

# Chapter 6

## Conclusions From Social Dynamics for Sustainable Educational Development

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The social and didactic dynamics produced by the negotiation-oriented and partly web-based game “Surfing Global Change” (SGC) were analyzed by independent experts after their observations in advanced interdisciplinary university courses. It could be empirically demonstrated that the intended didactics of SGC were successful, namely that they were grounded on “active, self-organized learning,” training of “competence to act,” and on responsibility for both practicable and sustainable solutions for the society of the future. The design of SGC succeeds in equilibrating competition vs. consensus, self-study vs. team work, sharpening the self-interest vs. readiness to compromise, reductionism vs. holism, and hence, mirrors professional realities. The conclusion is made that the game’s rules act as a boundary condition for expected processes of social self-organization. The independent expert’s opinions express the importance of self-responsibility. Hence, self-organization in SGC allows for self-responsibility.*

### **1. THE ORGANIC MEANING OF THE FIVE PHASES IN SGC**

The overall design of the game SGC (see descriptions in Duraković, et al., 2012; Öttl et al., 2014; Vogler, Ahamer, & Jekel, 2010; Bader, et al., 2013; Lehner & Wurzenberger, 2013; Altmann, et al., 2013; Ahamer, 2004a, b, 2005, 2006, 2008a, b, 2012a, b, 2013a, b, c, d, e; 2015; Ahamer & Schrei, 2006; Ahamer & Jekel, 2010)

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sets out to train students for the vicissitudes of professional life. Consequently, a certain rhythm of fact-based analysis versus the social striving for acceptance of one's own convictions is what follows:

- The phases focusing on individual work (1, 2, 5) complement team-oriented phases (3, 4).
- The phases focusing on defending individual views (1, 3) alternate with phases where openness for other standpoints is a necessary attitude (2, 4).
- Phase 3, with its richness in differentiation and details as visualized in the matrix, is followed by phase 4 where formerly singular aspects intertwine and where details converge to a common action program.

The main dramaturgy of Surfing Global Change lies in *arguments serving as tools for objectified interpersonal communication*:

- *First* define and foster your own precise standpoint in order to ...
- ... *Then* become able to make it more flexible in the interest of greater equilibrium.

SGC builds on dialogic, self-responsible and game-based didactics as proposed in (Gierlinger-Czerny, 2003; Gierlinger-Czerny & Peuerböck, 2002; Peuerböck, 2003; Prensky, 2001; Rogers, 1974; Rauch, 2013, 2014, 2017; Klabbers, 2001; Jonas, 1979; Montessori, 1988; Ahamer & Kumpfmüller, 2013; Ahamer & Mayer, 2013).

In this light, SGC's set of rules could be seen as a facilitator for social and academic evolution inside a class and has several organic functionalities (right in Figure 1).

SGC sets out to allow an organic maturation of standpoints (left in Figure 1):

1. Small isolated packages of traditional content representing only one side.
2. A process of text-oriented critiques at a slow pace allowing deliberation on a one-to-one basis mediated via asynchronous virtual communication.
3. A quick process of situation-dependent need to present and defend individual arguments as a function of the adversary's behaviour and strategy on a group-to-group basis within a team in synchronous real-time communication.
4. A consolidation process with less pressing time restrictions in real-time communication on a many-in-one-boat basis requiring consensus in synchronous real-time communication.
5. A closing activity involving the creation of a view that integrates the many standpoints heard so far by creating an analysis outside severe time restrictions on an individual or freely-chosen team "we just for us" basis in web-mediated asynchronous communication.

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