



Spaces for knowledge generation.

The Knowledge Generation Aesthetic

The SKG Project has developed design principles which when applied to classroom design contribute to a 'knowledge generation aesthetic' – a space and approach that encourages learning and contributes to knowledge. A space where students and teachers feel comfortable, that enables the flow of ideas, and through its design actually facilitates the learning process. A flexible learning space is one that can easily accommodate changes in technology and is not locked in to one particular mode of teaching.

Creating Flexible Learning Spaces

The SKG Project is based on the philosophy that collaborative approaches to learning, as well as to research and study, should make use of technologies and approaches that student favour, and that learning spaces should therefore be organised to accommodate learner-generated aspects of learning. A learning space that is student centred has a **knowledge generation aesthetic**.

How do we create a knowledge generation aesthetic within existing university spaces? In terms of classroom set up, students and teachers need the same things. In general terms, a knowledge generation aesthetic requires flexibility and choice in relation to the configuration of the room and the use of technology



Design Principles

Flexible learning spaces should incorporate the following design principles (CAFEBAR):

Comfort: regulated heating and colling, comfortable chairs, natural light, flexible lighting (a mix of lighting approaches rather than bare florescent, good acoustics

Aesthetics: incorporates CAFEBAR design principles

Flow: the furniture is modular and able to be reconfigured quickly and easily. Tables should be on wheels so teachers can reconfigure the room to suit the teaching method used. (Teachers at university move from room to room and often only have a few minutes to set up before students arrive). Room needs to allow space for teacher to move around between tables.

Equity: the rooms needed to be fitted to accommodate differently abled students. The presentation wall needs to allow for optimum viewing by all participants. Every student should be able to see every other student.



Blending: the room should incorporate a range of teaching tools for various teaching methods

Affordances : the learning space has to be capable of supporting a variety of student owned learning devices – such as laptops. This can easily be achieved by incorporating floor based power (keeping in mind the principles of flow, comfort and equity this is a better option that power outlets around the wall as it minimizes the amount of wires and cords lying around). The knowledge generation aesthetic incorporates the ‘chalk to plasma continuum’ so in addition to technology the space needs to allow for all teaching methods, including the use of blackboards.

Repurposing: the underlying principle of the SKG project is (not quite) **making do** - a knowledge generation aesthetic can be achieved by making simple adjustments to existing facilities at low cost.



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