

One Size Does Not Fit All



Brief #20

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The broader one's understanding of the human experience, the better design we will have. – Steve Jobs

The days of designing and building schools with the traditional double-stacked corridor are fading into history. Today's educational vocabulary refers to 21st century learning centers, community schools, school-within-a-school models and virtual schools.

What do these different descriptors mean, and do they appropriately describe facility needs for today's students? How do we design facilities to maximize the likelihood that all students will have an equal opportunity to succeed?

Importance should be placed on evidence-based features, and, in addition, careful consideration should be given to the fact that no two children learn in the same way. The research indicating that school facilities have an effect on achievement and learning outcomes continues to grow.

Designers must strive to accommodate differing learning styles and preferences. Howard Gardner's research on multiple intelligences and different learning styles helped educators to understand that not all children learn in the same way. Other differentiated learning style models exist and explain how to optimize learning. One such model is the Dunn and Dunn learning style model (Rundle, n.d.).

To illustrate how the different elements impact learning style, let's look at lighting. Some students prefer brightly lit areas while others prefer soft, dim lighting. As a designer for a new learning center, consideration must be given to providing spaces that accommodate both of these learning styles. Students will tend to gravitate to the amount of lighting consistent with their learning style preference. Areas of bright natural light as well as areas that are not so bright should be available in order to accommodate the variety of learning styles regarding light.

[Read full blog.](#)

Reference

Rundle, S. (n.d.). *Building excellence – effective environments inspire minds to dream more and become more!* [PowerPoint Slides]. Retrieved from <http://media.cefpi.org/pacificnorthwest/alaska/AK08BuildingExcellence.pdf>

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