

# Learning spaces, learning environments and the dis'placement' of learning

Herbert Thomas  
Division e-Learning, CHESD  
University of the Free State



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE • UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT • YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

## Learning spaces: definitions of learning embodied



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE • UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT • YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

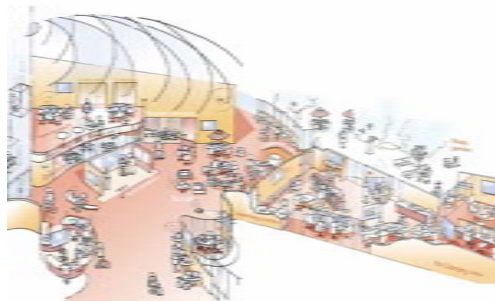
## Learning spaces and the imprisonment of learning

- This is where learning takes place!
- Student engagement?
- Learning in informal spaces?
- The whole campus is a learning space!



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE • UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT • YUNIBESITHI YA FREISTATA

## JISC Report (2006)



## “Designing spaces for effective learning”

- Flexible: current and evolving pedagogies
- Future-proofed: allow reconfiguration
- Bold: beyond tried and tested pedagogies
- Creative: energize and inspire
- Supportive: develop potential of all
- Enterprising: support different purposes
- Oblinger (2006): “built pedagogy”
- Milne (2007): “rooms with memories”



## Virtual learning spaces

- Learning management systems (e.g. Blackboard)
- Virtual worlds (e.g. Second Life)
- Social applications (e.g. MySpace)
- Internet - decentralisation: ‘social features of the system’
- Emergence of a social space: human network
- Adaptive complex systems: ‘ecosystem’
- Milne (2007): Can avatars learn?



## Connectivism and radical discontinuity

- Siemens (2004): "learning is a process that occurs within nebulous environments of shifting core elements - not entirely under the control of the individual"
- "learning (defined as actionable knowledge) can reside outside of ourselves (within an organization or database)"
- There are different types of learning – no unitary definition



## Designing spaces for 'learnings'

- 'Learnings' as emergent properties of learning ecologies
- Complex learning space design re-engineered
- Learning spaces have to be adaptable, malleable – fluid
- Skills: critical thinking in complex environments / interdisciplinary teams
- Coherence, complexity, legibility ... mystery? (Graetz, 2006)
- Cognitive, affective, social, cultural, historical, philosophical contexts = "Enchanting" learning spaces or ecologies



Thank you

