A Critical Look at CSR and the Built Environment using Experiential Learning

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As the millennial generation becomes engrossed in the workforce, they are bringing with them new ideals of Organizational Development (OD), especially in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). For instance, millennials tend to view the built environment (i.e., space, time, meaning and communication relative to physical work spaces) as an aspect of CSR. Corporate representatives such as facilities managers, architects, space planners and designers dub this the new sustainability. Although the term has become common parlance within organizations, academia often overlooks the relationship between the built environment and CSR. The current paper will explore how the built environment, which includes all that happens in and around an organization’s facilities, is now an aspect of CSR. Yet instead of simply providing a descriptive account, the paper focuses on two ways to approach the new sustainability in the classroom. First, using communication design and critical geography, the paper will advance some reasoning relative to the
intersection of CSR and millennials. Second, the paper will describe how experiential learning in the form of a simulation is used to teach students the ways that the CSR-infused built environment is co-designed.

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