

THE LEARNING SPACES COLLABORATORY ROUNDTABLES

The Learning Spaces Collaboratory Roundtables are designed to focus on the future of planning 21st century learning spaces for 21st century learners. Their design reflects research in social creativity:

Social creativity is based on the assumption that the power of the unaided individual mind is fundamentally limited. Although creative individuals are often thought of as working in isolation, much human creativity arises from activities that take place in a social context in which interaction with other people and the artifacts that embody collective knowledge are important contributors to the process.

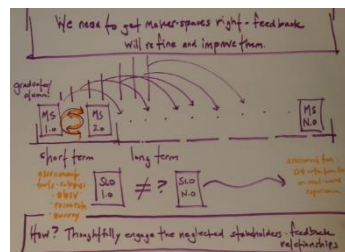


Because the fundamental problems of the 21st century are systemic, complex, and open-ended, they require the ongoing contributions of many minds, particularly from the people who own the problems and are directly affected by them. Unique new opportunities and challenges to enhance social creativity are facilitated by cultures of participation.¹

Their intent is to provide an environment in which academics and architects begin to reframe how 21st century learning spaces are planned: identifying new kinds of questions to be brought to the planning table, embracing the future of planning more audaciously. As described by Harvard's David Perkins:

Through skepticism, questioning, analogy, brainstorming, trial and error, exhaustive search and many other ways, inventors transgress boundaries to devise fundamentally fresh and more powerful ways of doing things.²

The LSC roundtables are brainstorming opportunities, devoid of the pressure to focus on a specific facilities project. They are a strategy to capture audacious questions from a diverse community of practitioners and stakeholders. The arc of questions addressed during the four-hour roundtable are prompted by questions incorporated in portfolios of participating architects³ included in the pre-roundtable packet of resources. In the initial roundtable setting, participants begin by sharing responses to the question: *what do I want my learners to become?* Following the extended, small-group brain-storming that is at the heart of the roundtable experience, participants reconvene in a "poster session" in which audacious questions from each group are examined, critiqued, applauded. The final question asked: *what next?* enjoins all participants to challenge their colleagues and communities to embrace the search for audacious questions in shaping spaces that matter.



These roundtables build on earlier LSC attention to questioning as a driver for planning, going beyond the central question about *becoming* to those about: *what learning experiences will make that happen?*; *what spaces enable those experiences?*; *how will we know?* Questions emerging from LSC Roundtables⁴ build on these foundational questions, yet reflect the changing context:

How do we design spaces that serve the invisible learner? What kind of spaces enable each of them to feel as though they belong? (LSC Roundtable at North Carolina State University, 2017)

How do we teach science "authentically" so that pedagogy reveals epistemology? How do we enter the 21st century and trust that students are capable of "taking over the place?" (LSC Roundtable at California State University, 2016)

¹ Gerhard Fischer. *Social Creativity: Making All Voices Heard: Learning, Social Creativity, Cultures of Participation*. <http://l3d.cs.colorado.edu/~gerhard/papers/social-creativity-hcii-2005.pdf>

² David Perkins. *Mapping the Inventive Mind*. National Academy of Sciences, 2004.

³ http://pkallsc.org/assets/files/ckfinder/LSC-Roundtable-Architect-Portfolios_2016.pdf

⁴ See below.

PREPARING FOR THE LSC ROUNDTABLES

- Involve ~ 20 participants, including architects and academics.

Academics (faculty and administrative colleagues) represent the diversity of stakeholders to be involved when major institutional change initiatives are being considered, developed, and assessed. This definition of stakeholders signals that focusing on learning spaces must be understood as central to broader institutional efforts focusing on a vision of the institutional future. Academics are reflective thinkers, recognized agents of change—within and beyond their home community.

Architects bring to their professional experience with recent projects that were driven by questions anticipating the future, that resulted from a common language and the mental images that emerged in their engagement with academic colleagues responsible for planning and for accomplishing “spaces that matter.”

There are no formal remarks or presentations. The arc of the four-hour session begins and ends with questions. The moderator provides context and facilitates the flow of the discussions.

- The process of focusing on questions:
 - (i) Begins prior to the roundtable, with each participant—academics and architects alike—reviewing roundtable resources posted on the LSC website (www.pkallsc.org). These include reports from past LSC Roundtables, materials prepared by participating architects, and other resources from the LSC archive and beyond.
 - (ii) Upon entering the roundtable space, each participant prepares a poster for sharing with roundtable colleagues, presenting reflections on this question: *what do you want your learners to become?* An informal poster session follows, an opportunity to get a sense of the community.
 - (iii) In the roundtable setting, participants make self-introductions, captured in their response to this question: *what keeps you up at night when thinking about learning spaces?* Informal discussions follow, an opportunity to gain a sense of what matters to each in the circle and why, to gain of sense of converging and outlier thoughts. This is an informal, unstructured process to self-identify the five working groups that will convene for the major roundtable assignment.
 - (iv) Around “realized” shared interests in a particular question/issue, working groups (3 - 8 people) tackle the assignment:
 - Articulate an audacious question to be addressed in *focusing on the future*
 - Make the case for the audacity and timeliness of that question/issue
 - Prepare a visual that illustrates the question and/or the case
 - Identify when this question should be addressed.
 - (iv) Reconvening in the roundtable setting, posters from each group are presented, critiqued and applauded, arriving at a set of questions to be addressed from the perspective of the users of the spaces—21st century learners; of the 21st century context within and beyond the campus; and of the process of planning that focuses on the future. These five questions will be included in the archive of 2016 - 2017 roundtable questions.
 - (v) What Next? This final question explores how this roundtable experience can inform the broader community of stakeholders.