What difference will new/repurposed spaces to the experience of the learner?

What do we know now about how our students experience learning?

If we are to establish base-line data from which to determine the impact of our planning on learners, what do we need to now as we begin?

How can we calibrate the return on investment at the level of the individual student, on our graduates?

What will be our measures of success for what our students have become, are recognized for accomplishing in the world?

How do we measure the return on an investment in spaces we have intentionally designed as a bridge into the future?

This image from an NSF publication illustrates the puzzling, complicated world our alumni and our campus communities and societies face. Recognizing this complexity, the Council on Competitiveness report (2005) Thriving in a World of Challenge and Change, set forth these goals for student learning:

- We need a whole generation with the capacities for creative thinking and for thriving in a collaborative culture. People are not born with inherent innovative skills,
- but they can learn them. They can acquire the skills to work in diverse, multidisciplinary teams, learn adaptability and leadership. They can acquire the skills to work in diverse, multidisciplinary teams, learn adaptability and leadership.

These goals are aspirational for learners in all disciplines in pursuit of making a contribution in the world in which they will live and work beyond graduation. They have been driving planning of repurposed and new spaces for learning on college and university campuses for many years (see: spaces that work collection II). There is an emerging body of evidence from the field how attention to such goals realizes spaces that work and some efforts to turn what we know from practice into theory. This will be a collaborative initiative, an important one.

Making the case for determining the return on the investment of institutional resources in physical & virtual environments for learning can be calibrated from several perspectives: focusing on learners, institutional programmatic and pedagogical initiatives, faculty and budgets.