



SHARPENS YOUR THINKING

## Space, conversations and place: lessons and questions from organisational development

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# Space, conversations and place: Lessons and questions from organisational development.

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## Abstract

Physical workspace is distinguished from workplace. The latter embodies culture and should become the greater concern of FM. In the field of individual and group development spaces can add an extra gear to stimulate cognitive processes. We provide various examples and suggest modern workplaces, with their emphasis on interaction need to also focus on environments and spaces for individual and collective reflection.

## Key words

Workspace, Workplace, Organisational Development, Cognition

## Introduction: Workspace and workplace

We have two aims in this paper. First we suggest a distinction between the physical workspace and the more intangible workplace. Second we draw lessons for the management of the latter from the use of variations on physical space in work on organisational development.

In the sense of the distinction just drawn FM, whether Facilities or Facility, probably now concerns itself more with workspaces, and some scholars of the subject define it as their management (Mudrak et al., 2005). Compare two titles. Becker's classic (1990) book took as its subject *the total workplace: facilities management and the elastic organization* whereas Macgregor and Then (1999), while also positing a strategic position for FM, wrote of *Facilities management and the business of space*. The latter implies a structural-functional concern for the tangible aspects of space. Our contention, anticipated by Becker, is that FM should rediscover its involvement with the total workplace. In the process it must, inevitably, engage with the 'patterns' (Schein, 1985; Price and Shaw, 1998; Price and Akhlaghi, 1999) or social constructs (Vischer, 2008, Price et al, 2009) of an organisation.

The etymology of the distinction between workspace and workplace is not clear cut. The Oxford English Dictionary (as of 11.30.2009) contains no entry for either though it does define work station as *a desk with a computer terminal and keyboard; the terminal itself*. Wikipedia, accessed on the same date, contained a definition of workspace that many in FM would see as unduly restricted, viz:

*Workspace refers to small premises provided, often by [local authorities](#) or economic development agencies, to help [new businesses](#) to establish themselves. These typically provide not only physical space and utilities, but also administrative services and links to support and finance organisations, as well as peer support among the tenants. A*

*continuum of sophistication ranges through categories such as 'managed workspaces', 'business incubators' and 'business and employment co-operatives'. In cities, they are often set up in buildings that are disused but which the local authority wishes to retain as a landmark, such as tramsheds. At the larger end of the spectrum are [business parks](#), technology parks and science parks*

A search for workplace redirected the searcher to Wikipedia's Employment page and in less directly physical senses workplace can be found associated with various aspects of organizational life or culture, such as workplace safety, workplace harassment or even workplace law. Workspace does not carry the same connotation yet organisational theorists, for whom the topic is still not common, write about space (Lebevre, 1991 Baldry, 1999; Kornberger and Clegg, 2004) rather than place. The words space and place carry many meanings in the OED which nonetheless categorises one such set, for place, as *senses relating to space or location*. Defined such, a place is a classifier of, or an entity created from, a space or location. Although space and place require each other in order for them to be defined (Tuan 1977, p 6) "undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value". We transform space and dwell in it: space, says Tuan, is freedom, place is security. Security enables but can also limit (Price and Shaw, 1998).

In what follows we will use workplace to express both the work space and the social constructs within it. Workplace in short is workspace plus culture. We develop, or reassert, the theoretical and evidential argument that FM should concern itself with constructs and workplace, rather than mere workspace. For organisations concerned with and profiting from knowledge, learning and conversation are fundamental parts of the production process: indeed Price (2007) has claimed conversation as the fundamental production process of a knowledge economy. The influence of workspace on conversations within it and hence the production or emergence of workplace becomes a managerial lever (Peters, 1992). We aim here to explore the link by seeking lessons drawn from the experiences of individuals and groups stepping outside their workplace to have different experiences in different spaces. The cases focus on the sensory-bodily nature of these experiences as well as an examination of both external social conversations and internal conversations of cognitive processing. We will also argue that the learning from such events is frequently diluted when those same individuals return to their habitual workplace.

## **Human Resource Development (HRD) and pedagogy**

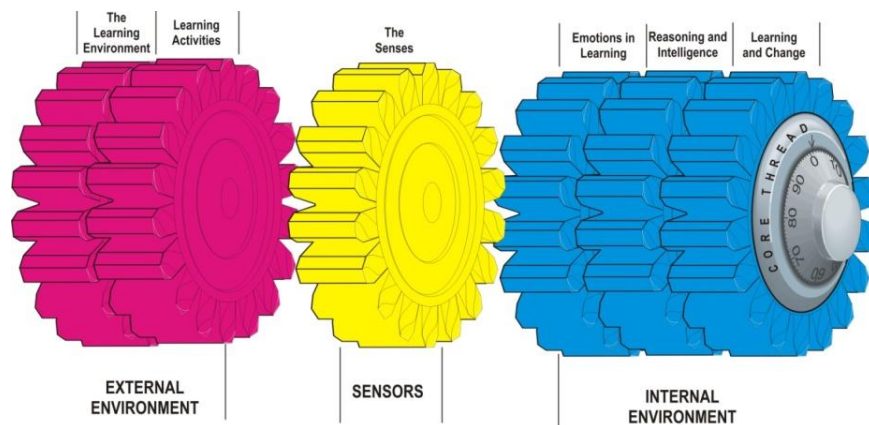
The exploration takes the researchers into fields that are themselves often explored in separate bodies of literature concerned respectively with, on one hand, HR or Organisational Development (OD) and, on the other, pedagogy or teaching. We seek to open up a new theoretical space by exploring fieldwork across and between both fields of study. Breaking out of the disciplinary boundaries (inter disciplinary), combination/researching in more than one simultaneously/juxtaposition (multi disciplinary) and across/beyond/unity of knowledge (trans disciplinary) (Dillon, 2007) our fieldwork enables us to generate a creative co-presence, a mutual respecting of disciplines, moving towards a greater unity of knowledge using tools of 'comparison, association, analogy, metaphor, mapping and blending' (Dillon, 2007: 6) which 'cannot be accomplished within a framework of disciplinary research' (Dillon, 2007: 3).

Here the question of the relationship of space and place to learning is significant, in particular the relationship between organisationally owned workplace and 'other' environs, and between the sensory and conversational province of employees. Working and learning have,

or should have, mutual affinity: learning impels work and vice versa. Similarly space generates behaviour and behaviour drives space design. Space is not an inert container: the coalescence of social dynamics with learning experiences and environments is in constant flux. In the literature on learning and development in the outdoors, and in education and training for sustainable development, there already exists a strong unifying call for more integrative interpretations of spaces and places for learning and for working with the contemporary, complex nature of societal problems (e.g. Loynes, 2002; Payne, 2002; Beringer and Martin, 2003; Friese et al, 1998; Burns, 1998; Berger, 2007; Sterling, 2001; Stibbe, 2009). Payne (2002: 19) specifically advocates a reconciliation of the inner and outer world experiences as worthy or pursuing for critical outdoor experiential learning and recommends a 'sorely needed reparation of first, human-environment, second, community/society-land/sea/town/cityscapes and, third, culture-nature relations'. While at first glance this appears to have little currency for human resource development let alone FM we suggest there is a translation to be achieved.

Approaches to learning models have tended to move progressively towards more experiential, holistic interpretations and beyond the emphasis on cognitive processing. For example, John Heron (2001 p208) voiced concern that 'The old model of education, going back to classical times, dealt only with the education of the intellect, theoretical and applied' Heron noted that 'nowadays we have people who are learning by thinking, *feeling* and doing – bringing all these to bear on the acquisition of new knowledge and skills'(emphasis added). At the same time UNESCO (1996) proposed four pillars as the foundations of education: learning to *know*, learning to *be*, learning to *do* and learning to *live together* (quoted in Sterling, p. 75). In 2002 the Danish educator Knud Illeris broadened his theorising to include emotions, suggesting three dimensions as central to learning: the social dimension, cognition and emotion. He noted (Illeris 2002: 157) that '*in order for learning to be characterised as formation of experience, the learner must be actively present and be self-aware in his or her interaction with the social and/or material environment*'. (emphasis added). Peter Jarvis (2006), a leading writer on adult education, likewise acknowledged that emotions were more significant than he had imagined in his earlier work.

One pedagogic theorising that presents a connectivity and dynamic flux between six dimensions of learning is presented by Beard & Wilson (2002: 2006), who argue for a greater understanding of the relational and dynamic nature of a number of core aspects of learning. Their integrative theorising presents a significant development in that their modelling specifically recognises the importance of the learning environment, and includes space, place, and the cultural and socio-political context. This consideration of the location and context of learning is anchored within a notion of *belonging*. The second dimension concerns an exploration of what learners *do* (active component), the third dimension concerns *sensing* (how information is received internally for processing), the fourth dimension concerns *feeling* (emotions), the fifth concerns aspects of *thinking* (cognition), and finally the sense of *being* (learning and change).



Belonging    Doing                    Sensing                    Feeling   Thinking   Being

Figure 1: A visual metaphor illustrating the significance of six dimensions in learning (from Beard and Wilson (2006))

What then is the significance of this pedagogic modelling for workplace learning and what does it tell us about space and place in relation to HRD, FM and OD? The question is explored through practice examples, but suffice to say at this stage we tentatively suggest performative, output considerations as related to employee *doing*, might be extended to embrace *thinking*, *sensing*, and *feeling*, within the broad notion of *belonging*. These dimensions of learning experiences influence, and are influenced by, space dynamics of organisational and individual learning. In short the first cog in the metaphorical gear chain is the domain of FM. It constrains or enables the performance of the rest of the chain. If space is in too low a gear the performance of the rest of the learning system is, we argue, inherently limited. We illustrate the point with examples.

## Practice Examples

Both authors have experience working as facilitators in various organisational development contexts. The first author in particular develops practice through specific spatial arrangements for which, over time, he has developed metaphors.

### Reflective spaces

Reflection can be a significant, or perhaps even necessary, precursor to learning from experience as Wood-Daudelin (1996) showed by experiments and as developed by Schön's classic arguments for the reflective practitioner (developed for facilities briefing by Hörger et al 1999) and foundation of the ubiquitous circular model developed by Kolb (1984). Wood-Daudelin suggests that solitary and group reflective processes are important for workplace learning. She lists performance appraisal, project review sessions, and mentoring as examples of group reflective processes. Individual, solitary reflective activities on the other hand include repetitive, rhythmic, routine so called 'mindless' activities such as jogging, swimming laps, lawn mowing, and routine habits such as shaving, driving an established route, ironing or showering. This she suggests reduces or suspends incoming sensory information, allowing for a re-wiring and refocus or concentration on the sorting of existing data about previous experiences. Significantly Wood-Daudelin is proposing that reflection is operating here as a state of flux between mind and body. The cognitive function is facilitated by bodily movements.

We equip our workplaces for meetings, with increasing evidence for the benefit of the informal (Price, 2007, Heerwagen et al, 2004). However the lexicon of the workplace does not include a similar noun for ‘concentratings’. You cannot reach her: she is in a meeting is an acceptable response to a phone call. You cannot reach him; he is (in a) concentrating is not so readily acceptable. A tension between *doing* and *thinking* becomes apparent. A challenge facing many OD practitioners is to find means of facilitating reflection among managers or professionals who are not accustomed to it.

### Routine walking

The **sand walk** honours Charles Darwin’s original example of a route around which he would walk so as to develop his thinking by creating a ‘synthesising mind state’, which resulted, of course, in Darwin having some of the most original insights in the history of thinking. The rhythmic, sub conscious movement of the activity allows, and even facilitates, contemplation by reducing sensory input. Some years ago one of us facilitated a session designed to encourage team work in an FM setting, again a hospital, where managers who had previously worked for the health service had been transferred to the management of a new FM provider as part of a one of the first Private Finance Initiative (PFI) projects to go live in the UK<sup>i</sup>. The staff concerned actually recognised that they were being encouraged to improve services and initiate changes in a manner that had not previously been accepted in what had been a very traditional, top down, organisation. There was however an underlying issue that they did not feel trusted as truly loyal to their new employer. A socially constructed, 2<sup>nd</sup> order reality pervaded the new organisation; a situation more common in FM than many FMs recognise (Price et al., 2009; Owen and Ellison, 2010 in press). The tension ended up being verbalised and physically expressed in the early hours of one morning. The facilitator was confronted next morning with two groups, two of whose members had come to blows the night before and invited both to participate in a reflective walk during which both groups spontaneously began discussing solutions rather than asserting problems. In essence the hotel where the event was happening had become an extension of the actual workplace imbued with the same accidentally adversarial (Senge et al, 1994) dynamic. The kinaesthetic activity, a walk, created a physical, affective and cognitive space for a different conversation.

### Separation of conversations

Conrad Waddington (1977) provided a perspective on social context and organisations that in many ways anticipated better known systems arguments such as Senge’s (1990). Waddington argued that organisations exist because of the replication of the conventional wisdom of dominant groups; COWDUNG in his graphic metaphor. From such a perspective organisations are systems in which conversations establish and reproduce the conventional wisdom. That sentence requires a word of warning. We use the term conversation not in the colloquial sense but rather in a sense closer to the post modern concept of ‘discourse’. That sense is well explained by Ford, (1999)

*conversations as a complex, information rich mix of auditory, visual, olfactory and tactile events and includes not only what is spoken but the full conversational apparatus of symbols, artifacts, theatrics etc that are used in conjunction with or as substitutes for what is spoken. The speaking and listening that goes on between and among people and their many forms of expression in talking singing, dancing etc may be understood as conversation. Similarly, listening is more than hearing and includes all the ways in which people become aware and conscious of, or present to the world. (p. 484)*

and provides a stimulating alternative perspective on organisational change as managing conversations (Ford and Ford, 1995).

The Disney Corporation are masters at providing visual and spatial experiences. Indeed their front of house and back stage metaphors provide lessons for FM that have been much remarked on. According to Robert Dilts (1994, p. 163) a major element of Walt Disney's original genius was his ability to explore something from a number of different perceptual positions. An important insight into this key part of Disney's strategy comes from the comment made by one of his animators that: 'There were actually three different Walts: the dreamer, the realist and the spoiler. You never knew which one was coming into your meeting.' Based on this insight, Dilts identifies the structure of creativity as a synthesis of different processes or phases. Specifically, the Dreamer conversations enables new ideas and goals to be formed; the Realist conversations transform those ideas into concrete expressions; and the Critic conversations act as a filter to counter overly creative or ambitious ideas but also to provide a stimulus for refinement. Another important element of Disney's creativity, according to Dilts, is the linking process known as 'synesthesia', which is the ability to overlap two or more of the senses together simultaneously, as when one feels what one sees, or sees images of sounds that one hears. Sharon Beedon, (2008) experimented with a physical expression of **Disney's Creative Strategy** providing separate spaces in which students were encouraged to dream, critique or plan.

Expressive or branded workplaces are becoming more common in modern office though the norm is still the corporate brand rather than the customer or product brand. The exceptions arise where workplace FM is seen as part of the Organisational Development process. Interesting signs may come from the hospitality industries and those who supply them. One of us received a commission to develop a strategic brief for an international brewing company seeking greater connectivity between their marketing and operations functions via a workplace solution. The central 'attractor' (Figure 2), their multi-functional networking space, became an expression of their brands in typical customer and consumer environments and also a setting for the conversational experiences marketed by their customers such as the space for creative conversations themed around a brand which was then being promoted under a general think differently, drink differently theme. The space associated with the no nonsense, plain-speaking brand, was a place for short, sharp, no nonsense conversations. The strategic brief was written as a virtual tour, or pub-crawl, through a variety of outlets for the company's products in a real city centre (Manchester UK) considering the types of conversations carried out in each. The designers translated the brief into the conceptual sketch shown in Figure 3. One side effect was that operations took responsibility for product standards in this space and marketers came to appreciate the degree to which items such as the pressure in pumping systems affected the experience of the product. Both sides appreciated the worlds and concerns of the other. Another, according to the CEO, was the best festive season for sales the company had experienced.



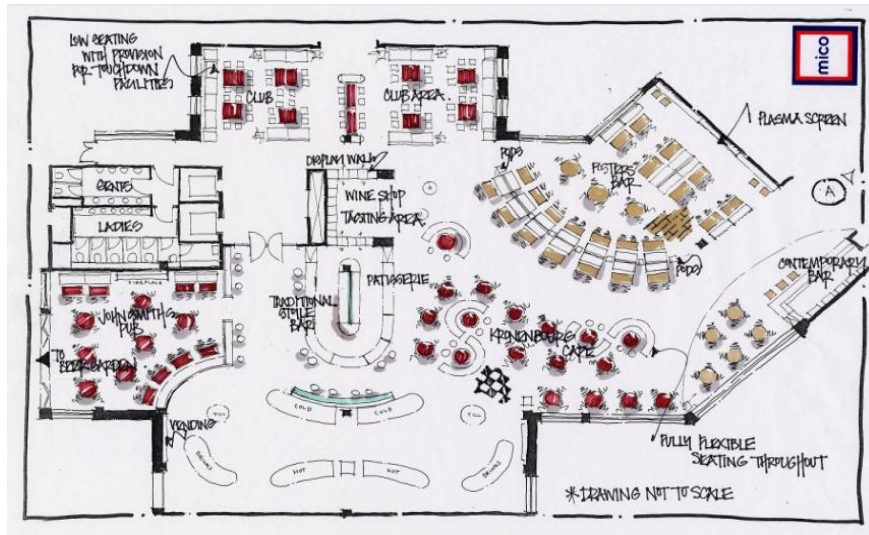


Figure 2 Concept sketch for a variety of customer / brand centres spaces in the central place on the HQ campus of an international brewing company.

## Solo and collaborative reflection

That is a space for beer and conversations. A more general approach to reflective learning, referred to as '*Coffee and papers*' (Figure 3), got its name from learning and development settings in hotel lounges where the learning experience was designed to be comparable to reading the Sunday papers, in a relaxed mind state. Essentially it consists of an invitation to individuals to read themed articles and to intentionally relax in an environment that is special for them. *Coffee and Papers* typically generated high levels of learner engagement and knowledge generation through the process of a reading retreat simulation. The experience is designed to develop a specific sensory-cognition, or body-mind state of 'relaxed alertness'. The individual experience has to be in a place or space that learners find particularly relaxing and comfortable, with a degree of solitude to enhance concentration and thinking. Coffees, teas, fruit juices, croissants and fruit add to the sensory experience (Beard, 2008a). The quiet solo experience involves individual, internal conversations. After a period of solo reading the group re-assemble and construct collective conversations, critically exploring the range of readings. The acquired collective knowledge can be substantial.

One senior manager said of one such session: ‘One of the more effective learning community development exercises, in my view, followed the coffee and papers sessions each morning. During these sessions, differing views concerning the same articles were discussed and new insights developed based on individual experience outside the articles. This lead to a spin of ideas that spurred more new ideas, and re-shaped some of my initial thoughts of the articles. It appeared that many of the participants shared this experience regarding the coffee and papers sessions.’

The articles might be from scholarly and professional journals: 'People Management', and 'Management Learning', 'Management Education and Development', 'Training and Development', 'Industrial and Commercial Training', 'Sloan Management Review', 'Harvard Business Review', and many others. Hardly Sunday morning reading! In the corporate world where this technique has been used one chief executive sat in her stocking feet on a stool in a hotel lounge, surrounded by strawberries coated in chocolate, and coffee and croissants and said: 'Colin, I am in heaven. I never have the time to read any more. I have lost the power to think or read with any depth these days...I am enjoying this experience!'



The Senior Executive pictured in China admitted his pleasure at effectively being given permission to experience an extended period of *thinking/concentrating*. The place signifies that time for concentration is important and a legitimate extension of work. FMs concerned with new workplaces, and the various barriers to change thrown up by organisational culture (e.g. Becker, 2007) might find a coffee and papers approach a pragmatic means of gaining executive buy in to the strategic possibilities inherent in new workplaces.



Figure 3: Coffee and papers in action

The importance of such experiences to the corporate progress is highlighted by Ray Anderson the well known CEO of the Georgia based, global company Interface Carpets<sup>ii</sup>: when he realised he had little understanding of the notion of sustainable development he started reading more widely and more critically about society and his role in it as a business leader. Reading changed his views, his business and his life. The company has gone on to be widely recognised as leading the way for sustainability in business, winning many awards for successes. Significantly the dawning experience for Anderson, often referred to as an epiphany, was initiated through reading with an open yet critical mind.

Furthermore the *coffee and papers* experience has had a similarly profound effect on a whole organisation. Staff in the UK's National Health Service (NHS) have responsibilities to sustain professional development through reading of evidence-based clinical practice. Time to read about such clinical practice however had largely diminished by the dominance of everyday activities;<sup>v</sup> the *doing* dimension of learning. Concentrated reading and the subsequent collective sharing was not happening for a number of reasons, including that of guilt associated with relaxed reading at work. Reading might not be interpreted as *doing* work. However the staff of one primary care trust (PCT)<sup>iii</sup>, having experienced *coffee and papers* on a training programme, put forward what turned out eventually to be a successful proposal brought to senior managers under the workplace umbrella. The proposal, as part of an 'Inspiration Award' scheme in 2009, included some of the following required actions suggested in order to implement this idea:

Encourage staff to write reading time into their objectives.

Develop a marketing campaign across the PCT showing that it's okay to sit and read clinical material.

Provide education for managers to help them understand how to enable staff to absorb current evidence.

Understand the cost of allowing staff time to absorb evidence, but also calculating and understanding the cost, service and other benefits.

Purchase resources to make reading easier.

### Grasping complexity

Authors such as Waddington and Senge remind us that today's executives need to appreciate organisations and contexts as complex, dynamic systems. Linear descriptions and complicated process diagrams do not easily convey complex interrelationships in a way that people find easy to absorb. Moveable sticky post-it notes on walls or flip charts (Figure 4) help but they are rarely durable. Recently one of us received a request from Mumbai to accelerate staff training in the processes behind complicated financial procedures. The response was to arrange a 'walk-the-talk' experiential session in which participants equipped with suitable card symbols map out, and have conversations about, the processes concerned. The approach draws on observations concerning the enhancement of learning through movement and mapping (Beard, 2008b) and was developed when working with different professional groups (lawyers, volunteers, and scientists) seeking to understand the complex evolution of new social movements and the inter-relationships involved in solving complex environmental problems. The shared physical modelling creates movement and different groups achieve a shared understanding, through shared conversations for clarification, before they began to develop solutions. The enhancement of learning through movement is highlighted: mobility is applied so that movement can be experienced by the people learning, the information/data can easily be moved and reconfigured, as can the artefacts and the space itself in which they are working. Through movement people have a sense of the bodily position in the mapping process, and the relational complexity through connectivity is understood and remembered. This awareness of the body in space is partly the function of the senses, particularly muscular proprioceptors that allows us to walk for example up steps without looking at our feet, and walk down the street without continually bumping into people.



Figure 4: *Stick-it* labels permit mobility of space usage, people and information.

A technological response seen and advocated for offices is often the, large, supposedly interactive screen or whiteboard sometimes positioned horizontally as a table. This we would suggest removes or reduces an important element of the kinaesthetic walk. One of us has seen magnetic walls used to similar effect but the use of floors so that groups can walk through their model of the system helps release more insights and stories (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Floor space: mobility of space usage, people and information.

### Schools

So far we have phrased the discussion around corporate spaces. Similar lessons should inform the design of schools (Author B et al., 2009). That research (online address to follow) traced pupils' views of the physical space, and its condition, in an old school awaiting an extensive refurbishment and a four year old new build. The desire for, and lack of, reflective and social learning space was strongly and eloquently expressed. Pupils even took matters into their own hands rearranging outdoor seating (Figure 6). In subsequent surveys pupils rated social spaces as being as important as classroom in affecting their learning.



Figure 6. Spontaneous creation of a group space by school pupils (from Author B et al 2009)

### Discussion

Contemporary, experience based models of learning (Beard & Wilson, 2006) highlight how the physical environment affects a complex milieu of learning dynamics. Through practice examples we have sought to open up a new vista so as to highlight the underappreciated and sophisticated nature of the connectedness of space to the bodily senses, and to internal and external reflective conversations. We have alluded, briefly, to school pupils awareness of same. We have explored the important role of rhythmical physical bodily movement, the separation of cognitive and social conversations in different spaces, the use of quiet space to develop mind states of relaxed alertness, and the experiencing and understanding of problems that have a relational complexity in terms of time and space dimensions. At the heart of our brief explorations of practice is a suggestion that greater flexibility and mobility of the space-learning dynamic is required. Mobility and flexibility is required for the movement of people,

for the movement and reconfiguration of information, for the movement of technology itself as well as other artefacts, and for the reconfiguration of spaces to facilitate different conversational types that are essential for learning.

If FM is distinguished from simple workspace provision and services, it is arguably through its ability to influence the social constructs of organisations (e.g. Macdonald et al., 2009). A lesson from OD and pedagogy is the underappreciated potential of reflective spaces. Linear spaces, whether cubicles or straight lines in open plans, promote linear thinking and inhibit more complex, systemic appreciations in an economy that is no longer Newtonian; that requires Becker's 'elastic organisation'. Peters' lever may include the equivalent of Darwin's sand walk, a contemplative path within the grounds. Employees continue to struggle with old practices that facilitate such mobility, such as paper cards on floor, or stick-it labels on flipcharts. These techniques, though awkward, facilitate mobility and flexibility and allow problematic complex problems to be more easily seen and unravelled. There is now a need however for a new generation of space linked to technological developments that will allow kinaesthetic gesture based computing, to facilitate bodily and data movement. Might this be akin to an '*i-Wall*', in that it might enable the big-picture to be mapped, allow touch screen functionality, and systemic thinking about complex problems? Over twenty years ago Peter Senge (1990) suggested five disciplines that should be practised by every employee for an organisation to become a learning organisation:

- An awareness and examination of mental maps.
- Attaining and encouraging personal mastery.
- Developing vision and creating the future.
- Encouraging team learning.
- Developing the ability for systemic thinking.

We have tried to show, through examples, how these five disciplines might be developed and facilitated via processes mediated by physical spaces.

Finally the question of the *other* spaces for learning is also of interest to facilities managers. The *first space* type might be regarded as a new unoccupied, vacant niche. Second space evolves into a workplace, as space is accommodated and inhabited, and reconfigured. There have been multiple evolutions of place designs for work but organisations still seem to yearn for a *third space*, one to which staff '*go away*', to 'other' spaces for learning and change. Such third spaces for 'away days', are found in hotels, retreats, outdoor centres, even on board tall ships and the venturing up mountains. Golf is played at the golf course, as physical exercise and routine movement in natural outdoor environments for the purposes of social networking and important business conversations. Why does this happen? Typically heightened sensory alertness and increased cognitive receptiveness occurs in novel locations. Furthermore a *third space* has the potential to divest the sensory habituation and social political belonging that can inhibit change. The other space is less inculcated with identity, and people have to forge a new collective identity and belonging in their new location. Such spaces appear to be exemplary for specific kinds of organisational and individual learning? Is FM, by still concentrating on the structural and functional aspects of space, providing the first space and ignoring what develops in it, limiting the learning that is possible

There are some interesting parallels with third position as used in the Disney Creative Strategy. Practitioners of the school of facilitation and development known as Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) (Dilts, 1984) contrast three positions or perspectives. The *First* involves individuals seeing, or really understanding, matters from their own perspective.

The *second position* involves seeing perspectives from others' vantage points and the *third* involves seeing self, colleagues, ideas and projects from a more distant vantage point or meta-position. The lesson, from the world of individual development, concerns particularly the benefit of the first position and the first space. Themed corporate spaces are no longer especially unusual and the importance for FM of considering the change management aspects of the workplace and not simply the project is becoming better known through evidence (Donald 1994; La Framboise et al., 2003; Price and Fortune, 2008). The provision of, and the informal legitimisation of using, reflective spaces is probably under explored.

Why don't we find more first and third position spaces within many workplace portfolios? Some might argue they are unaffordable within the contemporary portfolio having said which the brewing example described above was achieved within the context of an overall saving of 20% on FM costs (25% less space better managed) and similar benefits are well within the purview of Lean Assets (Price, 2007; Price and Clark, 2009). Should third space be imported into the everyday world of the office workplace? Third position spaces might be viewed as unaffordable within the contemporary workplace portfolio.

We suggest that those responsible for workplaces need to understand the important inter-related contributions of space (s), of cognition (c), kinaesthetic bodily movement (k) separation (s) and conversation (co) to overall cognitive understanding and performance. An inability to know the world in a more complex relational way through space design for complex learning might have long term consequences of limiting the learning function and brain capacity. The recognition of the need for such *satellite* spaces might be a compromise interpretation of Becker's notion of the elastic organisation. Such space is devoid of cultural embellishments. Traditionally workplace has a population density, creating close proximity of humans. Close proximity represents noise, and potentially excessive sensory stimulation sometimes at inappropriate times: complex problems require a synthesising of the complexity, which is a not solely a cognitive/mental function. Synthesis demands connective and relational thinking.

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<sup>i</sup> PFI, first used in the early 1990s, was a scheme whereby public infrastructure such as hospitals should be constructed and operated by effectively FM companies. NHS FM staff were transferred. The initiative was a boost to the growth of FM in the UK but was massively resented by many in the NHS.

<sup>ii</sup> The first author is one of Interface's Innovation fellows

<sup>iii</sup> Readers unfamiliar with the organisation of the NHS can find descriptions given by Macdonald et. al. (2009). <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/915/>