

# CO-CREATION COMPETENCE

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## EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An evaluation of competence  
development in relation to the project:  
*Co-Creation*: Students as co-producers  
of learning objects at academic libraries

**Christian T. Lystbæk**

This publication is supported financially by DEFF: Danmarks Elektroniske Fag- og Forskningsbibliotek.

Project partners:

The Royal Library, Aarhus University Library (project management)  
Aalborg University Library  
CBS Library  
DTU Library  
KEA Library  
The Royal Library, Copenhagen University Library  
University Library of Southern Denmark  
VIA Library

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*Co-creation* Competence. Experiences and Recommendations.

Layout:

AU Kommunikation, Aarhus University

Print:

AU Tryk, Aarhus University

# PREFACE

This report presents the results of an evaluation of competence development in relation to *co-creation* in the project *Co-Creation: Students as co-producers of learning objects at academic libraries*.

The following academic libraries participated in the project (2017-2019):

- The Royal Library, Aarhus University Library (project management)
- Aalborg University Library
- CBS Library
- DTU Library
- KEA Library
- The Royal Library, Copenhagen University Library
- University Library of Southern Denmark
- VIA Library

The purpose of the project was to test *co-creation* as a method in the production of learning objects and services at the libraries. *Co-creation* allows students to influence both form and content of learning objects and services. As part of the project, the libraries initiated a series of competence development activities and it was decided to evaluate these activities.

This report describes the results of the evaluation.

The project was supported financially by DEFF: Danmarks Elektroniske Fag- og Forskningsbibliotek.

## **CO-CREATION:**

CO-CREATION IS A WAY IN WHICH ORGANIZATIONS CAN DEVELOP PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TOGETHER WITH THEIR CUSTOMERS AND CLIENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

*Co-creation* is a way in which organizations can develop products and services together with their customers and clients (Voorberg, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2014). Increasingly, organizations turn towards *co-creation* in order to invite “users” to contribute. For instance in higher education where research shows that *co-creation* with students enhances both teaching and learning (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014). Hence, it is argued that *co-creation* is an important method in higher education that can be used by both faculty (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014) and academic libraries (Islam, Agarwal, & Ikeda, 2015a, 2015b).

In Denmark, academic libraries share an interest in *co-creation*. In a nation-wide DEFF-project on *Co-Creation: Students as co-producers of learning objects at academic libraries* eight academic libraries have tested *co-creation* as a method to cooperate with students.

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“ In a nation-wide DEFF-project on *Co-Creation: Students as co-producers of learning objects at academic libraries* eight academic libraries have tested *co-creation* as a method to cooperate with students.

The purpose of the project was to test *co-creation* as a method in the production of learning objects and services at the libraries. It was part of the project, then, to challenge traditional conceptions of how students manage information as well as to develop staff competencies to engage in *co-creation* with students. The participating libraries were The Royal Library Aarhus University Library (project management), Aalborg University Library, CBS

Library, DTU Library, KEA Library, The Royal Library Copenhagen University Library, University Library of Southern Denmark and VIA Library, which all had one or more sub-projects, in total 12 sub-projects. Case descriptions of the sub-projects and reports on general issues regarding didactical design of e-learning objects, the significance of involving students and approaches to *co-creation* with students have been made available<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The material is available on the project homepage, <http://library.au.dk/blogs/co-creation>

Projects often struggle to become transformed into daily practices. A main reason for this is that competence development is typically not an integrated part of projects (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). However, competence development was an integrated part of the *co-creation* project and it was decided that experiences from the competence development activities should be evaluated in order to inspire continued competence development at and across the libraries.

This report presents the results of the evaluation. The report has three parts: Part 1 describes the evaluation design. Part 2 describes the general experiences with competence development in relation to *co-creation*. Part 3 makes general recommendations for continued competence development in relation to *co-creation*.





# EVALUATION DESIGN



# 1. EVALUATION DESIGN

This part of the evaluation report describes the design of the evaluation of the competence development in relation to the project *Co-Creation: Students as co-producers of learning objects at academic libraries*.

The literature distinguishes between different types of evaluation, in particular between summative and formative evaluation (Mark, Greene, & Shaw, 2006). The purpose of summative evaluation is to assess the end results of a project or practice whereas the purpose of formative evaluation is to form an ongoing development process with inputs from the evaluation (Rogers & Williams, 2006). Hence, formative evaluation is sometimes referred to as developmental evaluation.

Since the purpose of the evaluation of competence development described in this report is to inspire continued competence development it is designed as a formative evaluation. Part 2 describes the preliminary experiences and part 3 makes general recommendations for continued competence development based on these preliminary experiences. This part of the report describes the evaluation design in relation to the competence development in more detail as well as the data and analysis of the evaluation.

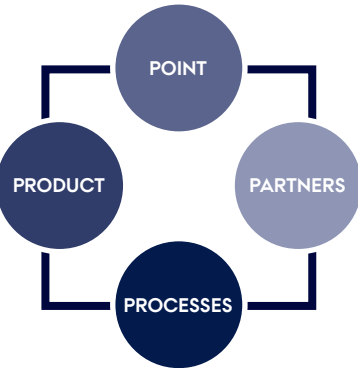
## COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AND LEVELS OF EVALUTION

The project *Co-Creation: Students as co-producers of learning objects at academic libraries* had competence development as an integrated part of

the project. Often, competence development in a projects is only for the project members, but in this project the participating libraries initiated competence development activities for other members of the staff as well. The competence development activities were organized by the project members and were based on both personal and general experiences from the project.

The general experiences have been summed-up in a 4P-model of *co-creation* (figure 1), which describes the interdependence between four elements in *co-creation*: Point (why is *co-creation* relevant in this case? What is the purpose?), Partners (who is going to participate?), Processes (how is the *co-creation* process organized) and Product (what is the end result?).

**FIGURE 1. MODEL OF KEY ELEMENTS IN CO-CREATION**  
(Lystbæk, Harbo, & Hansen, 2019)



The model was a common reference point in the competence development activities.

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The activities were presentations in meetings, participation in workshops and participation in new *co-creation* projects.

**MEETINGS**

All libraries organized formal and informal meetings at which project members informed their colleagues and managers about the project and its progression. At such meetings, the project members referred to their own sub-projects as well as other sub-projects and, thus, presented both personal and general experiences of *co-creation* with students as co-producers of learning objects.

**WORKSHOPS**

Most libraries organized workshops at which project members and colleagues could test the method in a kind of *co-creation* process with each other. On the workshops, the colleagues got the opportunity to engage in a kind of *co-creation* process and, thus, to get their own first-hand experience with *co-creation* as a method.

**NEW CO-CREATION PROJECTS**

Some libraries organized new *co-creation* projects in which project members and colleagues could collaborate with students or other users of the library. In such projects, project members and colleagues got the opportunity to get concrete experiences with *co-creation* with students or users.

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Research on workplace learning describes such competence development activities as the most useful (Illeris, Jørgensen, Warring, & al., 2004). Research also shows that evaluation of such competence development activities can focus on different aspects (Tamkin, Yarnall, & Kerrin, 2002). Evaluation of competence development typically focus on student satisfaction or test of knowledge and skills. However competence is the ability to use knowledge and skill in action, and therefore neither satisfaction nor knowledge and skill per se are adequate measures for competence development (Tamkin et

al., 2002). Both satisfaction, knowledge and skills are relevant parameters in an evaluation of competence development, but by themselves they are inadequate in representing competence development. More aspects need to be taken into account.

The Kirkpatrick model is probably the best known model for evaluating competence development (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016; Tamkin et al., 2002). It takes into account four aspects or "levels" of analysis: Immediate reaction, actual learning, behavioral changes, organizational results.



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**IMMEDIATE REACTION: SATISFACTION**

Evaluation of competence development can focus on the participants' immediate reactions, i.e. what participants think about the activities that they participate in. Immediate reactions are easy to evaluate and, hence, evaluations often focus on this aspect, for instance in the form of "happy sheets" (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006, p. 27), i.e. quantitative assessments of the level of satisfaction (typically measured on a scale from 1-5). However, research shows that satisfaction is an inadequate measure for competence development. The level of satisfaction correlates more with the level of entertainment and catering than with competence, mainly because competence development can involve stress and discomfort (Illeris, 2011; Tamkin et al., 2002). Quantitative measures of satisfaction per se, then, are inadequate as parameters of competence development; this does not imply that immediate reactions are irrelevant to take into account, since they provide important information about the participants' motivation and interest in competence development (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

**ACTUAL LEARNING: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

Evaluation of competence development can also focus on participants' actual learning, i.e. their learning outcome in terms of new knowledge and skills. Learning is often considered more important than satisfaction, however it is also more difficult to measure (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). In higher education, learning is typically evaluated in tests of learning and skills, for instance in exams, but research shows that tests are inadequate as measure for competence development (Tamkin et al., 2002). Tests assess what participants remember rather than how they use what they have learned, and hence tests are better at assessing instrumental learning, i.e. learning how to apply particular tools, rather than relational learning, i.e. learning about relationships and collaboration. However,

this does not imply that knowledge and skills are irrelevant to take into account, since knowledge and skills are among the fundamentals of competence development (Illeris, 2011).

**BEHAVIORAL CHANGE: COMPETENT ACTION**

Evaluation of competence development can also focus on participants' behavior at work after the competence development activities, i.e. if their behavior has changed. Competence is the ability to act adequately, and hence behavioral change is typically considered the best expression of competence. Behavioral change is more difficult to assess than satisfaction, knowledge and skills, mainly because it is difficult to decide when and which changes should be evaluated (D. L. Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Firstly, it can be difficult to decide when behavioral changes can be expected. Certain types of behavior can be changed quickly, for instance simple behavioral patterns that only involve one person, whereas other types of behavior take more time, for instance behavioral patterns that involve new roles and relationships, which involve more people and are more difficult to change. Secondly, it can be difficult to decide which behavioral changes should be evaluated. Many organizations are interested in evaluating whether employees reach their goals, for instance through so-called Key Performance Indicators (Dooren, Bouckaert, & Halligan, 2015), however research shows that performance indicators are inadequate as measure for evaluating competence development (Agostino & Arnaboldi, 2015; Illeris, 2011) because performance not only depends upon competence but also organizational structures and culture, which influence the opportunity to change behavior (Tamkin et al., 2002). This does not, however, imply that behavioral change is irrelevant to take into account, since competence is about what a person is able to do, in practice (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

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**ORGANIZATIONAL RESULTS: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Finally, evaluation of competence development can focus on organizational results, i.e. organizational performance and development. Many organizations are concerned about competence development in so far as it leads to performance and development of the organization, which however are even more difficult to assess than behavioral change (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Firstly, it can take even more time for organizational performance to improve, because this not only depend upon individual action but also on organization changes, for instance implementation of new routines and relationships. Secondly, it can be even more difficult to link soft competencies to hard results. Competence development is not the only causal factor but is situated in an environment of organizational structures and culture, which makes it difficult to attribute cause and effect. The process of linking competence development to organizational performance is thus highly interpretive, especially in complex organizational environments (Tamkin et al., 2002). Organizational results from competence development are difficult to assess, then, but they are not irrelevant to take into account, since competence development is often justified in terms of the organizational results, such as increased productivity, improvement of quality of products and services, or other goals (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

The Kirkpatrick model suggests that evaluation of competence development takes all four aspects or "levels" into account. There is an increasing degree of complexity through the levels, which indicates that the more important aspects are more difficult to evaluate.

Data collection and analysis in this evaluation are structured in accordance with the four levels of the Kirkpatrick model. The data and analysis will be described in more detail in the next section.



### DATA AND ANALYSIS

The evaluation is based upon a qualitative study of the experiences and reflections in relation to the competence development activities in the *co-creation* project. While quantitative data and analyses can be used to measure competence development on fixed scales of measurement, qualitative data and analyses are well suited for detailed descriptions of experiences and perspectives (Neuman, 2014). Hence, qualitative data and analyses are particularly suited for formative evaluations (Rogers & Williams, 2006).

The qualitative data were collected through focus group interviews with both project members, colleagues and managers. The purpose was to get insight into a variation of experiences with and reflections on competence development in relation to *co-creation*. Interviews are well suited for formative evaluations, since they provide detailed descriptions of the experiences and reflections of the informants (Wilkinson, 2004). In comparison with individual interviews, focus group interviews are particularly suited for providing detailed descriptions of experiences and reflec-

tions, since informants can inspire each other to elaborate on experiences and reflections, argue for perspectives and ideas, etc. (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In focus group interviewing, it is important to select informants in a way that allows a positive dynamic in the group during the interview. The quality of data from focus group interviews depends upon the atmosphere in the group, since the informants should be willing to talk openly and honestly about their experiences and reflections (Wilkinson, 2004). When possible, three focus group interviews were carried out at the libraries with project members, colleagues and managers in different groups. At a few libraries, where there were only few project members and managers, they were interviewed in the same focus group in order to have a substantial number of informants in the groups (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In total, 19 focus group interviews were conducted, from September 2018 to March 2019. All project members were invited into focus groups. Colleagues and managers were selected by project members in order to have a variation of experiences and perspectives (table 1).

TABEL 1. DATA

The data in numbers	
Libraries	8
Focus group interviews	19
Project members	28
Colleagues	35
Leaders	15

The focus group interviews were conducted as open interviews and structured in accordance with the four levels of the Kirkpatrick model described above: Immediate reaction, actual learning, behavioral changes and organizational results. More specifically, informants were asked to share and elaborate on experiences and reflections, taking these questions as a starting point:

- a. What is your immediate reaction to *co-creation*?
- b. What do you take with you from the competence development activities?
- c. How you started to act in different ways?
- d. What do you think will be the organizational implications if you start to co-create more?

These questions invited the informants to talk about their experiences with and reflections on the competence development in relation to *co-creation*.

In order to promote a trustful and honest atmosphere, the moderator stressed both before and during the focus group interviews that the purpose was to get many nuances on the topic, not to reach a common conclusion or agreement. The group dynamics allowed the informants to follow up and comment on experiences and reflections and thus gave the focus group interviews the characteristics of a conversation (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In the analysis, first the data from the focus group interviews was analyzed in accordance with the Kirkpatrick model’s four levels of analysis. The findings are described in part 2. Second, the data was analyzed in order to make recommendations for continued competence development in relation to *co-creation* at and across the libraries. The recommendations are described in part 3.



# EXPERIENCES WITH COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT IN RELATION TO CO-CREATION



## 2. EXPERIENCES WITH COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT IN RELATION TO CO-CREATION

The project *Co-Creation: Students as co-producers of learning objects at academic libraries* had competence development as an integrated part of the project. Hence, the libraries initiated a series of competence development activities during the project in terms of meetings, workshops and new *co-creation* projects as described above, in part 1.

This part of the report describes the general experiences from the competence development activities as expressed by the informants in the focus group interviews with project members, colleagues and managers respectively. The description is structured in accordance with four analytical levels of competence development: Immediate reaction, actual learning, behavioral changes and organizational results.

### IMMEDIATE REACTION

Immediate reactions per se are not adequate measures of competence development, but they are nonetheless

important to take into account when evaluating competence development activities in relation to participants motivation and interest in such activities. The focus group interviews allow the informants to give detailed descriptions of their immediate reactions to the activities.

In the focus group interviews, both the project members, the colleagues and the managers stress that the competence development activities have been relevant and interesting, but they also mention some reservations and concerns. The project members generally stress that their motivation to collaborate with students have increased. For instance, a project member says: "This is what gives me energy in my work: To collaborate with students." The project members stress that collaboration with students is fun and exciting. However, some project members also mention that it is not only fun and exciting, but also demanding and at times frustrating. For instance, some of

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“ This is what gives me energy in my work: To collaborate with students.”

the project members have found that it can be even more time-consuming than expected as well as difficult to retain student motivation. Among the project members, then, there is some ambivalence towards *co-creation*: It is fun and exciting but also demanding and frustrating.

A similar ambivalence is expressed by the colleagues. Generally, the colleagues stress that the competence development activities have increased their motivation and interest in

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*co-creation*. For instance, a colleague says: "I think that it could be very interesting if we could co-create with students and faculty." The colleagues stress that they have become inspired to collaborate with students and other users of the library. However, some of the colleagues also mention that they fear that it can be a waste of time. For instance, a colleague says: "I think that user involvement is great, but I am not sure that it has any effect. It can provide energy and new ideas, but often it only takes from a few minutes to a couple of days before all the ideas are dead. That is what often happens." Some of the colleagues fear that *co-creation* is just another buzzword. For instance, a colleague says: "All these new concepts and titles are annoying. And the fact that they are always in English." Related to this, some of the colleagues fear that *co-creation* is a fad and a fashion, which is only being described in idealistic and uncritical terms and thus can become a goal in itself, even where . "and when it does not make sense. For instance, a colleague says: "I fear that we are forced to collaborate with

students even if one cannot see the meaning." Among the colleagues, then, there is some ambivalence towards competence development in relation to *co-creation*. The colleagues express a high level of interest but also a reservation towards *co-creation* being a fad and a fashion.

The managers also express some ambivalence. The managers are generally positive towards *co-creation*. They stress that the libraries increasingly engage in different kinds of collaboration and partnership in which *co-creation* can be relevant. For instance, a manager says: "I believe that *co-creation* can add value that we cannot get in any other way. We have a lot of contact with the students but it is often as experts. We are experts in seeking information, etc. What I like about *co-creation* is that it allows members of the staff to take the role of a facilitator rather than an expert." The managers generally describe *co-creation* as necessary, but some of the managers also mention that the libraries must be cautious about when and how much to invite students

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“ We must be careful that the students do not get tired of us.”



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“All these new concepts and titles are annoying. And the fact that they are always in English.”

to collaborate. For instance, a manager says: “We should not start projects with students all the time. [...] We must be careful that the students do not get tired of us. It is a trend that organizations ask users about everything, and personally I say ‘I do not want to’. It can become too much, and I do not want to answer questions all the time.” Among the managers, then, there is also some ambivalence towards *co-creation*. They consider *co-creation* to be necessary and indispensable but also to be a method that should not be used too much.

Overall, then, both project members, colleagues and managers express both positive and negative reactions that are important to consider in continued competence development in relation to *co-creation*. Part 3 will describe recommendations as to how the libraries can do this.

### ACTUAL LEARNING

Competence is the ability to use knowledge and skill in action. Learning in terms of knowledge and skill, then, is not in itself competence, but learning is a prerequisite of competence development and as such it is important to take into account when evaluating competence development activities. The focus group interviews allow the informants to give detailed descriptions of their learning from the competence development activities.

In the focus group interviews, both the project members, the colleagues and the managers stress that they have acquired new knowledge and skills in relation to *co-creation*. The project members and the colleagues say that they have gained a better understanding of what is involved in *co-creation*. It can be difficult to distinguish between *co-creation* and related concepts that are also about user involvement, for instance UX (user experience) methods and partnerships, but the competence development activities have made it clear that *co-creation* is distinct in being about creating something together. For

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“ We have been collaborating before – that is not something new – but what is new about co-creation is that we are collaborating all the way. It is the ongoing collaboration with the students that is new.”

instance, a colleague says: “We have been collaborating before – that is not something new – but what is new about *co-creation* is that we are collaborating all the way. It is the ongoing collaboration with the students that is new.” Both the project members and the colleagues stress that they have learned that *co-creation* is not only about getting information from the users, for instance information about their experiences and wishes, but about creating something new. There is almost no limit to what can be created. It can be new ideas and concepts, new designs of product

and services or new practices around products and services. For instance, a project member says: “I have come to realize that it is very productive to recognize that the users have resources which are relevant to the library. This has given me a new perspective on development. The interaction is good.” In general, the informants stress that they have gained a better understanding that users can contribute to the development of library products and service.

Further, both the project members, the colleagues and the managers stress

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“ You can involve the users without compromising your standards. You interact with them.”

that they have come to realize that *co-creation* requires willingness to let go of control. Regardless of whether a *co-creation* process is about creating new concepts, new designs or new practices, it requires that the parties let go of control in order to be able to develop something new. For instance, a colleague says: “I have realized that it is important to let go of control. That was super exciting, but also difficult.” In the focus group interviews, the informants mention several reasons why it can be difficult to let go of control. First, it can be difficult because of the professional identity of the library staff. Both the project members, the colleagues and the managers stress that academic library staff are experts with high professional standards about how things should be done, which they will not compromise. Hence, they prefer to have control of development processes. But the informants have learned that you can let go of control without compromising professional standards. For instance, a project member says: “You can involve the users without compromising your standards. You interact with them.” In general, the informants stress that they

have gained a better understanding that the interaction in *co-creation* can be productive and valuable in a way in which the professionals do not have to compromise their standards.

Another reason why it can be difficult to let go of control is that one has to trust that the creative process can be productive. In the focus group interviews, the informants stress that not everyone has this kind of trust. For instance, a colleague says: “We had a 1,5 hour workshop, and I thought: ‘How can we do anything in such a short time?’, but then, afterwards, I thought: ‘How could people come up with so many ideas in such a short time?’ I was very surprised about this. I did not bring one single creative idea to the workshop, but I had a lot when we were there.” In general, the informants stress that they have learned how *co-creation* promotes creative interaction.

A third reason why it can be difficult to let go of control and why competence development is necessary is that productive interaction does not always just happen. Rather, it can be a challenge



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“ I was very surprised about this. I did not bring one single creative idea to the workshop, but I had a lot when we were there.”

to facilitate creative and productive collaboration. For instance, a colleague says: “I would not be able to just do it. It requires something to facilitate a process. Not everybody would be able to do it. Some of us do not find it easy to involve students. You get into situations that you have not prepared for.” In general, the informants stress that they have come to realize that *co-creation* requires some facilitation competencies that cannot be taken for granted. For instance, in several of the sub-projects there were disagreements and potential conflicts between the students and the project members had to deal with these issues.

Overall, then, the informants have gained a better understanding of *co-creation* and the competencies it requires to facilitate this kind of collaboration. Part 3 will make recommendations as to how the libraries can build on this in continued competence development in relation to *co-creation*.

### BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

Although behavioral change can have other causes than knowledge and skill, it is important to take into account when evaluating competence development activities. Behavioral change, though, can take time. In the focus group interviews, a manager says: “Regarding the time of the evaluation – it is rather limited, so if you expect a steep curve you will probably be disappointed. It would be fine if the evaluation was done in two years.” Although time between the competence development activities and the evaluation was limited the informants stress that they have taken new initiatives in relation to *co-creation* with students and other users of the library.

In the focus group interviews, both the project members, the colleagues and the managers stress that they have started to look for opportunities to engage in *co-creation* with students and other users. For instance, a project

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“ It is difficult to say if it is due to this project, because we are also interested in UX -processes that share some of the same ideas about user involvement. But we have become better at saying: Let us ...”

member says: "It is difficult to say if it is due to this project, because we are also interested in UX -processes that share some of the same ideas about user involvement. But we have become better at saying: Let us ..." In general, the informants stress that they have started to look for *co-creation* opportunities both in terms of formalized *co-creation* projects with project plans, etc. and informal *co-creation* interactions, i.e. "small ways of doing it" as a project member describes it, where library staff take the opportunity to invite students and other users who ask for help to collaborate. For instance, a colleague says: "It is possible to involve users in ways that are not very demanding. It can be short-term interactions. It does not have to be fancy and a big thing." Some of the formal projects that have been initiated focus on students and

some focus on other users. One project, for instance, is focusing on library users at a hospital and another is focusing at museum guests. The initiative to formal *co-creation* projects typically come from the managers, since they require formal agreements and authority to allocate resources, whereas the initiative to informal *co-creation* interactions typically come from members of the staff, in particular project members, who take the opportunity to collaborate with students and others with whom they interact. For instance, a project member says: "When you interact with students, you get to know them a little bit and can ask them about this and that. You get a relationship when you have interacted with them." In the focus group interviews, then, the informants mention examples of both formal and informal *co-creation* initiatives.

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Besides *co-creation* initiatives directed at students and other users, the informants also mention initiatives directed at involving more colleagues in order to spread the competences in relation to *co-creation*. For instance, a colleague says: "We have been invited into a project in relation to a course for bachelor students. We are teaching the course and we have been invited to develop the course based on the *co-creation* approach." Both the project members, the colleagues and the managers look for opportunities to involve more colleagues in *co-creation* with students or other users. Some of the project members find that they have to take the initiative to involve more colleagues. For instance, a project member says: "It is up to us to involve the colleagues. They are interested and they think that it sounds good, but they are not taking the initiative. They want to be invited. So, it is up to us to invite them." Other project members find that the colleagues do take the initiative. For instance, a project member says: "A colleague has joined us. In a lunchbreak she said, 'I do not know what you are doing'. So I said: 'You only have to ask'. Then, she

joined us." The managers stress the initiative to involve more colleagues can come from the managers. For instance, a manager says: "Sometimes I have to ask: 'Who wants to work on this idea? And this idea?' But some of the staff do not have to be asked. They just do it. The important thing is to involve the rest. It should not be only for those who already want this." In general, both the project members, the colleagues and the managers focus on and take initiative towards involving more of the colleagues in *co-creation* in order to spread competencies.

Overall, then, both the project members, the colleagues and the managers have started to take initiatives in relation to *co-creation* with students and other users of the libraries. Some initiatives are formalized while other initiatives are informal. Besides, initiatives have been taken to involve more colleagues in *co-creation*. Part 3 will make recommendations as to how the libraries can build upon these initiatives in continued competence development in relation to *co-creation*.

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“ The important thing is to involve the rest. It should not be only for those who already want this.”



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“When you interact with students, you get to know them a little bit and can ask them about this and that. You get a relationship when you have interacted with them.”



### ORGANIZATIONAL RESULTS

Organisationer kan være interesseret. Organizations are often concerned about competence development in so far as it improves organizational results, such as increased productivity, improvement of quality of products and services, or other goals. That is also the reason why the libraries have decided to integrate competence development into the *co-creation* project. In the focus group interviews, a project member says: "It is supposed to change things, organizationally. And I am excited about what the results will be in the years to come."

In the focus group interviews, both the project members, the colleagues and the managers stress that time has been too short for organizational results to show in the evaluation, however the sub-projects indicate the *co-creation* with students can improve the quality of products and services. For instance, a colleague says: "We would never have come up with the idea if we had not been working with the students." A project member elaborates on this point and says: "The students ask other questions than we do." In the focus group interviews, though, the informants mainly discuss which organizational changes can support *co-creation* with students

and other users. Two issues are discussed in particular: Allocation of resources, more specifically time, and the possibility of coaching with colleagues and the management.

A major issue in the focus group interviews is the organizational structures around the allocation of resources, more specifically time to participate in *co-creation* activities. The library staff, and in particular the colleagues, are very concerned about the allocation of time. For instance, a colleague says: "If the organization really wants *co-creation*, time is a key aspect. I do not know if this has been taken into account. Time management is important and we do not have the time to just sit and experiment. We are busy and have many deadlines throughout the year." Another colleague elaborates on this point about time management and says: "It is not only a matter of the amount of time, but also of timing. The students have just handed in a report, so we hope that, now, some of them are willing to continue to work with us on some of the ideas that they helped to develop and formulate." The managers are also concerned about resources. More specifically, their concern is that allocation of resources is not too fixed and inflexi-

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“ It is not only a matter of the amount of time, but also of timing.”

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“It ought to be in our DNA that we always have the users in mind. Of course we all want to do what is good for the faculty and students. But you also need to see the point in what you do. And preferably, this is a point you recognize bottom-up, as a need.”

ble. For instance, a manager says: "It will be a pity if nothing happens because of bureaucratic issues of 'we do not have the time', 'what, then, should we stop doing' and all that, instead of focusing on the fun in doing it." The managers stress that *co-creation* should not only be considered as a new task but also a general mindset, i.e. as an integrated part of existing tasks and the way they are taken care of. This point is also stressed by members of the staff. For instance, a colleague says: "It ought to be in our DNA that we always have the users in mind. Of course we all want to do what is good for the faculty and

students. But you also need to see the point in what you do. And preferably, this is a point you recognize bottom-up, as a need." The project members are concerned that *co-creation* is considered as an integrated part of daily tasks. For instance, a project member says: "In relation to our core tasks, it must be high on the list. It should not be a special kind of task that you get extra time to do. Rather, it should be an integrated part of the core tasks." In general, the project members find that *co-creation* should be considered as a mindset that permeates the entire organization, although collaboration with students is more im-

portant in relation to certain tasks than to others. Hence, some of the project members want the management to make it clear that *co-creation* is a high priority. For instance, a project member says: "It should be defined as a core task. This is something we simply must do. It should be communicated that this is a priority, and it must be clear to everyone. The management still has not made this priority." The managers, on the other hand, stress that *co-creation* is a priority at all the libraries, however the use of it depends upon local circumstances, i.e. the structures and relations at a particular library, department and area.

Another major issue in the focus group interviews is the organizational structures around the possibility of coaching with colleagues and the management. For instance, a project member says: "It is important to have a colleague to do it with, to coach with. I don't think I could do it alone. There are so many issues that you need to consider with a colleague. You have to have a partner. It is an important factor that you have somebody to work with. Especially when it is new and you are uncertain about your role." In general, members of the staff stress that it is important to have access

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to coaching not only from colleagues but also from the management. For instance, a colleague says: "It is important that the management is engaged and offers support. As members of the staff, it is important to have the support of the management and the possibility to discuss: Where are we going with this?" The managers also stress the importance of time and space as well as support in relation to *co-creation*, even if success cannot be guaranteed. For instance, a manager says: "The management must have the courage to say that it is OK to fail. It might be the case, sometimes, that we do not work with the best of the students and the product, then, might not be very good. Then, the process might fail, but that is OK. Sometimes it is OK that we fail." In

general, then, coaching and support are important, both from colleagues and from the management, who must accept that collaboration is not always a success.

Overall, both the project members, the colleagues and the managers stress that competence development in relation to *co-creation* must be supported by organizational structures in relation to tasks and coaching, both with colleagues and with the management. This is something that the libraries must be aware of in order to inspire continued competence development at and across the libraries. Part 3 will make recommendations as to how the libraries can do this.

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“It is important to have a colleague to do it with, to coach with. I don't think I could do it alone. There are so many issues that you need to consider with a colleague.”





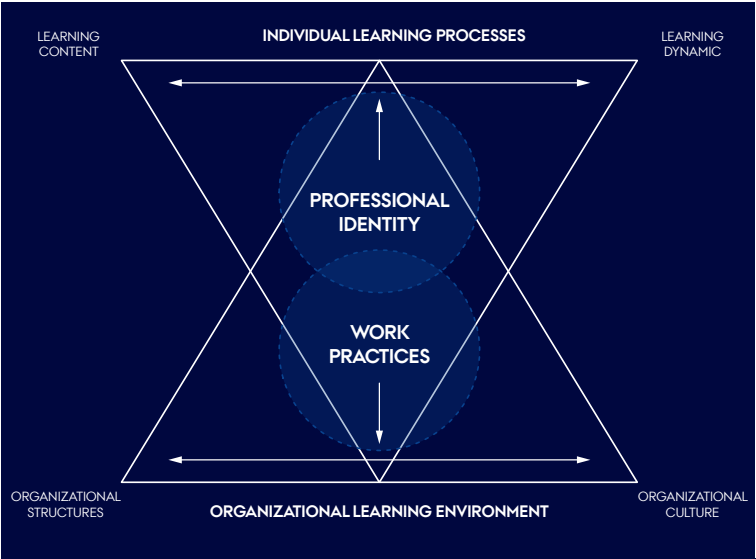
# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUED COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTINUED COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT

In the project *Co-Creation: Students as co-producers of learning objects at academic libraries* it was decided that experiences from the competence development in the project should be evaluated in order to inspire continued competence development at and across the libraries. This part of the report makes general recommendations to continued competence development in relation to *co-creation*.

The recommendations are structured after a model of competence development at the workplace (figure 2) that stresses that competence development includes both individual and organizational aspects (Illeris, 2004). Whereas a narrow and simple conception of competence development only puts focus on the functional acquisition of competencies, the model has a broad and nuanced conception of competence development that recognizes that competence development includes complex patterns of meaning, motivation, structures and culture. Thus, this broad conception of competence development resonates with the experiences from the competence development activities describe above (in part 2). In the focus group interviews, the informants stress both individual and

FIGURE 2. A MODEL OF ELEMENTS IN COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT AT THE WORKPLACE



organizational aspects of competence development.

The model describes the most important aspects of competence development at an individual and an organizational level. The model consists of two triangles (both with a circle inside) that

illustrate the interaction of individual and organizational elements. One triangle has its base line on the individual level and stress the importance of both learning content and learning dynamic, which interact with the third angle that has to do with the learning environment. Inside the triangle, a circle illustrates

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organizational aspects of competence development.

The model describes the most important aspects of competence development at an individual and an organizational level. The model consists of two triangles (both with a circle inside) that illustrate the interaction of individual and organizational elements. One triangle has its base line on the individual level and stress the importance of both learning content and learning dynamic, which interact with the third angle that has to do with the learning environment. Inside the triangle, a circle illustrates that individual learning processes both form and are formed by the professional identity of the individual. The other triangle has its base line in the organizational level and stress the importance of organizational structures and culture, which interact with the third angle that points into the individual level. Inside this triangle, a circle illustrates that the learning environment both form and is formed by the working practices of the organization.

The model, then, illustrates the most important elements in competence development at both individual and organizational levels. It serves as a map

of competence development at the workplace in the sense that it shows that the individual and organizational levels of competence development involve different learning processes (Illeris et al., 2004).

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL OF COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT**

Research into competence development has mainly focused on the individual level and in particular on the cognitive content of competencies (Illeris, 2011). However, this approach to competence development has been criticized for its narrow and simple focus on functional acquisition of knowledge and skill while excluding more complex patterns of meaning and motivation that are also part of competence development processes (Illeris et al., 2004). Based on the focus group interviews analyzed above (in part 2), this section makes general recommendations for competence development activities in relation to both learning content and learning dynamics.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTENT

Competence development always has a content, i.e. it is about something, in this case *co-creation*.

The focus group interviews show that it is important to have a common understanding of *co-creation* and the competencies it takes to facilitate *co-creation*. Continued competence development, then, should define both the concept and the competencies.

More specifically, it is recommended that competence development activities continue to clarify the characteristics of *co-creation*. This is not easy, however, since *co-creation* is not a simple concept, which can be easily defined (Verschuere, Brandsen, & Pestoff, 2012). Rather, *co-creation* is a

concept that is widely used and partly open regarding who creates what. For instance, *co-creation* can be directed at both new ideas and concepts, new designs of product and services as well as new practices around products and services. In general, though, there are two key characteristics in *co-creation*: An assumption that users have resources and an intention to include these resources in the development of products and services (Lystbæk et al., 2019).

Further, it is recommended that the libraries continue to focus on the fact that *co-creation* can be used to promote different kinds of development, both development of new concepts, development of new designs and development of new practices (tabel 2).



TABEL 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF CO-CREATION

Characteristics	Focus	Key elements	Competencies
1 An assumption that users have resources	a. Concept development	Idea formulation	Facilitation of idea workshops Resolution of group thinking
	b. Design development	Design of prototype	Facilitation of design workshops Resolution of conflicts
2 An intetion to use these resources	c. Practice development	Implementation of new practice	Facilitation of tests Resolution of zero defect mentality

Concept development is about the creation of a new idea for a product or service in order to formulate a clear concept about the product or service. Concept development, thus, can be facilitated at idea workshops and through the resolution of group thinking, which otherwise hinder creativity.

Design development is about the creation of a new design of a product or service in order to produce a prototype

of the product or service. Design development can thus be facilitated at design workshops and through resolution of conflicts, which otherwise hinder collaboration on a common prototype. Practice development is about the creation of a new practice around a product or service in order to implement it a practical context, e.g. in an organization. Practice development, then, can be facilitated through tests and resolution of zero-defect mentality, which

otherwise hinder experimentation and change of practices.

More specifically, it is recommended that the libraries expands the competence development activities they have tested further; meetings, workshops and new projects. Such activities allow a combination of theoretical and practical content, which help the participant to develop the knowledge and skills required for competence (Illeris et al.,

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“ when you are working together it is important to have a common language. This project has offered that.”

2004). The focus group interviews show that it is important that the competence development activities both have a theoretical content, which provides general knowledge of concepts and principles, and a practical content, which provides practical skills and personal experience. About the importance of theoretical content, a project member says: "I like theory, and this project has offered some practical theory. Some of the concepts are difficult to define. You can have different understandings of the concepts. But when you are working together it is important to have a common language. This project has offered that." Thus, it is recommended that the competence development activities at the libraries continue to establish a common language and understanding. It is important to be aware, however, that this can involve different cognitive processes for the participants. As individuals, we do not always acquire the same competencies from the same learning activities. The learning of an individual depends upon a complex pattern of meaning, i.e. involves sense-making processes. Research shows that such sense-making processes can

involve both assimilative cognitive processes in which new input is assimilated to an already established cognitive frame of reference, and accommodative cognitive processes in which new input challenges and changes an already existing cognitive frame of reference (Illeris, 2011). It is recommended that these processes are activated in discussion of how *co-creation* relate to concepts such as UX and partnership that also stress user involvement.

Besides theoretical content, it is also important that the competence development activities have a practical content. For instance, a project member says: "You learn a lot from this. You learn that *co-creation* is another way of approaching the users." The focus group interviews show that there have been several initiatives to involve more colleagues in *co-creation* processes and projects. It is important that the libraries continue to take such initiatives in order to inspire continued competence development when and where it makes sense to the colleagues. The library staff collaborate with users to varying degrees and, hence, *co-creation* should be used to varying degrees. Thus, it is

recommended that the competence development activities allow the participants to have varying degrees of competence. Competence is not something you do or do not have, but something you have to a certain extent or level of competence. It is recommended that the libraries are aware of at least three levels of competence in relation to *co-creation*: Basic competence, expanded competence and expert competence (table 3).

To sum up, the content recommended here will provide a common language and understanding of *co-creation* and required competencies. As such, it can contribute to continued competence development in relation to *co-creation*.

TABEL 3. LEVELS OF COMPETENCE IN RELATION TO CO-CREATION

Levels of competence	Characteristics
1. Basic competence	Basic knowledge and skills as a prerequisite for being able to participate and contribute constructively in <i>co-creation</i> with users
2. Expanded competence	Expanded knowledge and skills as a prerequisite for being able to initiate and facilitate <i>co-creation</i> with users
3. Expert competence	Expert knowledge and skills as a prerequisite for being able to deal with unexpected challenges as well as to further develop the the area



### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOTIVES AND IDENTITY

Competence development not only involve a content but also motivation and interest, i.e. learning dynamics, which form and are formed by the professional identity of an individual (Illeris, 2004). In other words: Competence development is easier when you are interested and personally engaged in the topic. Hence, it has a huge impact if competence development activities are interesting and relate to the professional identity of an individual (Illeris, 2011).

The focus group interviews show that there are both positive and negative reactions to *co-creation* that are important to consider. Continued competence development, then, should address the ambivalences towards *co-creation* as well as their relation to the professional identity of individual library staff members.

More specifically, it is recommended that the libraries discuss the motives for *co-creation* as well as resentment and resistance to these motives. Research show that there can be different motives

for *co-creation* (Voorberg et al., 2014). In general, the motives can be quality, efficiency or legitimacy (Lystbæk et al., 2019). First, *co-creation* can improve the quality of a product or service. It is increasingly recognized that some products and services become better if the users are involved in their making, simply because the users have relevant knowledge and experience about a product or service that can help to improve its quality. *Co-creation* is a way of involving users in order to include their knowledge and experience in the creation of products and services. Second, *co-creation* can improve the efficiency of products and services. It is increasingly recognized that some products and services are not cost-effective, i.e. are too expensive to produce. *Co-creation* is a way of involving the users in order to make them contribute to the creation of a product or service and thereby to reduce the costs for the provider of the product or service. Third, *co-creation* can improve the legitimacy of a product or service. It is increasingly recognized that users get a sense of ownership and attachment to products and services that they have contributed

to. *Co-creation* is a way of involving the users in order to give them a sense of ownership and attachment to a product or service and, hence, to improve the legitimacy of the product or service among the users.

Often, the motive for *co-creation* in an organization can be unclear, either because it has not been formulated or because it consists of a mix of motives that have not been prioritized.

This can decrease motivation and increase resentment towards *co-creation*. Research show that, throughout their working life, employees develop a professional identity that influences their attitude towards learning opportunities at work (Illeris et al., 2004). The professional identity of an employee consists, in part, of a series of psychological defense mechanisms, i.e. psychological strategies that are unconsciously used to protect an individual from stress and anxiety arising from uncertainty or unacceptable feelings in the working life. These defense mechanisms help the individual to avoid or reduce stress and anxiety, but they also exclude

some learning opportunities and thus restricts an individual from certain kinds of learning. It is sometimes difficult to define when a defense mechanism is appropriate and helpful and when it is not, i.e. when it is just simple resentment and resistance to change (Illeris, 2011). The focus group interviews show that the positive and negative reactions towards *co-creation* are reflected in the professional identity of the individual library staff member, which can both increase and decrease the motivation for *co-creation*. For instance, a colleague says: "If your professional standards are high it is difficult to let go of them. Many of us have trouble accepting that something should be 'good enough'." As the quote indicates, a professional identity with high professional standards can decrease motivation towards *co-creation*. A manager says: "It is important that the staff members are willing to let go of control. This depends most certainly on the kind of person you are. It is easier for some than for others. But in relation to competence development, it is one of the things you have to work on. We all know this: When you are busy you tend to think that it is easier

to do things yourself; however, maybe things are done better if you get more perspectives. I think that this is an issue you have to work on." The quote indicates that competence development activities should address the motivation that drives the library staff members in relation to *co-creation* and the professional identity of individual staff members. Thus, it is recommended that the libraries include this issue in their competence development activities, both meetings, workshops and new projects. Generally speaking, the different motives for *co-creation* (quality, efficiency and legitimacy) appeal to different professional identities, i.e. each of them motivates some staff members but risks demotivating others. To deal with this issue, the libraries can use a simple but practical typology of professional identities (tabel 4).

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“ If your professional standards are high it is difficult to let go of them. Many of us have trouble accepting that something should be 'good enough'.”

TABEL 4. PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES

	Professional expert	Service provider	Collaborating partner
Professional value	Quality of products and services	Efficiency of products and services	Legitimacy of products and services
Potential in <i>co-creation</i>	User knowledge and experience	User demands and wishes	User influence and ownership
Professional aversion	Defects and mistakes	Bad service	Professional arrogance

The professional expert wants to perform a task in the best possible way. Staff members who mainly consider themselves to be professional experts thus focus on the products and services that the user needs. To them, *co-creation* makes sense and increases motivation to the extent that it is used to involve the knowledge and experience of the users in order to improve the quality of products and services. However, professional experts tend to react with resentment and resistance if they are expected to compromise their professional standards.

The service provider, on the other hand, wants the users to experience the best

possible service. Staff members who mainly consider themselves to be service providers thus focus on user wants. To them, *co-creation* makes sense and increases motivation to the extent that it helps users to get what they want, preferably quickly and efficiently. However, service providers tend to react with resentment and resistance if they find it a waste of time, for instance if they find that users' wants can be met more easily in another way.

The collaborating partner, finally, wants to help users to be able to influence products and services in their interest. Staff members who mainly consider themselves to be collaborating partners

thus focus on user influence for its own sake. To them, *co-creation* makes sense and increases motivation to the extent that it helps users to influence the products and services they use. However, collaborating partners tend to react with resentment and resistance if they find that user influence is not true and honest, for instance if user influence is dismissed in the end because of other concerns.

The typology identifies ideal types, i.e. analytical categories that can be used to identify different professional identities, but they are neither ideal nor typical. Rather, most staff members can have complex identities that include

different types. Hence, it is possible to appeal to most staff members by clarifying the motive for *co-creation*, but it is also possible that individual staff members react with resentment if the motive does not resonate with the main concerns of the individual. Research describes this as an expression of the need for transformative learning processes, i.e. competence development that involves a transformation of the basic frames of reference of an individual (Illeris, 2011).

In summation, the focus on motives and identity recommended here will improve motivation and sense making processes in relation to *co-creation* and thus contribute to continued competence development.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL OF COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT**

Increasingly, research has shown that competence development does not only involve individual aspects but complex patterns of organizational structures and culture that influence competence development processes. The organizational structures and culture form the learning environment of individual competence development (Illeris et al., 2004).

Based on the focus group interviews analyzed above (in part 2), this section makes the general recommendations for competence development activities in relation to organizational structures and culture.

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“ It should not be the task of an expert team, but a task in all teams



### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

Competence development at work is depended upon the organizational structures of the workplace, in particular of tasks and work relations (Illeris et al., 2004). The focus group interviews show that competence development in relation to *co-creation* must be supported by organizational structures in relation to tasks and coaching, both with colleagues and with the management. Continued competence development, then, should be reflected in decisions about the structures of tasks and work relations.

Regarding the structures of tasks in relation to *co-creation*, it is recommended that the libraries decide how to conceive of *co-creation* as a task. Is it a general task for everybody or a special task for a few people? In the focus group interviews, the informants suggest nuanced answers to this question. On the one hand, some of the informants stress that *co-creation* should be an integrated part of the core tasks.

A project member says: "It should not be the task of an expert team, but a task in all teams as an integrated part of whatever the team is doing. I don't think that you can do it if it is done by an expert team." The quote suggests that all members of the staff should be involved in *co-creation* activities – and be allocated time as a part of the core tasks. But on the other hand, some of the informants stress that the staff can be involved in *co-creation* at different levels. For instance, a colleague says: "If we are only expected to remind each other that *co-creation* is a good thing, is does not require much. But if it is something that the organizations want to develop, then we need a special group to do it. This is not to say that they should be the only ones doing it, but they facilitate it, they show the methods, they stay up to date with what happens in the field, the methods, etc.." This implies that all members of the staff should know about *co-creation*, but only a few members of the staff should have more advanced competencies – and more responsibility. Another colleague says: "I am not

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“ But if it is something that the organizations want to develop, then we need a special group to do it.”



afraid to throw myself into doing it, if I have the time, since we are not expected to be 'nerds', we should just do it. But I would not do it alone." As the quote suggests, it is important to distinguish between different levels of competence and responsibility in relation to *co-creation*. Hence, it is recommended that the organizational structures around *co-creation* activities reflects the fact that it makes more sense and adds more value in some areas and that library staff in these areas should have more competence and be more engaged in *co-creation* activities than staff members in other areas. This principle for the organizational structures around *co-creation* should not be controversial, but the specific decision about what level of competence for which areas might be controversial. For instance, a manager says: "I recommend that we take it beyond the most obvious areas. I am certainly a fan of involving students in the development of teaching, and it can be a challenge, because our time with them is very limited. But you can also apply it in many other areas than

the most obvious." As the quote suggests, it can be a problem to delineate *co-creation* to certain areas, since it is tempting to make the (too) easy decision.

More specifically, then, it is recommended that any delineation of *co-creation* is considered to be dynamic in the sense that it can change. To deal with this issue, the libraries can distinguish between (at least) the three levels of competence mentioned above: Basic competence, expanded competence and expert competence. Basic competence, then, is a level of competence that all staff members should have, while expanded competence is a level of competence for a few selected members of the staff, who serve as internal consultants. Maybe the libraries should even have staff members with expert competence, who can develop the area further (see tabel 5).

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“ I recommend that we take it beyond the most obvious areas.”

TABEL 5. DISTRIBUTION OF COMPETENCIES IN RELATION TO CO-CREATION

Levels of competence	Characteristics	Examples	Distribution
1. Basic competence	Basic knowledge and skills in how to participate in <i>co-creation</i>	Knowledge of concepts Basic relational skills	All/many staff members
2. Expanded competence	Expanded knowledge and skills in how to facilitate <i>co-creation</i>	Methodic competencies Special relational skills	Some staff members
3. Expert competence	Expert knowledge and skills in order to develop <i>co-creation</i> further	Methodic expertise Strategic skills	Maybe few staff members

Regarding the structures of work relations, the focus group interviews show that it is very important to have access to coaching, both with colleagues and with the management. Research stresses that coaching with colleagues can be either formal or informal (Illeris et al., 2004). In formal coaching, the role of responsibility of providing coaching to colleagues is given to selected members of the staff. The advantage of formal organization of coaching is that it is easy to plan whereas the disadvantage is that it is inflexible, since only a few selected colleagues offer coaching.

In informal coaching, a staff member can ask any colleague for help. The advantage of informal organization of coaching, then, is that it is flexible whereas the disadvantage is that the colleague might not have the time nor the competence to offer coaching. Hence, it is recommended that the libraries find a balance between formal and informal coaching with colleagues.

More specifically, it is recommended that the organization of coaching reflects the decision about the organizational structures around *co-creation*.

Staff members with expanded or expert competence should have a formal role and responsibility to act as coaches or internal consultants whereas colleagues with basic competence can be used as informal coaches when time permits. Again, this principle should not be controversial, but the specific decision about who offers coaching about what and when might be controversial. This is an issue that not only concerns internal work relations but also the relationships to students and other users. For instance, a project member says: "The students we have worked with are en-

gaged in student organizations, such as the student café. Thus, we can establish a relation ... but the students are here for a very short time. Hence, it is good if we can establish a relation to some of the student organizations.”

The focus group interviews show that coaching with the management does not concern practical issues and tasks in relation to *co-creation*, but is rather about having access to managerial support and a “green light” in terms of resources and motives for *co-creation*.

In short, the decisions regarding organizational structures recommended here will support continued competence development in relation to *co-creation*.

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### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND PRACTICES

Competence development at work is not only dependent upon the organizational structures of the workplace, but also organizational culture, in particular organizational values and work practices.

Some values and work practices are common, but some are specific to a department or a group of employees and are thus the basis of the formation of sub-cultures in an organization. Cultural communities are not defined by the formal organization but by employees' sense of common goals and values. Cultural communities, then, cannot be formed by decision, but arise from stories about the past and fantasies of future experiences (Illeris et al., 2004).

In the focus group interviews, the informants stress the importance of organizational values and work practices in relation to *co-creation*, in particular the

values and work practices in relation to user involvement. For instance, a manager says: "Isn't this what we have always done? Haven't we always involved users in order for what we do to make sense for them? Well, eh." As the quote indicates, the basic idea in *co-creation* is not new but neither is it well integrated into the organization and its work practices. Continued competence development, then, should discuss how the organizational values and work practices relate to *co-creation*.

More specifically, it is recommended that the libraries discuss how and why collaboration with users is valued – and if it is also valuable when it is not productive. Research shows that the current interest in *co-creation*, in particular in public organizations, is part of a general transformation in the public sector towards more collaboration with users and citizens (Crosby, Hart, & Torfing, 2017; Torfing & Triantafyllou, 2016). The focus group interviews show that this trans-

formation also applies to the libraries; however, not in a simple or linear way in which new organizational values and work practices simply replace old ones. Rather, the transformation means that there are competing values and work practices. For instance, a colleague say: "I think that we generally talk about the users as 'users' and, thus, we are on our way. But still, on an organizational level, we could work on how we view the users, as resources rather than as recipients of services. This is a matter of culture." In the focus group interviews, the informants provide a nuanced view of the organizational values that characterize the libraries. On the one hand, the libraries value high quality standards, but on the other hand they also value user service. Both of these values can support *co-creation* with users – as well as problematize it. It is recommended, then, that the libraries discuss the organizational values that characterize everyday work practices as well as discuss how and why they

support organizational goals, for instance about *co-creation* with users.

To deal with this issue, the libraries can use a simple but practical typology from public management research that distinguish between three sets of values and work practices public organizations, which are labelled Public Administration, New Public Management and New Public Governance (Crosby et al., 2017; Thomas, 2013).

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TABEL 6. PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

	Public Administration	New Public Management	New Public Governance
Organizational ideal	Bureaucratic authority	Competetive service provider	Arena for partnerships
Organizational values	Quality and predictability	Service and efficiency	Involvement and cooperation
Organizational work practices	Standards and rules	Benchmarking and user satisfaction	Partnerships and projects

Public Administration describes the ideal of a bureaucratic authority. The core values related to this ideal are professional expertise and predictability, which have been and still are the fundamental principles in many public organizations. Thus, it is with reference to these values that many public organizations have established around formal hierarchies and work practices, which focus on professional standards, rules and regulations (Crosby et al., 2017).

New Public Management describes the ideal of a modern public service provider. The core values related to this ideal are service and efficiency, which

have become fundamental principles in many public organizations today. Thus, it is with reference to these values that many public organizations have introduced projects and work practices which focus on user satisfaction and productivity (Thomas, 2013).

New Public Governance describes the ideal of an open and democratic organization. The core values of this ideal are involvement and cooperation, which are increasingly stressed as fundamental principles in many public organizations. Thus, it is with reference to these values that many public organizations have started to en-

gage in partnerships with both private corporations and non-governmental organizations as well as to engage in collaboration with their users and citizens in general (Crosby et al., 2017).

*Co-creation*, then, resonates with New Public Governance values and the interest in *co-creation* has increased in the last decades as has the interest in New Public Governance, but *co-creation* can resonate with Public Administration values as well as New Public Government values. According to Public Administration, *co-creation* can be valuable in so far as it promotes the compliance of professional standards,

rules and regulations, for instance by informing users about them. Similarly, *co-creation* can be valuable according to New Public Government in so far as it promotes user satisfaction and productivity, for instance by inviting users to voice their experiences and wishes. Many public organizations have values and work practices that relate to all three ideals of public organizations (Crosby et al., 2017; Thomas, 2013). Research describes such organizations as “hybrids” that are characterized by both explicit and implicit tensions between values and work practices, which calls for ongoing reflection and discussion about how to deal with tensions and dilemmas (Byrkjeflot & Kragh Jespersen, 2014). The focus group interviews show that some informants are wondering how well the organizational values at

the libraries resonate with *co-creation*. For instance, a colleague says: “I wish we had more courage to do things, sometimes, and then observed what was going to happen.” In elaborating on this point, a project member says: “The ideal would be if a project like this can change our mindset.” As the quote indicates, *co-creation* can be used to challenge some of the values and work practices at the libraries.

In sum, the discussion of organizational values recommended here will support continued competence development in relation to *co-creation*.

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“ I wish we had more courage to do things, sometimes, and then observed what was going to happen.”

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“ The ideal would be if a project like this can change our mindset.”

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**Department of business development and technology**

Aarhus BSS

Aarhus University

Birk Centerpark 15

<https://bss.au.dk/en/>