

**TITLE:**

Co-creation of a complex post-graduate curriculum by academics and practitioners - a case study

**THEME:**

Permanent Study Group IX: Teaching Public Administration

**AUTHOR:**

Dr Katalin Pallai, associate professor, director of the Integrity advisor post-graduate program, National University for Public Service, Hungary (katalin@pallai.hu)

**ABSTRACT**

It has been widely discussed in recent years that in face of complexity and rapid change, traditional role models for public managers become inadequate and positivist analytic frames have serious limitations. One important claim is that public managers' capacity for reflexivity plays an important role in the new context where not only new techniques are needed but a substantive reconsideration of the role and approach of public service is also necessary. During the last 5 years, the Teaching Public Administration journal (TPA) published three Special Issue on this theme. Contributing authors discussed both positivist and post-positivist concepts and approaches to public administration education and practice. Many authors presented new teaching methods that may help students to become more reflective and reflexive – two qualities that potentially strengthens the capacity of senior civil servants to lead change processes in their organizations. Although many articles mention that for the implementation of the new teaching methods educators need to possess different competencies than the ones necessary for traditional forms of academic education, it is a blind spot in the discussion how educators could be educated and how their competence to lead the new type of dialogic learning processes could be developed. In my paper, through the presentation of my experience in a post-graduate program, I would like to contribute to the collection of new teaching methods already published in TPA and to filling this blind spot on the education of educators with the method that I implemented. Beside this key objective, my paper may also contribute to two additional themes within the dialogue initiated by TPA: the implementation of an interactive dialogic method for the education of reflexivity and post-positivist inquiry and the use of real life experiences in the education process of mid-career civil servants.

*Keywords:* integrity education, transformative education, anticorruption education, dialogic process, collaborative curriculum development,

Introduction.....	3
Connecting relevant ideas in education and integrity theory.....	5
Positivist and post- positivist approaches to anti-corruption and executive education .....	5
Developing reflexivity in education .....	6
Transdisciplinarity and cognitive flexibility .....	7
Using real life experiences in the learning process .....	8
Dialogic education and interactive learning process .....	9
Educators who can facilitate the dialogic learning process .....	10
A transdisciplinary, dialogic approach to curriculum development and teaching .....	11
The context and challenge .....	12
The curriculum development concept .....	13
The Faculty Lab – a space for dialogue on method and curriculum .....	14
The story of the Faculty lab process .....	18
Educating faculty to facilitate dialogic learning process .....	19
Conclusions .....	20
References .....	20

## Permanent Study Group IX: Teaching Public Administration

# Co-creation of a complex post-graduate curriculum and education process by academics and practitioners<sup>1</sup> - case study

by Katalin Pallai<sup>2</sup>

### Introduction

During the last decade, numerous books and journal articles have discussed the consequences of globalization and the global economic crisis on public administration, and the consequent challenges that civil servants face. They discuss how the changes in the context urged public sector leaders and managers to reconsider the roles they should play and to find new approaches to respond to the increasing speed of change and increasing levels of complexity. The same processes urged educators of mid-career programs to reconsider teaching method and curriculum.

In public administration theory, the claim emerged, that in face of complexity and rapid change, traditional role models for public managers have become inadequate and positivist analytic frames have serious limitations. Many scholars argued for the need for a “paradigm shift in terms of how we think about and conceptualise the role of the public service professional... within their organisations” (Ahmad et al 2013: 3) and for the need to search for new approaches and new competences. One

---

<sup>1</sup> „The work was created in commission of the National University of Public Service under the priority project KÖFOP-2.1.2-VEKOP-15-2016-00001 titled „Public Service Development Establishing Good Governance” in the Miklós Zrínyi Habilitation Program.”

<sup>2</sup> associate professor, director of the post-graduate program for public integrity advisors at the National University for Public Service, Hungary, [katalin@pallai.hu](mailto:katalin@pallai.hu)

important claim is that public managers' capacity for reflexivity<sup>3</sup> plays an important role in the new context where not only new techniques are needed but a substantive reconsideration of the principles and approach is also necessary.

In 2013 the Teaching Public Administration journal (TPA) published a Special Issue on this theme. In the introduction, the editors argued that managers' need to "understand and uncover the basis of the assumptions of both their own practice and that of the policies that they are involved in implementing." (Ahmed et al 2013:3) and reconstruct the operating system. Contributing authors discussed both positivist and post-positivist concepts and approaches to public administration education and practice.

The 2016 Special issue of TPA continued the discussion of this theme. It explored implications of the contextual changes to the nexus of research and practice. In this issue many contributors presented why and how they integrate the experience of participants in course content offering learners a practice-oriented reflection and reflexion in the safe environment of the classroom.

The theme of the 2017 special issue of TPA was Reflexivity in executive education. Authors presented new teaching methods that may help students to become more reflective and reflexive – two qualities that potentially strengthens the capacity of senior civil servants to lead change processes in their organizations. Although many articles mention that for the implementation of the new teaching methods educators need to possess different competencies than the ones necessary for traditional forms of academic education, it is a blind spot in the discussion how educators could be educated and how their competence to lead the new type of dialogic learning processes could be developed. (van der Steen et al 2016; Newswander-Newswander 2016; Sandfort 2016; Alford-Brock 2013; Meer and Marks 2013)

In my paper, through the presentation of my experience in a post-graduate program, I would like to contribute to the collection of new teaching methods already published in TPA and to filling this blind spot on the education of educators with the method that I implemented.

I present my experience in a post-graduate, mid-career public administration program, developed at the National University for Public Service (NUPS) in Hungary. The aim of the mid-career post-graduate program is to train anticorruption professionals, called integrity advisors, who will work in public organizations on enhancing organizational integrity. Integrity development/management is a holistic approach. Its main tenet is that the organizational rules and values need to be changed with complex strategies so as they support each other. Therefore, integrity strategies should target not only the hard elements of the internal control system but the values, principles and commitments that lead people in their decisions and actions. The integrity advisors who we educate are responsible for advising the head of the organization in initiating complex processes of organizational change that can deconstruct rules and values that support the integrity breaching practices. In our

---

<sup>3</sup> Reflexivity is the systematic exploration of 'unthought categories of thought that delimit the thinkable and predetermine the thought' (Bourdieu 1990: 178).

program, we train integrity advisors to support and facilitate these complex change processes.

The program I will discuss is implemented in Hungary, in a corruption tolerant country, where corrupt and integrity breaching practices became the worst type of wicked problems. (Pallai 2017) Thus, my starting point is not the rapid change produced by globalisation and the financial crisis, but an equally complex challenge: fighting corruption and extractive practices in the public administration of a corruption tolerant environment where not only material interests but social incentives, deeply rooted practices and widely accepted narratives also support the corrupt practices. Nevertheless, the challenge is similar to the one faced by those managers whose challenges have been discussed in the above-mentioned publications. In order to reconstruct rules and values of their organizations, beyond the use of simple positivist instruments, integrity advisors need to initiate complex change processes based on contextual analysis and action strategies. For this, on the one hand, they need to “understand and uncover the basis of the assumptions of both their own practice and that of the policies that they are involved in implementing.” (Ahmed et al 2013:3) On the other hand, they need to be able to involve the members of their organizations in collective processes of reconsideration and reconstruction of personal commitments and modes of operation. (Pallai 2016) This is how my experience may have relevance to the discussion on the reflexivity education of public managers and the application of post-positivist approaches.

There are three themes in the inquiry to which my experience may contribute: the implementation of a dialogic method for the education of reflexivity, the use of real life experiences in the education process of mid-career civil servants and the education of educators to new approaches.

## Connecting relevant ideas in education and integrity theory

Before discussing my experience in Hungary, I would like to connect some ideas from the theory of education with ideas from anticorruption and public integrity theory. These connections will be important to understand the experience I present in the second part of the paper and to see its relevance to the wider topic of teaching public administration.

### Positivist and post-positivist approaches to anti-corruption and executive education

The most widely educated and applied concepts and methods for corruption analysis and prevention are the positivist models. Each of these models capture one distinct aspect of the complex corruption phenomenon, and can support policy proposals that moderate the rational incentives connected to that aspect. Critics have identified multiple weaknesses of an exclusively positivist approach to tackling complex corruption phenomena and argued for the need for post-positivist contextual analysis

and for intervention processes that can lead to better fit between political will and contextual energies. (de Graaf 2007; Tänzler 2007; Pallai 2017) Scholars propagating the need for post-positivist, argumentative methods in anticorruption argue that the concept of corruption and integrity and the receptiveness and dispositions of stakeholders that lead to corruption are socially constructed. Consequently, in order to find effective remedies we need “to reconstruct the strategies people use to define, legitimise, apologise for, criticise or condemn corruption”. (Tänzler 2007:10) The construction of appropriate measures need to start with a process that cannot only reveal material incentives but can also render explicit the underlying assumptions and unthought structures that frame the local context. (de Graaf et al 2011: 113) They also argue that this process of “critical reflection must be a social act of collective empowerment” (Gray 2007: 497) For both processes, for the contextual inquiry and for leading collective change processes, public managers need reflexivity: self-reflexivity and critical reflexivity.<sup>4</sup> (Cunliffe-jun: 2005 : 239)

This is the same starting point and logic as that of the scholars mentioned above who argued for the need for post-positivist argumentative and interpretative approaches in the praxis and education of civil servants. (Cunliffe-Jun 2005; van der Steen et al 2016) and for the education of reflexivity in executive programs. (Quinn 2013; Broussine-Ahmad 2013; Synnott 2013) The key argument behind the education self- and critical reflexivity was that understanding of social construction processes and develop civil servants responsiveness to change and their ability to understand and manage that change. (Quinn 2013: 8)

## Developing reflexivity in education

Many scholars both from the field of public administration and anticorruption refer to Bourdieu for definition of reflexivity as a starting point: “systematic exploration of unthought categories of thought that delimit the thinkable and predetermine the thought”. (Bourdieu cited by Quinn 2013:11; de Graaf 2007) This competence obviously does not belong to the competence set of civil servants in the traditional positivist concept of public administration. In the rational paradigm, the civil servant is a technocrat who makes rational decisions based on means-to-ends rationality and calculative problem solving. The risk in this is that in times of change or moral decline “a lack of reflexivity turns individuals into uncritical functionaries carrying out the routine work of a rigid bureaucracy” void of moral considerations and actions. (Cunliffe-Jun 2005: 234)

The education of post-positivist concepts and reflexivity help students to grasp multiple drivers of complex process, and even the drivers beyond the rationalistic motivations and incentives. They draw students’ attention to “the construction of social and organizational realities, how we relate with others, and how we construct

---

<sup>4</sup> Self-reflexivity that helps to „move beyond the habitual act and see how to act with intention, will and moral responsibility” and critical reflexivity „to examine how processes and practices contribute to dehumanizing organizational life and how to redesign them to pleasing and meaningful” (Cunliffe-Jun 2005)

our ways of being in the world. By doing so, we can become more creative, responsive, and open to different ways of thinking and acting.” (Cunliffe-Jun 2005: 228) Reflexivity is key to responsible action in complex situations and to collaborative action with others.

The education of reflexivity shows students the need to question our natural and often taken-for-granted attitudes such as our prejudice, bias, thought, and habits.” (Cunliffe-Jun 2005: 226) As such, it is a first step to understand and influence others and social processes within organizations. That is, to understand everything that matters beyond material incentives. If we understand the social construction of reality, it impacts our own practices and ways of relating to others. (Cunliffe-Jun 2005: 230) It also makes public managers more ethical and cooperative and help them to recognize their ability to act and change those realities. In the case of anticorruption, reflexivity is needed to reveal the tacit assumptions and norms that make extractive strategies possible in the given context and it is also needed for devising strategies to initiate engaged collective processes that can deconstruct and dismantle the integrity breaching practices.

### Transdisciplinarity and cognitive flexibility

The logical consequence of the recognition of the importance of post-positivist concepts – the “argumentative turn” – led to a widening theoretical base of public administration, and a shift towards transdisciplinary approaches. The transdisciplinary inquiry transcends disciplinary approaches in order to address the wholeness of the complex problems from multiple perspectives and to understand the interlinkages and interdependencies of its components. (van der Waldt 2014: 174) For the application of this approach, not only the understanding of multiple epistemologies is necessary but cognitive flexibility as well. That is, “being able to hold incommensurables together in one’s mind and allowing the tension generated between them to stand” (McSwite 2001: 114). This is a very different state of mind than the reassuring belief in objectivity and the existence of one truth that underpin positivist disciplines. It may create intellectual discomfort for the ones accustomed to disciplinary approaches. At the same time, if achieved, cognitive flexibility offers the capacity to make sense of and deal with the diverse drivers of a given situation and lead to creativity and “experimental attitude toward action” that is necessary in face of contemporary challenges. (McSwite 2001: 112)

TPA authors argued that for developing adults cognitive flexibility educators need to thoughtfully integrate various disciplinary perspectives into the discussions in the classroom and generate a learning process where students can experiment with various approaches on complex cases. (van der Waldt 2014; Sten et al 2016) “The result of such efforts would be a new generation of flexible civil servants uniquely prepared for the complexity of the real-life problems that will face them after graduation.” (Newswander- Newswander 2016: 286)

While the objectives of teaching transdisciplinary analysis and developing students’ cognitive flexibility are desirable authors propagating the need for transdisciplinary

inquiry and cognitive flexibility also identify major roadblocks to their implementation. The first roadblock is that the academic environment operates in a disciplinary logic. The interdisciplinary community can become isolated from the rest of the scientific fraternity. (van der Waldt 2014: 176). The second road block is the competence of faculty members. "Often individuals are not aware of their epistemological beliefs". (Newswander- Newswander 2016: 296) They consider their paradigms as the only true one. Instructors are not necessarily trained in interdisciplinary thinking and not aware of their biases either. In order to be able "to recognize and properly appreciate that different ways of knowing exist, ...[one] must learn enough about them to respect them and ask appropriate questions." (Newswander- Newswander 2016: 296) It is important to see that in order to offer transdisciplinary education not only students need to be educated. Educators also need to be introduced to transdisciplinary thinking and need to gain a broader generalist perspective that allows them to see issues in their wholeness and complexity. In the second part of this paper, when I present my experience, I will tell the story of the sinuous process we had to go through to achieve a transdisciplinary approach and methods to the field we all had known from different professional and theoretical perspectives but intended to teach with a new transdisciplinary approach. The key message from the case and my proposition is that for educating transdisciplinary approach to a specific professional field (integrity management in my case) the process that prepares content and faculty need to be carefully planned and may take a lot of effort and relatively long time. Much more effort than organizing a traditional academic program.

### Using real life experiences in the learning process

The positivist case study method uses didactically designed cases. They give "methodologically sound but highly simplified accounts of reality, which then form the basis for discussions about the profession of public administration and its processes. (Steen et al 2016: 2) This didactical format is excellent to apply newly acquired disciplinary concepts for problem solving. This may be an adequate objective for bachelor and masters education but it is less relevant for education practitioners who confront complexity and ambiguity in their daily reality. This is why many scholars argue that real life experiences, that are complex, messy and trigger ambivalence, should be introduced into the mid-career education process. (van der Steen et al 20016) Mid-career students have incredible resources that can be mobilized. When they are allowed to take their real world challenges into the learning space "the classroom becomes a social and temporal space for participants to share knowledge with fellow students. Literally, it is a time and place to learn, set apart from the everyday routines of the work floor, but at the same time closely related to the dynamics of practice." (van der Steen et al 20016: 5) Through the discussion, not only problem owners are helped in better understanding the situation, redefine problems and see a new range of options but other participants equally learn from the process. The real life cases lead to "situated, engaged, relational, material-discursive practices" in education (Keevers and Treleaven, 2011: 506).

## Dialogic education and interactive learning process

There is one common characteristic among the new elements mentioned up till now, transdisciplinary inquiry, building cognitive flexibility and reflexivity and work with real life cases: all these processes need to happen in dialogue and none of them can be educated with traditional format of frontal education. Not a traditional teacher-centred but a student-centred teaching method is necessary for these processes. The lecturer's role is not the expert who transfers hegemonic information controlling content, speed and order of the process but a process facilitator who actively engages students in discussion. The consequence of student engagement is that "the teacher has less control over what happens in the classroom, having to share that power with the students, with the result that what happens in class is less structured and therefore less predictable." (Alford-Brock 2013: 147) At the same time, although the teacher has a special role in bringing in knowledge blocks, concepts and structuring and leading the learning process when necessary, this is a social construction of new knowledge that brings the benefit that students take the results as their own to a much higher degree than the content of the traditional "downloaded" lectures.

This is a constructivist educational approach where not only dialogue but interaction also has a different meaning than in a traditional format. Simple question and answer, or simplified problem solving that has obvious good and bad responses are not important. Interaction means that "participants are co-developers of their learning process. The lecturer safeguards the process, but at the same time should leave it open enough for significant co-ownership by participants." (Steen et al 2016: 10-11) The fact that the learning process is less controlled and predictable does not imply that the interactive dialogic learning process is not planned and structured. The teacher need to have a concept, predefined themes and objectives and prepare for presenting or summarizing the new concepts and some blocks of relevant knowledge. At the same time he/she leaves "plenty of room – in terms of time, space and intellectually – for new ideas to emerge and for participants to explore paths that arise unexpectedly." (Steen et al 2016: 14) It is also the teachers' role to safeguard that discussions need to go beyond an exchange of personal experiences and anecdotes and a link with theory, concepts or other inputs that lecturers and faculty consider appropriate and helpful for the group" are integrated in the learning process. (Steen et al 2016: 14)

There are clear reasons why are such learning processes effective. "Self-efficacy is one of these: the fact that students feel they have some control over the process, and that therefore it has at least the potential to connect with their own interests rather than the alien ones that the traditional lecturer might be imposing. Mutuality is another: to the extent that the teacher offers contributions in a mutually respectful or inviting way, the student is more likely to reciprocate." (Alford-Brock 2013: 147)

Beyond the effectiveness of involving students in the learning process and establishing substantial interaction among peers and the instructor and students, there are additional benefits of the method. The experience in being an active and constructive member of the learning community that emerges in the classroom and a

contributor to the co-creation of the learning product has important impact on the personal development of students. Such experiences “generate an identity in students of themselves as a leader, an agent capable of exerting energy and engaging others to solve public problems. (Sandford 2016: 5) The process, where knowledge actively constructed by students and not passively received, and an active community of learning and practice forms, gives students a positive experience of democracy. The group builds into “a trusting community of praxis that provides a positive experience of democracy, with all of its complexity” (Sandford 2016: 7) The community of praxis can survive after the education. It often does and continues to support members in their daily struggles. This is a fact that many authors report and I also see in my experience.

In sum, the dialogic method of interactive education is more than cognitive knowledge transfer. It is a complex experience of social construction that creates a deeper relation to the new knowledge, insights and competencies, and among peers, and impacts not only knowledge but attitude, behaviour and personality. In the case I will present it plays a crucial role in preparing integrity advisors for their new roles. Offering opportunity to step out from the limiting socialization they gained in strictly hierarchic, legalistic organizations, gain a valid experience of a collaborative process and space is for many a transformative experience. This experience is a key part of the process of building integrity advisors’ capacity to become agents of organizational change.

### Educators who can facilitate the dialogic learning process

Up till this point I wrote about the potential benefit of a transdisciplinary, dialogic approach to educating mid-career civil servants and integrating their experience in the learning process. There are many great cases when such approaches produced high level of satisfaction among participants and equally high level of effectiveness. (Steen et al 2016; Sandfort 2016; Alford-Brock 2013; Olfield 2015) At the same time, we need to see that initiating such a different learning process carries risks. Its effectiveness depends only partly on the good concept, an equally important part of the success is the competence of faculty to facilitate such a learning process. Relatively few knowledgeable academic and professional experts are equally experienced facilitators. Facilitating a dialogic approach to education is a different challenge than the traditional lecturing mode that most faculty members are accustomed to.

In the dialogic learning process a learning community is created. Initiating the community building is the role of the teacher. (Sanford et al 2016:2) For this, instead of down loading academic concepts and introducing students to paradigms and method, the teacher need to facilitate a learning process. The teacher need to have a predetermined theme and knowledge blocks and concepts prepared for explanation but remain open when and how to present them because the most important learning emerges from students’ wrestling with the theme or with the complexities of a particular case, with more or less gentle guidance on the part of the teacher. (Alford-Brock 2013: 149) Knowledge blocks and explanations of concepts or methods need to be inserted and adjusted to this learning journey.

If a teacher want to develop students capacity for dealing with complex problems and processes the best way is to use the learning process to give an experience of such a process of collective inquiry and decision-making. This cannot be demonstrated through strict control of the process, but through creating “a ‘teaching presence” that models what we are trying to teach – engagement with others, mastery of content, openness to the unexpected, and reflective practice – engaging ourselves in a learning process of action and reflection” (Sanford 2016: 7)

In order to be able to fulfil this leading and facilitating role in the dialogic learning process teachers need to have two different kind of competences. One is a broad understanding of the theme, its practice and the concepts and knowledge from the respective fields. They also need to have the proficiency to present the key concepts in a manner connected to the evolving discussion. The second competence is to “serve the role of warden by overseeing and safeguarding the quality of content produced, and ensuring that discussions lead to concrete results, applicable insights, a workable methodology or towards new repertoires for action. However, the role of the lecturer as warden also needs to take into account that participants are co-developers of their learning process. The lecturer safeguards the process, but at the same time should leave it open enough for significant co-ownership by participants.” (Steen et al 2016: 10-11)

The Faculty lab method that I will present on the following pages is an attempt to prepare faculty for developing faculty’s competence to facilitate dialogic education and prepare them for these two specific roles: having big picture, comprehensive insight and a broad set of conceptual underpinnings, and an attitude to involve, share and guide.

## A transdisciplinary, dialogic approach to curriculum development and teaching

I want to contribute to the evolving discussion on how to teach civil servants to deal with complex challenges and to facilitate complex change processes by presenting my experience in developing and directing a program that trains public integrity<sup>5</sup> advisors<sup>6</sup> for Hungarian public organizations. This is a one-year long, mid-career

---

<sup>5</sup> Public integrity is a complex field of activity systemic intervention in public administration in order to strengthen its integrity and prevent corruption. In order to achieve this objective public integrity management is a holistic approach, that aims to develop value and rules in a concerted manner. “Integrity management can be seen as a complex and never-ending balancing exercise between the rules-based and the values-based approaches” (OECD 2009, p. 14)

<sup>6</sup> The position of the integrity advisor was legislated in 2013 (50/2013. government ordinance) as an attempt to create a new and effective anticorruption agent within each Hungarian public organization. Integrity advisors on the one hand have a list of tasks, like risk analysis, intervention planning, whistle

program for experienced civil servants whose job will be to advise the leadership of their organizations on preventing corruption and assuring that operation of the organization is adequately serving the public interest. The key component of the job is to coordinate and support an integrated risk management process and to facilitate organizational change processes where necessary.

Integrity management is a complex organizational development activity by its nature. When implemented in a corruption tolerant culture, like the context in Hungary, integrity developers face the “most challenging kinds” of wicked problems: complex patterns of corruption, legitimizing narratives and the resulting culture of personal loyalties where honest stakeholders often become confused and paralyzed. In such an environment, traditional positivist public policy instruments are not sufficient to curb corruption and turn around destructive processes. A complex transformative process is necessary that is composed of positivist technical instruments and such collective reflective and reflexive processes that lead to the reconstruction of values and commitments of stakeholders. (Pallai 2016)

Below first, I give a very short insight into the key features of the context and the concept and objectives of the curriculum development and the education process. Then I describe the operating model of our program: the Faculty Labs where the curriculum development happens. At the end, I will also give some indicative evidence of the results.

## The context and challenge

The Hungarian public administration is strongly hierarchic and legalistic. Most public sector leaders deeply believe in the power of regulatory control and mostly positional power over staff. Although some new public management instruments have been introduced, the prevailing culture is one of top down command and control that allows very weak horizontal and bottom-up communication. The prevalent self-image of most public organizations and civil servants is the disciplined implementer. Most civil servants reflect on tasks only within the limits of their own desks (scope of task and authority) and are proud of their technical expertise in delivering results in the tasks assigned to them. Obviously, this context operates based on a leadership concept and culture that is the diagonal opposite of the leadership approach necessary for public integrity and for initiating collective internal change processes.

In Hungary, the National University for Public Service (NUSP) is the key institution responsible both for degree programs in public administration and professional training of civil servants. The university offers traditional academic education focused on the positivist theoretical underpinnings of public administration. The actual focus of the curriculum is on law with additional subjects in management. The teaching is mostly delivered through frontal presentations that keep learners in a passive

---

blower protection, disciplinary processes, ethical advice and education of staff, data protection, etc. On the other hand they have to advise the head of the organization in integrity development.

receptive position. In recent years, some personal skill trainings have also appeared in the curriculum but only very few teachers apply interactive methodologies.

The integrity approach and the position of the integrity advisor is relatively new in the Hungarian public administration. When the education program started, there was no standard method to organizational integrity management in Hungary. The governance ordinance that created the position gave only a list of the components of the organizational integrity system. The organizational integrity practices at the time were empty, formal exercises. Most integrity advisors felt that the actual methods do not bring the desired results. (Pallai 2017: 17-21) Only some of the very talented could establish effective processes and produce some practice that could be a source of further discussion on possible method. It was a peculiar challenge to design the education of a profession whose professional method was not clear yet.

### The curriculum development concept

My claim underpinning the curriculum concept was that integrity advisors need to be 'hybrid integrity professionals'. The term 'hybrid professional' refers in this case to the possession of two different kinds of competences: on the one hand integrity advisors need competence in the application of standard positivist anticorruption instruments, like rationalist risk analysis, and the design and implementation of formal regulatory instruments (i.e. the legislated tasks). On the other hand, they also need competence in initiating and leading collective processes that may reconstruct values, perceptions and commitments of stakeholders. (Pallai 2016: 14) I have argued already on the previous pages that while the positivist part of this curriculum may be educated through the traditional frontal teaching method, the second component is a different challenge. For preparing integrity advisors for this second challenge a transformative (Mandel-Fischer 2011) education method is necessary that builds reflective and reflexive capacities of integrity advisers, and supports them to go beyond their self-limiting practice and socialization and gain commitment and competence to support complex, collective change processes in their organizations.

Transdisciplinary approach was also part of the concept because it fits the complex holistic nature of the integrity management methodology.

Because integrity management was a new and complex professional field, academics at NUPS did not possess all the expertise for the education of all the necessary positivist instruments. The competence to teach the post-positivist component was not present either. Most academics and professionals who worked on public integrity outside NUPS were also positivists with little or no knowledge of and appreciation to post-positivist concepts and dialogic processes. This was one reason why methodologies adapted from the Dutch integrity practice remained ineffective in Hungary. (Pallai 2016: 22-23) On the one hand, I needed the expertise of these positivist professionals, but at the same time, in order to bring in the post-positivist dimension, I also needed professionals from outside of NUPS and the evolving but relatively closed circle of the positivist 'integrity professionals'.

Through an open tender four types of professionals were recruited for the program:

- academics who had the conceptual clarity and overview of the field of anticorruption and public integrity, and some who were also familiar with system and argumentative theories,
- practitioners (anticorruption experts and active civil servants, some actually working as integrity advisers) who had expertise in the technical fields and were familiar with the actual practices in public organizations and the organizational possibilities and constraints,
- process experts who could develop faculty members' and students' process awareness and skills, and demonstrate how dialogic processes operate
- personal competence and communication trainers who could help students to change their communicative attitudes and develop their reflexive and collaborative skills.

The profiles did not target academics imprisoned into disciplinary fields. Many of the recruited faculty members had various kinds of hybrid identities that integrated multiple frames of reference into their worldview and value system already at the start. (Meyer et al., 2014) Among the process and personal competence professionals, many had experience with dialogic methods in organizations and education processes. Within the group, all necessary competences for the education method targeted in the concept were present but different components of these competences were possessed by different faculty members. There was obvious need to mutually share knowledge and competences.

My objective was to initiate substantive dialogue among these diverse professionals in order to widen their understanding of the challenges, and to reflect both on possible integrity management methods within the actual condition of the Hungarian public administration and on the curriculum and teaching method in parallel manner. The hope was on the one hand, that a facilitated dialogue among such diverse professionals would reveal the key aspects of the challenge and would engender a holistic approach and creative solutions. As a second objective, I expected that the emerging holistic understanding would also help faculty in practice related discussions in the classrooms. As a third objective, I hoped that the experience of the dialogue would reveal the post-positivist dimension for the positivist professionals as well, and thus, help them to have a more open approach to teaching.

### The Faculty Lab – a space for dialogue on method and curriculum

The standard approach in most post-graduate programs is that faculty members teach their field in a parallel manner with little content coordination and without conceptual integration. In such programs, academics and practitioners explain their different paradigms and interpretative frames to the students, and teach them to apply the language and concepts inherent in their theoretical perspectives. In this educational model, students are expected to learn the paradigm and language, and become 'bilingual facilitators' who have capacity to reframe the academic theory for practical purposes. (Knassmüller 2016) When the program is multidisciplinary the need to become 'multilingual facilitators' that is a bigger challenge.

In the case of integrity management in a corruption tolerant context the phenomena is so complex that understanding all related disciplines would have far outstretched both the time frame of the program and the integration capacity of students. Even after a preliminary survey of the necessary fields, it was obvious that faculty members should not present a comprehensive overview of their fields and the multiple disciplinary perspectives. It was also clear that professional languages with conflicting uses of terms would create a cacophony that would limit students understanding of the key concepts, and if individual student selected the terms that they use in their organizations, they would transmit this cacophony into the integrity practice as well. Consequently, I opted instead of a multidisciplinary, for a transdisciplinary approach. The aim was to use the dialogue among faculty members to transcend disciplinary and professional boundaries and produce a curriculum that is practice oriented and a language that can convey it to any civil servant and not only for the ones familiar with many disciplines. That is, a language that can be used not only in the classroom but in public organizations as well. One that effectively supports integrity advisors in their daily work.

For this it was necessary that faculty members select key concepts and methods from their field that were relevant for the practice and necessary for the new profession but without a clear understanding of the possible strategy for public integrity management in the Hungarian context it was impossible to identify the most relevant components of faculty members' knowledge. At the start, everybody believed in the importance of his/her own ideas and there was no chance to build informed consensus. It was obvious that one or two faculty coordination meeting would not solve the problem. A Faculty-lab was established in the form of a series of Faculty Workshops. The process had two main goals:

1. initiate a dialogue among faculty members on the possible method to develop integrity within Hungarian public organizations
2. design the curriculum that prepare students for the implementation of the method

The Faculty-lab was a facilitated transdisciplinary dialogue space where all participants could bring in their paradigms, epistemologies and insights, reflect, argue, build personal relations and mutual trust and appreciation of each other and each other's ideas. It was actually a 'transformative learning space' (Mandell-Fischer 2011) for faculty members, and in some aspects, a model for the desired education process. The idea was that from the dialogue among the diverse faculty members multiple benefits would emerge that can support the transdisciplinary approach and the dialogic education process:

- academics and professionals offer each other mutual insight in their fields, and this process make all relevant fields and discourses intelligible for all faculty members
- through the dialogue faculty members reflexive competence develop and their openness to different perspectives – an attitude necessary for facilitating a transdisciplinary learning process
- through the discussion and the evolving understanding of the complexity of corruption and integrity development, all faculty members gain a generalist

perspective for the whole field that will help them to lead discussions with students

- the experience of the dialogue process and the co-creation of the curriculum help positivist faculty members understand the nature of social construction processes, and through this the collective nature of integrity building, i.e. understanding beyond their technical knowledge
- the experience with the dialogic approach develop faculty members capacity to facilitate dialogic learning process in the classroom
- the process would also engender the language and narratives that are adequate to support the education and implementation of the method (Figure 5)

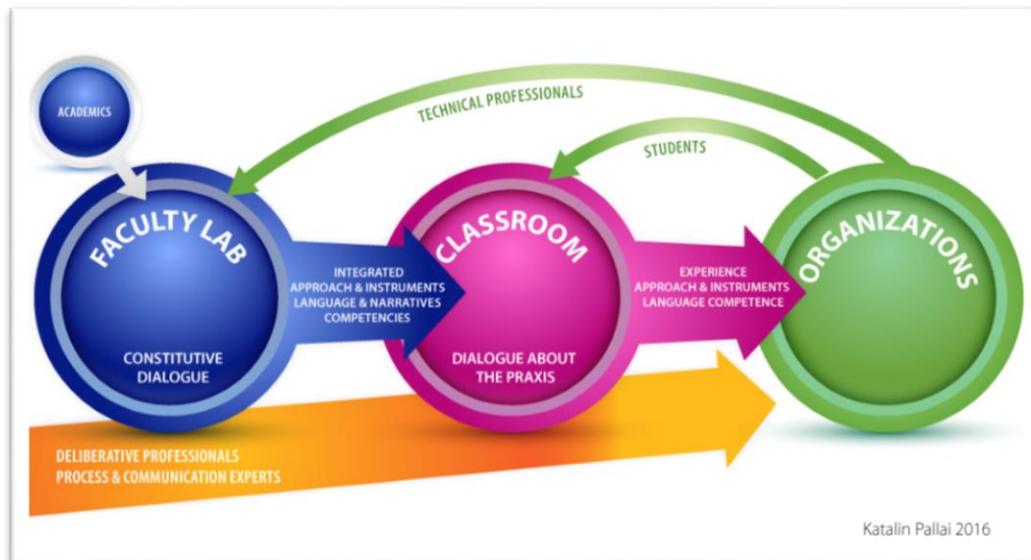
Figure 1 – The composition of the Faculty-lab and the aim of the curriculum development process



Source: created by the author

The faculty lab was a transdisciplinary dialogue space where all participants could bring in their paradigms and epistemologies and insights. The objective was to establish a constructive dialogue among fields and paradigms in order to create a concept of the role, methods and competences profile of integrity advisors. Possibly and integrated approach and instruments. It was also expected that from the dialogue some key terms and concepts will emerge and a language and some narratives that could be used during the education and then also used by integrity advisors in their organizations.

Figure – The connections of between academia and practice



Source: created by the author

The selected leading academics and professionals, among them some active integrity advisers, worked for nearly two years on plunging into new domains, and gaining a 'good enough' understanding of the other relevant fields to co-create a new integrity methodology for the Hungarian public sector and a complex but integrated curriculum. The length of the process contests that in the specific context, faced with this level of complexity, if we worked with a traditional multidisciplinary education method, students alone could have probably not extracted a similar integrity methodology for themselves from disciplinary lectures.

The experience confirmed the concept that, in the given situation, individual students would have little chance to extract applicable practice and language from the different paradigms, fields and expertise, and had no chance alone to design effective new integrity methods in their organizations. The faculty group had to start the process because without an idea of the desired profile of future integrity advisers they could anyhow not design a curriculum for the education of those integrity advisers. At the same time, the faculty group needed to be aware that what they discuss is an evolving product that will improve through the discussion with students in the classroom and later through the application experience of the integrity advisers. In order to render this process open for learning, faculty members had to learn to continue the dialogue that they started in the faculty lab in the classrooms. The faculty lab was only one component of this faculty education strategy.

## The story of the Faculty lab process

The faculty-lab was organized as a series of 2-3 days long workshops that gave space for faculty members to engage in a dialogue on the adequate professional approach to integrity development within the local context and on the education of the approach. This meant a parallel dialogue on professional methods and their education. Earlier, I already mentioned that the dialogue in the Faculty Lab was a sinuous process. Telling the story of the process is a detour from the logic of the argument, nevertheless, I include it, because it reveals some important points about the difficulties in establishing a transdisciplinary dialogue process.

At the start there was a divide between positivist academics and practitioners but both acknowledged the validity of the other's insights. At the same time, the paradigms from where positivist anticorruption professionals (academic and technical) and process and deliberative experts saw the world could hardly be more different. Only the conviction was identical that the approach of the other groups is insufficient. It was obvious that reaching openness, understanding and collaboration in such a diverse faculty group was a challenge.

At the start the aspiration to advance public integrity and create a good program was more or less shared, but the communication was the usual type of professional debate and surely not a creative dialogue.<sup>7</sup> This is the condition where any similarly multidisciplinary groups start. We experienced "strong walls" among professional groups. The barriers were not only a lack of openness and curiosity towards others' ideas but also lack of trust and lack of experience in integrative interdisciplinary communication. Nobody had an effective solution for curbing corruption but did not look at others for solutions either. (The most interesting element of this condition was that not only academics and technicians were closed towards the deliberative professionals but the process and communication experts did not feel the need to deeper understand the technical matters either.) At the same time, all faculty members had strong positions on what should students learn from the knowledge of their own fields. When these expectations were collected the group had to face that the result was that a "superman" should be educated. This was an obviously 'mission impossible' for a one year program.

After months, when through the discussions faculty members began to develop more solid commitment, some personal connections, began to realize that fields previously neglected by them can contribute to finding better responses to problems that they alone could not solve. Nearly a year passed till the first moment of 'presence' (Senge, 2013) evolved: when walls collapsed and ideas suddenly got aligned and integrated. This condition of "group flow" gave the formative experience for many group members of how effective responses to complex patterns of problems evolve from dialogue across professional boundaries. This also opened the door to integrate ideas in a locally applicable integrity approach and curriculum.

---

<sup>7</sup> I use the word debate for the competitive and adversary exchange of ideas whose usual aim to decide what is right or wrong, and the dialogue for a collaborative and integrative mode of communication whose aim is to explore and create shared understanding and ideas.

Faculty as a group could also grasp at this point that the curriculum should include a few key elements from each field. The core concepts and instruments began to crystallize. This allowed the curriculum development process to focus on the selection of these concepts and instruments and to discuss how they could be fit together and how their application in praxis could be taught, and how inferences and interdependencies of these key conceptual and instrumental elements could be explained to students. That meant a shift from theory towards the creating of a conceptual framework and language for the structured discussion of praxis.

The next step in the process was that a technical expert, an active integrity adviser who, after experiencing the power of dialogue and understanding the process he was taking part in, began to weld the steps of technical work and group process together into a special collective risk analysis and management process. A deliberative faculty member, who already developed enough understanding of the technical challenges, could contribute to the design of the collective process and help with facilitation during its pilots. An innovation that evolved from the dialogue: a collective, processual, dialogic method to integrity development, a method that involve internal stakeholders in a collective inquiry and action process. The design was not additive from different technical and dialogic tools but a new approach, born across traditional professional boundaries, and designed for the specific local context. An integrated risk management process that since has been legislated in Hungary. (Pallai 2018: 25-26)

It was a relief for the faculty to finally have a shared idea of the possible work method and of the profile for the hybrid professional. The hybrid professional, who exploits the insights, knowledge and resources of others, was a plausible solution that replaced the earlier unrealistic “superman concept”. On the basis of the shared understanding of the new method the faculty group could agree in the content of the curriculum. Because the focus became clear and the teaching objectives were shared by faculty members, faculty could see what is relevant from their knowledge and could omit unnecessary elements from the subjects. This is how the training of the hybrid professional could be squeezed in the one-year long program. The integrated curriculum is certainly leaner and more effective for mid-career professionals’ training than the usual ‘solo performances’ of individual faculty members could have been. It is a curriculum that faculty members could create only together.

### Educating faculty to facilitate dialogic learning process

I already mentioned that the dialogue in the Faculty Lab was a sinuous process that gave a first formative experience of the constitutive power of dialogue for the positivist faculty members. This developed faculty’s reflexivity and cognitive flexibility. Nevertheless, there was no expectation that all faculty members, even the ones coming from a positivist background and accustomed to frontal teaching, would become master-facilitators from this one experience. Some more components were built in the process for supporting those faculty members who were weaker in this domain to become better facilitators for the learning process.

The second component of the faculty education was that we inserted some sessions of reflection and reflexion on dialogic method in the Faculty Labs. The third was a workshop on teaching method where they could experience some of the exercises/experiences that students go through during the first months of their education and they could reflect the impact mechanism together with the faculty members who are more experienced in teaching method. A discussion of the application of similar methods in their more technical subjects followed. The fourth component was the student group. We designed the sequence of course in a manner that the more experienced facilitators could establish the dialogic culture and form a learning community out of the student group. When the technical experts entered they only had to maintain this operating mode. And the fifth, yet evolving component is that we involve more and more active integrity advisors in the faculty who themselves learned in this method in previous years and since gained expertise in the implementation of the method.

## Conclusions

I intended to make three important points one is that for the mid-career education of civil servants on fields that require complex set of expertise the traditional model that faculty educate disciplines and the students are expected to integrate what they learn and apply it to the practice is not the most effective approach. Complex, integrated curriculum can better prepare students to solving complex challenges. The second point was that for educating professionals to lead complex change processes, and for developing their reflexivity and cognitive flexibility a transdisciplinary approach and dialogic method of teaching is necessary. In case such an education program is implemented in a positivist academic environment, and/or the field has a strong technical dimension that has to be educated by positivist technical experts educators, not only the students but the educators also need to be educated in teaching method.

## References.

Ahmad, Y, Nielsen, R.J.C., Raine, J., Synnott, M., (2013): Special issue on developing the reflexive public manager. Editorial. *Teaching Public Administration*. 31:1. 3-5. DOI: 10.1177/0144739413479546

Alford, J., Brock, J., (2014): Interactive education in public administration (1) The role of teaching 'objects'. *Teaching Public Administration*. 32:2. 144-157. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0144739413515491>

Bourdieu, P (1990) *In Other Words: Essay toward a Reflexive Sociology*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press

Boussin- Ahmed 2013

- Cunliffe, A, Jun, J (2005) The need for reflexivity in public administration. *Administration and Society* 37(2): 225–242. de Graaf, G. (2007): Causes of Corruption: Towards a Contextual Theory of Corruption. *Public Administration Quarterly*. 31.1: 39-86.
- de Graaf, G., von Maravic, P., Wagenaar, P. (2010b): Constructing Corruption. in: de Graaf, G., von Maravic, P., Wagenaar, P., eds. 2010: *The Good Case – Theoretical Perspectives on Corruption*. Leverkusen: Barbara Bundrich Publishers. 98-115.
- Fischer, F. & Mandell, A. (2012): Transformative Learning in Planning and Policy Deliberation: Probing Social Meaning and Tacit Assumptions. in: Fischer, F. and Gottweis, H. (2012): *The Argumentative Turn Revisited: Public Policy as Communicative Practice*. Duke UP. Durham-London.
- Goldwin, M.L.-Meek, W.J. (2015): The scholarly practitioner: Connections of Research and practice in the classroom. *Teaching Public Administration*. 34 (1) 54-69.
- Gray, DE (2007) Facilitating management learning: Developing critical reflection through reflective tools. *Management Learning* 38: 495–517. Cunliffe, A.L., Jun, J.S. 2005: The need for reflexivity in Public administration. *Administration and Society* 37:2, 225-42.
- Keevers, L, Treleaven, L (2011) Organizing practices of reflection: A practice-based study. *Management Learning* 42(5): pp. 505–520.
- Knassmüller, M. 2016: Turn! Turn! Turn!: A time for engaged learning. The engagement of scholarship and practice in a classroom setting. *Teaching Public Administration*. 2016, Vol. 34(1) 19–39.
- Marks, P.- van der Meer, F.B. (2015): Special issue on the teaching- research nexus in public administration curricula. *Teaching Public Administration*. 34 (1) 3-6
- McSwite, O. C. (2001). Theory competency for MPA-educated practitioners. *Public Administration Review*, 61, 111-115.
- Meyer R.E, et al. (2014) Of bureaucrats and passionate managers; Institutional logics, executive identities, and public service motivation. *Public Administration* 92(4): 861–885.
- Newswander, L.K. –Newswander, C.B. (2012): Encouraging cognitive flexibility and interdisciplinarity in Public Administration Programs. *Teaching Public Administration*. 44 (3) 285-309
- OECD (2009): *Towards a Sound Integrity Framework: Instruments, Processes, Structures and Conditions for Implementation*. unclassified policy paper. GOV/PGC/GF(2009)1
- Olfield, C. (2015): Another look at research. *Teaching Public Administration*. 34 (1) 40-53.

Pallai, K (2017): The integrity development in corruption tolerant context in the post-truth world – a case study - EGPA Conference, 30. August-1. September 2017. Milan, Italy

Pallai, K., (2016): The Need for a New Expertise Profile in Anticorruption. Paper prepared for the Anticorruption Collective Action Conference, Basel, Switzerland. 21-22. October 2016.

Quinn, B. (2013): Reflexivity and education for public managers. *Teaching Public Administration*.31 (1) 6-17.

Sandfort, J.- Gerdes, K. (2016): The design, pedagogy and practice of an integrated public affairs leadership course. *Teaching Public Administration*. 1-16.

Smith, S. R. (2008). The increased complexity of public services: Curricular implications for schools of public affairs. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 14(2), 115-128.

Synnott, M. (2013): Reflection and double Loop Learning. *Teaching Public Administration*.31 (1) 124-134

Tänzler, D. (2007): *Cultures of Corruption – An Empirical Approach to the Understanding of Crime*. Crime & Culture. Discussion Paper Series No 1. Konstanz: University of Konstanz.

van der Heijden, K. (2005): *Scenarios: The Art of Strategic Conversations*. 2nd. ed. John Wiley&Sons.West Sussex.

van der Steen, M.-van Twist, M.-Frissen, P. (2016): Learning from experience: From case-based teaching to experience-based learning. *Teaching Public Administration*. 1-21.

van der Waldt, Gerrit (2014): Public administration teaching and interdisciplinarity: considering the consequences. *Teaching Public Administration*. 32:2. 169-193.

Ysa, T., Hammerschmid, G., Albareda, A., (2017): Executive Programs for Public Sector: Taking Stock and Future Perspectives. *Teaching Public Administration*. 2017:35 (1) 3-7.