

Unanswered Questions

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Abstract: Don Schön was a polymath. In this rather personal reminiscence I suggest that Don's remarkably varied interests, abilities, and accomplishments were bound together by an abiding and persistent belief in the permanence of change. First and most clearly expressed in his early book, "Beyond the Stable State," Don's quest for understanding the generativeness in change led him to study and actively participate in such wide ranging realms as organizational learning, the enigmas of professional education and evaluation, the design process, the role of metaphor in invention, and in his latest works, the relations between the organization of an organization and the organization of the space in which that organization does its work. These comments focus particularly on Don's interest in "generative processes," of "coming to see in a new way," as these are enabled through "reflection-in-action" and through the transience of "conversations with the materials of a situation." I propose that Don's persistent pursuit of the permanence of change was paradoxically both the driving force and also the foundation for his continuing quest—a quest that continues to live on in the multiple intersecting paths of his life and myriad writings.
