

Q&A with Eduardo Blanc, Intl. Assoc. AIA

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How should the physical environment respond to the teaching methodologies that support a child's natural curiosity?

Imagination. The design of the learning environment must leverage a child's natural curiosity and robust imagination. The different ways young students learn demand a very different type of learning environment. This requires creating physical spaces that promote inquiry based learning, social emotional learning, and hands on learning. Inquiry based learning pedagogy includes curriculum that involves investigation and exploration, requiring spaces for research, testing, and individual and group areas for students to work in. Creating an environment with indoor and outdoor

learning opportunities encourages a child's natural instinct to play, while developing their communication, critical thinking, and collaboration skills.

How does the design of spaces get students excited about constructing their own learning?

Immersion. Creating an immersive learning experience in your facility is not just for medical students anymore. Today students are constructing their own learning by creating content using hands on learning, rather than simply absorbing information. Designing STEM/STEAM spaces with ample space to experiment and providing the right type of equipment to support their experimentation helps to keep students engaged and excited about learning. Designing the facility that allows for the STEM lab spaces to spill into the hallways, without limits to creativity and exploration, creates an immersive learning experience.

How can your facility prepare students to transition to their future lives?

Integration. When designing spaces for high school students, the goal is to create a community of learning for students to access opportunities



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Perrysburg Schools – Hull Prairie
Intermediate School, TMP Architecture



Troy School District – Early Childhood Center, TMP Architecture

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that will prepare them for the future. Designing spaces that allow peer-to-peer collaboration to emulate work spaces, experience in high tech labs, and online learning opportunities will provide a seamless transition into the next steps of their lives. The new SWCC High School in Grand Rapids was part of a 5.5 acres multi-use development; developed with strong collaboration with several community partners and Grand Rapids Public Schools. With these partnerships, the District was able to integrate real life programming and new learning opportunities for the students. The goal was to integrate and connect learning, living, healing, shopping, and recreation into an urban district.



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