

# **Synergetics of co-creating learning and help in social work**

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Synergetics is a transdisciplinary science that studies spontaneous emergence of more effective organization in complex systems. Exploration of synergetic description of formation and change of (cognitive-emotional-behavioral) patterns of systems has already shown its usefulness in different scientific fields. Synergetics offers fresh, reframing answers to the question of effectiveness in social work and related helping professions, as well as increasing empirical evidence for what works in those professional contexts. A research team at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Ljubljana, has conducted a developmental and research project on working relationship of co-creating learning and help in school (2011). One of the purposes of the research on participative learning and help was to use and verify the usefulness of synergetic theory and methods in individual working projects of help - IWPH (each consisting of a student with learning difficulties, his/her parents, teachers, school counselors). Collected data (recorded IWPH and supervision conversations, questionnaires for all the groups of participants, different fill-in forms for researchers) from 18 IWPHs of 9 primary schools were qualitatively analysed from the view of eight synergetic generic principles and a variety of heuristics, with a tentative theory suggested. The research findings support the original thesis that synergetics meaningfully frames and theoretically and empirically interconnects the concepts and methods of collaborative, dialogical approaches to participative learning and help. It's use can essentially enhance our chances to increase the effectiveness of social work projects of learning and help in a wide range of contexts, above all by creating conditions for relational stability, a sort of pre-condition for successful social work. While the Slovenian school legislation and social care system have already adopted the concept of co-creating learning and help, the synergetic theory with its methods for mapping processes of change is contributing to a growing body of new empirical research.