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Published in:
CoDesign - International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts

DOI:
[10.1080/15710882.2014.922993](https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2014.922993).

Publication date:
2014

Document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (APA):
Nielsen, M. F. (2014). Sizing up 'the box' in order to fit in. *CoDesign - International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts*, 10(2), 112-134. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2014.922993>.

This article was downloaded by: [Mie F. Nielsen]

On: 03 July 2014, At: 08:35

Publisher: Taylor & Francis

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK

CoDesign: International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ncdn20>

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Published online: 26 Jun 2014.

To cite this article: Mie Femø Nielsen (2014): Sizing up 'the box' in order to fit in, CoDesign: International Journal of CoCreation in Design and the Arts, DOI: [10.1080/15710882.2014.922993](https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2014.922993)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2014.922993>

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Sizing up ‘the box’ in order to fit in

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(Received 17 September 2013; accepted 7 May 2014)

Participants in design processes make an effort to come up with solutions that will be deemed acceptable, while accomplishing to ‘think out of the box’. Thinking ‘outside the box’ is often announced as a challenge to and for design teams. ‘The box’ is a metaphor often used in creative processes, and in organisational practices, as a term for rules and regulations, everyday routines and tacit knowledge of ‘how things usually are’ and ‘what we know about the world’. Such a challenge is meant to encourage participants to approach a situation with an open mind, challenge the most basic assumptions and be willing to do things differently. Basically, something different is being called for. Studies have shown that it is striking, how much the participants orient to actually ‘fit’ the box, even when asked to develop it. This paper shows how participants in design processes are ‘sizing up the box’, while participating in meetings or workshops in order to develop a design. They identify key stakeholders of the designated design project; they share their own expectations of these key stakeholders’ possible perceptions, discuss the success criteria and negotiate the values that are to govern the design team in the development process.

Keywords: design; stakeholders; workshop; facilitation; team; values; thinking outside the box; innovation

1. Introduction

Being creative, innovative and able to think ‘out of the box’ is considered an attractive social identity for employees and teams to embrace (Nielsen et al. [forthcoming](#)). This individual driver is strategically interesting for companies and organisations, since intrinsic motivation has shown to be the most important driver for innovation processes (Amabile 1996). With businesses in intense market competition, teams and employees are faced with organisational demands to be creative, innovative and think ‘out of the box’ when fostering new solutions to organisational tasks and challenges (Kim and Mauborgne 2005). A critical, independent and non-conformist thinking is important for innovation processes (Pralhad and Ramaswamy 2000), so that shared assumptions may be identified and challenged.

Still, it is well documented that consenting and conforming to group norms and habits may suppress creativity (Whitfield 1975; Rawlinson 1981; Basadur 1994; Schuldborg 1994). It is well established that strong socialisation may impede innovative processes (Janis 1971; Cheney and Tompkins 1987; Senge 1990). An early study points to one possible explanation: development teams may be more concerned with maintaining face

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(e.g. looking productive) than with solving the problem itself (e.g. being productive) (Pepinsky et al. 1966; cf. Goffman 1972/1955).

In order to understand such an apparent dilemma and other social mechanisms in the design process, it is important to study the creative process itself and not just the output of it (Luck 2003; Glock 2009; McDonnell 2011; Oak 2011; Mathews and Heinemann 2012). Studying design creativity and innovation in authentic everyday settings has in the first decades of design studies not been given as much attention as research via controlled laboratory experiments, because it requires a completely different research approach with more attention to the context of the process in the study (Motte, Yannou, and Bjärnemo 2011; Cuisinier et al. 2012). But design is to be seen as a social process (Luck 2009) and is co-created by means of cognition and talk in social encounters (cf. Medway 1996; Fleming 1998; Dong 2007; Luck 2009). Design is a social activity, and in design teams

design proposals can be shaped through introducing and negotiating versions of the world (...). Designers here are acting as a kind of 'practical psychologist', for whom it is imperative to come to a determination of what people will think, will know, can accept, will expect, will be frustrated by, or will be aware of. (Mathews and Heinemann 2012, 665 and 666)

Therefore, more attention has recently been devoted to studying authentic team interaction in idea development processes in detail (e.g. Brouwer and van Dijk 2011; Brouwer and ten Bhömer 2013; Landgrebe 2011; Nielsen 2012; Due 2012; Mortensen 2013).

Creativity may be seen as a social construction involving value systems of many stakeholders (Gero 2011; Gero and Kannengiesser 2009). In social encounters, designers are met with, and invoke themselves, concerns of key stakeholders. Design is usually undertaken with some consideration of an item's future users (Oak 2012). In some design schools, this is considered an obligatory orientation, which differentiates professional design from 'l'art pour l'art'. From the beginning of defining innovative efforts, innovation has been defined as something new creating economic value (Schumpeter 1911), something not only new and original, but also relevant (Mednick 1962), even if defining relevance and value is a difficult question only to be determined by the society (Csíkszentmihályi 1996). Design creativity has been defined as the 'ability or process for developing novel and useful ideas, solutions, or products' (Sarkar and Chakrabarti 2011). Such classic concepts of 'relevance', 'useful' and 'value creating' have implied considerations of stakeholder concerns.

Dialogue affords designers a better understanding of user needs. In order to have clients or future users articulate personal preferences and attempt to reveal tacit knowledge, since users' wants, needs and expectations (of, e.g. a future building), semi-structured interviews can be conducted by architects with future users of the building (e.g. people with a range of disabilities and people with no impairments) as part of the briefing process (Luck 2003). Such an approach may be used to show how decisions made on behalf of a person may be different from those made by the person herself (Luck 2003). In client meetings at a later stage in the process, stakeholder concerns are also considered. Previous studies have shown that designers orient to meeting stakeholder concerns, willingly or unwillingly, even if this was not the purpose of the studies. Luck has shown how an architect meeting with a client representative may explicitly consider the implications of the client representative's suggestions of modifications to the design (e.g. putting in a door) as a matter of compromising the design (Luck 2009). Glock has shown how clients' perspectives are interpreted or translated into design considerations by employing, and dealing with, vagueness (Glock 2009).

Orienting to stakeholders in the design process may represent attempting to meet conflicting concerns. Oak has shown how it may be treated by design participants as a practical and moral dilemma to decide if a product should be designed to meet the needs of a particular client (a wheelchair user) and the needs of a wider audience of both able-bodied and disabled persons (Oak 2012). Also, voices of other stakeholders may be invoked in design conversations. McDonnell in her studies of meetings between an architect and building users has shown how issues may be raised by users as personal opinions volunteered, perhaps tentatively raised or by conveying general impressions, and that issues may be raised by users on behalf of others (McDonnell 2009). Adding to that, Oak has shown how a client representative employs reported speech as ample evidence to represent particular concerns of users (in this case funeral directors and ministers) to an architect in the process of designing a new crematorium (Oak 2013).

Designers have traditionally been using client-designer conversations when striving to satisfy stakeholder concerns, and thus design conversation studies have focused on this endeavour. But satisfying stakeholder concerns also takes place in other types of conversations, e.g. between designers discussing future user considerations. And in order to understand why ‘thinking out of the box’ might be so difficult, stakeholder orientation is only one part of the equation. When working in a team of designers, the designers themselves are stakeholders to the design project too. If it is a newly formed team, the participants may also orient to defining their common expectations as a team to how they are going to work together, what they will consider a proper way of working together and which values and norms they consider relevant to orient to when making design decisions. They are orienting to social order, tacit norms about how to behave in ordinary interaction – even if they are to behave in a certain way, e.g. not being critical of ideas presented by others in a brainstorming session (Matthews 2009). As Matthew states, ‘while there are many different formats for interaction (e.g. interviews, ceremonies, legal testimonies and presentations are each distinctive in important ways), there are no time outs from social order’ (Matthews 2009, 74).

A recent study by Heinemann, Landgrebe and Matthews of the interaction within a design team shows that values of ‘democracy’ and ‘equality’, which inspire many facilitated design processes, may be overridden in practice. They argue that design participants orient to a more general interactional social order, in which avoiding disagreement and maintaining progressivity within the activity are shaping the interactional behaviour (Heinemann, Landgrebe, and Matthews 2012). Pressing ‘to keep a new option or design criterion on the table most likely comes at an (interactional) price that participants do not appear to be willing to pay in all cases’ (212). Heinemann, Landgrebe and Matthews argue that these ‘preferences in conversation for agreement and progressivity run deep’ and that participants’ ‘general interactional competences as members of a language-using community are prior to, e.g. competences of idea generation, problem-framing, problem finding, critiquing’ (211). As a consequence, Heinemann, Landgrebe and Matthews recognise ‘the potential irony of the idea that securing a “more democratic” outcome probably requires stronger (authoritarian) governance’ (211).

This should however not come as a surprise, and is not ironic at all. Democracy is not an interactional mechanism; it is an institution. Applying democratic values is a decision and an institutional goal for a group of participants. More than 30 years before our present focus on participant behaviour in innovation and design settings, Atkinson convincingly showed how formality serves the purpose of furthering distinct and goal-oriented interaction, while saving time and avoiding confusion (Atkinson 1982). Atkinson’s primary objects of analysis were courtroom interactions and church ceremonies, but securing democratic participation is as relevant a goal orientation for institutional

interaction, as securing a fair process in a courtroom. Formality may shape the interaction in the form of pre-allocation of participant roles (e.g. ‘project owner’, ‘client representative’, ‘facilitator’ and ‘presenter’), topics, turn types, turn slots and pre-formatted utterance design. In some settings, participant roles are made visible and audible by special boundary signals, turn mediation and speaker identification procedures, allocated physical spots for speaking (e.g. ‘speaker’s corner’ or a platform) and/or garments (e.g. the robe of a judge or a yellow ‘thinking hat’). Meeting chairs and workshop facilitators, therefore, play a key role in moving a group of participants ‘in and out of formality’ (Nielsen 2013a, 61) and in securing participation and progressivity by means of exercises serving to decouple sequentiality (Nielsen 2012).

The Heinemann, Landgrebe and Matthews study confirms a participant orientation to shared values, in this case the values being agreement and conversational progressivity. The study is conducted on data from a summer school, and the students are participating in the design processes in order to learn about participatory design and participatory innovation workshops; they do not have any ‘practical stakes in the project’ (204). However, participants include project collaborators and partners from industry (i.e. architects, nurses, engineers, textile developers and manufacturers of devices such as solar panels and fuel cells; contingent on the particular design project). Different types of stakeholders participated, some having more at stake than others. Therefore, the data are similar to the data in the study described here. Not stated in that study is that an important and highly probable stake for the participants in the project is to establish and maintain good relations with fellow students at the summer school. The fellow students and the summer school teachers are main stakeholders for the participants in these workshops. Consequently, even if it was not the aim of the study or a finding at all mentioned, the Heinemann, Landgrebe and Matthews’ study thus confirms my basic finding that participants in design processes orient to stakeholder values and attitudes.

The social order indeed constitutes part of ‘the box’. A study by Nielsen has shown how participants in design processes strive to ‘fit the box’ by orienting to appropriateness, sufficiency, image and professional quality (Nielsen 2013b). This paper expands the scope of how participants in design processes are ‘sizing up the box’ at a design development meeting and how such orientation to stakeholders may be interactionally constructed. The study will focus on design process participants’ interactional accomplishment of identifying key stakeholders of the designated design project, orienting to own expectations of key stakeholders’ possible perceptions, discussing success criteria and negotiating the values that are to govern the team in the development process.

1.1 Data and methods

With a user-driven approach, not only classic design projects but also other kinds of development projects and innovation projects may be considered instances of *co-creation* (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000) and examples of design. The term ‘design’ is now also used in referring to sub-elements of processes working to develop human interaction, social processes, product development and routine organisational practices of inventing and reinventing the organisation and its services. It is in that broader understanding of design that this study fits. It has been suggested to distinguish between the terms creativity and innovation by defining something as ‘creative’, if it is *new and valuable*, and as ‘innovative’, if it is also *implemented* (Amabile 1996). A broader innovation concept also treats organisational procedures and social interaction as potential objects of (social) innovation. A more product-oriented approach to innovation may primarily focus on economic value creation, whereas the result of social innovation may be more difficult to identify as a bottom

line result. Nevertheless, this does not mean that this type of innovation may not be value creating (Drucker 1985). Consider how design creativity has been defined as the ‘ability or process for developing *novel and useful ideas, solutions, or products*’ (Sarkar and Chakrabarti 2011; italics by this author). Design and development processes may thus have a wider range of outcomes, and the terms are often used interchangeably. In this paper, the ‘designers’ are sometimes employees asked by a CEO to develop something new, and sometimes a variety of stakeholders (including professional design company representatives) are working on developing something new together.

The study consists of four data-sets; examples from two of them are shown in this paper (data-sets A and B). The companies participating in this sub-study responded to a call for ‘the most innovative’. By responding to the call they showed to perceive themselves as being innovative and defined their own activities to be included in *the term innovation*. Thus, the data were sampled by reference to participant categories of ‘being innovative’; emic categories (Pike 1954). This choice was made, since etic categories (researcher’s categories) may be problematic to apply because value creation may be difficult to identify in early stages of a new innovation project.

Names of companies, persons and activities/work areas, which may convey or reveal any specific identities, have been rendered anonymous.

A: NGO: Three meetings were recorded in an NGO in Copenhagen. The organisation set out to develop a new brand strategy for the organisation. The CEO formed a project group, chose a project leader and held a kick-off meeting with the project group. After that, the group met without the CEO. Their first task was to arrange a seminar for all employees in order to engage them in co-developing a new corporate brand.

B: Innovation consortium: A workshop day was recorded in a consortium, with the institutional aim of developing user-driven, personal comfort in the workplace. The project involved a series of meetings and workshops. The recorded data are from day 2 of workshop 1. A prototype within office furniture (not to be disclosed here) was present at the workshop. To further develop this prototype, a consortium of eight stakeholders (from a special area of the building industry) with different interests in the final result was gathered, each company represented by 1–4 employees. Day 1 consisted of participant presentations, site visits and presentations from invited speakers. On day 2, the participants were divided into three groups, which were supervised by three facilitators.

The two data-sets supplement each other, since they represent two very different design settings: in-house employees asked to develop something new together, and external partners/collaborators brought together, by one of the partners in order to develop something new together. The reason for bringing these two data-sets together is to show how the orientation towards ‘sizing up the box’ applies to both settings.

The data were analysed from a conversation analytic perspective. The method has been thoroughly introduced in *CoDesign* as an approach suited to study design conversations (e.g. Matthews and Heinemann 2012; Oak 2013). The analysis draws on a range of analytical concepts from conversation analysis and linguistics: *social actions*, such as informing, accepting, inviting, rejecting and assessing, are key concepts in the formation of social systems (Parsons 1937; Atkinson and Heritage 1984; Goodwin 2003), used by interlocutors to accomplish social results, create relations and shape social identities (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998; Sacks 1972a, 1972b). A design participant may suggest an improvement, and the action of suggestion produces a turn-at-talk local identity for the participants as ‘suggestor of improvements’. Moreover, it creates the reciprocal identities for co-participants as ‘receivers of suggestions’, ‘evaluators of suggestions’ or perhaps even ‘participants with designs in need of suggestions of improvements’.

Another key term is *inter-subjectivity*; participants showing each other their mutual understandings, when responding to each other (Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Schegloff 1992). This concept is a term for the interactional practices used by participants to show each other their local understandings of what is going on in the conversation (e.g. if a suggestion is welcomed as a great new idea or treated as an uncalled for critique of an existing idea). By responding to a turn-at-talk, a next speaker shows the first speaker how she/he perceived the prior turn. And by responding to the response, the first speaker shows his/her understanding of the second turn, and if the second turn evidences a correct hearing of the first turn. This inter-subjectivity also serves to show the analysts if the speakers share tacit assumptions or if they initiate *repair* (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977; Schegloff 1991). Therefore, this *next-turn-proof-procedure* (Drew 1992) and the concept of *presupposition* (Harder 1980; Vagle, Sandvik, and Svennevig 1994), i.e. what is implied in the talk, make it possible to identify participant orientations towards norms and values (such as criticism being uncalled for) as well as passable, non-questioned and therefore acceptable, actions and assumptions (such as ideas being social actions relevant to assess by calling them 'great').

All data are from authentic design processes taking place independent of this study. All interactions are video recorded. Data-set A: Video recordings were made with two cameras facing the group. Data-set B: Video recordings were made partly in a seminar room when all the participants were gathered for plenary sessions (four cameras) and partly in three group rooms (two cameras in each group room).

To secure further authenticity of the interaction, the research team chose not to be present in the workshop rooms and the plenary room, while the participants were working. This decision was made on grounds of experience gained by a pilot study, which showed that participants may resort to recipient designing their turns-at-talk and actions in the process in order to achieve understanding and social acceptance from external participants.

The recordings have been transcribed according to an adaptation of the Gail Jefferson transcript notation system (Atkinson and Heritage 1984; see Appendix).

2. Stakeholders, success criteria and norms

The study will show how design process participants identify and discuss key stakeholders of the design project, identify and discuss success criteria for the design project and negotiate the norms and values to govern the teamwork. Each of these three orientations will be discussed below. The three categories of participant orientations have been developed according to the procedure of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990), and they thereby constitute an etic perspective on the data.

2.1 Identify and discuss key stakeholders of the design project

Participants identify key stakeholders and discuss these stakeholders in terms of their possible, potential and jointly imagined third-party perceptions of how they as team/designers/developers may appear. They also discuss how these stakeholders may evaluate team solutions and suggestions at a future point in time.

An example of this is from the second meeting in a project team in an NGO. The CEO has asked the team to organise an employee workshop in order to kick off a process of rebranding the entire organisation. The participants in the meeting are Anna, Linda and

Klara. In the following excerpt (see Appendix for key to notation), they are discussing whether to use yellow post-its at the workshop they are planning:

Example 1. ‘They will laugh’: the team talks about potential future responses

- 1 Kl: og jeg ved godt de vil ↑grine,
and I know well they will laugh
and I do know that they will ↑laugh,
2 når vi kommer med de der gule ↓lapper,
when we come with those yellow patches
when we appear with those yellow ↓postits there,
3 (.)
4 fordi
because
5 An: mh he ↑HH, .HH
6 >>ja, [jeg ka godt ↑si: dig jeg(strikker)]<<=
yeah, I can well tell you I knit
>>yeah, [I’ll ↑tell you I knit)]<<=
7 Kl: [det har vi lissom prøvet en gang]
that have we sort of tried one time
[that we sort of have tried once]=
8 An: ="nå::m så det’ no’d med no’n gu:l la:pper"
well so it’s something with some yellow patches
="ri::ght then it’s all about ye:lla po:stits"
9 >og så’n no’d<
and such something
>and stuff like that<
10 >>si’r {Martin}<<
>>says {Martin}<<
11 "↑NEJ, det ska’ vær’ ↑mere ↓kreativt"(H)
NO, it must be more creative
"↑NO, it must be ↑more cre↓ative"(H)
12 ((said with guttural Donald Duck voice))
13 h he
14 Li: (h) he he=
15 Kl: =↑nå,
=↑well,
16 (.)
17 An: .H
18 Li: ↑ja ↓jaer,
Yes year
↑well ↓okay,
19 An: u:[h:]

Both Klara and Anna orient to key stakeholders’ potential responses to the solutions they will come up with in this team. Klara expects the seminar participants, their colleagues, to ‘laugh’, when the team appears with yellow post-its (lines 1 and 2). Anna backs that with a laugh, and the two of them refer to an earlier experience of that sort (line 7). Anna develops this line of thinking by shifting interactional footing and beginning to animate (Goffman 1981; Clayman 1992) an explicit critique from another key stakeholder, the CEO (lines 10 and 11). It is possible that she is enacting an actual conversation between her and the CEO (lines 8–11).

Enacting (Weick 1988) or reporting speech (Couper-Kuhlen 1998) is an extremely effective and economical way of reporting someone else's speech and conveying affective information (Holt 1996). In addition, it is often used at the climax of stories (Clift 2000; Golato 2000), when making a punch line in a complaint sequence (Drew 1998), when highlighting and dramatising key elements (Mayes 1990; Günthner 2000) and when telling amusing stories (Holt 2000). Anna's move (line 9) could be accomplishing all of the above, referring to a specific episode, enacting the climax of it and using it here to complain about what potentially could be used as a criticism of the team's chosen solution. Her mocking voice marks a distance (Günthner 2000) to such assessments, but she nonetheless brings in the perspective as something to consider in their team development process since she is enacting his possible, potential response in shape of an utterance. The team members animate (Goffman 1981) possible opinions of key stakeholders and incorporate them as voices to be heard in their local negotiation of norms and values to orient to, when choosing a solution.

In this extract, the team identifies two key stakeholders for the team to orient to: seminar participants (i.e. their colleagues) and the CEO. In other teams, the key stakeholders can be different. The design team does not identify them as a list of stakeholders to discuss, and they do not initiate a discussion of potential stakeholders in order to point out the central one for further discussion. Instead, they identify their key stakeholders as distinct opinions and voices to be met with, and they identify them simultaneously with giving them a voice in their discussion. Note that the second stakeholder is brought into the discussion as a means of support to the prior talk by expanding on it and participating in co-telling the hypothetical team story of their potential opposition to be met with.

2.2 *Identify and discuss success criteria*

Design teams are also orienting to success criteria. One criterion of participant orientation is economy of efforts: sufficiency and economy. Team members orient to a norm of restricting to do what is sufficient. The ideal seems to be finding an optimal level. They use words such as 'only', 'enough' and 'sufficient', and talk about whether something is 'too much' or 'not enough', as if orienting to find an invisible target line of investing the appropriate amount of resources.

An example of this is from the second meeting of the project team in the NGO. The participants are Anna, Linda and Klara. The CEO has asked the team to organise an employee workshop in order to kick off a process of rebranding the entire organisation. In the following, Linda suggests using PowerPoint at the workshop, and that suggestion is treated as problematic.

Example 2. 'Good enough': Linda suggests using PowerPoint at a seminar

- 1 Li: ø::hm[: (1.2)]
- 2 ((L sits with stack of postits in hand))
- 3 An: [>>men sorterer under m(h)ig (H)]=
but sort under me
[>>but is sorting under m(h)e (H)]=
- 4 Li: =>men det' ik-
but it not
=>but it's not-
- 5 ((L is fingering a pad during the following talk))
- 6 det ikk' no'n
it not any
it's not any

7 jeg syn's det' ikk' no'n< ↑dum ide
 I think it not any stupid idea
 I don't thinkg it's a< ↑stupid idea
 8 >at man sån<:: s:- ikk
 that one PT s:- not
 >that one ki::nd of< s:- not
 9 >>altså hvis de nu bare<<
 PT if they now just
 >>y'know if they just<<
 10 ((L puts stack away on table))
 11 ((K fold hands behind her head))
 12 "↑hvad havde I"
 what had you
 "↑what did you have"
 13 ">nå men ↑så havde vi det og det<"
 well but then had we this and that
 ">right but ↑then we had this and that<"
 14 >>i stedet for det er så'n no'd opremsning<<
 instead of it is such thing recitation
 >>instead of it is sort of reeling off<<
 15 >vi skriver op på< ta:vlen
 we write up on the board
 >we write on< the whi:teboard
 16 (0.5)
 17 så >ku' man lave en< ↑↑lille ↓bitte,
 so could one make a teeny tiny
 then >one could make a< ↑↑tiny ↓little,
 18 (0.5)
 19 ((A leans forward and makes a note))
 20 (1.0)
 21 (H::)
 22 >↑lille bitte<↑power↓point: ↓ting
 teeny tiny power point thing
 >↑tiny little< ↑power↓point: ↓thingy
 23 hvor at
 where that
 where
 24 (1.2)
 25 ↑ta'r no'n billeder
 >↑take some pictures<
 26 >loader dem ind<
 >load them in<
 27 og så:øh (0.3) op på en projektor
 and then eh up on a projector
 and the:neh (0.3) up on a projektor
 28 (0.4)
 29 An: hf:
 30 (1.0)
 31 An: m:m[:m]
 32 Li: [bli'r det for om]stæn[digt]
 becomes it too cumbersome
 [will it be too com]ber[some]

33 Kl: [>>jeg ved ikk<<]
I know not
[>>I don't know<<]
34 ((Kl takes her notes from table))
35 (3.0) ((K flips through paper, A looks at K))
36 ↑vi e:r
↑we a:re
37 (5.4) ((K flips through paper))
38 vi ↓kun på et visionmøde=
we only on a vision meeting
this is ↓just a vision meeting=
39 Li: =ja,
=yeah,
40 An: ↑m↓m:m.
41 (1.2) ((K flips through paper))
42 Kl: den ↓formiddag.
that ↓morning.
43 (1.0)
44 An: måske >er det fint nok bare at<
maybe is it fine enough just to
maybe >it is just fine to<,
45 skri:ve det op på et,
write it up on a
wri:te it on a
46 altså så'n no'n: (.) <pla:ncher> til
ie such things posters for
Y'know sort of some (.) <flipo:vers> for to
47 (1.6)
48 Li: >er du si-<
is you su
>are you say-<
49 er det fint nok [ba:re]
is it fine enough just
is it good enough [ju:st]
50 An: [ja og] >skriv' det<
yes and write it
[yeah and] >write it<
51 på en planche
on a poster
on a flipover
52 for det ska' jo ta' for ↑lang ↑tid,=
for it must well take too long time ((a "not" is missing))
because it should take ↑too ↑long=
53 Li: =↓ja ↓det' selv↓følgelig oss' ↓rigtigt.
Yes it of cause also right
=↓yeah of ↓cause ↓that's ↓right
54 (0.4)
55 An: ↑m↓mm.

Linda is hesitant in suggesting using PowerPoint. She prepares for the suggestion (lines 1–16), produces it with hedges ('↑↑tiny ↓little', line 17), pauses, restarts and hedges further ('>↑tiny little<↑power↓point: ↓thingy', line 22). She launches a continuation, pauses and expands the idea (lines 23–27). She seems to be right in hesitating. She gets no responses at possible completion points (lines 23, 24 and 28), until

Anna produces a minimal response (line 31), which is not enthusiastic. When Linda begins presenting her idea, all three of them lean forward and sit close to the table, orienting to artefacts on the table. Throughout Linda's presentation of her idea, Anna and Klara sit back in their chairs, listening to Linda, and Klara has her hands folded around her neck. Anna sniffs and utters a delayed 'm:m:m' (lines 29–31), and Linda and Klara begin talking in overlap. Linda retracts (line 32), referring to economy of efforts: Will it be too complicated? When Linda here 'backs down' from her own suggestion, she in fact shows that she has understood the lack of uptake and the minimal response from Anna in line 31 as projecting disagreement/rejection. The next turns prove her understanding to be correct. When Klara in line 33 stalls by stating that she is not sure and picks up some papers from the table and takes her time to flip through them, she is attracting gaze from Anna and Linda. Nobody is countering Linda's retraction of the PowerPoint being too complicated. Klara now lays out the grounds for responding to Linda: it is '↓ just a vision meeting'. Linda and Anna agree (lines 39 and 40), and Anna quickly suggests 'maybe > it is good enough to < write it on a "flip chart," because it should(n't) take ↑ too ↑ long'.

It is interesting how they in this case do not refer to professional considerations (like the usability of PowerPoint as a tool for involving groups in developmental work), but to what would be 'good enough', and thus sufficient with respect to purpose of the seminar and the time and effort spent executing the solution. However, such professional basis could be underlying the linguistic forms chosen by the team members. One could argue that Anna works to protect Linda's face (cf. Goffman 1972/1955) by constructing her suggestion as above the standards, instead of criticising it for not being professional (cf. Pomerantz 1984 on negative assessments and the use of delay in showing the negative response to be a dispreferred social actions). We will never know what Anna, Klara and Linda were thinking at the time, but we may of course consider it a possibility.

Sufficiency as key rationale is treated as non-problematic and non-accountable; a value suited as a compass to use for making team decisions. The team members are not looking to find an ideal or ambitious solution, just a solution that is deemed 'good enough'. Having that orientation is perfectly acceptable within the team.

Professional quality is also a success criterion for the team though. The design participants bring forward professional grounds for producing and assessing solutions of good quality. An example of this can be seen in the following extract, which is taken from the same meeting as above. It is a continuation of Example 1 in Section 2.1.

Example 3. 'Kills the process': the team strives for a professionally sound solution

- 1 Kl: [men al]tså:,
[but rea]lly:,
2 (.)
3 An?: (h)
4 (0.6)
5 An: >det ska' heller ikke vær' så krea<tivt
it must also not be so creative
>it should also not be so crea<tive
6 at det slår processen ihjel< jo (h)=
that it kills the process well
that it kills the process< right (h)=
7 Li: =↓nej, >det er<>det ska' ↑heller ikk'
no it is it must also not
=↓no, >it is< >it must ↑also not

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27 af ↓noget
 of ↓something
 28 (0.4)
 29 der ↑har man jo talt om det-
 there have one PT talked about it
 then one ↑has y'know talked about it-
 30 der ↑har man kommet frem til det
 there have one come forward to it
 there one ↑has arrived at what-
 31 man skal ta' ↑billeder ↓af ((fortsætter))
 one must take pictures of
 one has to take ↑pictures ↓of ((continues))

Both Klara (lines 9–15) and Linda (lines 21–31) bring forward professional grounds for producing and assessing solutions of good quality, and Anna backs them (line 17). The process at the seminar should not be killed (line 6) by excessive attention to appearing creative (line 5). It must not be difficult (lines 8 and 9); probably for the participants in the seminar, because then it will not work (line 9). The pictures to insert in the PowerPoint should 'fit' (line 12) what vision (line 12) participants 'have' at the seminar. The notion of 'vision' could refer back to a prior meeting in the team, which is also recorded but not included here. The team should by their choice of photographs not 'control' (line 15) seminar participants' visions. By this co-produced professional rationale, the three team members demonstrate an orientation towards designing an inclusive and involving process that will make it possible to create ownership of the co-developed organisational visions for the seminar participants. Such an orientation is considered highly professional, when working with participatory design and participatory innovation.

It is of interest how they as a team co-produce their professional reasoning. They invoke their professional reasoning as counter arguments ('but really': line 1) to imagined stakeholder perceptions. Note how 'but' is often, but not always, used as a contrast marker. It can also be used as a resumption marker; compare how the Dutch 'maar' (Mazeland and Huiskes 2001) may be used to resume something prior to the immediately prior by the same speaker, and presuming that the prior topic or sub-topic was closed down. Mazeland and Huiskes have shown that by use of 'maar' the current talk is retrospectively marked as less important, a side track, to the previous and now resumed topic. The sub-topic here marked as less important is the enactment of the CEO potentially demanding the seminar to be 'more creative'. His voice in the design process, enacted in this conversation by means of reported speech, is countered by Klara and retrospectively marked as less important for them to orient to than her following talk about professional quality. Linda is entering as co-teller of this orientation by introducing an addition to Klara's counter arguments ('also not', line 5), and Klara is backing the now mutual orientation by means of the same conversational technique ('either' in line 9). They co-produce a strong team orientation to professional quality.

However, they produce their orientation to professional quality as a success criterion that constitutes a value dilemma, as something being in opposition to being creative (lines 5 and 6) and in opposition to being easy (lines 7 and 8). They appear to see themselves as having to 'fight for' professional solutions, even if they are asked to join the team *because of* their professional background and competencies (not shown in these data excerpts is how the CEO at the first meeting narrates his choice of team members with explicit reference to their different individual professional competences).

2.3 *Negotiate the values to govern the team*

Finally, and related to orienting to success criteria, the design teams orient to negotiating the values to govern their work. Two sets of team value orientations have been identified in the data.

The first team value orientation is towards a locally negotiated normality for the team itself, while the participants are working together. Participants throughout the data orient to, what they as a team, at each point in time, find appropriate to do and what is to be considered suitable to do as a team in the local context of the design process.

An example of this is from innovation consortium Group 1. Participants are Preben, Charlotte, Ole, Søren and Flemming. The team sits in the room, waiting to begin working on developing ideas. When the facilitator (Martha) arrives in the room, she first opens a window in order to get fresh air into the room, and she then encourages the group to get up and do 1 minute of light gymnastics before starting to work:

Example 4. 'Getting up'

1 Mar: GODT.
GOOD.
2 nu skal I ↑høre vi skal videre hvor,
now shall you hear we must further where
listen ↑up we are to continue where,
3 vi slap før,
we let go before
we left off before,
4 ((makes wave movement with her arms as if calling))
5 så vi skal finde en øh
so we must find a eh
6 ((wrigles her shoulders))
7 ↑whiteboard og vi skal og vi skal
↑whiteboard and we must and we must
8 ((moves closer to the group with large steps))
9 [OP AT STÅ]
[UP TO STAND]
[GET UP]
10 [((hops closer to the group and waves her arms))]
11 (.)
12 Fle: [(op at stå igen?)]
[(up to stand again?)]
[(get up again?)]
13 Sør: [↑okay ha ha ha]
14 Mar: ja
yes
15 Fle: ((reaches for his chair arms as if beginning to get up))
16 Mar: VI SKAL LIGE OP AT STÅ OG
WE MUST SORT OF UP TO STAND AND
WE ARE TO GET UP AND
17 Fle: ((moves to get up))
18 LIGE
JUST
19 Sør: ((pushes off from his chair in order to get up))
20 E:H~
21 ((third person pushing off to get up, Søren getting up))
22 (.)
23 ((fourth person beginning to get up))

24 whoo
 25 (0.5)
 26 ((last person beginning to push off to get up))
 27 ~ryste skuldrene~
 ~shake the shoulders~
 28 ((wrigles her shoulders))
 29 (1.2)
 30 ((everybody is up))
 31 ((the first men to get up moves their shoulders slightly))
 32 jeg har sådan erfaring for at når man
 I have sort of experience for to when one
 it is my experience that when one
 33 kommer ↑op og ligesom sådan kan kan
 gets ↑up and sort of like can can
 34 kan bevæge kroppen så kan man bedre
 can move the body so can one better
 can move the body so that one better can
 35 skyde ideerne [op så]
 shoot ideas [up so]
 36 ((moves her arms))
 37 ???: [xxxxxxxx]
 38 all: [ha ha ha]
 39 Mar: ~[HVORIMOD] HVIS MAN SIDDER~ så så
 ~[WHEREAS] IF ONE SITS~ then then
 40 der alle de ideer der sidder i benene
 there all the ideas they sit in the legs
 41 de bliver ved at sidde i benene
 they are about to sit in the legs
 they keep sitting in the legs
 42 de kan
 they can
 43 ((pats her legs))
 44 [slet ikke] komme (.) videre op.
 [absolutely not] come (.) further up.
 45 ((makes a snake movement with her torso))
 45 ???: [ha ha ha]
 46 Sør: hvad har du fået til morgenmad
 what have you had for breakfast
 47 all: ha ha ha

By using the word ‘so’ (line 5), Martha constructs finding a whiteboard and getting up as a necessary condition for, or a preparation to, continue working (lines 2 and 3). The Danish ‘så’ as well as the American ‘so’ can be used to project the following to be an upshot of the prior turn in order to prompt an action from co-participants (Raymond 2004, 192). She embodies what this means by beginning to hop and move around. The facilitator’s move is met with both non-verbal and verbal resistance. In line 4, she waves them up, but they do not respond. The team is still seated. When she begins wriggling her shoulders (line 6), they remain seated. At this point, she is designing her turn as a description of what is going to happen. In the middle of her turn, she initiates self-repair by repeating ‘and we must’ (line 7) and quickly moves closer to the group, taking large steps. Still they remain seated. Then, she makes an abrupt shift. She is hopping towards the group (lines 9 and 10) and simultaneously shouting to get up. She now enacts a very different mode of interaction than the one that governed the group conversation before she entered

the room. Flemming questions the invitation by reference to repetition; if they are to get up 'again' (line 8), presupposing that they had already tried getting up. But he immediately after reaches for his armchair arms as if pushing forward to get up, showing willingness to get up. Then she repeats her request to get up, this time designed as a directive using an inclusive 'we', even if she is already standing herself. She at the same time enhances her request (by shouting and hopping) and modifies it (they are 'sort of' and 'just' getting up lines 16–18). All together she communicates that she really means it and that it apparently is no big deal for them.

At first, the participants resist doing gymnastics together. They do not follow the facilitator's physical enactment of what they are to do. But when she recycles her request and redesigns it, they comply. One after the other makes a move to get up, and they follow each others' example (lines 17–26). They end up all getting up and do a version of what she tells them to do, thereby confirming her entitlement to tell them what to do. She then continues by accounting for this exercise (lines 32–45) by reference to her 'experience' (line 32) and elaborating on how physical movement promotes participants to shoot ideas out from their legs. They treat the account as a laughable (line 38), but she has already showed them by using smile voice (lines 27 and 39) that it would be a relevant reading to treat her move as funny. At that point one of the male participants responds: 'What did you have for breakfast' with a smile voice and falling intonation, as if not wanting to know what she ate, but to state that her move is out of the ordinary for them. Everybody laughs in response to his utterance.

The team orients to comfort as well as rationality, and to being ordinary and out of the ordinary. Moving team members out of their physical comfort zone is treated as an accountable and negotiable action. It is furthermore treated as a laughable, even by the facilitator. The participants introduce humour and self-irony as resources for dealing with potential conflict. The facilitator uses her voice (i.e. shouting and smile voice) and her body (i.e. hopping, making large movements, wriggling her shoulders and moving around) to show them that she really means for them to do, what she tells them to. One participant is more willing than the rest to follow her, and he starts a domino effect leading to everybody getting up. The team members do not just orient to the facilitator, but also to each other in order to sort out for themselves, what is the appropriate move to make. Should they remain seated, or should they get up? Should they wriggle their shoulders, or should they just stand there? Should they make large movements, or just show to be moving a little? Should they collaborate in not getting up, or should one of them break out of the group comfort zone to get up and follow instructions? Should they leave him alone, or should they all get up? These decisions are made turn-by-turn, and they make them by monitoring each other and the facilitator. It takes some work for the facilitator to establish herself as somebody to listen to and to follow. The team members struggle with their local identities (sitting/standing, not moving/moving, being willing to follow orders/being reluctant to follow orders, etc.). They negotiate, how they as a team are going to interact together, and they negotiate which identities will be relevant in and for the interaction. This team value orientation was towards the team itself and their mode of conduct.

The second team value orientation is towards the outcome of the team process. In extract 1, one specific organisational value could be identified: it was important to *appear creative*. In other organisational contexts, the locally negotiated parameters could be different. The conclusion is therefore not that design teams necessarily orient towards appearing creative, but that they orient to being in accordance with implicit organisational values and ideals. And this is not just accomplished on the level of the practical solutions

they develop, but also as a team with a social identity to be assessed by colleagues and leaders.

The following example (Example 5) is from the same data-set, the innovation consortium, but from Group 3 working with another facilitator (Ben). Participants are Poul Erik, Kim, Tim and John. Both the excerpt and the analysis are too long to include in this paper. Therefore, the following is merely an unevidenced statement. In the process, Ben suggests developing ‘anti-stress medication’ to provide greater personal comfort at the workplace:

if if when the pulse goes up and you sit and sweat and feel uncomfortable and you feel pressure and so on if you could: if you could get something (1.1) uhh that worked instantly and without any side effects (0.6) so when you are in such a stressful situation and but (0.8) I could take a pill.

He elaborates further on the necessity of lack of side effects, but Kim counters the idea saying that

if you imagined that stress symptoms (0.4) are a sign of a good health from the body so it isn't psychological that we can soothe them immensely but but (.) the factor itself (0.6) is still there after all (0.3) therefore even though that that (.) that the ↑ pulse goes down (0.4) then we will after all ↑ still (0.2) have a natural reaction (1.0) will after all have a problem.

What is interesting in the data is that Ben's idea and Kim's rejection of it represent two fundamentally different views of health and body.

These opposing ideologies are brought into the design process. This is probably done on purpose because they are participating in an innovation consortium aiming at bringing different participant perspectives to the design process. Compare how innovation is considered to be furthered by composing diverse teams (Campbell 1960; Lopez, Esquivel, and Houtz 1993; Simonton 1999; Sutton 2002), for instance with participants of different cultures, ethnicity, age, social status, professional field or educational background. However, these differences result in negotiations of team values with respect to the outcome of their design process.

An important part of the design teams ‘sizing up the box’ is the mutual orientation to, and negotiation of, which norms and values are to govern their work, their process as well as their outcome.

3. Discussion

The implications of this study are theoretical, methodological and practical.

The *theoretical* implication is a contribution to design studies with respect to the impact of the personal interaction level of the early stages of the innovation processes. The study shows how participants orient to ‘sizing up the box’ in order to ‘fit the box’ rather than ‘think out of the box’. They orient to project management basics such as key stakeholders, success criteria and their own norms and values, when they interact to design solutions for clients or for organisational practice. Three categories of participant orientation have been identified in the initial team negotiations:

- (1) Identifying and discussing key stakeholders of the design project:
 - Locally negotiated key stakeholders: Who are we aiming to please?
 - Locally negotiated team expectations of key stakeholders' possible perceptions of team processes and outcome: How will the team be perceived as a team?
- (2) Identifying and discussing success criteria as a dilemma of resources versus goals:
 - Locally negotiated norms of the appropriate amount of resources to invest for

the team: What is the sufficient or economically rational amount of resources to invest as a team?

- Locally negotiated norms of professional quality: What are the professional grounds for choosing a solution of good quality?
- (3) Negotiating the values to govern the team, while working together:
- Locally negotiated norms and values at process level: How is it appropriate to interact as a team? Appropriateness: What does the team perceive as locally negotiated interactional normality?
 - Locally negotiated norms and values at outcome level: What is it appropriate to develop as a team?

Not included in this study are team negotiations of procedure: What are we going to do, who will be doing what, when are we doing it and how should it be done. This fourth category is of course vital for the team outcome, but the focus of this study has been to explore the initial local team negotiations laying the foundations for exactly these kinds of (consecutive) negotiations and decisions when designing a solution together.

Even if the participants in the data are not doing explicit exercises in order to manage the design project in terms of project management, they are implicitly striving to identify key stakeholders of the design project. Furthermore, they are orienting to their own expectations of these key stakeholders' possible perceptions, they discuss success criteria and they negotiate the values to govern the team while working together, even if they do not use terms in the process such as 'stakeholders', 'success criteria' and 'values'. It is not just an implication of the study that the participants in the data are not doing explicit exercises in order to manage the design project in terms of project management. Neither is it an implication that they do not use terms in the process such as 'stakeholders', 'success criteria' and 'values'. It is a result of the study.

The *methodological* implication is that studying design and innovation processes entails studying participants interacting in their authentic professional and institutional context, and studying their social practice *as a social practice*, when striving to achieve institutional goals of being creative together. We need to expand our focus from client meetings to other interactional settings as well. We need to study authentic design team interaction, not just laboratory data. In order to better understand the impalpable 'human factor', we may in future studies benefit further from drawing on research methods from the faculty of humanities when studying identity, relations, communication, language, community and culture.

At this point, it is also relevant to consider the artificiality of the situation that the design participants are in. There is a difference between the situation in which the design event is held (a project group meeting chaired by the project leader, or a facilitated workshop group exercise facilitated by a facilitator with no stake in the outcome) and the setting and situation that the participants are seeking to change (i.e. a workshop event as a means to create new organisational meaning, or a physical invention that aims at creating enhanced personal comfort in the workplace). The design settings will have different norms according to the workplace conditions they want to change. In the design conversation in data-set 2, we see the participants doing what they do in workshops, their negotiating of norms and identities, etc. of a facilitated participatory design or participatory innovation workshop, not norms of interaction in the workplace, even if they aim at creating value for employees at ordinary workplaces. In the design conversation in data-set 1, we see the opposite: the participants at a meeting negotiating norms and

identities, etc. of interaction in the workplace, not of a facilitated participatory design or participatory innovation workshop, which they are collaborating in designing. It is difficult to say how these meta-orientations by and for design process participants are shaped. But using these authentic data, complicated as they are, is the way to go, if we are to study design as a process.

The *practical* implications are manifold. Fitting ‘the box’ is what typically concerns interlocutors in a wide range of interactions, institutional as well as non-institutional interactions (Sacks 1987; Pomerantz 1984). Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that development process participants will act as social agents in these processes and seek to define ‘the box’ in order to be able to ‘fit in’ and obtain social acceptance (Parsons 1937). Such negotiations, implicit or explicit, have implications for design and innovation processes. Teams do not just pay attention to a product or an outcome. They spend much time paying attention to the process.

The three (four) identified categories of orientation seem neither irrelevant nor arbitrary. However, participants orient to these different orientations constituting a *dilemma* in designing solutions. Participants in design processes orient to joint imaginations of key stakeholders’ (co-team members, colleagues, superiors, etc.) potential perceptions of their actions, choices and solutions, and they use this orientation in their local negotiation of norms and values. They negotiate values and norms with each other at a local turn-by-turn at talk level, while planning and designing future social interaction, and they are defining themselves as individuals and teams through these very negotiations. They orient to saving their own and protecting interlocutor’s face (Goffman 1972). In addition, they build their personal and their team relations and reputation, while they are planning and designing future solutions. And they are taking into consideration how the design may affect relations and reputation during the development process.

When the purpose of the process is to have participants think ‘out of the box’ in order to define something ‘new’, the design participants should then be assisted in doing so, and in achieving socially attractive, local identities in the process. Assisting a team in resolving these important team issues, while not slowing down the work, implies thinking of design processes as something to be facilitated. This takes on design and innovation is prevalent already, but a facilitator’s exercises and instructions should not just be devoted to help the team ‘think out of the box’, make joint decisions and plan execution of the ideas developed together. They should also assist the team in sorting out which ‘box’ they are already in. This is relevant even if the purpose really is to ‘think out’ of it. It is necessary to know what to rebel against, if revolution is ever to take place.

Acknowledgements

This study could not have been conducted had it not been for the collaboration from a range of individuals, teams and organisations. Special thanks are therefore due to the anonymous NGO and the anonymous innovation consortium.

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Appendix. Transcript notation

Symbol	Explanation	Meaning
,	Comma	Global intonation is continuing
.	Period after word or syllable	Global intonation is final
?	Question mark	Global intonation is rising
¿	Inverted question mark	Global intonation is slightly rising
<u>meaning</u>	Underlining	Stress
:	Colon	Stretched sound
↑	Upward arrow	Upward local intonation movement, pitch reset from low
↓	Downward arrow	Downward local intonation movement
(.)	Period in brackets	Micropause, less than 0.2 s
(0.7)	Number in brackets	Pause, measured in seconds
\$meaning\$		Pronounced carefully
> > meaning <<		Talking fast
[		Overlapping talk begins
]		Overlapping talk ends
~meaning~		Smile voice
-	Dash	Cutoff
.h	Period before h	In breath
h		Out breath
(h)	H in brackets	Explosive out breath, like when laughing
F		Snicker
(°meaning°)		Low volume
°°meaning°°		Very low volume
MEANING		High volume
=		The turn or turn constructional unit is latched on prior turn/turn constructional unit