

INTREPID 2nd Training School, Barcelona Prototypes

Nes(x)t Space

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Introduction

In our vision, the University of the Future must play an active role in society. We see the future university as a community builder for a **sustainable culture**. We want to focus on the concept of culture, since current higher education institutions are mainly foundational knowledge based and less space is dedicated to the acquisition of other skills. There is a reductionist approach to knowledge and a market-orientation that leads to quantification and competition, in which the students are mostly seen as clients or consumers. This is not a paradigm that will work when faced with the challenges of our time. A change to a sustainable society must include a change in values, knowledge, and skills, and even include wisdom as a goal to be achieved.

In our perspective, future universities will play a key role in creating and communicating this sustainable culture, but to accomplish this goal they have to focus not only in foundational knowledge but also include in their programs the possibility to develop life skills/ transversal skills, values, as well as inter- and transdisciplinary competencies.

For this to be achieved the university can not be a closed system - where there are no interchanges with the outside - but has to be connected with the society. That's why we would like to act in a space inside the frontiers of the university and then open it to the neighborhood, the city, and the world.

Purpose

Our purpose is to create a generative space for learning. That means to integrate into the universities a space for learning not focused on curricula but directed to an open learning space developed by the community itself.

The role of the university as an institution will be to facilitate this community in order to create a sustainable culture able to address the three divides referred by Otto Scharmer¹ as: the ecological divide (SELF vs. NATURE), the social divide (SELF vs. OTHER), and the spiritual divide (SELF vs. SELF).

Prototype

In our prototype, we focus on creating a space where the community of university and surrounding society can meet. This is for us the first action to build and facilitate the learning community. In our vision, this community is multicultural and intergenerational, incorporating all the people who want to join it.

¹ Scharmer, O.C., 2016. *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it emerges* Second Edi., Berret-Koehler Publishers, Inc.



The first problem that we found in the environment of the university is that there is a divide between the university life and the outside life. It seems that in university people just eat, learn and work - universities provide space for these tasks and needs - however, other important dimensions of daily life (e.g. relationships, ...) are completely excluded from it - there is no space for them in the university's environment. We would like to create a modular space to enable the possibility to include more aspects of the daily life in the university.

For this reason, our prototype aims to create a space:

- to reflect and connect with yourself (Storytelling booth);
- an open space for music, theatre, and performance in general;
- to relax;
- to release tension and stress;
- to share ideas, art, and knowledge in all of its forms;
- to try, experiment and fail.

It is important to remark that we find that not every university is at the same stage in its development in terms of community building. In the case of the Campus Besos of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, there is a commitment to the surrounding society but not a strong community inside. For this reason, if we imagine the prototype in this campus, we think that first we need to create a space to facilitate the creation of an active university community. The second stage would be to open this space to the local community so that all stakeholders become active users of the space.

An important point in our vision is that this space will be a **nesting space** - this is in contrast with the result-oriented vision that dominates the educational system - we think it is a key aspect to building a community able to co-create a sustainable culture.

This space is oriented to create community and not to create divides, on the contrary the objective is to have a space that embraces diversity, and from it, creates sustainable and inclusive values shared by the community.

Conclusions

The future university must open its spaces to different ways of learning to address society's needs, therefore we reflected on the separation that university has regarding needs, skills, and challenges of society. We see that the first action to be carried out by the university, to take on the role of community builder for a sustainable culture, is to rethink itself in order to

be able to create a Nest Space, a generative space for learning. The purpose of this space is to facilitate a learning community capable of embracing diversity and address society's needs, coming together to build a sustainable culture.

