

21st century learning spaces

"Spaces shape and change practice. Engaging, adaptable spaces energise students, teachers and the community. Well-designed learning spaces inspire creative, productive and efficient learning"

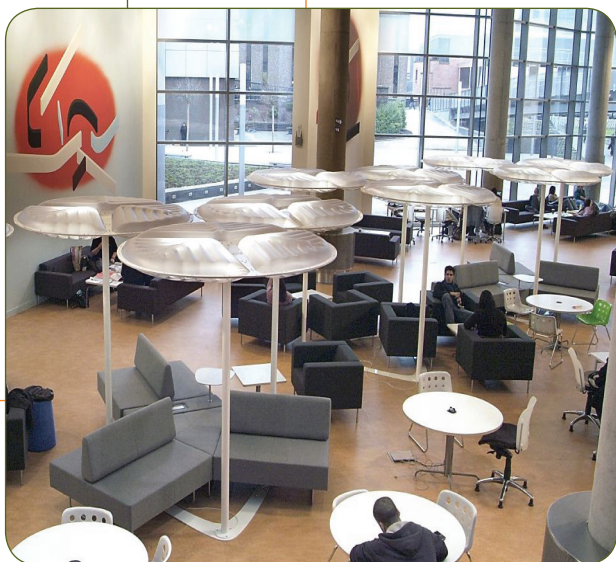
MCEETYA Learning Spaces Framework

A new environment of schooling has been emerging over several decades of the 20th Century, stimulated by a new economy, new technologies and new understanding about learning. In today's interconnected, technology driven world, learning typically takes place in physical, virtual and remote places. It is an integrated, highly-technical environment in which learners learn. The new learning spaces incorporate technologies, engage the learner, creating new learning possibilities, enhancing achievements and extending interactions with local and global communities¹.

Characteristics of new learning

- A shift from instruction to active learning and an increased attention to personalised learning.
- An emphasis on collaborative learning and greater attention to human relationships
- A growing commitment to project-based learning involving problem solving, investigation and trial and error.
- Emphasis on skills needed for the 21st Century
- Emergence of collaborative networks that support professional learning
- Globalisation of education – national and international partnerships

¹ Learning spaces framework – MCEETYA http://www.icttaskforce.edna.edu.au/icttaskforce/webdav/site/icttaskforcesite/users/root/public/Learning_spaces_framework.pdf



Example of an innovative learning space - photo of Saltire Centre Glasgow
Caledonian University, courtesy of jisc_infonet via Flickr CC

Further Information and Online Resource Collection

Education.au has collated resources about this topic from our national and international networks. The resources include learning space design plans, implementing learning spaces, technical specifications and links to photo libraries. The MCEETYA Learning Spaces Framework document is an excellent resource for educators as it provides guidelines for assisting with decisions about implementing learning spaces in Australian schools.

To view these resources visit <http://www.educationau.edu.au/jahia/Jahia/home/pid/777>

Design principles for learning spaces

- Learning spaces reflect the culture of the institution
- Provide flexibility and adaptability - accommodate a range of learning
- Learning designs are the result of collaborative and consultative processes of all stakeholders (including learners)
- Design for comfort safety and security

New learner

Research indicates that learning is most effective when it is active, involves working on real tasks in collaboration with others – in both virtual and physical settings. In this environment a sense of community and collaboration are important elements and trusting collaborative relationships are formed.

The paradigm shift makes us all learners as new tools are incorporated into teaching and learning and one is exposed to an abundance of learning objects, activities and networks. New skills need to be learned and some existing skills become obsolete.

Characteristics of the new learner:

- Learns as part of a group
- Communicates and collaborates
- Independent and self reliant
- Learns by doing - is active
- Learns anywhere, anytime
- Technology literate and flexible
- Creative and analytical

New learner needs

- Space for instruction, presentations discussion
- Spaces for talk and privacy
- Space for private study and access to resources
- Room to move
- Technology that is 'just in time' and flexible
- Tools for communication
- Flexibility in space, location and resources



21C Library and Learning Neighbourhood - Building the Education Revolution from Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

New spaces

New learning spaces need to be designed to enable and foster new pedagogies, using technologies demanded by 21st century economies. The new learning spaces are:

- Flexible and adaptable - furnishings and equipment can be rearranged with speed and ease. Able to switch between individual and group settings – for presentation, communication and collaboration modes
- Reflective of the new learning practices
- Designed to support different levels of technological sophistication
- Provided with wireless and mobile computing devices

Management of new spaces

- Centrally managed and monitored for appropriate behaviour and security
- Policies and guidelines/best practice approaches are collaboratively developed and agreed by the school body.
- Cues for appropriate behaviour are available/displayed – e.g. graphics, brochures, lighting.

Challenges

- Do we know enough about learning and the use of technologies to enable us to construct effective learning environments?
- How do we develop synergies between formal and informal learning
- Find ways to adequately support teachers in using new tools
- Create a culture for the education profession that fosters innovation and engagement with new learning technologies
- Ensure the investment is spent wisely and that it will transform learning
- Develop and implement different models of assessment



Top Photo
iMacs The Mezzanine
Café Dublin City
University,

Right Photo
Open Aspect Library
and Learning Centre
University of East
London.

Photos courtesy of jisc_
infonet via Flickr CC



New technologies

Learners need access to tools and media-rich resources that help to express themselves in a world that they will inherit¹. Educators need access to tools and resources to share knowledge and practice with other professionals. Administrators need access to the same tools to manage – from student records, to personnel management to facilities operations.

- Personal devices (computers, laptops, netbooks, MP3 players)
- Networked environments
- Broadband internet connections
- Wireless networks
- Interactive communications e.g social networking tools
- Upload and download – to support any time learning
- Enable media production (video, audio, images, text)
- ICT rich environment with access to digital whiteboards, presentation walls, mobile computers, wireless technology and multimedia peripherals
- Access to online services from outside school
- Accommodate regular (electronic) communication with peers around the world to enriching learning
- 24/7 access

¹ 21st Century Learning Environments Partnerships for 21st Century Skills

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