

# Robust Learning: How does it happen? Where does it happen?

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2010 Learning Spaces Collaboratory Working Group

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.) ■