Nordic Life Design

A holistic approach and attitude to life

Kirsten Bonde Sørensen

When discussing future education, we tend to focus on defining future competencies and discussions on preparing students for an everchanging labor market with job titles we cannot yet imagine. We tend to oversee that our students, for years, have been among the human beings characterized as having the highest degree of mental challenges, which indicates a real need not only for new initiatives but for radical transformations in education. Initiatives that represent a more humanistic and holistic view, combining a broader focus on education, including newer knowledge and a clear and heavy focus on students' lives, well-being, and vitality. This paper describes Nordic Life Design, a learning concept rooted in design theory and -practice, including knowledge from cognition, creativity, and brain science. The intention is to educate student not only for working life in a complex and ever-changing world, but for life in general. The paper adds examples of incorporating the concept in the higher education curriculum.

Keywords: future education; paradigmatic shift; values; reframing; life design attitude

Our paradigmatic shift demands a new approach and mindset

We are in the middle of a paradigmatic shift, moving from an industrial society dominated by analysis, control, streamlining and order into a learning society dominated by creativity, intuition, chaos, and change. According to Wagner (2014) the paradigmatic shift has created an ever-widening skill gap between what schools are teaching and what buyers need. Nevertheless, there is an even more essential and ever-widening gap between what schools are teaching and what the students need to create a good and meaningful life. The move from the industrial society into the learning and knowledge society is also a move from industrial workers to knowledge workers, from life in stability and control into life in unpredictability, uncertainty, and change - and a life where knowledge workers are searching not for money, but for meaning (Sinek, 2009, 2017). This movement creates chaos, stress, insecurity, and most of all, a need for learning new human skills, competencies, and ways of being. Predicting the future is difficult, but as Wells and Claxton (2008) argues, one thing seems clear: "Students will need to be better equipped to successfully navigate the increasingly complex and ill-defined nature of life in the 21st century". This paper considers mental health issues to be related to this paradigmatic shift.

Mental health among students

Several reports demonstrate a high level of stress also among young people in higher education, in Denmark 33% feel a high level of stress (EVA, 2019). In the US 87% of students have experienced stress during their college years. 45% of college students claim to go through "more than average stress." Only 11% of students in the US sleep well. A Uni Health study in the UK (unihealth.uk.com, May 2019) found that 80% of those studying in higher education reported symptoms of stress or anxiety. Numbers that only have increased with the Covid crisis due to a recent report by American Psychological Association, in which stress is termed 'a national mental health crises'.

Experts present various reasons for the mental health crisis among young people: some point to increased use of SoMe and FOMO (fear of missing out) (Rose,2019) or the future precarious working life (Hyggen, 2019) the

challenging structural frameworks in education (Warming, 2019) or a double pressure: a social and a professional pressure (Ejrnæs, 2019). Katznelson (2018), professor and leader of the Center for Youth Research, directly points to industrial values, arguing that the performance culture limits young people in general. Young people feel controlled by external factors as outer requirements and expectations from educational institutions, societal norms, like being successful and creating a happy life. In a recent publication, eleven researchers (Görlich et al., 2019) argue current that vulnerability is changing expression. Till now, it has been thoroughly demonstrated that social heritage is crucial for young people's level of education, life chances and well-being. Now middle-class youth are increasingly being affected as well.

Katznelson (2018) recommends that young people learn life skills and list several things important for young people to learn: young people must learn to sense themselves and understand what is essential and valuable to them and what they need. Also, young people need to learn to think creatively, learn flexible thinking, and think in plan a, b and c. To summarize, Katznelson argues, young people need "tools for life's maze".

In a student research at Danish School of Media and Journalism on 'Mental health among student' a class consisting of 35 participating students conducted a research including 175 students, another class consisting of 98 participating students conducted a research including 490 students. From this research one significant insight was, how students predominantly consider mental health to be a private issue that includes feeling guilty and shameful. An insight confirmed by Petersen in Görlich et al. (2019, 82).

Definition of mental health

There are varying definitions of mental health. In this research, we apply the definition made by the World Health Organization, which is "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can make a contribution to his or her community". This definition includes both an inner and an outer focus. The crucial question is How? and not most minor Where? - and additionally, who owns this problem? However, the definition also leaves many questions to clarify definitions, like What includes 'realizing own abilities'? How to define 'the normal stresses of life'? However, as defined by WHO, mental health can only be achieved if students can cope with the everchanging surroundings. Before 'realizing own abilities', 'coping with normal stresses of life', a crucial factor will be to cope with the VUCA world (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) – an acronym describing the world as Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity. VUCA world describes the unpredictable nature of the world at stake, as the situation of COVID 19. A claim that will be elaborated in the following section about educational development and 'change agents' in education.

Recommendations for future education

Researching recommendations for future education is relatively comprehensive. This paper focus on learning experts, who argue education needs a transformation (Robinson, 2009, 2016, 2020 Claxton 2004, 2018, Wagner, 2014, Kreluik et al. 2013, OECD, 2018). This research builds on OECD's (2018) recommendations concerning future skills and future education. OECD argues young people must become 'change agents' (2018): young people need 'a broad set of knowledge, skills, approaches and values in action'. These skills are all described as 'transformative skills' and constitute relevant meta-skills or -competencies:

- Creating new value – to think creatively, create new knowledge, collaboration, co-creation, collaboration, curiosity, open-mindedness
- Reconciling/balancing tensions and dilemmas - see more perspectives, systemic thinking, understanding others, empathy.
- Take responsibility
- To see consequences - self-regulation, self-control, confidence in one's abilities.

Some will argue that not all of us must become change agents. However, if we think of our grandparents, they represent human beings from another time of history and another approach to life. Today, we need another approach, attitudes, and skills to embrace a world far more complex and in constant change.

Reframing industrial values into new values that fit our learning society

The above insights open to new questions related to essential concepts as 'learning', 'creativity' and 'life & human beings'. Moving into a new paradigm there is a need for reframing values and understandings:

A 'new' understanding of learning & learners

There are many discussions on what students should learn. Yet, as we do not know the future and what type

of knowledge and methods we need, the most important thing is learning to learn, and even learning to unlearn and relearn (Grant, 2021). Learning is considered an essential part of well-being:

To learning experts (Illeris, 2014, Lucas & Claxton, 2009) learning is not limited to school and education. It reaches everywhere and throughout life as a ubiquitous feature of life. To Lucas & Claxton, lifelong learning is built into our evolutionary bones and explain that "People who are used to learning and skilled at it, are less likely to be caught on the hop when circumstances change. They are more ready to rise to the challenge…" To Lucas & Claxton, lifelong learning is not a choice but an inevitability, moreover. Also, learning is related to well-being, achieved by choosing worthwhile forms of difficulty to engage in, in a self-chosen challenge.

The researchers even argue that the health of individuals, communities and societies depends on learning encouragement. People live and age better when they have the opportunity and the desire to learn new things. There are different paradigms within learning: the behavioristic view of learning is rooted in the industrial society, whereas learning described by Lucas and Claxton (2009) as well as transformative learning described by Illeris (2014) and Mezirow (1996) represent the constructivist perspective where learners continuously interpret their sense of existence to create meaning or develop alternative views. A perspective relevant in to 4-foci model (to be presented) and relevant in training students to create value and meaning in their lives.

In a 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2020) society is in a constant change, which adds some far-reaching demands to our learning, as it reaches everywhere and throughout life and is not limited to school and education. Due to Illeris (2014), constant change is actualizing the concept of 'transformative learning'. Everything is constantly changing, like identity formation and -reformation, young people's self-world and transformative learning. Mezirow (1996) introduced the concept: the transformative learning theory, which he characterizes as a type of learning and "the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (p. 162). Transformative learning can help us broaden our perspectives, transform outdated values and beliefs, it can help us rethink and unlearn. We often think of intelligence as the ability to think and learn, but in an increasingly complex and changing world, another trait is even more important, the ability to rethink and unlearn (Grant, 2021)

Figure 1. Illustration of transformative learning (Kali, Y. 2016)

Precondition for learning and becoming a successful learner is attitude, beliefs and assumptions. Carol Dweck (2006) demonstrated that beliefs remain open to modification also in adulthood. Dweck studies human motivation and claims two mindsets: a 'growth mindset' opposite to a 'fixed mindset'. Whether conscious or subconscious, our basic beliefs are compelling. Dweck argues our beliefs strongly "affect what we want and whether we succeed in getting it." Much of what we think we understand of our personality comes from our "mindset", which propels us and prevents us from fulfilling our potential. Likewise, Resnick and Perkins have revised the concept of intelligence to focus more on qualities of the mind that are malleable than those that are supposedly fixed, and therefore beyond the educator's ability to influence. Resnick defines intelligence as 'the total of one's habits of mind'. Lucas and Claxton elaborate, "…that in fields such as sports and music, where the idea of innate 'talent' is firmly embedded, it turns out, that these factors play a much smaller role than commonly thought, and some even question whether they exist at all".

Based on this knowledge teachers ought to create higher awareness on how to become successful learners and the crucial preconditions for learning: attitude, beliefs, and assumptions. Additionally, we need to incorporate knowledge about 'embodied cognition' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For years, we thought human beings were thinking and perceiving only with their brains, which is the reason for our traditional mentalistic types of learning that separate the mind from the body. However, according to embodied cognition, cognition is shaped by aspects of the entire body. This recognition accentuates the values in creative, designerly and

aesthetic learning principles, that makes learning more effective (Austring & Sørensen, 2006).

A 'new' understanding of creativity

People often assume that the term creativity only applies to ideas and even to breakthrough ideas – a focus on the so-called big-C rather than little-c creativity (Kaufman & Beghotto, 2009). Also, in the knowledge economy, creativity is seen as a goal-oriented competence used for idea development and innovation in a workplace (Stepper-Larsen, 2011). However, in creativity research, creativity is not restricted to isolated mental processes, which can materialize everywhere, instead creativity is seen as a socio-cultural phenomenon and considered an essential way of creating ourselves and in changing perspectives and worldviews. This view of creativity relocates creativity from inside individual minds to the material, symbolic and social world of culture, also termed cultural psychology (Tanggaard, 2015 in Gillespie et al., 2015)

For years ago, Maxine Greene, an American educational philosopher, argued that young people have 'to create themselves' (Greene, 1978, 1995). They must create value and meaning in their lives. In the socio-cultural field of creativity research, creativity is considered an essential resource in constructing and developing a person's identity (Bardot, 2008, Bardot & Lubart, 2012, Getz & Lubart, 1998). Also, creativity contributes to setting one's course in life and defining one's orientation. Thus, creativity represents an essential resource in identity construction and the development of 'a life project'. To help youth build their identity and life project is a valuable goal of educational systems (Valverde, Sovet & Lubart, 2017). Creativity concerning identity construction and life projects is rooted in and an example of 'mini-c creativity' (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). A parallel to Zittouns (2015) description of Life Creativity is Hammershøj (2014), who claims creativity is a question of bildung. Bildung is a German word and describes the relationship between the individual and the world. The basic assumption is that the formation of the personality can only occur through the transcendence of the self into the social (Schmidt, 1999).

As formation is an essential, but overseen, part of education, the above knowledge is relevant in future education. As Maxine Greene argues, "Part of teaching is helping people create themselves". Future education needs to be better at helping students create themselves, attune to a more creative attitude and recognize creativity as an essential human capacity in life (Lucas, 2019, Melles et al. 2013).

A 'new' understanding of 'life' as a creative learning process and 'human beings' as creators of value and meaning in life

Young people are dominated by the performance culture (Katznelson, 2018) and believe that life is a straight and successful up-going line filled with happy Insta-moments. However, normal life is filled with ups and downs, joys and sorrows, and fate and freedom. As Knoop (2015) argues: "It is essential to understand the complementary relationship from birth to death. We live a self-organizing life under compelling circumstances - that means we both must come to terms with and create. It is both and every single second throughout life". Presenting life as a creative learning process reframes 'life' from as 'a performance' into life as an exciting playground and learning process.

Being a creator of our lives is also accentuated with newer knowledge in cognition and brain science. We can rewire our brains and our habitual thoughts and behavior (Langer, 2009, 2016). Also, we can control our thought, and thus our emotions (David, 2016). Despite this not new knowledge, we still need to use and spread this knowledge to students. We can control our attention towards our dominating thoughts (also termed meta-cognitive therapy, (Wells, A. 2011, Callesen, P. 2017) is a simple but effective method and treatment to overcome stress and other mental challenges. Likewise, 'emotional agility' (David, 2016) and related methods can help students. Working with our imagination and our thoughts are related to our creative way of thinking and doing. Therefore, our creativity is a crucial and central human resource that we need to strengthen and cultivate – particularly in education

In cultural psychology creativity, there are different suggestions to how life can be seen as a creative process. Tanggard 2015) considers the conduct of life itself to be a creative act and argues that we need to study everyday life's creative pathways. Hammershøj (2014) argues creativity is a question of Bildung and compares life to a creative process. 'Life-creativity' is defined as a way to create a life-path, a 'possibility thinking' (Craft, 2000). Life-creativity is presented as the contrary of automatism or constrained repetition - a parallel to Langer's definition of 'mindful' opposed to 'mindless' living (Langer, 2016).

The design approach represents a 'new' creative and holistic approach

Opposite to creativity, design is a well-described creative profession with a research foundation. However, to many, design still refers to product design like a beautiful lamp or chair, or some might think of interaction

design as Apple products or the like, but design is much more than that. In the last decades, there has been an increasing interest in the underlying creative process, approach, and mindset behind the final solutions. The designer is characterized by an overall design approach, an attitude (Boland & Collopy, 2004, Michlewski, 2014) and an additional practice. Design has increased attention as design represents an approach that differs radically from the rational and analytic approach, which fit the industrial age's linearity and predictability (Boland & Collopy, 2004, Michlewski, 2014).

In the last decades, design has proven to be a valuable approach in various fields (designcouncil.co.uk). In the history of design, the understanding and practice of design have moved from 1st order of design to 4th order of design (Buchanan, 2001); from graphic design to the design of complex systems. Design has been introduced as 'a process' and 'a method' (Lawson, 2005, Lawson & Dorst,2009); 'a revolution' (Fuller, 1964, Sanders, 2006); a 'new' culture' (Nelson & Stolterman, 2012); as 'designerly ways' of knowing and being (Cross, 1982) and a 'new' attitude (Boland & Collopy, 2004, Michlewski, 2014, Rawsthorn, 2018). In 1957 Fuller introduced the concept of 'Comprehensive Anticipatory Design Science' and argued that the world needed a 'design science revolution'. Fuller coined the term the 'comprehensive designer', asserting that design could be more than a stage in the manufacturing process associated with the Cold War industry; it could be 'a a world-saving way of life' (Chu & Trujillo, 2009). In that sense, Fuller was the first person to use design thinking for planetary sustainability. Today, we often distinguish between different types of sustainability: human, social, economic, and environmental sustainability (Godland, 2002). Presumably, Fuller was focused on economic and environmental sustainability.

This paper argues it is time for elaborating and developing Fuller's concept and introducing design not only as a revolutionary approach to planetary sustainability, but as a broader and more holistic type of sustainability that also includes the individual, human life. Training human beings to become 'holistic designers', not only in the world but also in their lives, could be an answer and a solution to the increasing and worrying number of people, particularly young students, who fail to thrive.

Nordic life design

Nordic Life Design is a learning concept that aims at helping and empowering students to become better prepared for a complex, ambiguous and everchanging world. Nordic Life Design is aimed at enlarging students' perspectives and relationships to others and to themselves. Nordic Life Design (includes a 4-foci model that works together with a Nordic Life Design Attitude. The concept represents a holistic learning concept that breaks with the current and industrial based assumption that educational institutions should focus only on educating students for their professional lives. The research recommends that educational institutions should have two precise tasks:

1. educating students for life – offering creative life mastery skills and
2. educating students with skills, competencies, and ways of being relevant in a complex and everchanging world – offering a design attitude including design skills and -competencies.

The concept seeks to meet with current needs among students, but it also seeks to treat the cause of the problem: Students need both concrete knowledge and life mastery skills (Katznelson, 2018) and knowledge, skills and competencies that fits the VUCA world (OECD, 2018). However, from our student research, being challenged by stress or other mental issues, the students feel guilt and shame, which points to a need for reframing this problem and turning it into a structural problem belonging to educational institutions. The problem is highly current as Görlich et al. (2019) claim any student is now potentially vulnerable.

Nordic Life Design sees life as 'a creative learning process' and human beings as 'designers in their lives' and 'co-designers in other people's lives and the world'. In that sense the concept also seeks to challenge our industrial values, performance culture and focus on the individual. Instead, we suggest we need to become *designers in our own lives* and *co-designers in other people's lives* and seeing life as a creative learning process. The concept is based on existing research. In design theory design is described as a 'multifaceted nature' with various definitions and activities (Lawson & Dorst, 2009, Lawson, 2005). In 2004 Boland & Collopy introduced the notions' Design Attitude' as opposed to 'Decision Attitude'. The authors claimed business education needed a new approach. Inspired by Frank Gehry's designerly approach to business, they introduced the creative 'Design Attitude' that stood in contrast to the rational and analytic 'Decision Attitude'. Later, based on a study of designers working in organizations, Michlewski (2016) made a deeper characterization of the notion of 'Design Attitude' describing five characteristics.
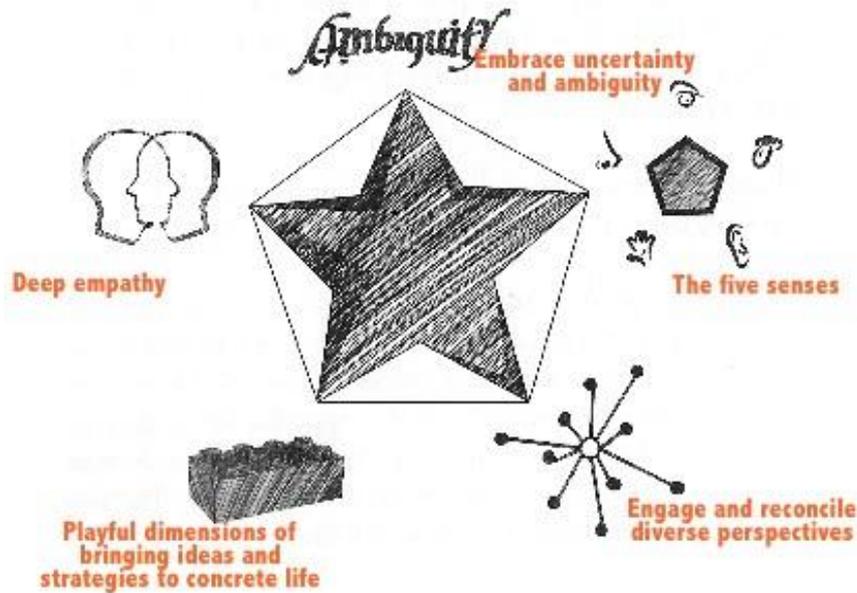
Figure 2. Design attitude (Michlewski, 2014)

However, Michlewski's definition of 'design attitude' is based on studies in business organizations and focuses on design as a profession in organizations, that means work-life. In an overall perspective, 'the decision attitude' and 'the design attitude' can be seen as stereotypes that represent different mindsets in the industrial society and the approaching knowledge- and learning society. In this paradigmatic shift the industrial values (represented in an intense focus on measurement, control, and efficiency) and activities (like thinking primarily rationally, analytically, and linear etc.) are outdated and prevent us from adapting to this 'new' knowledge- and learning society. Rashid (2021) distinguishes between an industrial society focused on 'measurement' and a society focused on human beings and on 'sensing and being'. He argues, people are "drowning in their everyday lives"- they have difficulties sensing themselves, living a life, increasingly dominated by external control, unpredictability, and a growing loss of control (2021, 74). To Rashid, this explains the growing numbers of stress and mental challenges among people, and young people (Katznelson, 2019). To adopt to this paradigmatic shift, we need to be able to think in new ways, to approach increasingly complex problems, to be in chaos and most of all, to include our human capacities: our senses, emotions, creativity, intuition etc. These human capacities are crucial and a precondition for sensing yourself. Consequently, Nordic Life Design includes a 4-foki model, that accentuates 'an inner focus' and the relationship to other foci. Training a life design attitude includes both imagining, different types of thinking, ways of being as well as concrete designerly activities. Nordic Life Design Attitude consists of nine elements that root in Michlewski's characteristics. Yet, some of the characteristics are defined in other ways that include more precise descriptions that refer to the activities in Nordic Life Design, e.g. 'engage or reconcile diverse perspectives' are described as the design activity: 'framing/ reframing'. Likewise, 'playful dimension…' is explained as 'thinking with your hands, materializing and expressing yourself'. The descriptions are based on other researchers' characteristics of design activities (Lawson, 2005, Lawson & Dorst, 2009, Kolko, 2010). Additionally, we have added elements that are central in life, like 'being open minded, focused and trying things out' (Burnett & Evans, 2016) and of course the crucial 'understanding our body and brain, thoughts, and emotions', which is crucial in the life design attitude and its inner focus.
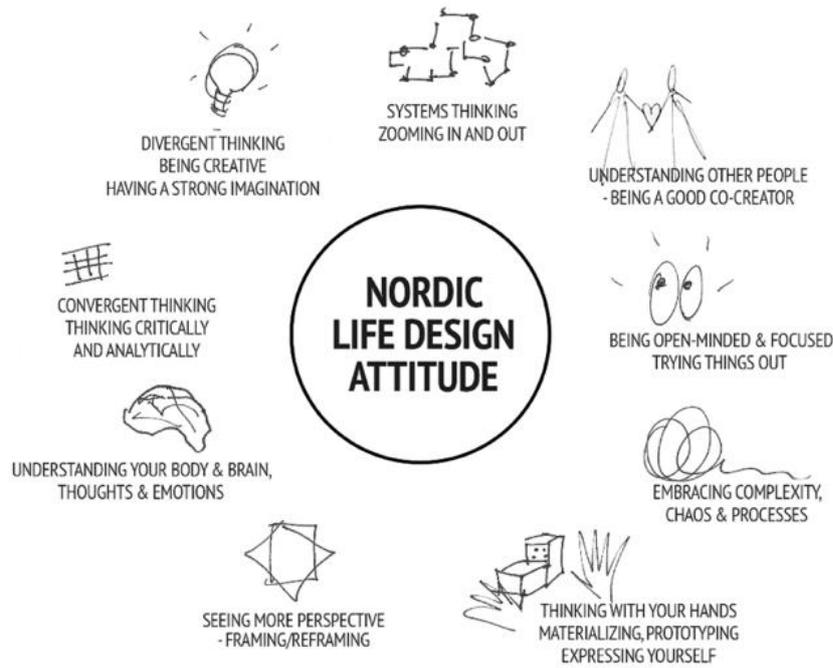
Figure 3. Nordic life design attitude

The 4-Foci model

Nordic Life Design Attitude works together with the 4-Foci Model, which accentuates the power in changing perspective and reframing. Applying the 4-Foci Model accentuates seeing more perspectives on life issues - could also be a problem, an idea e.g. If a person wants to become a writer or a debater, how can he possibly reframe his ideas in a way that creates value and meaning in a business context? Or for other people? Or in the world? Taking these different perspectives and related questions will help broaden a problem or an idea or even help to identify what and how to act from these different perspectives.
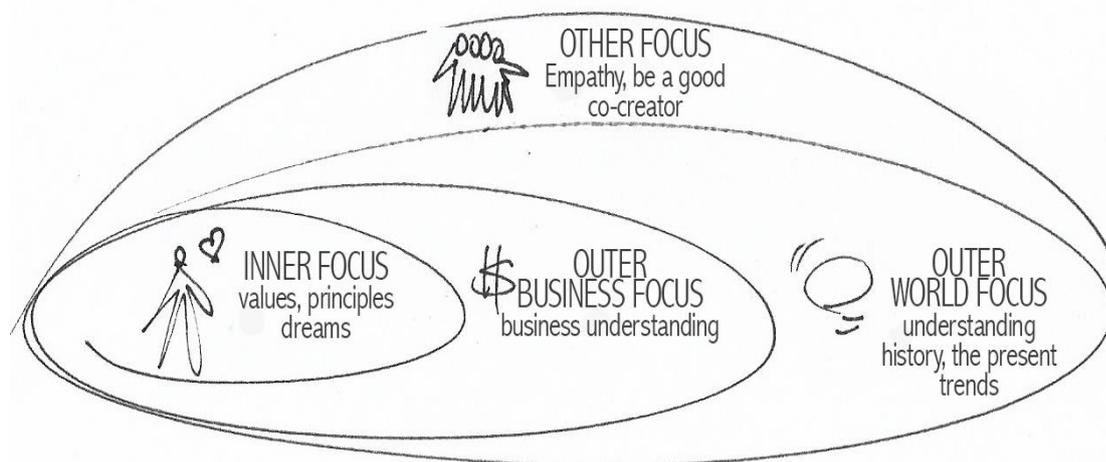

Figure 4. The 4 Foci-Model, (updated version from Sørensen, 2019)

144

However, the 4-foci model can be seen as a way of training or creating or even recreating identity - the relation between an inner focus and an outer business focus, another focus or a world focus. Applying the 4-foci model accentuates seeing more perspectives. Also, the precondition for creating a meaningful life, is having a connection between and inner focus and an outer- and another focus. Additionally, having an outer business focus, will strengthen the ability to create a meaningful work life. We know from research in youth that young people have difficulties in sensing themselves. A precondition for the creation of a meaningful life, is that people have a sense of themselves, and can connect to this inner focus.
In particular, young people are training and experimenting with different identities, professional identities, and identities in groups e.g., Yet, in our liquid society, the recreation of identity may also become a general activity in adulthood. Futurists (Skare, 2021) predict we will have more and different periods, maybe including different types of identities: a career pauser, a part-time pensioner, a full-time pensioner or identities that relate to what you like doing, being a writer, a debater, a community helper e.g. Liquid society (Bauman, 2020) appeals to human beings that think more playful about their identity – "we are always in the making" and "I am what I am not yet" to quote Maxine Greene. We ought to see self as a sculpture and each person, young or elderly, is in the process of sculpting his or herself (the inner statue, Jacob (1987). Many students (and adults) are dominated by negative thoughts that disturb and prevent a 'normal' life (David, 2016). Knowledge about how 'identity is never fixed', knowledge about the brains' plasticity and the possibility of rewiring our brains can be both relieving and empowering. Yet, nobody has 'a duty' changing identity; rather it is as a possibility. Working with this 4-foki model accentuates several issues:

- The student needs to identify his/her inner values and principles, understand personal feelings and emotions, which is a precondition for creating value and meaning in life
- The student needs to trains how to reframe something he likes or is good at into something that adds value to a business organization, to other people or the world
- The student needs to train how to empathize with other people and become a good co-creator to other people and the world. We all are interdependent and co-designers of each other, yet, we also need to be better at creating a higher awareness of co-designing businesses, solutions to problems, democracies, the world and our shared futures.
- The student needs to understand himself/herself as part of a larger community, the outer world. Having insight into the past, the present and training to foreseeing or creating the futures helps the student to contribute and become a good co-creator.

Nordic life design in practice

The following sections will present extracts from different experiments with the Nordic Life Design.
As mentioned before, Nordic Life Design has to goals:

1. educating students for life – offering creative life mastery skills and
2. educating students with skills, competencies, and ways of being relevant in a complex and everchanging world – offering a design attitude including design skills and -competencies.

This outline will present five experiments of how to work with this concept in higher education. Depending on the specific course, teachers can choose relevant elements from the framework.

A 7-week course with communication students in Entrepreneurship

In this 7-week course in entrepreneurship the 4-foci model is used as a framework for the whole course. The course starts out presenting the whole framework as well as an introduction to the inner focus, which may seem strange and different. The inner focus is represented in five individual mindset training interventions that runs through the whole course. Each intervention includes a written hand-in and a student-to-student peer-session to follow up on every intervention. Finally, sessions were conducted between student and teacher to examine and discuss the overall impact on the training interventions.
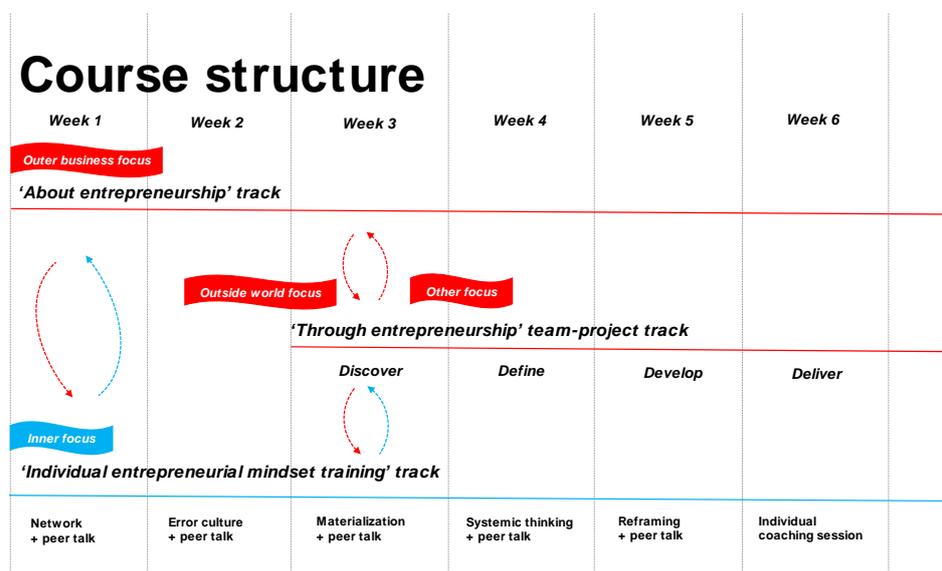

Figure 6. The 4-foci model as a framework for a 7-week course

Sessions where recorded and transcribed. This paper highlights excerpts from the analysis and feedback related to working with the 'inner focus'. However, the students also were working on other elements in the 4-foki, as seen in fig.6. Week 1 introduced to the outer business focus, then followed a design process including working with the outer world focus, like trends and markets and an other focus, like doing user studies. Through the whole course students are presented to the different elements in the Life Design Attitude, and discussing e.g. how to be in a chaotic design process, how to use materialization as a way of understanding issues or building ideas or solutions etc.

The following sections are excerpts from the analysis of the data:

96% of the students find working with the inner focus positive (48 students out of 50). Some students express they find working with an inner focus radical and different from what they are used to:

One student elaborates: *"…*We have written numerous reflection reports, but I do not think I have reflected that much since we started studying. Even though we are asked to evaluate something, and think about our work process, I think it is something else to have to think of ourselves as persons, and think of our worldview, and the boxes in which we just put things….*"*

Another student reflects, the tasks inner focus also reflects new or supplemental light on her fundamental understanding of why she is attending school at all "… it just dawned on me one day…I had to hand in the assignments so that I could get something out of it myself. It's for my own sake.".

One student reflects: "…these tasks have taught me a lot about breaking the boxes and how I initially

understanding the world, and then break things up and think in new ways…", - applying an even broader understanding, that connects to her understanding and construction of a personal identity.

"Yeah, I think it's been healthy…it is not often that we are given such a free framework in school to decide for ourselves where we want to go. Normally, we get a case, we get a company, we get a problem, we know what to deliver, and then we do that. In our student-job or internship, when faced with a problem, we are sometimes told: 'Just solve it' and at our own control. I think it is very healthy that we get trained in doing just that in school as well…" This students' reflection illustrates education as 'excluded' from real life.'

A 3-day workshop preparing journalism students for internship recommendations

This study describes a new and non-compulsory workshop: "Preparation for Internship," offered to around 100 students at the Danish School of Media and Journalism. Experiences from recent years show that preparing for an internship can be a challenging process. All students apply for an internship, but some years up to 25% of them might be rejected on 'Panic Day', the nick name for the day on which media institutions hire their interns. This process is very stressful to many students, and most students consider not getting an internship as a personal failure.

The intention with the workshop was to help students strengthen their 'inner focus' and their 'outer business focus'. In this way the workshop introduced to Nordic Life Design, but focused only on some elements in the concept.

The intention was building the skills of seeing more perspectives and creating new possibilities. The workshop included activities following Katznelson (2018) recommendations for young students and can be repeated in controlled experiments. The workshop was helpful to some of the students, yet, journalism students do not like talking about themselves and also, they consider creativity to be 'an unserious activity' (Stentoft & Sørensen, 2019). Only 50% of the students completed the workshop.

In the three-day workshop, we offered reflective learning processes. The focus was on working with an inner focus to map, who you are and what you like. Subsequently, the students were working with an outer business focus, trying to combine an inner focus with an outer business focus – for example, by questioning: "How can you transform what you are good at, into something that adds value in a company and/or for other people? "

The internship constitutes the entrance to adulthood and a changing labour market that calls for new values and understandings. As Burnett & Evers (2016) point out, people are dominated by 'old' and 'dysfunctional beliefs' like thinking, 'my job is out there waiting for me'. Today, most student will have to create their job (2016). However, people seldom reflect on their values (Sørensen, 2011, Burnett & Evers, 2016). Therefore, some of the assignments were clustered around personal values, both in order to identify their personal values and principles, but also to question some of the dominant values related to concepts such as 'journalist', 'life' and 'success'. Traditionally, in the field of journalism, 'a successful journalist' is working on a national newspaper or nationwide television. In a changing and turbulent media industry, students will have to think more creatively and invent new types of jobs. Likewise, many students think they need to make one plan and then execute it, or they must make the right choice the first time around, otherwise, they will fail.
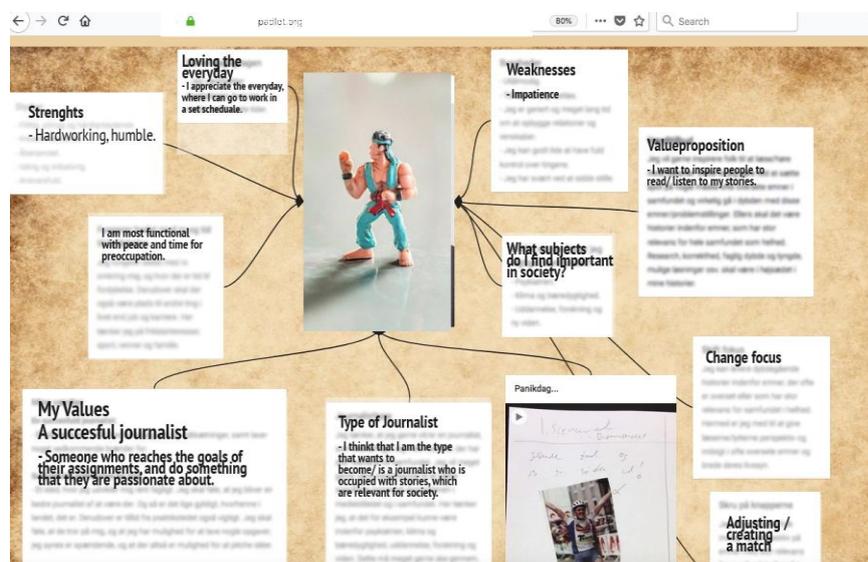

Figure 5. Examples of students' individual PADlets (pictures changed, excerpts of texts)

Some of the assignments included mapping their life journeys and reflecting on their ups and downs, identifying role models or heroes and reflecting on their related characteristics e.g.- assignments that stimulate students to get a stronger sense of themselves. From research we know that students seldom have a sense of themselves; they feel insecure and afraid of not getting on the right track and immediately (Burnett & Evers, 2016, Katznelson, 2018). Moreover, the students were urged to visualize and make a video presentation of three different future scenarios concerning their internship. In this way, they could prepare themselves for all types of scenarios, training themselves to see and create possibilities and reframe potential 'bad' scenarios – and train several of the elements in the life design attitude.

Feedback on the workshop:
In the research, we used mixed methods, combining mixed methods: qualitative and quantitative research methods (Brannen, 2007). Forty students participated in an online questionnaire, and ten students participated in a video interview. The feedback from the students falls into three categories, a) low or no interest/effect b) little/medium interest and c) high interest/effect:

a) "Spending time cutting, and gluing posters is simply too ridiculous. Call it creativity, reframing, a new mindset or whatever, in my eyes this is not at all useful to prepare for an internship. It's a waste of time and resources."

b) "In the beginning, it was like 'wow' - I couldn't really relate to it – but when we started working with [the assignments] yesterday, I thought it made a lot more sense, and I got the points about thinking differently [reframing]...." I have experienced reframing my view on other people's expectation of me."

c) "Many [of the other peers] were very critical of the course, but for me it was very enriching. Many of the tools [teacher's name] mentioned and the things we worked with helped a lot. It gave me more peace and a belief in myself. I was very delighted with the course..."

Design thinking embraces ambiguity and failure as growth opportunities, which often clash with institutional values and structures – and is reflected in student evaluations (Goldman & Kabayadondo, 2016). According to the data, the 4-foci model had a broad appeal: Some students highlight the value of reframing situations or dysfunctional beliefs about themselves. Many are interested in the transformation from an inner to an outer, business perspective. It seemed a manageable challenge to define their value proposition, whereas reframing their inner focus (what they are good at) into an outer, business focus (something that adds meaning and value to an organization) was a harder challenge; few managed this reframing.

Examples of how to incorporate exercises in a current curriculum.
Training divergent thinking, being in ambiguity, chaos, and processes, seeing more perspectives:
As a result of many years of education, (and as seen in our data) students are trained in the strictly defined assignments. Tina Selig (2018) argues that our educational institutions have been practicing strict defined assignments like: 5+5= ?. This type of assignment is training convergent thinking and practice. Instead, we need to offer open defined assignments like: ?+?= 10, that appeal to divergent thinking and practice.
As a teacher, it is relatively easy to reframe an assignment, so it appeals to divergent thinking. Yet, it might challenge both the students (and teachers) – they might feel uncomfortable, losing control and overview. Also, being in the middle of this paradigmatic shift, there is a need for critically to look at 'the hidden curriculum', Henry Giroux's notion describing everything that is being taught in classrooms but not explained in the curriculums - the hidden values, assumptions and mindsets.

Results and implications
Nordic Life Design offers students creative life mastery skills as well as design competencies relevant in a world dominated by change, ambiguity, and complexity. We see possibilities, that the concept might be a possible answer both to the current mental crisis among students and to the need for more updated curriculum in many educational institutions.
In our research, there are certain challenges: First, we have been struggling with narrow understandings of creativity, typically either as 'an unserious activity', or as 'creativity is having many ideas'. Such understandings are barriers to working with Life Design, particularly if you only have a short time. Another challenge is ethical. We are breaking the traditions and working with people's private lives. We argue, the students are not forced to share personal issues, yet, we encourage them to share their experience doing the assignments. In this way we also try to break with the taboo around mental health.

As Siemens (2006) argues, there is a clear tendency in traditional education, that life stops when we learn. From our experiment we can so far conclude that Siemens might be right, there seems to be an obvious need for bringing human life into educations, to have a stronger connection between education and real life (Siemens, 2006) and to reframe essential values and understandings.

Nordic Life Design relates to Bildung, the German word for formation. Bildung involves how learning is integrated into one's own life and one's understanding of oneself. The concept of Bildung has often been used to direct criticism towards an industrial focus on learning objectives, tests and efficiency. Generally, the problem is that the dominating business focus, seeing educational institutions as fabrics that focus on educating students for a market more than educating students for life, leaves students without any knowledge and tools for today's complex life. Instead, educational institutions should take a more holistic perspective and educate students to create quality in life (OECD, Education 2030, 2018).

All in all, we have predominately positive feedback from the students. The idea is to offer the program to all student, as the concept is relevant for everybody, (opposite initiatives that include 'treatment' of the 'weak' students). Also, the intention is, that the program is introduced in the beginning of the education and runs till the end. The program will primarily be individual and digital, yet, there are workshops and talks that highlight human aspects, joys and sorrows that belong to any life. Ideally, parts of the concept are integrated in all courses, to train the various activities and ways of being. In this way, old-fashioned curriculums can be relatively easily updated.

References

Akker, J.et all. (2006) *Educational Design Research* in Handbook of Research on Educational Communications Technology. Publisher: Springer. Editors: J. Michael Spector, M. David Merrill, Jan Elen, M. J. Bishop

Albæk, M. (2018) *Eet liv, eet menneske*, én thttps://doi.org/10.21606/drs_lxd2021. Gyldendal 2018

Austring, B. D. & Sørensen, M. (2006) *Æstetik og læring-grundbog om æstetiske læringsprocesser*. Hans Reitzel

Bauman, Z. (2020*) Liquid modernity*. Polity Press

Bennis, W. & Nanus, B. (1985) *Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge*

Birsel, A. (2015) *Design the Life You Love*. Ten Speed Press.

Boland & Collopy (2004) *Managing as Designing*. Stanford Business Books.

Brannen, J. (2007) *Mixing Methods: The Entry of Qualitative & Quantitative Approaches into Research Process*.

Buchanan, R. (2001) *Design Research and the New Learning in Design Issues Vol. 17*, No 4, 2001

Burnett, B. & Evans, D. (2016*) Designing Your Life. How to build a well-lived joyful life*. Borzoi Book Published by Alfred A. Knopf.

Callesen, P. (2017) *Lev mere tænk mindre - drop grublerierne og slip fri af nedtrykthed og depression med metakognitiv terapi.* Politiken

Chu, H. & Trujillo, R.G. (2009) *New Views on R. Buckminster Fuller*. Stanford University Press

Claxton, G (2004*) Learning to Learn: The Fourth Generation*, TLO, Bristol.

Claxton, G (2018) *The Learning Power Approach: Teaching Learners to Teach Themselves*, Crown House Publishing, Carmarthen, Wales.

Daniel, A. D. (2016) *Fostering an entrepreneurial mindset by using a design thinking approach in entrepreneurship education in Industry and Higher Education* 2016, Vol. 30(3) pp.215–223

Davey, T., Hannon, P. and Penaluna, A. (2016*) Entrepreneurship education and the role of universities in entrepreneurship: Introduction to the special issue in Industry and Higher Education* 2016, Vol. 30(3) pp. 171–182

David, S. (2016) *Emotional agility – get unstuck, embrace change, and thrive in work and life*. Penguin UK, 2016

Davidsen, H. M. & Sørensen, K.B. (2015) *Entrepreneurship as a new learning philosophy*. Paper presentation at 3E Conference – ECSB Entrepreneurship Education Conference Lüneburg, April 23-24 2015.

Dweck, C. (2006) *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success.* Random House Publishing Group.

Fuller R.B. & Mchale. J (1964) *World Design Science Decade documents*. Buckminster Fuller Institute

Glăveanu, V. & Gillespie, A. (2015) *Discussing creativity from a cultural psychological perspective* In book: Rethinking creativity: Contributions from cultural psychology Routledge Editors: V. Glaveanu, A. Gillespie, J. Valsiner

Goldman, S. & Kabayadondo, Z. (2016) Taking Design Thinking to School: How the Technology of Design Can Transform Teachers, Learners, and Classrooms. Routledge.

Godland, R. (2002*) Sustainability: Human, Social, Economic and Environmental in Social Science* 6:220-225

Goleman, D. & Senge, P. (2014) *The Triple Focus – a new approach to education*. More Than Sound.

Goleman, D. & Senge, P. (2014) *in Reflections the Sol. Journal on Knowledge, Learning & Change*. Vol 4No. 1.

Grant, A. (2021) *Think Again - The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know*. Penguin LCC US

Greene, M. (1995) *Releasing the Imagination. Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*. Wiley & Sons

Görlich et al. (2019) *Ny udsathed i ungdomslivet 11 forskere om den stigende mistrivsel blandt unge*. Hans Reitzels Forlag

Hammershøj, L. G. (2014) *Kreativitet – et spørgsmål om dannelse*. Hans Reitzels Forlag.

Illeris, K. (2014*) Transformative learning and identity*. Routledge.Taylor & Francis Group

Ilonen, S. and Jarna H. (2018) *Understanding Affective Learning Outcomes in Entrepreneurship Education Industry and Higher Education* 32(6):391–404.

Kali, Y. (2016*). Transformative learning in design research: The story behind the scenes.* Keynote presented at the International Conference of the Learning Sciences, Singapore

Katznelson, N. (2018) *Inaugural lecture*, Aalborg University 2018, in Altinget, downloaded 25.03.18: https://www.altinget.dk/uddannelse/artikel/professor-vi-oensker-innovative-og-kreative-unge-men-skaber-det-modsatte.

Kaufman, J.C. & Beghotto, R. A. (2009) *Beyond big and little: the four C model of creativity in Review of General Psychology*, 13 1-12.

Kaufman & Gregoire (2016) *Wired to Create: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Creative Mind.* Tarcher Perigee; Reprint edition, December 27, 2016.

Kereluik, K.; Mishra, P.; Fahnoe, C.; Terry, L. (2013) *What Knowledge Is of Most Worth* in Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education, v29 n4 p127-140 2013

Knoop, H. H. (2015*) Skal vi være mere positive?* Interview in Asterisk, September 2015 https://dpu.au.dk/fileadmin/edu/Asterisk/75/Asterisk75-s14-17.pdf

Lakoff, G & Johnson, M. (1980) Metaphors We Live By. University of Chicago Press

Langer, E. (2009) *Counterclockwise: Mindful Health and the Power of Possibility*. Ballantine Books

Langer, E. (2016) *The Power of Mindful Learning*. Persueus Books Group.

Lawson, B. (2005) *How Designers Think. The Design Process Demystified. Architectural Press*; 4 edition

Lawson, B. & Dorst, K. (2009) *Design Expertise*. Elsevier Ltd

Löbler, H. (2006) *Learning Entrepreneurship from a Constructivist Perspective in Technology Analysis & Strategic Management* - TECHNOL ANAL STRATEG MANAGE 18:19–38.

Lucas, B. (2019) *Why we need to stop talking about twenty-first century skills* Article. Centre for Strategic Education (CSE) is the business name for IARTV ABN 33 004 055 556 283 MAY

Lucas, B. & Claxton, G. (2009*) School as a foundation for lifelong learning: The implications of a lifelong learning perspective for the re-imagining of school-age education*. National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

Melles et all. (Editorial Board of IJDCI) (2013) *Perspectives on design creativity and innovation research in International Journal of Design Creativity and Innovation*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1-42

Mezirow, J. (1978*) Education for Perspective Transformation: Women's re-entry programs in community college*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University

Mezirow, J. (1991) *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Michlewski, K. (2014*) Design Attitude*. Routledge.

Nelson & Stolterman (2012*) The Design Way*. MIT Press.

Nielsen S.L. & Storvang, P. (2015) DesUni: *university entrepreneurship education through design thinking in education + Training.* Vol. 57 Iss 8/9 pp. 977-991.

Selig, T. (2018) *Creativity Rules - Get Ideas out of Your Head and into the World.* Harpercolling Publishers Inc

Solesvik et all. (2013) *Entrepreneurial assets and mindsets Benefit from university entrepreneurship education investment in Education + Training* Vol. 55 No. 8/9, 2013 pp.748-762

Rashid,I. (2021) Mærkbar. Forlaget Indtryk 2021

Rawstorn, A. (2018) *Design as an attitude*. JRP Ringler

Robinson, K. (2009) *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* Paperback. Penguin Books; Reprint edition.

Robinson, K. (2016) *Creative Schools: The Grassroots Revolution That's Transforming Education Paperback*. Penguin Books; Reprint edition

Robinson, K. (2020): *Transforming the Future of Education* - Sir Ken Robinson, at USI. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzvuJrVXNW8

Siemens, G. (2006) Knowing Knowledge. Lullu.com

Sinek, S. (2006) *Start with why*. Penguin LCC US

Stepper-Larsen (2011*) En nation af kreativitetsslaver* in Asteriks, Sep. 2011

Sørensen, K. B. (2011*) When Designing Emerges into Strategies – in an organization and in individuals*. Ph.D.

Thesis. Kolding School of Design. Denmark.

Sørensen, K. B. & Evers, W. (2015) *The role of doing and making models with materials: Outlining "designerly & human-centered entrepreneurship"* Eksig 2015 "Tangible Means: Experiential Knowledge Through Materials" Kolding. Nov. 25 & 26, 2015.

Sørensen, K. B. & Davidsen, H. M. (2017) *A Holistic Design Perspective on Entrepreneurship Education*, in Universal Journal of Educational Research 5(10): 1818-1826, 2017

Sørensen, K. B. (2019) *Journalism Students Prototyping a Brighter Future*. Proceedings Cumulus 2019: Resilience and Intelligence, University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland

OECD, 2018: *The Future of Education and Skills, Education* 2030. https://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20 (05.04.2018).pdf. Retrieved 05.12.19

Valverde, J., Sovet, L. & Lubart, T. (2017) *Self-Construction and creative "Life-Design" in The Creative Self* – Effect of Beliefs, Self-efficacy, Mindset and Identity. Edited by Maciej Karwowski & James C. Kaufman. Academic Press

Wagner, T. (2014*) The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Do not Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need* – and What We Can Do About It. New York: Basic Books, 2014.

Wells, A. (2011) *Metacognitive Therapy for Anxiety and Depression*. Guilford Publication

Wells, G. & Claxton, G. (2008) *Introduction: Sociocultural Perspectives on the Future of Education* In book: Learning for Life in the 21st Century: Sociocultural Perspectives on the Future of Education

Zittoun & de Saint Laurent (2015*) Life-creativity: imagining one's life in Rethinking Creativity*: Contributions from cultural psychology, 2015, pp 58-75

Kirsten Bonde Sørensen
Danish School of Media and Journalism, Denmark
kbs@dmjx.dk
Kirsten holds a 5-year degree in Design, a MA in Rhetoric, and a PhD in design. Currently working as an associate professor, teaching design driven entrepreneurship and -innovation, service design and life design. Her field of research is within socio materiality and designerly ways of using creativity as a human capacity for the creation of life and identity. She argues human beings need to become designers in their lives and co-designers in other people's lives - and in the world.