

EXPERIENCE OF THE USER LEARNER

REPORTING OUT: A ROUNDTABLE GROUP

“What spaces should be designed for is to motivate students to take risks. So a space has to be comfortable enough for them to get out of their comfort zone.”

This is not an audacious question, but an audacious proposition.

I am sure that on campuses like this where GPA is important, you have students reluctant to take risks. But on my campus students ask “what does it take to get an A?” **So you have to create a space for them to feel comfortable to fail. As an educator, I note that it is also important to have a space where students can feel comfortable navigating gray areas. In learning as in life, things are not always black and white.** One way to make students begin to feel comfortable in a space is to bring them into a space that they don’t necessarily expect.”

“The space should surprise them. It should invite exploration.”

“The space should disrupt them. They should be uncomfortable; their senses and their antennae should be up. And yes, it should motivate them to move out of their comfort zone.”

“This brings me back to our earlier conversation within our team about how to motivate the next generation of diverse students, about planning for the students who we know now but also for those in our population that we do not know now.”

“I think the essence here is that spaces should appeal to the innate sensibilities of students no matter who they are. **As an architect, I want to bring the intuitive back into thinking about and experiencing spaces and ask what it is about a space that is motivational. How do we bring this conversation to the planning table?**”

“I am thinking about spaces of transcendence, spaces that are remembered as students look back on their college years.”

“Spaces that are transcendent go beyond spaces for problem-solving. I am thinking about research on biophilia, about something that students can connect to as a human being that can be tapped into in the planning process. **It is not always just about putting the people in the right place to have the right collision to have the right conversation; all that is important. But there is that intrinsic intuitive spiritual connection that must be made to the space.**”

“That sounds quite impractical at the local campus level—where there are hundreds of spaces, different kinds of spaces.”

Think about the impact of a Foucault Pendulum in the atrium of a science building with a stairway wrapped around it. Every time a student walks up the stairway, it becomes a learning experience, an experience that the students will take as they notice that the pendulum was doing something different yesterday.

The notion of visual prompts, of learning on display, of connecting to the history or context of what is being learned in a particular space that can make a space welcoming to students, making them want to be and feel like they are part of a community. “

“But it is more than that. Every space should be considered for its potential as a space for learning—for all students, not just for particular majors in particular fields.”



Emily Carr University of Art + Design

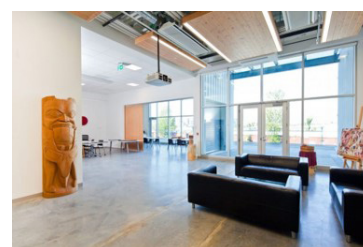


"That happens on our campus, as I assume on many others. Our senior art exhibitions are sited all around campus. Further, faculty in many disciplines beyond the fine arts schedule classes in the museum."

"I really agree with this discussion—emphasizing the role of space in fostering the kind of interdisciplinary communities that campuses are seeking to nurture. Learning is increasingly happening beyond the wall of a classroom, beyond the walls of a single building. **Buildings are increasingly not envisioned as serving a single discipline but as serving many—embracing multi-, trans-,interdisciplinary—initiatives. This reinforces the importance of thinking of about the wider campus green and about "campus as community" when thinking about a major new building or giving attention to the current physical plant.**

What better way to make this happen than through landscapes and traffic patterns—the "desire" lines of people moving across campus to get to different destinations. This gets us back to our earlier conversation about how spaces can be motivational—relevant now and into the future."

"Let me make a closing point about visibility, circling back to our earlier conversation about spaces as motivational. **What I think should be visible is a diversity of people in the spaces. If you want to diversify the population of students on a campus, you have to create spaces where if a person of color or a woman walks into them and sees a person like him or herself, he or she feels like they belong, that they want to be part of that community.**"



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