

# ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

## SPACE AS A CHANGE AGENT IN GENERATING INTERACTION AND NEW RELATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

More and more international companies use physical space as a way to enhance creativity, create change and stimulate interaction among employees (Kristensen 2004; Doorley and Witthoft 2012). Research has shown that there is a strong link between work practice, learning and innovation in organisations (Brown & Duguid 1991). This importance to investigate space and spatial arrangements with focus on change in the organisation and the learning environment in the organisation has also been seen in the educational sector (Oblinger, 2006; Nussbaumer, 2014).

One of the recent examples in the educational sector using this approach is the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) in Kolding. During the summer of 2014, the university has been relocated to a new Campus Kolding ([www.sdu.dk](http://www.sdu.dk)).

One of the departments at campus Kolding is the Department of Entrepreneurship and Relationship Management (IER). The employees of IER used the relocation to the new campus as an opportunity to strengthen the IER profile and create change in the organisation through developing new educational tracks, generating new ways of teaching and collaborating with internal as well as external partners: companies, educational

institutions and the municipality in Kolding.

We will use IER as a case to investigate how space can support a change in the organisation, generate interaction and support new relations.

The theoretical framing is from change management, organisational and design literature. Our findings demonstrate how an organisational change has taken place at the new campus and how the space supported the changes and affected interaction at IER.

**Keywords:** Organisational change, space, identity, interaction, co-creation

### INTRODUCTION

For years, environments for working, redesign of offices, new ways of working and space planning have been subjected to research (e.g. Laing et.al. 1998; Grangaards 2009; Bakker 2012; Nussbaumer 2014). This tendency to create extraordinary spaces in workplaces has led to research and experiments with redesign and new ways of working (Laing et al. 1998), creation of social spaces that enable increased collaborative working (Luck, 2014) and the need to establish physical environments that can accommodate personal and individual workspaces within open spaces (Grangaards 2009).

Preliminary studies from the project "Design to Innovate" have shown that companies as GJD, Royal Copenhagen and Kähler use workspace and company areas to place themselves in a specific league to attract certain types of customers and collaboration with other companies ([www.d2i.dk](http://www.d2i.dk)). This trend of companies towards using space as a way to tell stories about who they are and how they work in order to attract customers and the right employees has also been seen for instance in companies like Google, Lego, Nike, Virgin, Johnson

& Johnson and Innocent (Groves & Knight 2010).

Research has also shown that there is a need for organisations to be more concerned about how to create space for interaction and learning (Paludan 2010). However, Brown & Duguid (1991) point out the need for more research on organisational learning in order to understand how people learn and communicate in organisations. This is supported by Hatch (2006) who indicates 'loose ends' in organisation theory concerning organisational learning and knowledge management in organisational change and organisational identity in relation to organisational culture and physical structure (p. 303).

In this paper, we will look at the way in which creation of space can be used as a change agent in generating interaction and new relations.

The paper is structured in five main sections, including this introduction explaining why the research is of interest to organisational theory on change, interaction and creation of new relations and design theory on how to create spaces for organisational interaction and learning. A section that explains the literature and theory, ending up with a framework for the analysis of the IER case in relation to the aim of this paper, which is to investigate how space can be used as a change agent to make improvements in the organisation. The following section explains how the data is gathered in order to evaluate and discuss the data. This section will further assess the quality of the data according to the claim of the research and the method used. In the following section, we will present and discuss our findings, ending up with conclusions and some perspectives for future research.

## LITERATURE AND THEORY

We have already stated that some of the literature concerning new ways of working, planning and re-arranging of space to support various kinds of working activities has been richly studied in the design literature as different ways of planning and arranging the physical space (e.g. Laing et al. 1998; Grangaards 2009; Plunkett & Reid 2014). We also found documentation of studies on the human factor in the built environment, in which certain types of users, e.g. the elderly, children, and disabled, have been subject to studies (Nussbaumer 2014; Rengel 2014). Furthermore, we found various types of case studies on the shaping of interior spaces including studies on different use of architectural elements e.g. material, form, patterns, expression, order, balance and enrichment (e.g. Rengel 2012; Plunkett & Reid 2014; Rengel 2014).

The design literature includes reports on how learning environments and education can be supported by space (Oblinger, D. G. 2006), how space can set the stage for creative collaboration (e.g. Doorley and Witthoft 2012) and, similarly, the design literature investigates how the physical context, the confined space, can restrict and

enable interaction and how the induced emotions of this framing can facilitate or reduce creative processes and interaction (Kristensen 2004). But nowhere in the design literature is the focus on how people in organisations can use space to change the organisation.

With this point of departure in the design literature on workspace planning, creative spaces and spaces for learning, the theoretical framing in this paper will also build on literature from design management, learning in organisations and organisational change literature.

The encouragement of organisational change and organisational learning is rooted in the human resource and management literature. The aim in this article is not to discuss the terms in the different research fields, but we are aware of the difference between the literature on organisational learning versus learning organisation (Stacey, 2003, Eaterby-Smith and Araujo, 1999). Due to the multidisciplinary stand we regard an organisation as the frame for people working and learning, neither as a living organism nor as an absolute metaphor. In regard to management literature, a way in which management can make changes in an organisation is by creating a process of change. One way of describing change was presented by Kotter (1996) as a series of eight-step processes concerning planning before implementation of change to ensure that the change is anchored in the organisational culture. But Kotter also points out that many changes are not successfully implemented in the organisation because managers do not have a clear vision of the change. In addition, the challenges in how to make people in the organisation learn about transformation in order to change have been a subject for research. March (1991) introduced a way to define organisational learning as exploration and exploitation and describes exploitation as the use of existing knowledge and resources to gain value from what is already known, e.g. by refining procedures in order to do things more efficiently. Exploration is to rethink knowledge and redeploy resources in previously unforeseen ways in order to create organisational change (Hatch and Cunliffe 2013, p. 305).

Another way to enhance and stimulate change and learning is described in action science as learning at individual, group, inter-group and organisational levels by facilitating various actions, so people will redesign their actions to learn (Argyris 1995, p. 25). These types of interaction and learning are similarly unfolded in organisational learning from diversity and facilitation of cultural transition (e.g. Hogan 2013) and in the literature concerning facilitation of multicultural groups (e.g. Hogan 2007). But none of the management and organisational change literature studies focused on how space can influence and support organisational change processes. Finally, Hatch and Schultz (2008) explain how creation of identity is important to an organisation as a way to create organisational change. In this line of thinking, we will in the following look into how identity can be seen as a way to create change in an organisation

in order to create a framework to analyse how space can support organisational change.

#### FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSING ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Hatch and Cunliffe (2013, p 309) explain how organisational change begins *in one part of the organisation and spreads to other parts through the dedication of resources and introduction of new activities, practices, and structures and then as the new becomes integrated with the old, organisational learning permits change to find its way into the core of the organisation's culture*. In relation to this, the authors state that organisational **identity** is important in organisational change processes in order for the employees to change their current understanding. According to Hatch and Cunliffe (2013), identity is present in the language of individuals and the way in which they talk about an organisation.

To change the identity of an organisation requires a process in which conversations between employees and external stakeholders can be facilitated as a part of aligning the identity dynamics (Hatch & Cunliffe 2013). Organisational identity is, therefore, an on-going social construction process enacted by interactions between internal and external stakeholders (Hatch & Schultz, 2002), which also indicates that organisational identity is created in a process that takes place between: who are we (Organisation's **culture**) and what is the **image** of us (Stakeholders' perception). Hatch and Schultz (2008, p. 55) describe this relationship between identity, culture and image as a process built in many layers of interpretation over time. Both culture and image are important factors for an organisation's identity, since it is co-created by internal and external stakeholders. Another pivotal element is the image that people inside the organisation create about it as a way to become attractive and to be supported by external stakeholders (Hatch and Schultz 2008). The image of an organisation includes the metaphors and stories which insiders have created about the organisation and how people outside the organisation perceive these.

The third element that supports the identity of an organisation is **vision**. According to Hatch and Schultz (2008) vision is important to the organisation's internal and external stakeholders to communicate direction and content and hence to attract collaboration partners for the organisation. Similarly, as pointed out by Kotter (1996), if the management of an organisation wants implementation of changes to be successful, the changes need to be rooted in a clear vision. According to Hatch and Schultz (2008, p 68), a vision can be described as: Who do we want to be (as an organisation) and what do we want to be known for? Hatch and Schultz (2008) explain how strategic vision, organisational culture, and stakeholder images can be seen as a jigsaw puzzle to create change of identity in an organisation. If one looks at them as pieces, they are incoherent, but put together,

they form an integrated whole that will help build strong corporate reputations (p. 12). Summing up, Hatch and Cunliffe (2013) introduce a framework about an organisation's identity as a means of aligning vision, culture and image (see figure 1).

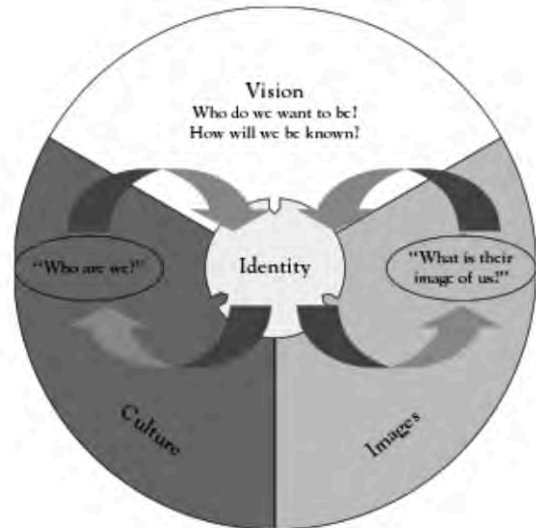


Figure 1. Framework foundation to discuss change programmes (Hatch and Schultz 2008, p. 68; Hatch and Cunliffe 2013, p. 317).

In the following, we will use this framework introduced by Hatch and Cunliffe (2013) to analyse the IER case to investigate how space can be used to create change in an organisation, generate interaction and build new relationships in the process.

#### DATA AND METHODS

The case study of the relocation of IER to the new campus in Kolding is a longitudinal study that has taken place over the last 4 years. First, the study has been followed before the relocation as a study on how to involve facilities management in the development of the new campus. The study continued, when the discussion about the relocation increased among staff and students as an on-going debate (observations, meetings, workshops and experiments on teaching and examination forms). The researchers of this paper have participated in several formal and informal meetings discussing how to accommodate, organise and arrange some of the new teaching facilities. The case of moving students and staff from the old university building to the new campus has been used as a teaching case, in which a group of students facilitated interviews with other students concerning issues in relation to moving to the new campus.

After the relocation, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with the former IER Head of Department (today Associate Dean) Torben Damgaard and the chief architect Lise Gandrup Jørgensen. One of the authors of this article participated in writing the IER communication strategy and also organised a series of design workshops for the department researchers in order to formulate a common vision on design research. Finally, the authors participated in the planning and

organising of a series of SDU Design Research Seminars aiming at introducing a space for the various departments to share knowledge and work together. Data from a space planning database recording the occupancy rate of the premises at the old as well as the new location has been used as secondary data together with records from campus council meetings.

## CAMPUS KOLDING

The Kolding Campus is one of six campuses of the University of Southern Denmark. Until June 2014, the campus was domiciled in a former hospital building with narrow corridors, few common areas and plenty of small single offices. The present campus manager P. Krogh Hansen states about the old university building: *"It had no common spaces. Students came in, took their classes and left again. As more than half of our students commute to Kolding, this was far from the ideal"* (Wortmann 2014/2015).

In the early years of the new millennium, the campus hosted Design and Communication/IDK (Faculty of Humanities), and IER (Faculty of Business and Social Sciences). The campus grew in number of students and staff, and along grew the need for a proper university building. It became evident that the old building could not accommodate the needs of a modern university. For several years the Municipality of Kolding had engaged in a discussion for a more significant profile as a university town. There was also a convergence of interests with the Region of Southern Denmark's strategy of putting design on the agenda as one of the cornerstones in its effort to brand and create more growth in the region.

This led to the vision of creating a campus with focus on design to support the Region's political profile as well as the design vision of the Municipality, and the university started a process of working closer with The Design School Kolding.

The Kolding Municipality offered a building site to SDU, right at the centre of Design City Kolding. This offer shaped the plan of a new campus as well as sufficient economic and political will to develop the project. As a part of the plan, SDU also decided to relocate the co-design and participatory innovation group SPIRE (Sønderborg Participatory Innovation Research Centre) of the Mads Clausen Institute (part of the Faculty of Engineering) together with the MSc education, IT Products Design, from the campus in Sønderborg to Kolding.

To get input for the new campus, the Property Agency, the legislative client, started a process in which the Agency asked stakeholders, students, teachers, researchers, programme directors, library staff and external partners with a potential interest in the university: What kind of university should it be? This investigation together with the functional requirements (e.g. number of students, square meters and norms) laid

the basis for the architectural competition won by Henning Larsen Architects. In 2014, finally, the new campus opened the doors to a 13,600 square metres triangular building for 2,500 university students and employees. A *"main station for open knowledge"* according to Associate Dean T. Damgaard (former IER Head of Department), and this "main station" as a basic idea for the new campus building was defined in unison by the architects, the building manager, developer and SDU employees.

## THE DESIGN OF THE CAMPUS

To support this, the campus is designed as an equilateral triangle, in which classrooms, offices and open terraces line the perimeter. The core of the building is a triangular atrium twisted as it ascends from the ground floor to the 6th floor. The decks leave a variation of space for student areas: circular sofa areas provide private areas for group work and long desks placed with view over the open atrium provide study areas. The open space in the centre also offers a variation of additional spaces for interaction, meetings, contemplation and learning. Each floor is designed in order to create crossovers between teachers, researchers and students by giving all users a legitimate presence on all floors as well as areas of immersion and quietude.

The open space in the centre is very different from the old campus, where students and guests visiting the university had no place to study and meet without attending a specific class. According to the Associate Dean and the chief architect, the common areas are a success because of the well-used space.

## SDU-DESIGN

The co-operation across faculties is the overall profile of the campus along with the strategic focus on SDU DESIGN (collaboration between SPIRE, IDK and IER) – a SDU initiative to enhance interdisciplinary in design research. Making students and researchers from different fields and departments work together to embrace interaction and student centred learning is the core idea of the new campus. This design approach to learning also plays a significant role in education, research and in the co-operation with public institutions and companies in the region.

## IER - DEPARTMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

IER had several reasons for embracing the idea of the new campus: the department was growing rapidly in terms of employees and students. The teachers were experimenting with new ways of teaching (e.g. blended learning), and the department has a strong tradition for research in close co-operation with business and the surrounding society. To IER, the strategy of the new



campus was to support a vision of an emergent process of changing the identity of IER. The aim was a department constantly open to new possibilities and co-creating with practice.

## Vision

Since the process started at the beginning of the millennium, the vision of the department has been debated among employees. In 2004, the department welcomed a new head of department from within the organisation. For some years, he had been a part of the vision process as head of studies and believed that in order to strengthen the IER vision, the space between people needed to be reinforced.

The old building restricted possibilities, e.g. for teaching in student camps or via a design approach experimenting with conceptualising and prototyping. The present Associate Dean and former Head of IER, T. Damgaard expects a change in the way IER operates and how it will evolve “...between the diverse interests of students and students, students and researchers and external companies...as a meeting place”

Over the years the IER vision stressed doing things in an emergent and collaborative way as an evolving process in close interaction and multidisciplinary collaboration with external partners such as private companies, local political systems and with other internal and external organisations. For IER employees the new building should create the frame to facilitate cross-disciplinarily. The vision was to create an open space where students and staff wanted to stay because they could identify with the idea of the place and the department’s vision of collaboration, interaction and transparency in the organisation.

According to the architect, the main intension from the very beginning was that the new building could help facilitate new approaches to teaching and make the organisation more transparent, making it easier to see and get inspired by each other. This was expressed in the architectural competition as a frame for knowledge to be shared in many different ways.

Right from the start, the heart of the new university has been collaborative spaces, as the chief architect states: the job of the architects has primarily been to provide “a lot of different spaces for collaboration with each other”. The design intensions of the architects were to make a short distance between spaces in order to ensure intimacy, the feeling of cohesion and enable people to see each other across spaces. The glass box meeting rooms, the desks along the perimeter of the atrium, the lounge areas, the stairs ascending from a large open space at the bottom of the building, the reading rooms and the visual lines into the library and canteen are elements introduced as answers to ‘how to make a transparent building with focus on interaction’.

## Culture

In the process of defining a vision for the department, it became clear that the way of teaching and doing things had created limitations for the organisation in terms of its development. The former Head of IER T. Damgaard explains that when seminars were held or when teachers were asked to teach together “...they did things in a different way...they took responsibility in a different way...but also when students attended seminars or were asked to do something together something new happened”. It was evident that this experimentation with teaching should be facilitated in the new campus.

Although creating new possibilities has been the focus of IER, not everybody has seen the changes as positive. Particularly on the subject of sharing offices in the new building, the discussion has been intense, as many of the staff members thrived in single offices and wanted the same privileges in the new building. Because of the resistance to sharing offices, originally, money was put aside to make experiments at the old university with open working spaces, alternative office environments, but it has not been possible to complete the experiments because of the opposition.

The office discussion ended in a compromise: managers and senior researchers/employees were allotted individual offices, and teachers, junior researchers and members of the administrative staff were to share (two or three together). A single attempt to establish a project office for a group of researchers was made, but after less than five months they moved to smaller offices.

Another experiment at the new campus is the IER project room for teaching, established on requests from some of the educational staff to have alternatives to the traditional teaching facilities. Although this was met by hesitation, especially by the head office of buildings and the service administration, negotiations with the technical staff as well as the project manager responsible for buying furniture for the new campus made it possible to arrange a small alternative teaching room. The space has turned out to be too small and at times had too many students for its size. The furniture has not been optimal in relation to the desired teaching requirements. One of the barriers of furnishing the room has been the regulation from the central purchase department. Another is the location of the room: tucked into an area without enough additional common space in close proximity to compensate (e.g. where group work could be transferred to). Finally, not all teachers have been informed about the existence of this room, and even the IER management was not aware of the possibility of an alternative use of a classroom.

The campus building is still very new and there are many restrictions on how to use the building. Hands on interaction, such as messy workshops, prototyping and materials on the white walls are not welcomed activities. As an example, a student preparing for exam had put up her materials on the walls with masking tape. She was requested by a member of the technical staff to remove the materials in order to protect the walls. This

also indicates that the proper and ‘legal’ form of learning is the traditional one and not the ‘messy’ way of design.

According to the former Head of IER T. Damgaard, things will change over time: *"It is a question whether the building sets the framework for what we do or we decide what to do and use the building as a framework... e.g. why don't we put small shelves to hold mobile phones or iPads in the toilet?"*

In October 2014, the building was challenged to its limits when 5-600 IER students from nearly all educational lines and semesters joined the same intensive course for one week with different tasks to solve in relation to challenges defined by seven private companies. According to the Head of Studies Jesper Piihl, the reason for trying the camp model as a way of learning was to get closer to real life problems and use theories in practice. During this week, learning was equal to project and problem based learning in practice. Every open space and meeting room available was used in many different ways. The traditional teaching facilities and the original set-up of furniture, e.g. in the library, the canteen and the reading room, was changed to accommodate the various needs for space. The experiment proved to be a success and the different types of space helped to accommodate the new requirements for teaching facilities.

### Image

The image created by IER employees puts an emphasis on interaction with multiple stakeholders from private and public institutions, local businesses, the political life, different kinds of educational organisations and users. In short, it is a matter of building new relationships externally as well as internally, as also stated in the new campus folder *"Syddansk Universitet, Kolding"* (2014).

An example of this is the Master programme of Design Management which is the outcome of joint efforts by two departments (IER and IDK) and an external partner, the Design School Kolding (DK). Other examples are large regional projects, e.g. Design to Innovate, D2i ([www.d2i.dk](http://www.d2i.dk)) and Design2Network ([www.design2network.dk](http://www.design2network.dk)), which are the result of joint efforts between the municipality, the region, DK, IER and private companies to attract business, innovate and create growth in the Region of Southern Denmark. The cooperation within SDU Design is an internal SDU action established as a strong collaboration partner to external organisations as well as an effort to break down the traditional academic boundaries and open up for collaboration with the outside world.

*"If research is supposed to concern the real world, it is a good thing that the university and the real world meet"* (Associate Dean and former Head of IER, T. Damgaard).

The challenge of collaborating and working together

across disciplines in the different departments, interacting and learning from each other, has in many ways been translated into the huge, open six storeys' high space in the centre of the new campus. Internally, the open space is transparent as it is possible to look across the space to the other departments at all floors. It is also possible to extend the more private department spaces into the big open space to share and exchange knowledge. Since the open space is a student working area, the students to a large extent act as agents across the space and they also represent the ways of working in the different departments. The more private areas of the various offices along the perimeter of the building have glass doors, so the transparency is extended into the offices and further out into the city. Large 2-3 storeys' high adjoining balconies cut into the building mass all the way into the heart of the building and further enhance the look out to the city.

In many ways the central space functions as an open arena for external communication, since activities in the new open areas have extended from next to nothing at the old campus to on-going activities at the new campus, from early morning till late in the evening. Similarly, a freelancer, who worked for the university for a period of four months, chose to create a workplace in the open space.

Compared to the former campus, the teaching facilities have been improved in terms of variation of space, size, shape and spaciousness. No matter the size, all teaching spaces because of their shape have a feeling of closeness and allow people to see each other. Even in the auditorium intended for 250 people this feeling is achieved: short distance between teacher and students due to curved shapes and steep seating.

### Identity

IER is located at the top floor furthest away from the many shared facilities and the classrooms. The floor mainly includes offices and some smaller meeting rooms as well as a larger 'Guest Café' with own kitchen and balcony. At the floor below, eight of the IER researchers working with design are seated together with the staff and students from SPIRE and the design researchers from IDK. This floor also hosts the campus manager and some additional meeting and teaching facilities.

As such, the fifth floor is the interdisciplinary staff floor. At the floor below, the fourth floor, the remaining IDK researchers are located together with many of the teaching facilities, student administration and facilities management. All major common facilities such as canteen, library and the large auditorium are located on the remaining two downstairs floors. SPIRE researchers are the only staff group at campus working in an open office.

The right or privilege to have one's own office has been difficult for most IER employees to set aside. The

reasons may be multiple: tradition, a hierarchy of staff or the possibility of creating a personal office identity and making it “homely”. Thus, there are examples of employees who have put up draped curtains stitched on with staples although there are external shutters to be adjusted or closed individually in each office (some offices do have great problems with direct sunlight). Examples also include staff members shielding themselves with posters and shelving to prevent others from looking into the office, and staff equipping offices with coffee machine and cups despite the fact that there are staff kitchenettes at each deck. This also caused a debate among employees on how to change the glass doors into a less transparent solution to gain more privacy.

Another on-going debate is the change regarding the lunchroom. At the old campus, IER had a lunchroom where employees met for lunch and exchanged ideas for cooperation and projects, debated various subjects, provided experience from teaching and got to know each other in a more relaxed atmosphere. At the new campus no department lunchroom was foreseen, but the head of IER made arrangements to use the guest café - a large, more exclusive meeting room with kitchen and a balcony with a view of the city. The lunchroom in the new building lacks the intimacy and the homeliness of the old, and the fact that the room can be booked for other arrangements makes it difficult to know if and when the employees may have lunch there. With the purpose of recreating and supporting the feeling of an IER identity, the department board has initiated the establishment of a new lunch area near the kitchenette at the upper floor (6<sup>th</sup> floor).

## EVALUATION OF DATA

To some extent, this diverse data collection presents an advantage, but on the other hand the data is very uneven and sometimes lacks consistency and would have benefitted from a more systematic way of collecting. Instead, the data is at times collected when least expected because both authors are a part of the IER organisation.

The fact that the authors themselves are involved in the case might present a problem because of an implicit understanding of what is going on as well as a degree of organisational myopia. So to perform the study again, the process would benefit from an outsider’s perspective in relation to the interpretation of the data. On the other hand, much of the data is interpreted and validated during the process directly and indirectly in the discussions with colleagues, students and external collaborators.

*After all, man is, in his ordinary way, a very competent knower, and qualitative common-sense knowing is not replaced by quantitative knowing.... This is not to say that such common sense naturalistic observation is objective, dependable, or unbiased. But it is all that we*

*have. It is the only route to knowledge – noisy, fallible, and biased though it be* (Campbell 1975)

## DISCUSSION

According to the former IER Head of Department T. Damgaard as well as the architect L.G. Jørgensen, the main intention of the building to create a *central station for open knowledge* that could facilitate cross-disciplinarity has been fulfilled.

For the staff the contrast to the old building is clear: modern design, shared offices, kitchenettes at each floor instead of staff/lunch-rooms and little privacy, e.g. the office doors are made of window glass. However, the teaching facilities have, compared to the previous campus, more variation of space in terms of size, shapes and spaciousness. There are many places where staff, students, guests and various visitors can meet, collaborate and interact with each other.

The new surroundings have created new opportunities compared to the old campus. The former IER Head of Department T. Damgaard does not believe in *the complete* solution because it is not possible to imagine all kinds of situations: “... *the task is now to take it in (authors: the building) and make it better*”.

Despite all challenges, the move to the new campus has initiated a change process and influenced the identity and self-understanding of the employees at IER. The new environment and the increased focus on design as part of branding the new campus has enhanced new ways of doing things at IER, e.g. a strategy workshop for all employees facilitated by the use of graphic process tools, internal workshops on design research and how to develop a particular IER design profile which can be seen as a series of patterned events and improved interactions in the workplace as an outcome of changed location (Luck 2014, p. 11).

The central SDU management expressed a desire for stronger department profiles at the various campuses. The IER management accepted this challenge and aims to create a stronger profile and give IER *identity*. According to the former IER Head of Department T. Damgaard at three levels:

- *Create opportunities*
- *Give people inspiration*
- *Give people the skills to implement*

To strengthen the IER identity, the goal of the new campus is to create opportunities by doing things in a more emergent and collaborative way as an evolving process in close interaction and multidisciplinary collaboration with external partners - supporting and developing the department’s *visions*.

*“During the 1990s, the vision, hardly defined, was specified by finding ways for it to be played, but it was not perfect ... but at least it made something possible”* (former IER Head of Department T. Damgaard). This is

coherent with what theory prescribes: the vision is critical to an organisation in order to have a clear identity and direction (Kotter, 1996; Hatch and Schultz, 2008).

Employees at IER have a long tradition for working multidisciplinary and collaborating with industry across professional communities (e.g. clusters), and hence it made sense to support the region's demand on a design agenda (working towards a regional design cluster). In the quest to find a common playground, design has worked as the creative constraint or a way to make people focus, not only to think but also to 'think' in action. This is in line with Luck (2014, p. 10) who found that multidisciplinary as a way of working seems to be clearly evident in a group with a designer attitude.

Simultaneously, employees at IER were inspired to change the identity in the interaction with these new partners, industry, and the public agents (municipality and region). People at IER grasped opportunities as they emerged. When SPIRE moved to Campus Kolding, further collaboration with DK became possible and made IER an attractive partner to the other stakeholders because of the contribution of (business and management) competences that were different from and complementary to the other partners.

Last but not least giving people the right skills to implement is, according to the former IER Head of Department T. Damgaard, a management task and responsibility: *"We must have some inspiring people to show how people can do it ... teach them by doing it by taking them through it – doing it hands on.* In this respect, the *main station for open knowledge* has not yet succeeded because *"it is not yet spread out to everyone in the organisation"* as something they can be *"learning from or contributing to"*. It is not yet sufficiently integrated in the **culture**, and as Torben Damgaard further states: *"...at IER design is a secondary focus because of many other projects ... for us it is not essential, but it is a new opportunity"*. The point of implementation in the culture and *"who we are"* are according to Hatch and Cunliffe (2013) affected by the change of an organisation's identity.

The identity of IER is the organisation's **vision, image** and **culture** which Hatch and Schultz (2008, p. 55) describe as a process of building in many layers of interpretation over time. In this sense, it is something that evolves.

The analysis have shown that as an initiator the new building made it possible for people to unfold the IER identity, evolve the vision and slowly change the culture into an attractive partner (in design). We have found that the case of IER is one of seizing opportunities in collaboration with e.g. SDU Design (the three internal departments), the Design School Kolding, the Region and the Municipality and together they have formed a strong story about a design campus. This has provided IER with a strong identity as a collaborative partner in

the field across Design, Entrepreneurship and Relationship Management. This corresponds well with the wish expressed by top management for a stronger identity of departments and campuses.

The campus in Kolding has come a long way compared to the old building and its inherent limitations, but maybe not far enough in terms of collaborative, tangible and visually interactive spaces. The campus is an aesthetically pleasing building, but it is designed as a place for classic thinking and interaction performed as dialogue. It is not designed for alternative ways of interaction and a designer way of learning e.g. experimenting with messy prototyping, large scale visualizing and organisational theatre. As T. Damgaard states: *"At IER the tangible (e.g. theatre lab) and the visual approach (e.g. prototyping) can be a vital inspiration in order to go from ideas to action, to implement our ideas"*.

Right now, a negotiation is going on for workshop facilities in a close-by external building, which means that the campus will be divided into two locations: one for the 'designer stuff' and one for the more traditional approach to learning. Then the spill over effect of design (methods and tools) as a way of *doing* becomes less visible.

## CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

The paper contributes with an investigation of how space can influence the interaction and the identity of an organisation.

As it is demonstrated, in many ways IER used the opportunity offered by the new campus to create change in the organisation, develop new educational tracks, and generate new ways of teaching and collaborating. Using Hatch and Schultz's framework we have shown how space can influence the vision, the image and the culture and thereby the identity of an organisation.

The challenges in organisational change, creation of space and how space can be used as a change agent to generate interaction and new relations is interesting for the field of design, especially when it comes to actually creating new spaces for interaction and learning, as well as for design to be able to define the right spatial challenges. For managers of organisations in change processes it is of vital importance that they are able to define the spatial challenges and the means to perform the change – and, as the case shows, design could be one of those means.

The findings are also of interest to applied research on design, design management, change management and organisational learning literature. The case deals with the relation between design of physical space and its impact on the practice of organisational interaction and learning. The findings are interesting as a frame for how to understand, diagnose and analyse the connection between space, an organisation's identity and design as organisational practice. The study has shown that design



and operationalization of space can influence organisational change because space influences relations between people who interact in that space - positively and negatively. This seems to have been overlooked in the literature.

Although the research is based on a single case study, we believe that the case presented some interesting insights on how space can influence interaction and building relationships among colleagues within the educational sector. The usefulness of the framework needs further investigation in other organisations within the educational sector. It might also be interesting to test the framework in private and other public organisations dealing with processes of change and creation of space for interaction.

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