STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON INCLUSIVE INFORMAL LEARNING SPACES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Filiz Keser Aschenberger, Christina Ipser, Gregor Radinger, Sonja Brachtl

2. Symposium Anerkennung und Validierung non-formalen und informellen Lernens an Hochschulen

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University for Continuing Education Krems

The Classroom Environment as the "Third Teacher"...

Loris Malaguzzi, Italian educational scientist of the 20th century, representative and co-founder of Reggio pedagogy.
His thesis: *"The peer is the first educator, the teacher the second and the room the third."*

"The importance of physical (teaching/learning) spaces has increased in the face of digitalisation and the resulting digital learning options."

Stang, Richard (2017): Lernraumgestaltung an Universitäten. Zur Relevanz physischer Lernräume im Kontext der Digitalisierung, in: Erziehungswissenschaft, Heft 2 (28), S. 29–36.

Physical spatial characteristics that impact learning experience, learning performance and students' well-being

- Indoor air quality
- Temperature
- Noise & acoustics
- Dayligth & lighting
- Colours & materials
- Layout & furniture
- Visual comfort & (green) views
- Informal areas in educational buildings / environments…

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How about **learning environments for adults & in HE?**

What does this mean with regard to **inclusion and equal opportunities?**

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N I i 𝓛 S New Approaches for
Inclusive Informal Learning Spaces

Co-funded by
the European Union

Brief Introduction to the NIILS Project

Funding: ERASMUS+ Cooperation partnership

Duration: 01/01/2022 - 30/06/2024

New Approaches for
Inclusive Informal Learning Spaces

Objectives:

- provide **data on informal and non-conventional** physical and hybrid **learning spaces** available for and **used by higher education students** from different social groups in different European countries and regions

- develop **recommendations and guidelines** for learners, lecturers and university administration to mitigate existing inequalities and **promote** technologically enhanced **inclusive informal learning environments** in HE

www.donau-uni.ac.at/niils

LinkedIn #NIILS

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Project Consortium:

University for Continuing Education Krems, Austria (Coordination)
 − Department for Building and Environment
 − Department for Continuing Education Research and Educational Technologies

Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin, Germany

Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania

Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy
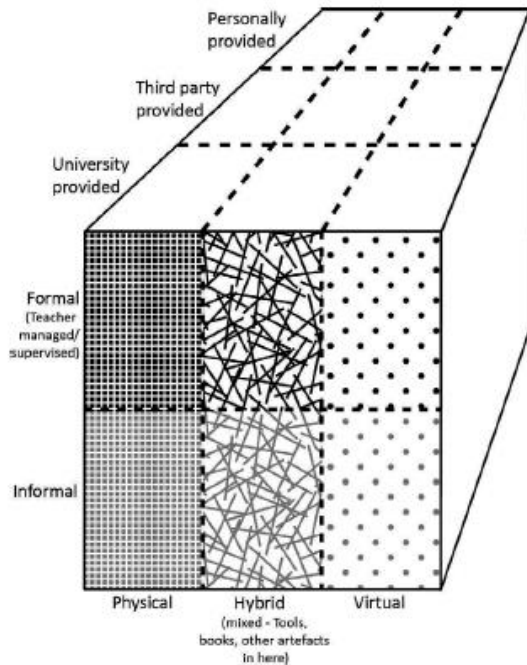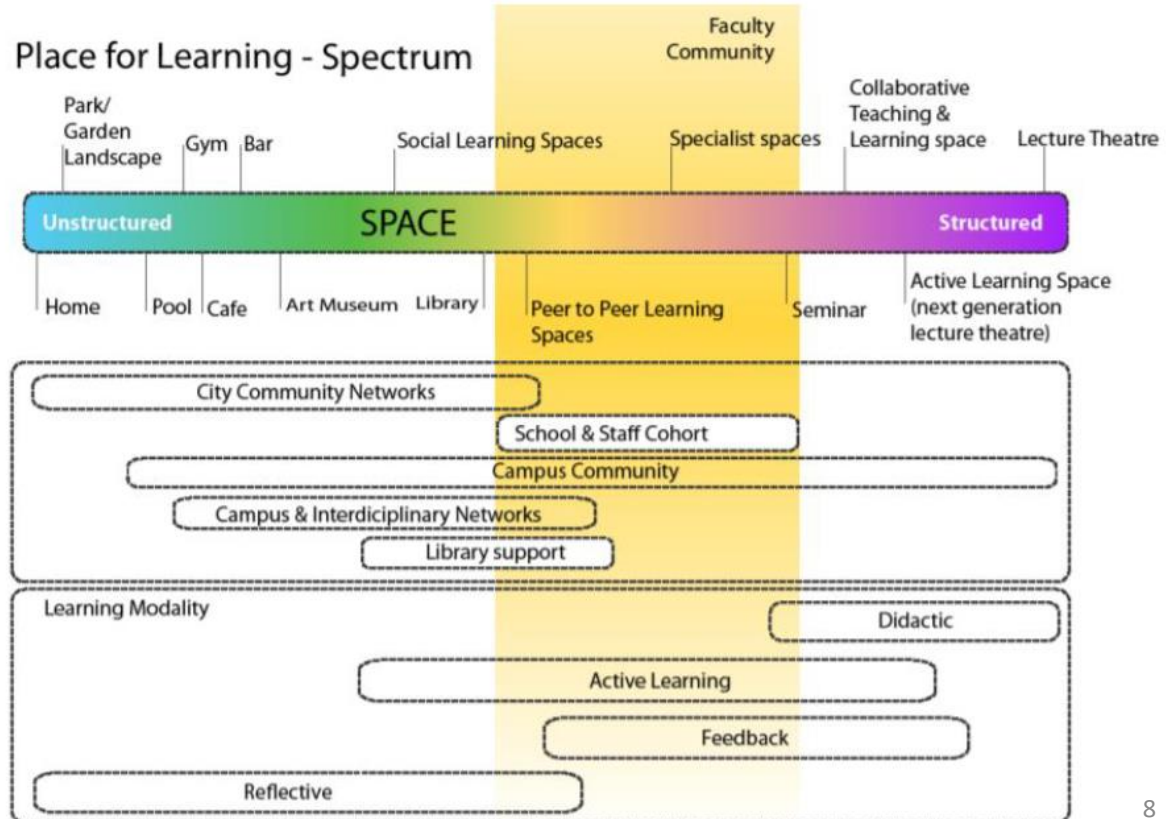
Akdeniz University, Turkey

Background

Figure 1. Three dimensions to the field of research on university learning sp...

Models of learning space
(Ellis & Goodyear, 2016, p. 165)

Informal Learning Spaces

Places for Learning Spectrum (Wilson, 2009, p. 20)

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Background

Informal Learning Spaces (ILS) in NIILS:

- Spaces that are **chosen by students independently and in a self-organised way** for different (individual or collaborative) learning activities outside of face-to-face teaching sessions

- **on-campus** (e.g. student lounges, foyers and hallway areas, library spaces or campus outdoor places) **or off-campus** (e.g. home environment, cafés, public space, cultural/educational buildings, etc.)

ILS ≠ Spaces for informal learning (may be, but need not)

Work Packages in NIILS

1 Country context analysis

Providing data regarding "state of the art", ILS infrastructure and awareness of providers, designers and managers regarding inclusive & supportive ILS in HE

2 Users´ perspective analysis

Collecting and analysing data regarding usage, perception and impact of ILS in HE
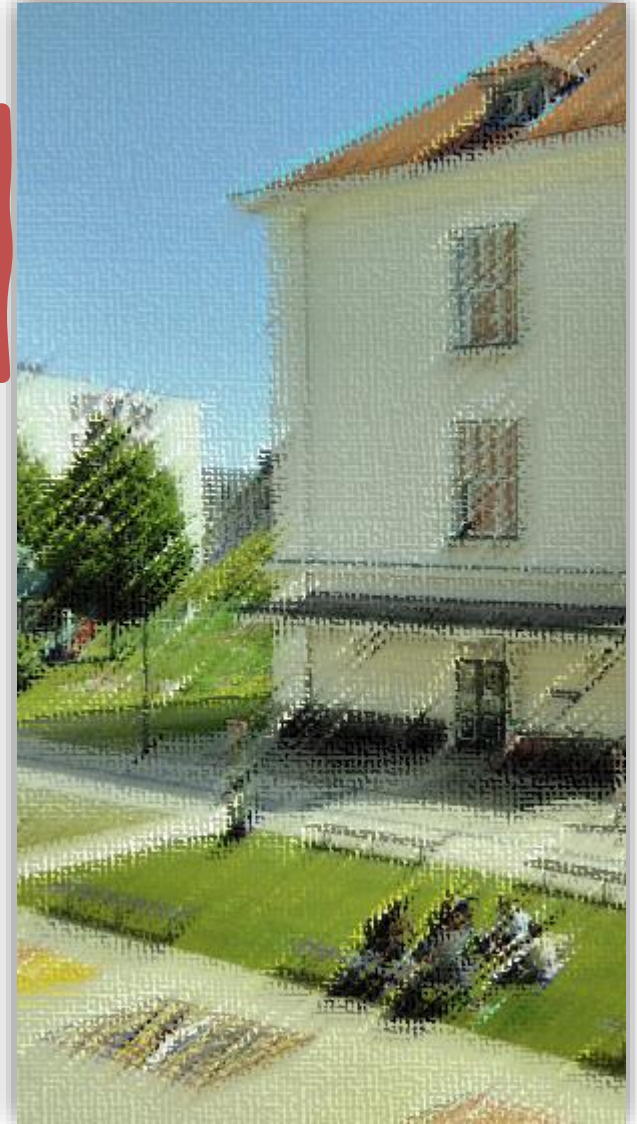
3 Mapping Platform

Development of a mapping platform for collecting and sharing data on ILS at partner institutions

4 Learning communities

Framework development and piloting of learning communities dealing with ILS in HE

5 Recommendations and guidance

Development of recommendations and guidelines to promote inclusive and supportive ILS in HE

1. Country context analysis

Focus: availability and infrastructure of informal learning spaces in HE

Methodology: desk search, focus groups & interviews with stakeholders in provision, management and design of ILS

Objectives: collect and analyse data on

- "State of the art" in project countries regarding ILS in HE
- Characteristics and infrastructure of ILS at partner institutions
- Stakeholder awareness and existing strategies to promote inclusive and supportive (technologically enhanced) ILS

1. Country context analysis

Methodology: Focus groups & interviews with stakeholders in provision, management and design of ILS about:

- Spatial characteristics of the informal learning environment at the university
- availability, accessibility, usability, equipment, and infrastructure of informal and non-conventional learning spaces
- awareness and perception related to inclusivity (problems, challenges, measurements taken)
- Role of digitalization in using learning spaces
- Future perspectives and plans

Data Collection: Data collection and analysis guidelines were created with the lead of UWK in English, translated into project languages

Data Analysis: MaXQDA is used for data analysis. Each partner conducted analysis and then a meta analysis was conducted to synthesize the results.

Stakeholder Focus Groups / Interviews

Data Collection

Participants

Institution	Focus Groups & Participants	Interview Participants	Total # Stakeholders
AKD	FG 1: 7 participants FG2: 4 participants		11
HTWB	FG: 5 participants		5
MRU	FG: 5 participants	1 participant	6
SU	FG: 4 participants	1 participant	5
UWK	FG: 8 participants	4 participants	12
Total	33	6	39

Number of Focus Groups and Interview Participants according to Partner Universities

Stakeholder Focus Groups / Interviews
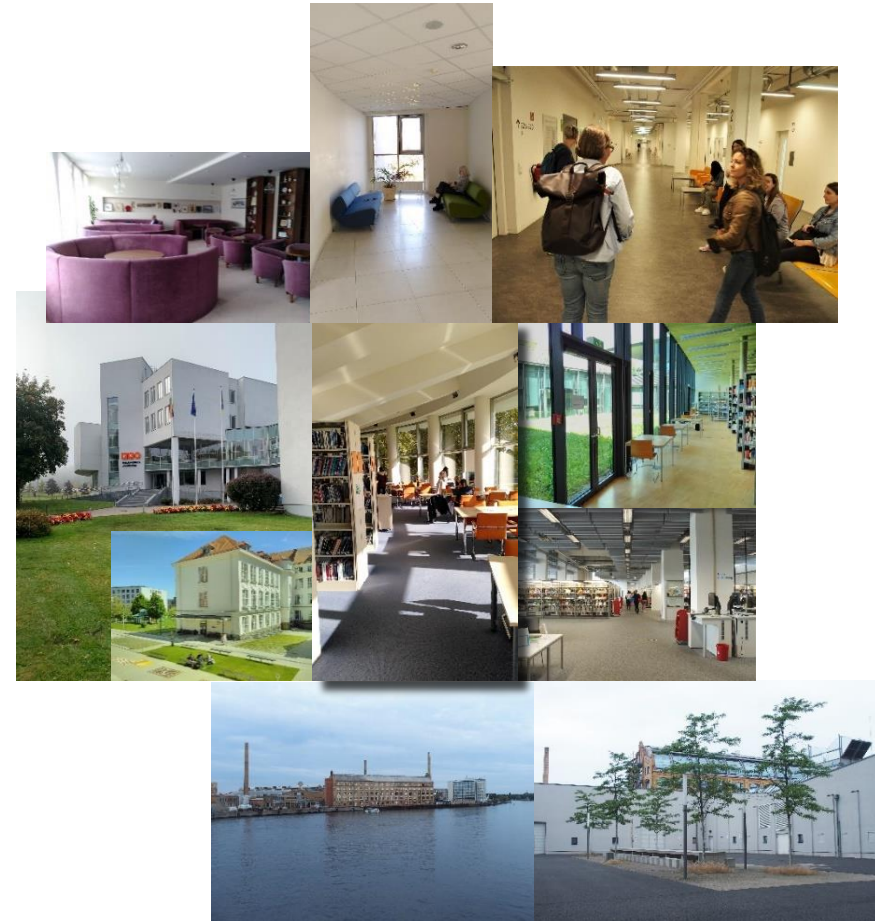
Data Collection

Participants

Stakeholders	f
Department Administration	1
Lecturer Service Center	1
Diversity / Inclusion Office-Service	1
Digital and Online Learning Centres/Units	3
Student Union/Representative	3
International Relations Office	1
Dormitory Management	1
Health and Sports Directorate	1
Facility and Construction Management	9
Faculty Administration	4
Rectorate/University Management	2
Student Services	2
Library/information resources	8
External Stakeholder-School and Sports Facility Construction	1
External Stakeholders-Federal Real Estate Company	1
Total	39

Categories of Stakeholders participated in the interviews and the Frequencies
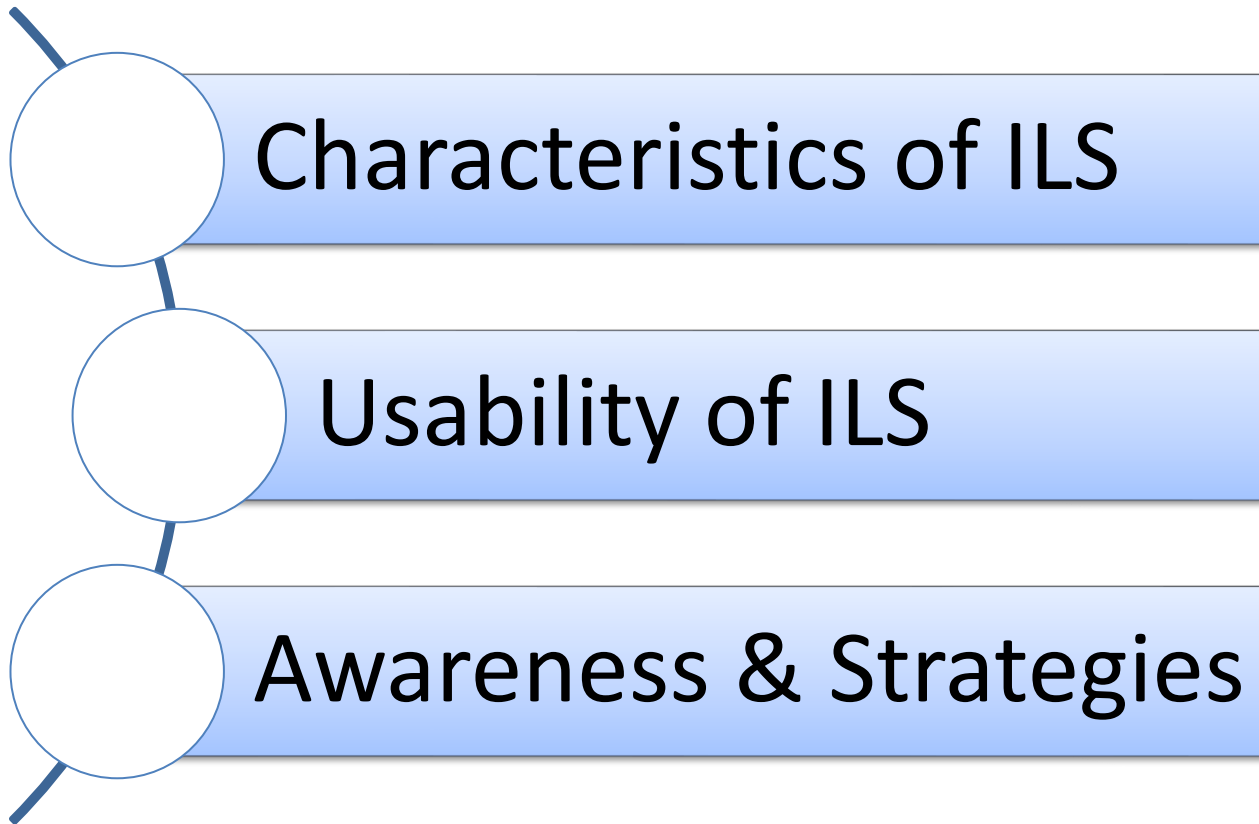
Findings

Institutional context – Existing physical Infrastructure and Learning spaces

Informal Learning Spaces		*f*
Indoor/Outdoor		
	Indoor	44
	Outdoor	18
	Both	3
Study Type		
	Focused	13
	Collaborative	21
	Both	31
Types of ILS		
	Off-campus ILS	3
	Outdoor spaces (seating groups, parks)	18
	Lecture halls, seminar rooms	4
	Social areas, lounges	8
	Library	8
	Cafes and restaurants	4
	Foyers, hallways	7
	University canteens and cafes	6
	Study areas, study rooms	7
Total		65

Findings

Themes

Characteristics of ILS

Usability of ILS

Awareness & Strategies

Findings
Characteristics of ILS

- Design and Attractiveness
- Indoor environmental quality (Acoustics, lightening, air quality)
- Equipment and Furnishing
- Basic Needs (Hygiene, Food)
- Outdoor spaces

Findings
Usability of ILS

Problems and Challenges
Financial issues
Structure of the buildings & physical barriers
Management and regulations
Maintenance and control of ILS

Findings

Awareness and Strategies for ILS

Awareness and Strategies for ILS
Existing Strategies
Well-being
Accessibility
Use of formal learning spaces as ILS
Pandemic and digitalisation
Hybrid and flexible formats
Increased role of digitalisation on teaching
Impact on well-being and inclusivity

Findings
Future Perspectives of ILS

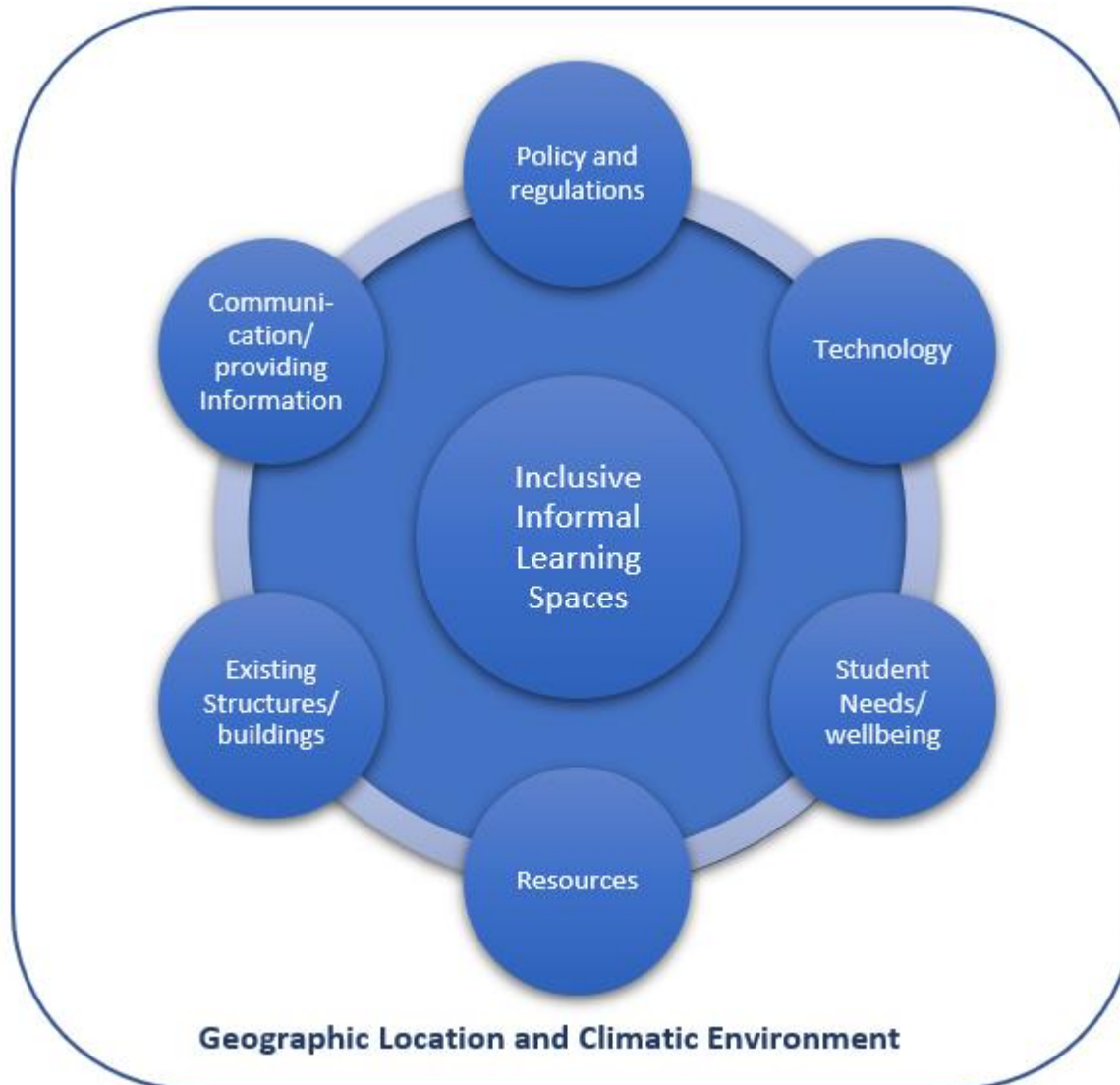| Future Perspectives of ILS |
| --- |
| Renovations and constructions |
| Flexible use of LS |
| Increased use of ILS |
| LS for different learning activities |
| LS catering the wellbeing of students and lecturers |
| Inclusive ILS |
| Promotion of ILS |

NIILS Framework for designing, building, and managing inclusive ILSs

NiiLS

New Approaches for
Inclusive Informal Learning Spaces

DI Christina Ipser
Department for Building and Environment
christina.ipser@donau-uni.ac.at

Assistenz Prof. Dr. Filiz Keser Aschenberger, MA
Department for Continuing Education Research and Educational Technologies
filiz.keser-aschenberger@donau-uni.ac.at

www.donau-uni.ac.at/niils
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