

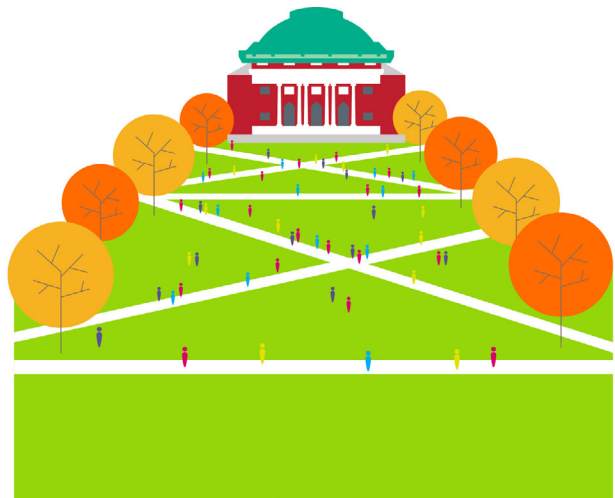
Brief: A New Generation of Space in Higher Education

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Should Learning Environments Drive Workplaces or the Other Way Around?

The answer is neither. Societal shifts, developments in technology, and a range of real world events are forces driving change. In response, progressive corporations have moved to distributed workplaces, allowing them to remain adaptable to business change. Likewise, higher education is increasing its emphasis on providing appropriate environments to meet new teaching and learning methods. These trends toward distributed work and blended learning experiences are converging to create a broader landscape of special settings. Together with Andrew Harrison, previously Global Head of Learning Environments for DEGW and now world-renowned education sector expert, and following his most recent book, *Design for the Changing Educational Landscape: Space, Place and the Future of Learning*, our research has focused on developing design guidelines for blended learning experiences. What follows is an overview of the discussion paper, *A New Generation of Space in Higher Education*, outlining the research as well as some design tips for one key space: the learning studio.

“One key space type to emerge in response to blended learning experiences demands is the learning studio – flexible, adaptable and reconfigurable technology-enabled space capable of supporting both didactic instruction and small group working.”



Research Highlights

1. We see a convergence between the modern workplace and learning environments, shifting away from the segmented spatial model that assumes learning only happens in the classroom, lecture hall, or college campus.
2. There is a greater focus on knowledge vs. process with an element of non-territory where layers of ownership are varied to make the most of each space while allowing the right type of work to happen in the right place.
3. “Life-long learning” is no longer a pipe dream but a pillar of society in which learning is facilitated across these places and spaces (libraries, colleges, workplace).
4. Active learning rather than passive learning emphasizes the need for customized, technology-rich learning spaces.

Design Tips for the New Learning Studio

Within the Learning Studio—one of the most central settings to the new learning landscape—there is increased sharing of workshops, studios, and other technical spaces with centralized supporting infrastructure. These multi-disciplinary spaces are more event focused rather than space focused, and mirror professional practice, allowing for team based learning. Learning studios tend to be larger than the average pedagogical arena, but this stems from their need for scalability rather than raw size. However big, they must be open, flexible, and adaptable. Design considerations include the following:



- **Support technology** for video conferencing and distance learning.
- **Provide adaptable lighting** levels to support computer and paper based activities. (Larger studios should be zoned.)

- **Facilitate collaboration** for any sized group through easily reconfigurable space with

- 1) level, flat floors and column-free space sufficient for total expected population—at least 3.25 square meters per person, and
- 2) functional furniture clusters.



- **Manage acoustics** so that noise criteria is equal to a large lecture room for studios housing 50 students or more; all studios should satisfy requirements for AV use and small group activities.

For an in-depth look at these issues, be sure to read the discussion paper.

Source

Haworth AP, Inc. & Harrison, A., A New Generation of Space in Higher Education, discussion paper, 2015.

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