
AN EMERGING LSC TEMPLATE FOR ASSESSING LEARNING SPACES

I. Premise. Robust learning happens when students are:

- ♦ actively engaged in evaluating, constructing, and re-evaluating their own knowledge
- ♦ actively engaged in a social and supportive community
- ♦ encouraged to assess, reflect, and build on prior knowledge
- ♦ empowered to address problems that are meaningful, of importance to the world beyond the campus.

II. Premise. Robust learning happens when it is:

- ♦ iterative and non-linear
- ♦ provisional, always in a state of flux, becoming
- ♦ scaffolded and transferable
- ♦ by turns, social and solitary
- ♦ understood by all as preparation for what comes next.

III. Premise: Robust learning empowers learners. Students who are empowered learners are becoming agents of their own learning. They are adventurous, tolerant of ambiguity, eager to ask new questions, testing the boundaries and limits of what is known, not known.

IV. Premise: It is essential to understand and assess relationships among the quality and character of learning spaces, learning behaviors and learning goals. Learning spaces should always be designed to support particular learning goals set by the community.

It is essential to make assessments actionable. Good assessment makes use of rubrics and protocols for measuring spaces of different sizes and purposes, formal and informal, individual and groups spaces, buildings, and/or an entire campus envisioned as a learning space.

V. Spaces should provide opportunities for students to:

- ♦ become actively engaged with peers in shaping their own learning
- ♦ practice skills, competencies, ways of thinking and doing of a professional in the field
- ♦ practice communicating and critiquing within a community of colleagues and peers
- ♦ be refreshed and renewed
- ♦ be self-aware and self-motivated, reflecting on what they are learning and becoming.

VI. Premise: Learning spaces that work in the service of robust learning:

- ◆ accommodate the wide range of programmatic and pedagogical approaches proven to support robust learning by today's students
 - ◆ are flexible, agile, and responsive to changing needs and desires
 - ◆ are open to changing hierarchical structures with ease
 - ◆ motivate and allow students to identify with professionals in a field
 - ◆ encourage the serendipitous collision of ideas
 - ◆ support social, affective, and cognitive aspects of learning, enabling students to explore and practice behaviors essential for learning
 - ◆ are aesthetically pleasing, open to the natural world
 - ◆ easily accommodate technologies essential for robust learning by today's students
 - ◆ are viewed by students as safe and comfortable for learning
 - ◆ "facilities should enable and empower people to do their best."
(*Leadership is an Art*. 1989 Max DePree, Chairman emeritus of Herman Miller, Inc.).
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DRAFT ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

LEARNING SPACE TYPE: Spaces for collaborative, social learning, where active learning groups, problem-based learning teams, formal and informal group work takes place, spaces serving learning groups of various sizes in both formal and informal settings.		
Exemplary	<p>Space naturally facilitates interactions, within and between groups and individuals. Instructor/facilitator can easily move between groups, technologies enable sharing between groups, white boards enable learning within groups and brainstorming (even 24/7). Spaces facilitate blended learning, reflect the concept of the 'inverted classroom,' in which 'passive' learning takes place in other times and places.</p> <p>Furniture movable, adaptable by students/faculty in the service of different types of engaged pedagogies (even in tiered classrooms).</p> <p>Spaces encourage and allow student voice to be heard, students to take responsibility for their own learning; no center stage. Reflects attention to research on how people learn, as well as to evidence from the field about what works.</p>	Comment:
Competent	Space allows for interactions within and among student teams; furniture moveable (on wheels), accessible white board panels, etc. Instructor has access to all groups. Tips its hat to research on how people learn; offers tentative opportunities for piloting research-based pedagogies.	Comment:
Needs attention	Traditional fixed seating; difficult for students to face/see each other; difficult for faculty to engage with students, rather instead limited to lecturing, with little opportunity to integrate lecture with active learning experiences.	Comment:

LEARNING SPACE TYPE: Spaces for acquiring and enhancing depth of understanding, gaining facility with the practices and tools of the field, opening up new ways of questioning and exploring, spaces serving learning groups of various sizes in both formal and informal settings.		
Exemplary	<p>Has state-of-the-art affordances (furniture, technologies, tools, etc.) that reflect best practice in the field (science, engineering, the arts, technologies, etc.). Allows for mentoring by peers and faculty within and beyond formally scheduled learning times. Is safe and functional. Encourages discovery and exploration, challenging learners to take responsibility for their own learning...for their own learning spaces; builds their confidence in becoming a "....." Is immediately welcoming to students, is visible to the community of practice.</p>	Comment:
Competent	Has necessary equipment and facilities that are maintained, but may not be adequate to enculturate students into a community of practice—turn them into physicists, environmental scientists, or pianists. Access is limited at some times.	Comment:
Needs attention	Needed equipment and facilities are lacking or inadequately maintained. There is no 'pull' to attract students into the spaces beyond scheduled times; few opportunities for personal, hands-on engaged learning.	Comment:

DRAFT ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

LEARNING SPACE TYPE: Spaces for communicating, critiquing, sharing, and celebrating what is being learned, what students are becoming, serving learning groups of various sizes in both formal and informal settings.		
Exemplary	Sufficient space to allow all groups within a class/course to present in a single location, allowing active questioning and responding. Places for quick posting and easy review. Audio and visual lines for seeing and hearing well. Allows for public interaction beyond a formal class. Makes the 'doing' of the learning visible. As appropriate, allows for extended posting and celebrating.	Comment:
Competent	Spaces for students to present, has functional traffic patterns, functional sight lines and audio capacity. Allows dialogue with presenters.	Comment:
Needs attention	Area for presenting too small, inconvenient to normal class space, bad sight lines, in path of noisy traffic .	Comment:

LEARNING SPACE TYPE: Spaces for renewal and reflection as individual learner and within small groups of learners, 24/7.		
Exemplary	With easy, intuitive access, aesthetically pleasing, a relaxing serene environment, with a view to a 'green' space, has ancillary resources (such as food, boards, and markers). Easy place for conversations. Scattered throughout a facility, open to be rearranged by the user, adapted to specific needs at a specific time.	Comment:
Competent	Available, but not easily identified or accessible; comfortable, but not as adaptable.	Comment:
Needs attention	Spaces are crowded, noisy, not really open and no views to the outside. Generally not inviting.	Comment:

Adapted from draft by Spencer Benson, University of Maryland College Park