



SPACES THAT TEACH, INSPIRE AND TRANSFORM

architecture for education

SPACE

Today on the planet we inhabit there are 7,200 million people, almost double the number there were in 1970; by the end of the century it is calculated there will be 12,000 million.

With these figures one thing is clear: it is unrealistic to think that we can continue doing the same thing as we, as societies, have been doing in the past few decades.

Facing a more and more uncertain and complex future, the challenge will not be how to make things better but how to make things differently.

In this search for radical innovation the question arises, **is the educational system as we know it up to the task of solving the challenges facing us as a society?** And I think the response almost everywhere in the world is a resounding no.



SPACE



The educational system as we know it was primarily designed to produce employees that could function in a post industrial revolution world. Education was standardized in order to train future workers in the factories that were vital for the economy at that time. However, this industrialized world has evolved radically, while many of the systems that industrialization generated have not. An obvious example of this lag is physical space, and physical space **has to be understood not as a container of people, but as possibly one of the most important learning tools that exists.**

If we analyze the work spaces where the graduates of our universities will work once they finish their studies, they have at least a 50-year time lag with the spaces in which those students studied and not only that; **the corporate world evolves at a velocity that the educational system does not, which is to say that unless we do something this lag will continue to grow.**



SPACE

A REVOLUTION AS NEVER SEEN BEFORE



While the panorama in education may seem pessimistic, there is a revolution brewing in many places that is showing the power to generate radical changes in how we educate. Certainly one of the key elements in this revolution is understanding **the importance of physical space in learning**; according to some specialists, **space is the third teacher**, the first being the teacher as we know it, the second the students and the third the space.

While many specialists speak of the importance of architecture and design in learning, it is only now that we have scientific bases that help to explain why and give us clues as to how.

SPACE



Never before has so much information been generated on how our brain works and on the correlation between mental processes and spatial solutions. Today we know that there are certain neurons responsible for measuring distance, limits and forms and that it is through these neurons that the brain saves information in the memory thereby converting **space into the magic key to our memory**, which in English is known as **awareness of the space**; when a person wants to remember some situation or experience, what the brain does first is remember where that person was physically, how was the space, the colors, and through this process the content of such experience is accessed. This is how today we know that there is a **direct link between space and learning**.

SPACE

Learning is predominately social

Another of the fields of study most affecting how we understand learning is the social aspect; the theory of social learning says that in the life of a person around 50% of what he or she knows was learned in social environments and the other 50% in formal environments, and nevertheless we continue designing predominantly formal educational spaces.





For these and many other reasons we find ourselves as a society at a watershed in which we have the great challenge of transforming spaces for education as part of the great revolution in learning, seeking **spaces that inspire students to find their passion, that generate confidence among the students and that promote creative thinking.**

Today it is no longer sufficient to focus on one isolated part of learning; today we have to understand **learning as an ecosystem** that must be addressed on different levels at the same time and one of the most important levels is the physical space.