it would be possible to combine better than before on the

one hand theoretical and practical aspects and on the other hand focus better on learning by doing. nutshell. In nutshell the course is as follows:

*Focus of course content*

Strategic planning in promotion of regional development, the overall frame of reference being EU regional policy and its Finnish application. Special attention to be paid to regional and local strategy processes

*Guiding idea of the course*

to practice those skills needed in communicative strategic planning and to enhance knowledge of practical strategic planning on the principle of 'learning by doing'.

*Course objectives*

to enhance students' conception of contemporary futures oriented strategic planning by combining theory and practice through activity  
to familiarize students with practical planning situations  
to familiarize students with methodology in strategic planning and futures research, and communicative planning

*Skills to be practiced*

evaluating and analysing foreign and Finnish strategic development programs  
compiling different types of strategic planning approaches, working methods and techniques of strategic planning  
oral and written presentation, working and discussing in groups, presenting multi-dimensionally and illustratively  
survival in communicative processes

One core idea on the course is to familiarize students with the working rhythm of the contemporary planner. For this reason several fast-moving practical tasks are accomplished. Practical assignments are done both individually and in groups. However, individual assignments are always done as part of a group and they are included as part of a group effort. Although the course is by nature biased towards learning by doing, there are also lectures. These, however, are brief and only raise various themes, thus the lectures are intended to be thought-provoking to support and direct the accomplishing of practical assignments, to offer an exposition of the theme to be addressed rather than to 'teach' it in its entirety.

The practical course in regional planning falls into three phases. In the first of these students are introduced to the 'shop front' of promotion of regional development, i.e. the formal aspects of it and of strategic planning related to it. In addition to the institutional structure the part of planning which is visible on the outside, development programs, is examined. The objective of the second phase is to get behind the scenes, i.e. to learn to understand how plans live, change and develop in communicative policy processes, what goes on in the fields. Thus the general objective of the second phase is to identify the nature of games. In the third phase students enhance their knowledge and skills in groups on separately chosen themes. The ob-

jective of the third phase is to collect together the observations made in the earlier phases and to enhance skills in a separately selected themes related to futures-seeking strategy processes.

## 6. Conclusions

In the mid 1990s the meaning of strategic planning and futures research in Finnish public administration in general and in regional and local development has been characterized by many changes. It may be stated as a generalization that all the municipalities of Finland and the regions have made their own strategies. In addition more and more of them have been using scenario planning to support their strategy work. Simultaneously great differences can be discerned between different regions and municipalities both in the quality of output and above all in significance to activity. As a further generalization it may be stated that if the preparation of strategies and scenarios has been a narrow performance led by holders of official posts, then the meaning of these is likewise narrow. However, if sufficient time has been devoted to the process and if sufficiently extensive and open discussions have been held, then contemplation of the future has at least had an indirect bearing on policy-making and decision-making. The process has had direct effects and the output itself has generally had an indirect effect.

On the basis of my research on strategic planning at regional and local levels the logic of combining futures-seeking development and policy processes can be summarized as follows:

- 1) *Discuss at sufficient length* - i.e. discuss the basic issues of development with various parties taking different perspectives into account. This is not only a 'one-off' part of planning, rather, in order to ensure a really effective discussion it should be constantly ongoing in one form or another.
- 2) Only after sufficient communication can a *realization* come to light in a wide range of actors as to which themes are current from the point of view of regional development and future.
- 3) Only personal realization can lead to a matter being truly *grasped*. This is essential if strategies are to become part of the actors' 'spinal cords' and not merely flourish on paper and in ceremonial speeches.
- 4) Real *commitment* can only follow after sufficient communication, personal realization and grasping of the issue.

Such a process is no linear planning process progressing from planning to decision-making, from decision-making to implementation and from implementation to evaluation and so to a new round of planning; it is a continuous communicative process in which different elements dovetail into one another in many different ways.

It is my opinion that in a network society the need for a communicative approach is constantly increasing and as Forester (1993) states we need a critical pragmatism, pragmatics with vision, and planning can no longer be seen as technical problem solving, but, as he states, planning can be seen as a questioning and shaping of attention, and organising it. One of the key-

problems of today is that key-actors are not trained or experienced in dealing with such soft questions. There is a need to redirect the focus because the current policy thinking is dominated by the classical strategic planning models, that are not adequate in collaborative forms of policy-making. Policy-makers do not know how to handle communicative processes and sometimes elusive quality. Thus, our aim has been to reduce this gap between contemporary needs and education by bringing sometimes confusing policy-processes into teaching too.

Student feedback on these efforts has been very positive. Students are interested in the new modes of working. They believe that things are retained better in memory if they do them hands-on instead of just listening to a lecturer. The hands-on approach has long been a core issue in teaching regional studies at the University of Tampere, and the course presented in this article has introduced new modes of working and a view which connects future and processes more firmly.

Despite the positive student feedback, the early stages of the course are not easy. Students are accustomed to being confronted with readymade facts and models, after which comes practise. On this course students are only introduced to issues and then they are practised hands-on. A typical student comment at the beginning of the course is “how can we do this task when the matter has not yet been properly taught to us?” Only at the end of the course the pieces begin to fall into place for the students.

The way of teaching the course and its relation to conventional teaching can be illustrated through an analogy with teaching people to swim.

If one were to set about teaching people to swim using conventional university teaching methods there would first be lectures on the history of swimming, the different schools of thought and the basics of the principle swimming techniques. Next there might even be video of swimming to show the students what swimming looks like. Given sufficient financial resources there might even be a study trip to the beach to see swimmers and the students could try for themselves what the water feels like. At the end of the course the students would be given a certificate stating that they has successfully completed the Basic Course in Swimming. But would they be able to swim? I doubt it.

If we were to set about teaching the students to swim according to the principles of the courses introduced above there would first be a few lectures to arouse students’ interest in swimming, its importance would be discussed etc. Students would further be advised that to stay at the surface the arms and legs should be moved in a certain way. Next the class would be thrown in at the deep end. The teachers would go in after them, give advice and show an example, support and encourage, but the swimming would be the result of the students’ own

perceptions and realizations. The teachers' task is to pilot them in the direction of that realization and give them something to build on. What is essential in this type of teaching is that theory is brought as near as possible to practice through the support of the teacher in the closest possible student-teacher and student-student interaction. Would the students be able to swim after such a course? Perhaps? At least they would stand a better chance after the course.

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<sup>i</sup> It was planned by Torsti Hyyryläinen and Markku Sotara