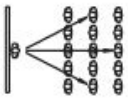
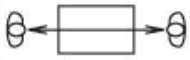
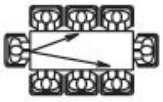
Authentic and Real-World Learning Spaces

When designing a space for Authentic and Real-World Learning, it's important to keep in mind flexibility and agility of furniture. Students needs opportunities to collaborate with peers and define solutions to problems, but also need space to process information and complete tasks independently. Authentic and Real-World Learning spaces need to encompass a variety of "Knowledge Environments", as highlighted in In Sync: Environmental Behavior Research and the Design of Learning Spaces.

Table 2: Archetypal Attributes for Knowledge Environments

ENVIRONMENTS	ARCHETYPAL ATTRIBUTES*			
	Icon	Behavioral Premise	Process Steps	Protocol Attributes
Delivering		• Bring information before the public • Instructor led • Knowledge is in one source	• Prepare and generate presentation • Deliver to an audience • Assess understanding	• A formal presentation • Instructor controls presentation • Focus is on presentation • Passive learning
Applying		• Learner-centered • An apprentice model	• Knowledge transferred via demonstration • Practice by recipient • Understanding achieved	• Controlled observation • One-to-one • Master and apprentice alternate control • Informal • Active learning
Creating		• Innovation or knowledge moved from abstract to a product	• Research • Recognize need • Divergent thinking • Incubate • Interpret into product / innovation	• Multiple disciplines • Leaderless • Egalitarian • Distributed attention • Privacy • Casual • Active learning
Communicating		• Share information • Provide quick exchange	• Organize information • Deliver • Receive and interpret • Confirm	• Knowledge is dispersed • Impromptu delivery • Casual • Active learning
Decision Making		• Make decisions	• Review data • Generate strategy • Plan • Implement one course of action	• Knowledge is dispersed • Information is shared • Leader sets final direction • Situation is protected • Semi-formal to formal • Passive / Active learning

* Portions adapted from:
Bromberg, J. Space as a Product. *Community-Based Planning Project*. MI: Steelcase Inc., 2000. Unpublished.
Cornell, P., and Lennie Scott-Webber. *Environments for Sharing Knowledge. A Sheet for Grist, Fodder, Starters, Solutions, Stories, Insights, and Beginnings. Application series 1–9*. TX: Vecta, 2001.
Davis, S. and C. Meyer. *Blurr . . . The Speed of Change in the Connected Economy*. NY: Warner Books, 1998.
Leonard, D. and W. Swap. *When Sparks Fly. Igniting Creativity in Groups*. MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1999.
Scott-Webber, Lennie. *Environments for Learning—Design Implications*. Speech by Lennie Scott-Webber at Steelcase Canada's Worldlife Center Knowledge Forum, Toronto, Ontario, October 2000.

Webber, Lennie Scott. *In Sync: Environmental Behavior Research and the Design of Learning Spaces.* Ann Arbor: Society for College and U Planning, 2004. 2009. Web. Oct. 2015.

What is authentic and real-world learning?

In traditional academic settings, “problems” are often thought of as opportunities for students to practice specific learned procedures. For instance, traditional math “problems” focus on students’ abilities to replicate techniques that have been explicitly taught. These can be important skills, but they do not help students develop the ability to define and create solutions to the less-well-defined problems they will encounter in the real world.

Problems that provide students with opportunities to solve real-world problems should not, therefore, focus on specific procedures students have already learned. Developing problem solving and innovation skills requires that we ask students to complete tasks for which they don’t already have a response or solution. In sum, problem solving and innovation are thinking skills, not procedural skills.

Authentic and Real-World Learning

> *Students are engaging in authentic and real world learning when they define and develop solutions to problems that they have encountered or are likely to encounter in their lives, or when they complete a task for which they have not received explicit instruction.*

-Citation from Minnetonka Public Schools Framework Guide