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news release

Attention: Editors and Science and Business Correspondents

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COMPLEXITY BOOK ADDRESSES ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

A new book by the Open University's Elizabeth McMillan illustrates how complexity science can be key to driving positive change in today's organizations.

Dr McMillan's book *Complexity, Organizations and Change* takes the ideas and insights of complexity science and illustrates how - when implemented in an organizational setting - they can lead to intelligent and sustainable 21st century organizations.

"It is about transforming the way people think about organizations, about their design, the way they operate and, most importantly, the people who co-create them," says Dr McMillan.

"Complexity offers alternative solutions and a fresh range of possibilities that can help address the raft of issues that organizations and individuals face, at all levels, in order that their organizations flourish and their working life is enriched."

Dr McMillan's book explains the history and development of complexity science to those who are either familiar with, or new to complexity science, or complexity systems (as it is also known as). The book describes key concepts and their use in theory and practice.

The concepts in the book are fleshed out with real life examples from organizations in the UK, Europe and the USA. It includes an in-depth case study of the Open University, where complexity principles were used as part of a successful strategic change intervention.

The book looks at how traditional approaches to strategy mesh within a complexity-based framework and suggests a number of real-life complexity based approaches to change.

In the book Dr McMillan introduces 12 principles based on her real life observations at the Open University. These may be used to encourage a complexity-based change process. An example of such a principle is stimulating change at the micro-level by focusing on people as individuals, encouraging them to think and behave differently.

Dr McMillan says; “Small changes constantly happening at this level can affect the larger systems and, over time, real changes can occur. A participative approach to envisioning the future and a self organizing response may prove more effective and less demanding on both people and resources than a traditional one with all the preplanning, analysis and resources that it involves.”

“*Complexity, Organization and Change* will appeal to anyone with an interest in complexity science and what it means for strategy, organization and management theory and organizational change. It is also an important book for anyone interested in how their organization could benefit from this exciting new science,” says Dr McMillan.

Editors’ Notes

Elizabeth McMillan is a Research Fellow in the Centre for Complexity and Change, Technology Faculty at the Open University where she co-founded the Complexity Science Research Centre. She is also co-founder and director of the UK Complexity Society and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, with many years of experience as a senior manager.

For more information on the Centre for Complexity and Change at the Open University click on <http://ccc.open.ac.uk/>

For information on the Complexity Science Research Centre click on <http://technology.open.ac.uk/ccc/csric>

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