

Donald Schön — A Life of Reflection
Remarks at special session in honor of the
memory of Donald Schön
Conference of the Association of
Collegiate Schools of Planning, Fort Lauderdale
November 6-9, 1997
Forthcoming, *Journal of Planning Literature*

INTRODUCTION

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Donald Schön didn't seem the sort of person anyone would expect to die. He was full of life and, though "retired" from MIT, we all assumed he would continue traveling the world sowing the seeds of reflection to architectural studios along with international corporate board rooms; to educators starting new universities along with computer modelers looking for new meaning; and to those of us in the planning community for whom his teaching strikes at the heart of our endeavor.

Don Schön did die, from cancer, at the age of 66 on September 13, 1997. A moving memorial at MIT on October 19 introduced us to Don's many facets. He was a brilliant clarinetist and it was perhaps the structure of musical composition that inspired the profound harmony of his written output. As in Mozart's great *Clarinet Concerto* Don's work drew you in with an opening of brightness and enthusiasm. Before you knew it you had plunged to a slow movement of previously unfathomable depths. As with Mozart, Don knew he couldn't leave you down there and the unifying theme of all his oeuvres was a finale that left those he had so powerfully engaged refreshed and with hope for the future.

Don's family was a deep love of his, and it is especially poignant that he was helping prepare his grandson for his barmitzvah at the time of his death. A puppet theatre was also under construction for his grandchildren who he taught the essence of reflection by having them critically conceive a theory of how a puppet theatre ought to work. Blessed with this reflective underpinning and the natural curiosity Don transmitted to one and all, his grandchildren are already set up to become reflective practitioners of the future without having to be taught how in graduate school. Don was important to us in planning, but his work had global application because it reached to the heart of all thought and action. Once touched by his wisdom, all were changed. He is mourned in very many milieus both personal and professional.

The four of us who have written up our talks below came together at the November 1997 ACSP conference to celebrate Don's life and to urge patterns of reflection in our own lives and in all lives to come that will ensure that his reflection lives on in future action. I am grateful to Bish Sanyal, Raphaël Fischler and Niraj Verma (and to Lloyd Rodwin whose comments are also included here) for providing their splendid contributions on such short notice and we all extend our condolences to Don's many friends and family.

DONALD SCHÖN — INVITING US TO REFLECT

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I have believed for as long as I can remember in an afterlife within my own life — a calm, stable state to be reached after a time of troubles. When I was a child, that afterlife was Being Grown Up. As I have grown older, its content has become more nebulous, but the image of it stubbornly persists.

The afterlife-within-my-life is a form of belief in what I would like to call the Stable State. Belief in the stable state is belief in the unchangeability, the constancy of central aspects of our lives, or the belief that we can attain such a constancy. Belief in the stable state is strong and deep in us. We institutionalize it in every social domain. We do this in spite of our talk about change, our apparent acceptance of change and our approval of dynamism. Language about change is for the most part talk about very small change, trivial in relation to a massive unquestioned stability; it appears formidable to its proponents only by the peculiar optic that leads a potato chip company to see a larger bag of potato chips as a new product. Moreover, talk about change is as often as not a substitute for engaging in it.

This striking passage which opens the extraordinary *Beyond the Stable State* was the first that I read of Don Schön. Don had visited a class of Martin Rein I had been taking at MIT and had left me riveted. The book, which I quickly acquired and read, left me with a sense of its universal appeal. At a time when so many in the world of education and research were moving towards compartmentalizing problems into small boxes, here was a work which had relevance to the very essence of humanity from which all problems ultimately come. Here was an author who with humor and honesty went for the jugular to show the fallibility that makes us human. We are afraid of change and resist it with a tacit process which he fantastically names “dynamic conservatism.” “Social systems resist change with an energy roughly proportional to the radicalness of the change that is threatened.”

Some people believe that Don Schön's principal contribution was to direct us to learn from practice. It is certainly true that his dissection of practical situations was always enthralling but it was invariably backed up by a strong theory. While Don is best known for his recent work on *The Reflective Practitioner*, his earlier writings established the study of metaphor as the theoretical core of all his output. His 1963 book on *Displacement of Concepts* is all about the life of metaphor and how it both constitutes and restrains change. Metaphor is about the new because in seeing concept A in terms of concept B we see concept A in new B-like ways. Metaphor is also about conservatism when an old concept B comes to program our conception of A. "When old theories are displaced to new situations, all aspects of the old theories tend to locate themselves projectively in the new situation."

In a wonderful essay for a book on *Metaphor and Thought* edited by Andrew Ortony, Don vibrantly shows how such old theories locate themselves projectively in the new situation. He tells the story of slum clearance in the 1950s, for example, where a metaphor of disease pervaded our notion of slum and generated the surgical solution of cutting out the afflicted part of the community. He then introduces an alternative metaphor, one of the "natural community."

Once we are able to see the slum as a "natural community"... then it is also clear what is wrong and what needs doing. What is wrong is that the natural community, with its homelike stability and its informal networks of mutual support, is threatened with destruction — indeed, by the very prophylaxis undertaken in the name of "urban renewal." We should think twice about "dislocating people from their local areas;" "natural communities" should be preserved.

Don shows us how metaphors tacitly invade our thinking to name and frame understandings. The heart of reflective inquiry, then, is to identify and criticize the mechanisms of metaphor that lead to understandings; in doing so, we to facilitate a process of "frame restructuring" in which we come to new understandings. This is the concept that was to be the heart of the *Reflective Practitioner*.

Theory and practice went hand in hand in Don's world. We learn from the study of practice, but our learning is both based on prior theories and used to construct new theories with which future observations may be tested. Don's world was fluid — one in which assumptions were to be unearthed, not to be taken for granted, one in which an assumption unearthed in a concept A was to be used to explore the secret life of concepts B and C which might in turn enable us to see concept D differently. And our ways of seeing D differently might well lead us to see A in a new light.

The most important lesson for education is that theory and practice must not only be taught together but must be locked in a critical combat. It is a lesson which Don's teachings have succeeded in inculcating in a number of realms and certainly well beyond our planning community. Don had a deep involvement with business schools and in education in general and his work has penetrated conceptions of how professional teaching should be done on a significant scale.

At the same time, there is a faction opposing Don's view. It is not doing so knowingly; and many of the guilty may never have read Don's work. That faction is grounded in the school of "Technical Rationality" which Don showed us has too often more status than ability to reflect upon itself. The emphasis on giving Masters-level students "skills" is intensifying. The metaphor is one of diploma as meal ticket. Those who teach "practical" skills — microeconomics, statistics, GIS and the like — often spend more time telling students "how" to do it than to equip them to question how it should be done. How many teachers of microeconomics, for example, seriously devote effort to having students question whether microeconomics is in fact a form of ideology? And how many teachers are troubled in using textbooks which show students "how to do" policy analysis as if it were a matter of solving a few technically-difficult but nonetheless simpleminded problems? In some of these situations a planning theory course will exist as antidote. But how often is it taken seriously? I worry that we have merely created a larger bag of potato chips.

Many of us know better as result of Don's contribution. The problem is in getting the courage and momentum to have his metaphors invade whole departments. The very "dynamic conservatism" he identified limits the chances of success. His message is so appealing to many of us. But it threatens models of teaching and research many of us have become used to and indeed cherish. The reflective way makes us feel insecure. We may cheer at the concept on a superficial level. But we have to understand and critique the metaphors which personally constrain our productivity on a deep level if we are to change.

Don was an essential part of my Stable State. I will never forget waiting outside that door of his. The door was always closed — he gave his entire attention to the person in his company and, as the thought of execution is said to concentrate the mind of the prisoner, the terror of waiting outside in the knowledge of the focused concentration going on inside did a great deal to focus subsequent thinking.

The meetings were astonishing. Don always made his students feel important and communicated his own ideas in ways that made them the student's own. For a difficult customer such as myself — one who was often too full of his own ideas — his was the perfect recipe. He would have me pull out the rug from under my own feet so that I showed myself that what I had thought was utterly right was quite the opposite. At the same time there would always be new ideas to brood on at the end of a meeting. Were they my ideas? Were they Don's? I was never quite sure, but I always left Don's office feeling exhilarated, having been honored to have received such powerful attention from one of the greatest teacher's of our time.

The Displacement of Concepts enables new ideas to form from the old. Death is regrettably a part of this process. When we use Don's ideas in our work they enmesh themselves with our own personal cultural perspectives and the result may not be quite the same as originally intended. But in the variety and fertility of ideas engendered in the process, the essence of Don Schön's work will live on as an eternal memorial to his remarkable contribution to us all.

LEARNING FROM DON SCHÖN — A TRIBUTE

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To understand Don Schön's intellectual contribution to the fields of Organizational Theory and Urban Planning, we must begin by understanding the intellectual turmoil during the 1960s. The urban riots, the Vietnam War, assassinations of President Kennedy and Martin Luther King, and — most importantly — the sharp decline in US economic growth by the early 1970s, had generated a range of reaction from academics, including Don Schön. These reactions varied from total disillusionment with the dominant ideological and epistemological models on the left hand of the political spectrum to a gung-ho, ostrich-like denial of all problems on the far right. In between — almost near the ideological center — emerged a small group which acknowledged that the 1960s events had significantly challenged the ideological and epistemological foundations of traditional thinking; but, unlike the radical left, this group did not call for total rejection of the failing system which, they proposed, could be reformed and refined through social learning, collective reflection, and organizational changes at the margins.

Don Schön belonged to this group in the middle. Through innovative research, which resulted in seminal books such as *Beyond the Stable State* and *The Reflective Practitioner*, Don proposed that societal response to the tumultuous 1960s required curiosity, experimentation, reflection-in-action, and learning — aspects of our lives we usually ignore as we struggle to resolve personal and social problems. This led him to coin the term “The Reflective Practitioner” to describe the type of planner the nation needed as it grappled with unprecedented changes in technology, societal norms, economic relationships, and organizational forms. The notion of the reflective practitioner was incorporated as a central element in the MIT planning department's educational mission. Many planning educators across the US and abroad now use the notion of “The Reflective Practitioner” as a central organizing theme for structuring the curriculum for planning education.

In developing the notion of “The Reflective Practitioner,” Don drew on the philosophy of John Dewey who had inspired him since his undergraduate years at Yale. After graduating from Yale in 1951, Don had studied in Paris at the Sorbonne and Conservatory Nationale de Music, where he pursued his interest in playing clarinet. After returning from Paris, Don had joined Harvard where he earned Master's and Doctoral degrees in Philosophy in 1955. All along Don retained his intellectual attachment to Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism. Specifically, the Deweyian notion that all knowledge derives from practice remained at the heart of Don's formulation of the epistemological foundation of effective practice. Don's formulation, however, was not a rehash of Dewey's arguments: He went beyond Dewey in developing a theory of learning which, he argued,

required reflection-in-action. In other words, not all actions lead to learning: only when action is informed by reflection and, in turn, informs reflection, is one able to learn and refine one's knowledge. In developing this theory of learning, Don probed the nature of reflection by inquiring into what effective practitioners reflect. The answer was a major theoretical insight. Don suggested that there are usually two sets of theories associated with any problem solving action — an “Espoused theory,” which describes the proper and somewhat sanitized story of how the problem should be solved, and, in contrast, a “Theory-In-Use” which is usually not articulated precisely in formal language, and yet guides action more frequently and more effectively than the Espoused theory. Successful practitioners who learn from action reflect continuously about the discrepancy between espoused theory and theory-in-use, being sceptical always about the former and respectful of the latter, even though the latter may not have much legitimacy in formal professional discourses.

In drawing our attention to the power of theories-in-use and, conversely, the powerlessness of espoused theories, Don legitimized “informal knowledge” which is usually dismissed in formal professional discourse as anecdotal evidence, impressionistic views, intuitive understanding, or, simply, gossip. Don demonstrated that more than often effective practice is based on informal and unorthodox knowledge; and that knowledge is conveyed through stories, metaphors, and other “non-scientific” methods which lack professional legitimacy. The power and usefulness of informal knowledge, Don argued, is its holistic form: unlike formal knowledge generated by surveys of statistically significant samples of desegregated indicators, informal knowledge attempts to capture the essence of “the whole” which is crucial for effective action. This approach to epistemology led Don to argue that individuals, however uneducated in formal methodology, are capable of taking action and, in fact, do take effective action when they acknowledge the validity of their own knowledge and learn from their own action through reflection-in-action. This non-elitist and democratic approach to knowledge generation made Don listen to everyone's stories, however trivial they seemed at first glance. And, as David Warsh wrote in the *Boston Globe* on December 28, 1997, by listening to others' stories in his gentle but probing way, Don helped others to develop new insights about their own capabilities and understandings.

We must, however, acknowledge one shortcoming in Don's intellectual approach if we are to build on his ideas: Don was silent about uneven distributions of political/economic power and how this affects learning and innovation. This omission did not reflect ideological posturing on Don's part: It was the result of his work experience, which was primarily in the private sector. As advisor to large private firms on organizational issues, Don rarely had to confront issues of political economy of the kind which influence urban problems. And, since Don only wrote about issues which emerged directly out of his work experience, he had very little to say about the effects of asymmetrical political and economic relationships in the public domain.

The closest Don came to addressing the issue of politics was in his relatively recent book, *Frame Reflection*, co-authored with Martin Rein. In *Frame Reflection*, Schön and Rein focused on what they labeled as “unsolvable problems.” They argued that some

problems are unsolvable because different social groups contest the framing of these problems. Homelessness, for example, is an unsolvable problem because there is no social consensus about its origin. Some groups frame homelessness as a problem resulting from drug use and abuse of welfare benefits. Others frame it as resulting from a structural shortage of affordable housing. And still others view homelessness as the unfortunate result of the deinstitutionalization of mentally disturbed people. The presence of quite different framings of the same problem hurt policy formulation and often leads to conflicting policies which waste social resources and further aggravate the problem. This approach to the explanation of social problems such as homelessness led Schön and Rein to the conclusion that problem solving required consensus building about problem definition. But how such consensus is to be created, and whether there is a necessary role for social conflict to force the socially powerful towards a consensus, never got addressed by the authors.

A deep understanding of social/political conflicts was not of particular importance to Don because he was generally content with what some refer to as the human condition. This is not to say that Don was oblivious to human misery, social exploitation and such other negative outcomes of social behavior. He left those issues for others to understand and focused himself on what he considered life enhancing activities — namely, experimentation, innovation and learning. This was as much a strategic decision as an emotional response which sustained his creativity and peacefulness of mind. This calmness was evident even after he was diagnosed to be dying from cancer. I remember working closely with Don on the edited volume, titled *Advanced Information Technology and Urban Poverty*, soon after he learnt about his ill health. Don did look a little pale, but, as always, his thinking was positive: He was curious as ever about the issues we had not resolved in writing the introductory chapter to the edited volume; and while discussing the chapter on policy recommendation he was optimistic, as ever, that through social experimentation and action research we will eventually learn how to utilize advanced information technology for the benefit of the urban poor.

Don Schön was an optimistic scholar, and he loved life because it provided the opportunity to learn, experiment and innovate. For a man who loved life, it was a fitting farewell for his family to stand surrounding his bed holding hands and singing rounds of songs the family had sung many times before on happier occasions. Andrew Schön, Don's son, told me that as Don's eyes closed for the last time, the family members lowered their voices in sorrow only to be urged by Don who raised his right palm to request them to continue singing so he could listen to his favorite Brahms as he gently embraced death. Don Schön died peacefully on September 13, 1997 at the age of 66.

DON SCHÖN AS COLLEAGUE

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I've seen Don in many ways as a colleague at MIT. What struck me over the years thinking about Don is that he had strong points of view, but he really reflected more than anyone else Mallarmé's observation: "to suggest is to create and to define is to kill." Don was no slouch in defining things but he was even better in suggesting ideas for people in a way that is very memorable.

Don was a pretty busy fellow: writing books, teaching his fair share of courses, doing a lot of consulting work, meeting with his students, and so on; but I have not in all my years on the MIT faculty come across a faculty member who was so extraordinarily responsible in picking up responsibilities, not shirking them, and doing them very well: chores that most people shy away from, he would pick up and handle in addition to all those other things he was doing.

Don and I once gave a seminar devoted to rethinking the experience of development, focusing in particular on the ideas of Albert Hirschman. Albert thought Don's paper was one of the most revealing to him of his own work. In effect, Don showed how Albert was really functioning as a Reflective Practitioner: that Albert had opened up a range of ideas, and that they required an educational perspective to test the various implicit and explicit hypotheses that were involved; and Albert's feeling was that Don — in a masterly fashion — helped him to look at those ideas he had developed over the years in an entirely fresh way.

DONALD SCHÖN — TEACHER AND WRITER

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I think of Don Schön: a tall man with a smile, approachable yet somewhat aloof, with a penetrating, probing gaze. He didn't make everyone feel at ease, nor did he try to do so. His smile was kind, paternal and ironic at once. He seemed relaxed but was intense

too, a simple person in demeanor, inwardly complex. This juxtaposition of simplicity and complexity, of economy of means and richness of thought, is characteristic of his writing as well: nothing superfluous or bombastic, difficult ideas expressed clearly. Re-reading passages from *The Reflective Practitioner* will remind one of that.

His title was Ford Professor. “Ford,” as in “Ford Motor Company”? That never seemed to fit: the name of a massive business organization next to the name of a critic of technocratic and bureaucratic behavior. Think of it, the organization of “Mr. Smith” associated with the person who wrote in *The Reflective Practitioner* that “An institution congenial to reflective practice would require a learning system within which individuals could surface conflicts and dilemmas and subject them to productive public inquiry, a learning system conducive to the continual criticism and restructuring of organizational principles and values.” But then, perhaps Ford owes its current success to some of Don’s insights...

Attending Don’s course on Planning and Institutional Processes — “Pip,” as we called it — was a powerful learning experience. To take the course was to be introduced to the world of case-based research and teaching. As a researcher, Don certainly knew how to milk a good case. He brought that knowledge to the classroom. “A skilful case teacher,” he wrote, “draws out critical facts, and by a sequence of astutely chosen questions leads students through a process of inquiry which serves both to structure the “solution space” of the situation at hand and to demonstrate a mode of thinking about . . . problems.” He often was that skilful teacher. To take the “Pip” course was also to enter into the world of organizations, to learn about the interaction between the individual and the institutional setting in which he or she worked. In case after case, Don sensitized us to the constraining effects of organizational and intellectual frameworks. But we felt, among students, that “politics” tended to remain limited to the narrower field of personal interaction.

Power permeated everything, but domination was absent. The exercise of brute power for the benefit of one’s personal or group interests was not part of the picture. Nor did it seem to be part of Don’s world in general. In that world, power was all in the mind, in the limitations imposed by established modes of thought, in the blinders that narrowed people’s vision, in the win-lose attitudes that they adopted in their professional dealings. Yet, at the same time, Don knew what authority meant.

Indeed, he could be a strict taskmaster. One day, he dismissed a draft for a chapter of my Master’s thesis as nonsense. (“What did you think this meant?”, he asked me.) He was probably right; the piece, part of a thesis on verbal and visual representation in planning, was based on French social theory and semiotics, a dozen pages on the fear of the image as a fear of fusion with the mother, or something of the kind. Mind you, Don did let me include a revised version of that draft in the thesis, as an appendix. Tough but flexible, blunt yet understanding, he challenged us to do our best work. The incident is for me a bad memory: I didn’t appreciate the stinging comment and I felt angry, misunderstood, for days. But it is a memory that I cherish: Don insisted that theory be grounded, that the deepest philosophical considerations remain linked to the real lives of real people.

Our debt to Don is both personal and collective. To his students and many others, he showed the way as a thorough, imaginative, multidisciplinary scholar. To planning academics in general, he presented planning theory as the theoretically informed, empirical study of planning practice; the essays he wrote on the topic fostered the communicative turn in the field. His most important contribution, in my view, was his attention to problem-framing. On this concept hinged his critique of “Technical Rationality” and his study of “Reflection-in-Action.” All of Don, his theory as well as his style, is perhaps best captured in this passage from *The Reflective Practitioner*:

From the perspective of Technical Rationality, professional practice is a process of problem solving. Problems of choice or decision are solved through the selection, from available means, of the one best suited to established ends. But with this emphasis on problem solving, we ignore problem setting, the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved, the means which may be chosen. In real-world practice, problems do not present themselves to the practitioner as givens. They must be constructed from the materials of problematic situations which are puzzling, troubling, and uncertain... When we set the problem, we select what we will treat as the “things” of the situation, we set the boundaries of our attention to it, and we impose upon it a coherence which allows us to say what is wrong and in what directions the situation needs to be changed. Problem setting is a process in which, interactively, we name the things to which we will attend and frame the context in which we will attend to them.

Recently, I brought a copy of *The Reflective Practitioner* along with me to a Veteran’s Day commemoration a few blocks away from campus. In case the ceremony started late, I would be able to reread passages from the book before sitting down to write some pages in Don’s memory. Military punctuality made me keep the book in my coat pocket. But as I watched the World War II veterans remember their fallen comrades, I thought it not inappropriate to have this volume with me. Not that the struggle for truth in academia has anything to do with the savagery and horror of war. But the blind application of technical expertise and the uncritical acceptance of established ideas — tendencies which worked for evil five decades ago — were also the targets of Don’s efforts. Even though he decried the excesses of scientific rationality; even though he rehabilitated the role of tacit knowledge in professional practice; (and even though he exposed the dangers of visual metaphors to describe understanding), his work perpetuates the tradition of the Enlightenment, the Voltairian use of reason and eloquence to free us from dogma and constraint. Perhaps that, too, was what I was then mourning: the loss of a modern intellectual, reasonable yet acerbic, critical yet constructive, attentive to daily concerns yet opening our eyes to realities beyond ourselves.

DONALD SCHÖN'S REFLECTION-IN-ACTION

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In April last year Donald Schön read my book (*Similarities, Connections and Systems*) for Jossey Bass' New Lexington Press Imprint. In a frank and somewhat scathing but very touching review, he wrote that I was continuing an agenda that he himself had pursued with *The Reflective Practitioner* and *Displacement of Concepts*. A few weeks later I heard that Don was battling cancer but in reply to my email he wrote that he was very optimistic about his health. So I for one was taken by complete surprise by the news of Don's death.

Today I propose to examine the notion of "reflection-in-action" as part of a revisitation of Don's works. I do this as someone deeply influenced by Don's works. Although I profited from Donald Schön's kindness (he sent me four pages of comments on my first paper!), I was not privileged like Jonathan or Bish to know him as teacher, mentor, faculty colleague, or collaborator.

"Reflection-in-action" is a widely known metaphor but I suspect that it is not fully understood. At a cursory level it is clearly about linking knowledge and action. But what does this mean? Why, for instance, did Don describe planning as reflection-*in*-action and not, as others have claimed, as the combination of knowledge *and* action? In other words, what is the meaning of the preposition "in" when we talk about reflection-*in*-action?

As I see it, this question holds the key to understanding Don's epistemology and appreciating the distinctiveness of his position. At the same time, it also mutes a criticism that Donald Schön did not consider issues of power or that he underrated the role of institutions.

Let's start with planning defined as the combination of knowledge and action. Suppose we announced this definition to a group of planning students. What are we expecting them to learn? We are certainly not telling them the meaning of "knowledge" or the meaning of "action." We expect them to know these already. But, we want to tell them that the distinctive aspect of planning is in its linking or joining together of knowledge and action.

Now, enter Don Schön to this conversation. Schön tells us that such a union is rarely useful, even if it can be done. From his perspective reflection and action (read knowledge and action) are not two separate concepts but one. For planners to separate reflection from action, even with the intent of ultimately bringing them together, is to give in to a divisive tendency that promotes separations in the interest of rigor. Once rigor becomes a concern it starts dominating all other concerns. The result is a predictably rigorous, but oftentimes irrelevant integration of knowledge and action. That is to say, relevance and usefulness are

the price we must pay for construing planning as the simple union of knowledge and action.

Don wrote that I was following his agenda because in my book I have argued that the tendency to divide concepts into constituent parts is what is at fault and this is associated with an analytic form of reasoning that promotes distinctions and differences instead of similarities. Emphasizing similarities between concepts becomes a way of reigning in this tendency to separate.

Don's epistemology that describes planning as reflection-in-action tells us that there are no grand phases of knowledge generation and knowledge application. Planning is not applied social science. Certainly, planning demands new knowledge but it recognizes that this knowledge is useful only when concerns for action energize its production, storage, retrieval and application. If we should speak of separating knowledge and action at all, it should be at the microstructure of planning. But, even here, it is never quite clear when a planner is generating knowledge and when using it. So intertwined are reflection and action that it is not useful — perhaps even dangerous — to keep them conceptually separate. Reflection and action is a singular concept.

Given this, it is not surprising that Don's epistemology took him to examine the microstructure of planning and design and to write about its daily happenings. Even when he was engaged in analyzing macro-ideas, as for instance in his analysis of the German social security system in *Frame Reflection*, (co-authored with Martin Rein), his approach was to uncover ideas and concepts of everyday relevance. In *The Reflective Practitioner* and *The Architectural Studio* his enduring example is brilliantly derived from an analysis of the conversations in the design studio.

The examples and cases are essential to understanding the work but recounting them is not my purpose here. I just want to summarize the point that reflection-in-action is a solution to the problem of rigor in the professions.

Now, how is this related to the issue of power? Critics have faulted Donald Schön for not including power in his philosophy. Others seem to support this by pointing out that most of Don's works involve individual clients rather than institutions or groups. On the surface both these points are justified. Certainly, the word power is not pervasive in Don's works and he often uses the example of a student or an individual client to illustrate his arguments.

Yet, this is not the full picture. Don was deeply interested in issues of power — not the power of holding a gun over someone, but a subtle form of intellectual power that grips us and forces us to act in particular ways. Power in Don's writings can be seen as standing for the power of rigor or, as I have traced it, the power of the analytic tradition. We might call it by another name but in its consequences it is as dangerous as more conventional forms of power. It can marginalize, dominate, and force particular outcomes. Indeed, its effects may be much more pernicious exactly because it is not seen as being a form of power.

This power is self-delusionary. It possesses us as much as we possess it. It blinds us and leads us to sacrifice relevance for rigor and means for ends. Worse, it is long lasting

and systematic, i.e., it is not capricious and is unlikely to disappear on its own. Don Schön has taught us that the worship of rigor is not capricious and not by chance. It is derived from our training and through the influence of dominant scientific traditions. The early ties between the professions and the social sciences no doubt have something to do with this. To say, then, that this is not institutional is to disregard the importance of science as an institution and to overlook its influence.

If Don can be faulted it was for not making this explicit enough. Were it better understood the field of planning might have internalized it as part of its pedagogy. Science and technology are institutions of enormous might and a multitude of actors reside in them. If planning is to have some influence it must first locate its enemies within the institutions that influence our learning. And reading Don Schön tells us that reflection-*in*-action is a good bet for doing so.