



REBECCA HARE

Powerful learning space design

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A little bit about Rebecca

- ❑ Full time teacher of Art and Design in High School.
- ❑ Holds a BFA in industrial design and worked with an architecture and design company for ten years.
- ❑ Works with teachers to help them maximize their space in the classroom.

- Often times teachers don't have control over the furniture in the learning space.
 - It's not helpful to talk about "the stuff".
 - Much more helpful to look at the elements in the room as potential for learning and collaboration.
 - Thinking through surfaces helps us plan.
 - That really great "thing" you need to support the learning and collaboration might be free and in your school's basement.
- **It's not about decorating. It's about the learning.**
 - The four walls of your classroom is your best visual real estate.
 - Walk into your space and think about the learning that is being "pushed at kids" and where the learning is being "pulled through them."
 - If it's redundant take it down.
 - We are overwhelming our students with visual information.
 - **Less is more.**
 - Pull away from Pinterest and think "how am I using my visual real estate well?"
 - Kids can have a space on the wall where they are putting up their own work and having conversations around it.
 - **How can we think of our walls as being a place for current learning?**
 - It doesn't have to go through a copy machine to be an artifact of learning.
 - Creating a simple color palate will help get rid of that visual color.
 - Think about having different heights of horizontal surfaces where kids can create.
 - A desk on wheels is still a desk.

- **As a teacher reflect on where you work best at home.**
 - Flexible seating means that students have a choice in where they work best to learn.
 - A makerspace should have places to stand and where students can move around as they build.
 - Rectangular tables tend to avoid wasted space.
 - Give kids three different heights to work on.
 - Posture affects learning and behavior. Spaces should have different areas so that students can change positions and postures as they learn.
- It's irrational for us to expect a student to sit for 8 hours.
 - We want them to be able to choose a place where they learn best.
 - Students have under developed vestibulars because of lack of play.
 - Vestibular helps us balance and understand our place in the world.
 - Having kids take breaks, roll around and play are essential to their development.
- It doesn't have to be expensive but you do need to provide choices.
 - Do you have at least three choices for kids to work?
 - You will need 20-30% more seating options than you have students.
- Tips for how to get started with developing a more thoughtful learning space.
 - Understand how the orientation of the space affects the learning.
 - Allow kids to be the flexible element in the space rather than putting everything on wheels.
 - The power teaching point in the room is the center where you can turn to each student.
 - Untether yourself for content delivery frees you up for frequent checks for understanding.
 - Think about how your space is designed for different types of learners and different groupings.
 - If we want students to collaborate we have to make sure we have surfaces for all students to be involved in the learning.
 - A different colored marker for each student to use as they collaborate on a shared poster allows for a quick check on how much each student is participating.
 - Do we have a space for collaborative learning?
 - Do we have a space for quiet learning or "cave work"?
- Procedures and protocols for learning spaces.
 - Students drive the agreements for the learning space.
 - The teacher is the facilitator.
- **What about the teacher who says "my classroom is too small"?**
 - See opportunities where you didn't see them before.
 - Can you get rid of something that allows for more space?
 - Give kids a basket of pillows and let kids find the space.

- Your four walls are not the only place your kids can learn in. Students can learn outside.
- Access other learning spaces in the school that might be free that you could move to at one point during the day.
- Social learning spaces and the fear of too much socialization.
 - Try to enhance the learning opportunities for students to process rather than restrict.
 - Create protocols around social spaces and for giving feedback.
 - Tag feedback
 - Tell me something you like.
 - Ask me a question.
 - Give me advice.
- Finding ways to create quiet.
 - You want to be able to see, hear and feel quiet in your space.
 - Three minutes of mindfulness at the beginning of class can have a huge impact on learning.
 - The mind needs a break to transition into new learning.
- **Always keep your space in growth and beta mode.**
 - Try it for two weeks and see how it works.
 - Be explicit with students about your plan and what you are creating.
- **“The best gift you can give your students is time and space.” Laura Share**

Resources:

- [The Space: A Guide for Educators](#) by Rebecca Hare and Dr. Robert Dillon
- [Make Space](#) by by [Scott Doorley](#) and [Scott Witthoft](#)
- [The Third Teacher](#) by O'Donnell Wicklund Pigozzi and Peterson and Bruce Mau