# SWINBURNE

## SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

# *Get out of my space: designing a curriculum-led, non-teaching, learning space*

Nicki Lee, Academic Director, Swinburne Professional Learning

# The problem of designing

☐ Designing learning spaces is a 'wicked problem'*

 ☐ All design is open-ended

 ☐ There are no right answers

 ☐ We align our design with what we think we need

 ☐ And hope that we have aligned better than before

 ☐ We aim to make it better for someone

 ☐ It may not be better for everyone

 ☐ Evaluation is easy or complex, depending on your perspective

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*From Rittel & Webber (1972)

# The problem of designing

☐ In the universities I have visited there are:

    ☐ Corridor 'learning streets'

    ☐ Reproductions of gentlemen's clubs

    ☐ Private library spaces

    ☐ Open air workspaces with wireless and sockets

    ☐ Teaching rooms with interactive consoles and turning tables

    ☐ Lecture halls with central pods and group tables

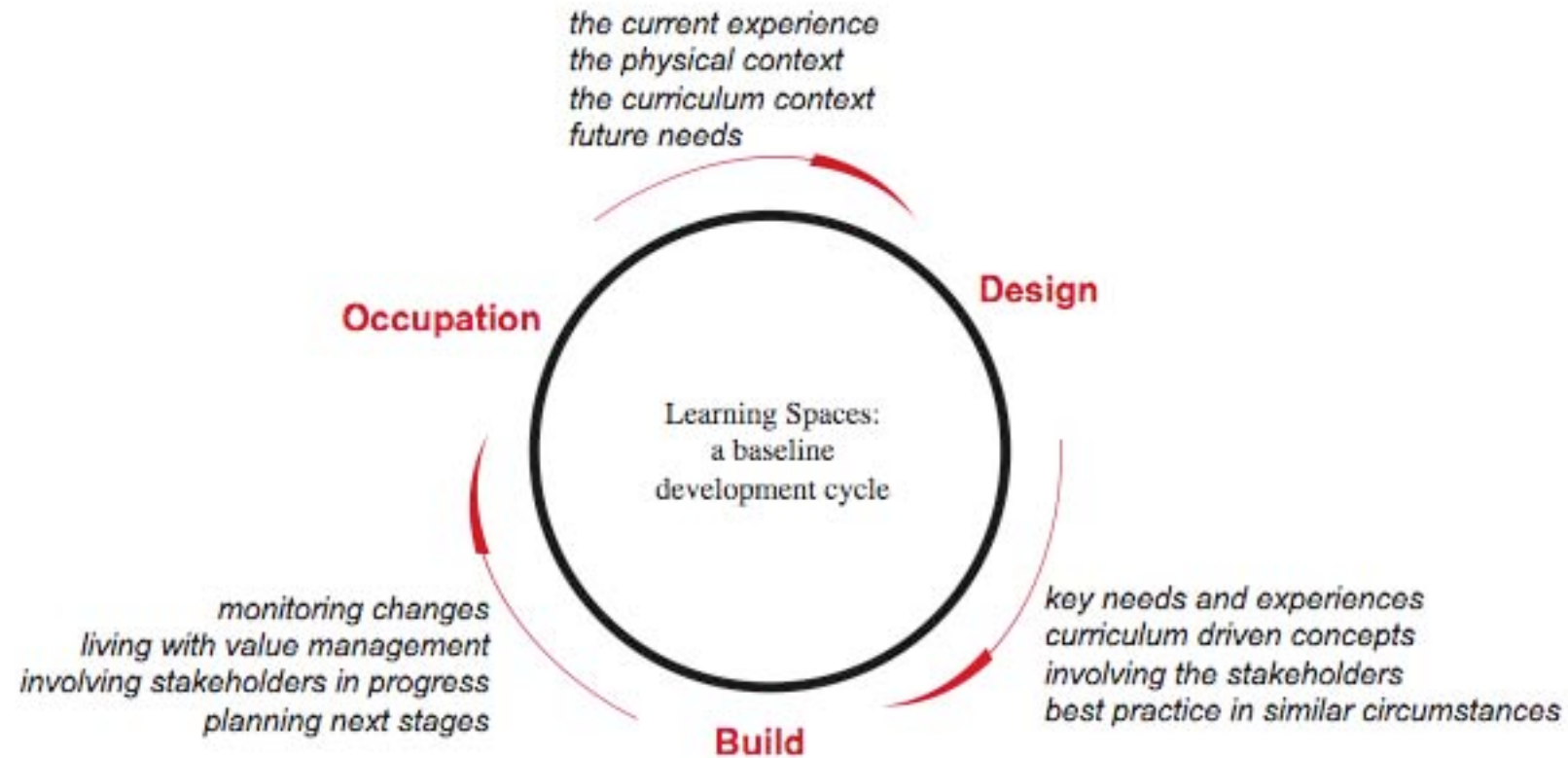☐ Each in response to a wicked problem

☐ Each problem definition different

*From Rittel & Webber (1972)

# The example of the Hawthorn Project Hub

# Development cycle



the current experience
the physical context
the curriculum context
future needs

Design

Occupation

Learning Spaces:
a baseline
development cycle

key needs and experiences
curriculum driven concepts
involving the stakeholders
best practice in similar circumstances

monitoring changes
living with value management
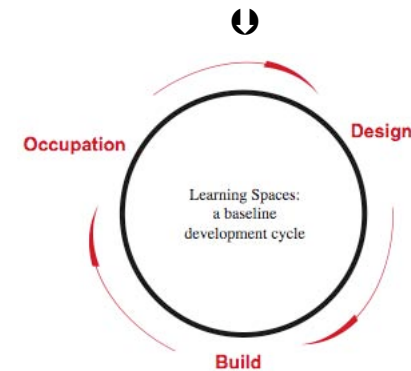involving stakeholders in progress
planning next stages

Build

# The current experience

☐ Digital Learning Initiative outcomes

*"…a physical place which utilises technology and which, through innovative application, provides some form of campus heart." **

☐ Group project experiences study

   ☐ Second most common choice

   ☐ Considered most important
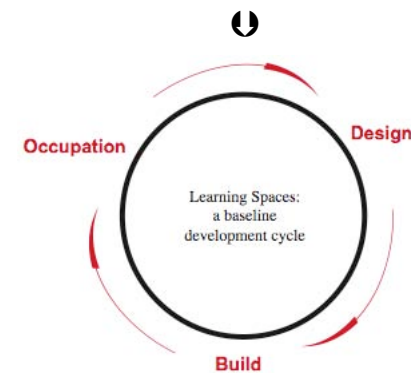
   ☐ Travel and schedules

# Future needs

☐ Final Year Experience - major capstone projects

    ☐ In 2009, at Hawthorn alone, approximately 1800 students are engaged in final year projects, 89 units, and four faculties

    ☐ By 2010, this number will rise to 2500 in 95+ units

    ☐ More than half of those will be working in groups

    ☐ A quarter working with external partners



Occupation

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Learning Spaces:
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development cycle

Build



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# Curriculum context

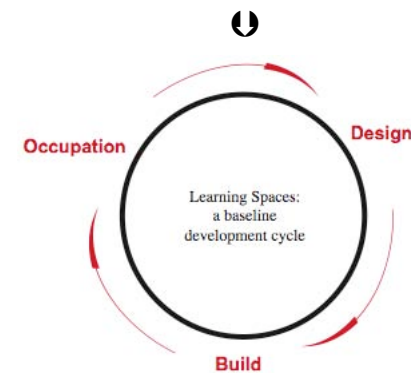- ## What students do

    - Team meetings, brainstorming and general collaboration

    - Small group peer reviews and cross-group collaboration

    - Project development including writing and multimedia work

    - Presentations including inter and intra group rehearsal and review

    - Individual and informal social study

    - Meetings and presentations with external partners or clients

    - Web conferencing and events

- ## An independent learning space

- ## A professional commons

- ## NOT a teaching space

Learning Spaces: a baseline development cycle

Occupation — Design — Build

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# The physical context

- ☐ Urban Campus

- ☐ Growing student numbers

- ☐ Over-subscribed library

- ☐ Long term redevelopment projects (holes in ground)

- ☐ Urgency and relative prioritisation of needs

  - ☐ Research groups

  - ☐ Teaching rooms (timetabling!)
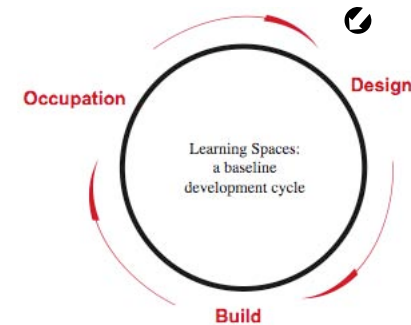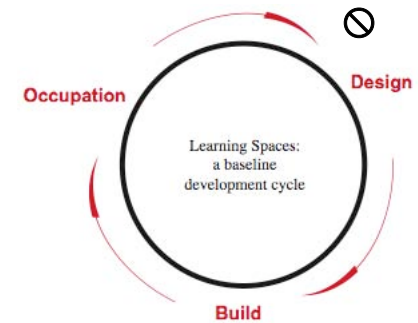
  - ☐ Office space

- ☐ Where??



Learning Spaces: a baseline development cycle

Occupation — Design — Build
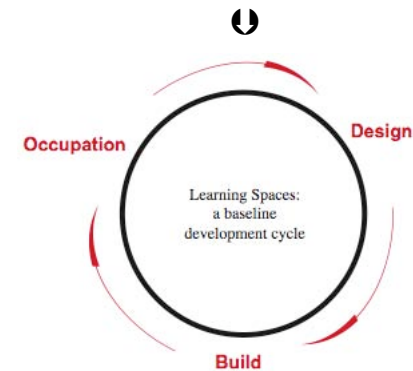
# Where?

# From proposal to design

☐ Proposal to DVC(A) November 2007

☐ Proposal to Council December 2007

☐ Capital funds granted ($2.5m)
December 2007

☐ First contact with stakeholder groups
January 2008

☐ Deadline February 2009

Occupation | Design

Learning Spaces:
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development cycle

Build

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# From proposal to design

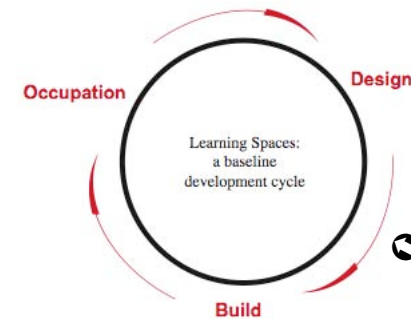☐ Facilities and services brief architects January 2008
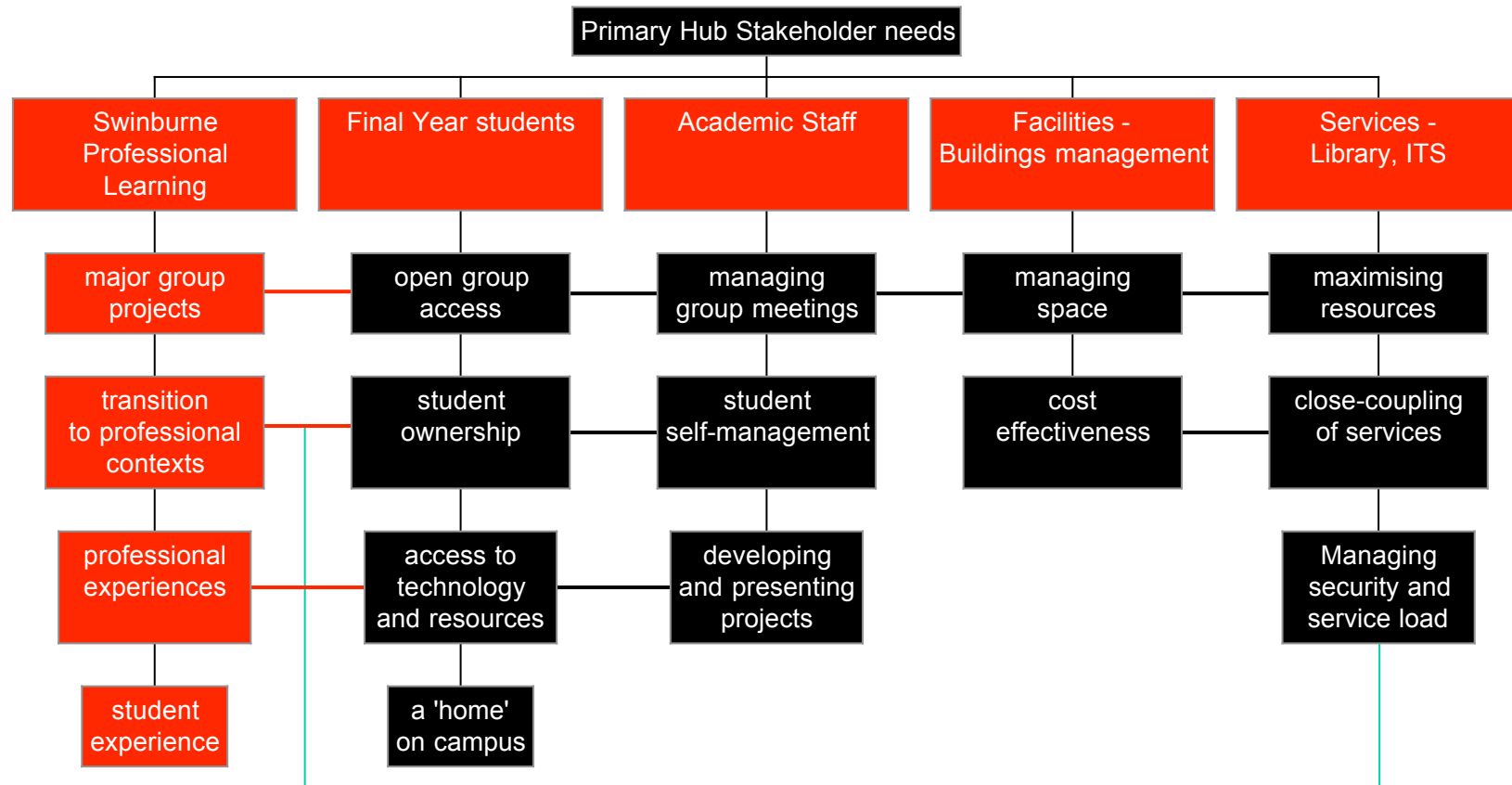
☐ First designs arrive February 2008

# Designing

- ☐ Team briefs architects February 2008

- ☐ Design group
    - ☐ Facilities and Services
    - ☐ Final Year Experience team
    - ☐ Library
    - ☐ Architect  (DL Design Group)

- ☐ Reference group
    - ☐ Educational Coordinators (4),
      project unit coordinators (7) and
      students (4) from Hawthorn faculties
    - ☐ By: Group circulation, email, feedback requests, meetings

- ☐ Visits to
    - ☐ Faculty academic groups, student groups, corporate units



Occupation    Design

Learning Spaces:
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# Stakeholders

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                          ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                          │  Primary Hub Stakeholder needs   │
                          └─────────────────────────────────┘
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| Swinburne Professional Learning | Final Year students | Academic Staff | Facilities - Buildings management | Services - Library, ITS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| major group projects | open group access | managing group meetings | managing space | maximising resources |
| transition to professional contexts | student ownership | student self-management | cost effectiveness | close-coupling of services |
| professional experiences | access to technology and resources | developing and presenting projects | | Managing security and service load |
| student experience | a 'home' on campus | | | |

──── Close relations

──── Points of contrast

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# Designing

- Project based learning concepts
  - Creativity
  - Interaction
  - Reflection
  - Action
  - Communication

- Primary zone concepts
  - Creative
  - Social
  - Focus



Learning Spaces: a baseline development cycle (Occupation, Design, Build)
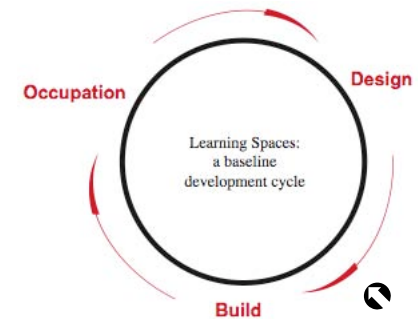
# Final design



**Focus spaces**
Meeting rooms, boardrooms, computer hall
Networked screens, conference tables, PC's

**Creative spaces**
Wall length whiteboards
Relaxed tables and chairs
Storage and standing/sitting boundaries

**Social spaces**
Soft flexible seating, low chairs
Wall-size pinboards, projection screen

**Gallery walls and exhibition spaces**
**Booths (quiet places)**
**Transitional tables (in access area)**
**Docking stations (for plugging in)**

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# Final design



**Access**
Via library 'late lab' 24/7 - student swipecards
Lecturers and clients - by invitation

**Security**
4 cameras, alarmed exits

**Networks and power**
Every space has multiple hardwired
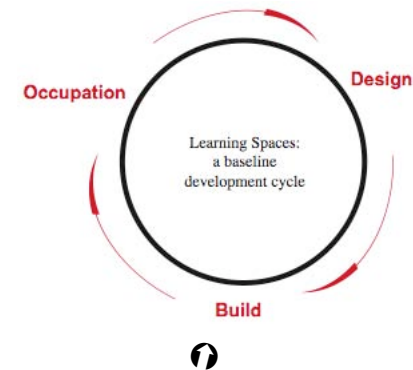Additional wireless stations

**Ventilation/lighting**
New plant required

# Build

- Timeline
  - ☐ People moved out of their parking June 08
  - ☐ Construction tender started July 08
  - ☐ Construction started August 08
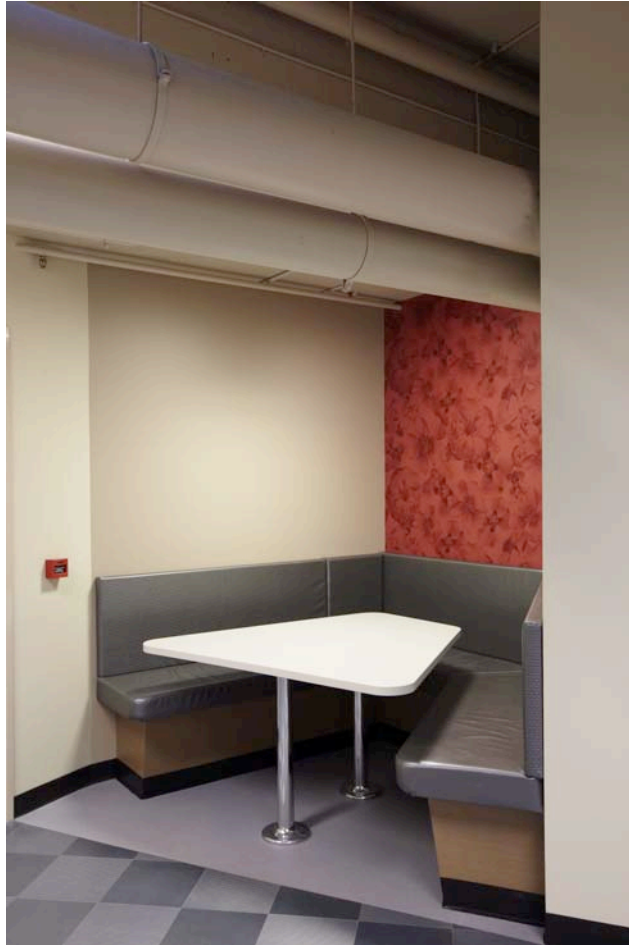  - ☐ Completed February 09

# Pre-occupancy

# Pre-occupancy

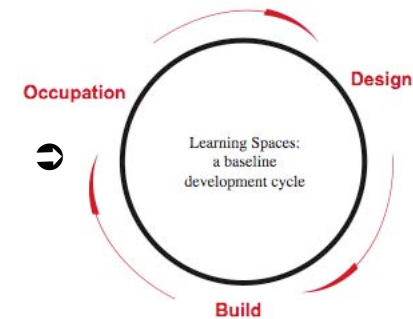# Pre-occupancy

# Pre-occupancy

# Pre-occupancy

# Pre-occupancy

# Designing still

- New problems requiring design solutions
    - Access - system catch up
    - Student involvement
    - Value management
    - Publicity
    - Other!
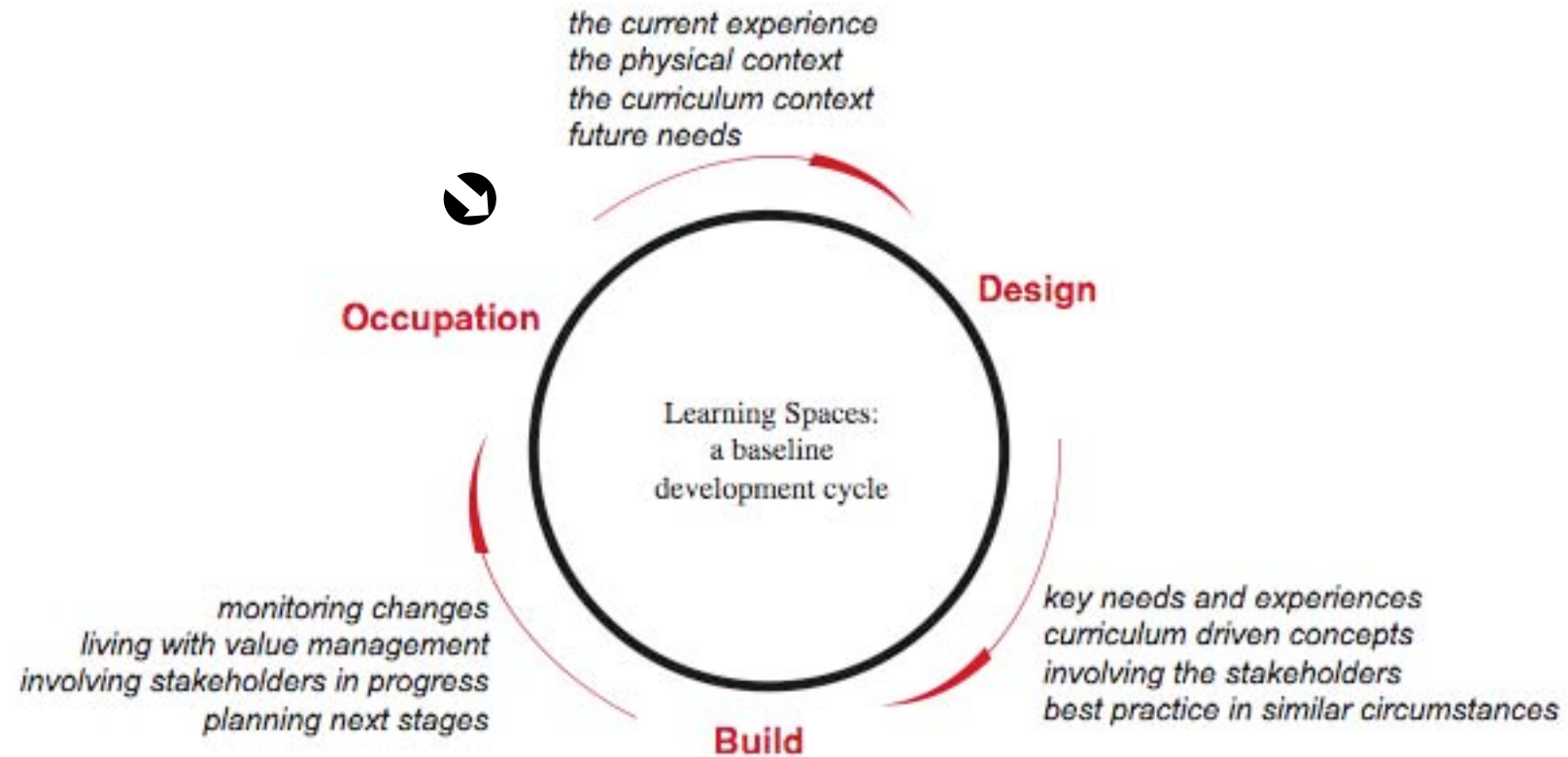
    - Meanwhile, we are moving on to occupancy

Occupation    Design

Learning Spaces:
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# Occupancy

# Occupancy

# Occupancy

# Back to here…



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# Development cycle for the Hub

- Needs analysis

  - ☐ Curriculum context

  - ☐ Physical context

  - ☐ Stakeholder needs

- Pre and post design evaluation

  - ☐ Reference group

  - ☐ Hub management committee

- Now

  - ☐ Post-occupancy

  - ☐ Pre-design

# Evaluation

Evaluation is easy or complex, depending on your perspective

    In a wicked problem there are:

        Unique problems

        No true or false answers

        No predefined solutions

        Non-transferable solutions

        Impossible to test?

# Post occupancy evaluation

- ☐ The priorities and common practice in evaluation were different

  - ☐ Library counts numbers

  - ☐ Facilities counts efficiency

  - ☐ Academics count outcomes

  - ☐ Students count experience

- ☐ Our mixed methods

  - ☐ Count frequency and occupancy

  - ☐ Survey satisfaction

  - ☐ Video observations

# Urgency

- Atrium Centre Lilydale (3 levels, 2009)

- Student Services Building (3 levels, 2010)

- Advanced Technologies Centre (8 levels, 2011)

- Post-graduate student centre (?)
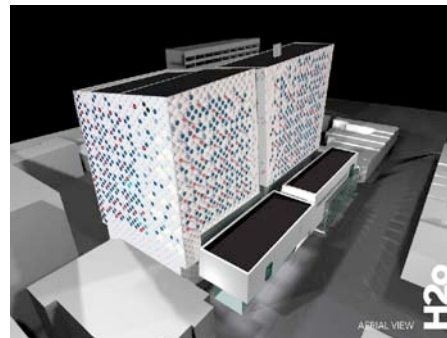
*We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment. Whether we permit chance environments to do the work, or whether we design environments for the purpose makes a great difference.*

John Dewey (1906)

# Thank you

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