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LEARNING LOG
Enhancing Learning Spaces in Support of Active + Adaptive Learning - Co-Creation

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DETAILS

MAKING IT WORK, UNDERSTANDING WHAT WORKS, AND SHARING WHAT WORKS

TITLE

Enhancing Learning Spaces in Support of Active + Adaptive Learning - Co-Creation

SOLUTION ⓘ

Digital Learning and Next Generation Digital Courseware

CAPACITIES ⓘ

Leadership & Culture

Owner

👤 Johannes De Gruyter (/education/s/profile/00536000003BijUAAS)

Record Type

Monthly-Current 2017

INSTITUTION

Portland State University

REFLECTION

SITE INITIATIVE ⓘ

The purpose of the Active + Adaptive Program at PSU (www.pdx.edu/oai/active-adaptive-at-psu (http://www.pdx.edu/oai/active-adaptive-at-psu)) is to support student learning and success by partnering with faculty to experiment with the adoption of adaptive and personalized learning and courseware in credit-bearing general education classes. A critical part of this initiative is enhancing physical learning spaces to support active and adaptive pedagogies. The Active + Adaptive Program is led by PSU's Office of Academic Innovation (www.pdx.edu/oai (http://www.pdx.edu/oai)).

PROGRESS TOWARD STUDENT SUCCESS ⓘ

The goal of the learning spaces effort is to formally influence the space allocation process at PSU to incorporate considerations for active and collaborative learning. Alternative classroom designs have emerged that support collaborative learning and shift the focus away from lecture-based formats. Such spaces enable alternative pedagogies that allow for more inquiry, investigative and collaborative work, and they empower students to explore course content and ideas in an environment that has multiple points from which learning may emerge. Specific deliverables for this effort include: Changes in space allocation practice and policy to incorporate active learning considerations; and changes in the Neuberger Hall renovation to better align learning spaces and active learning. Learning spaces includes classrooms, instructional lab spaces and student flexible spaces (such as for group work, individual studying and engaging with faculty).

In an effort to design with students and faculty, a task force of the Active + Adaptive Steering Committee (consisting of faculty and staff) facilitated one engagement session with students and one engagement session with faculty (both in January 2017), where we engaged them in both brainstorming and discussions (in reaction to various classroom, instructional space, and student flexible space designs) to identify ideal spaces in support of active learning. We then synthesized these findings and shared the input with campus planning and architects working on remodels.

The tangible steps that summarize the above include:

- Engagement session with students to brainstorm and solicit reactions to various classroom, instructional space, and student flexible space designs

- Engagement session with faculty to brainstorm and solicit reactions to various classroom, instructional space, and student flexible space designs

- Synthesized results

- Developed a
  synthesis document (https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Z98dEZfrmtKhtP8sRM97zF8eR-WzXWF8ywnLfFrWczM/edit#gid=0)
  that distilled our findings
- Shared findings with campus planning and architects working on remodels

IMPACT ⓘ

This work on learning spaces, if successful, could have a large impact across campus when more classrooms, instructional lab spaces, and student flexible spaces embody many of the recommendations we made based on the sessions with students and faculty. Such spaces would allow for increased use of more effective learning strategies that allow for more inquiry and investigative work.

This document (https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Z98dEZfrmtKhtP8sRM97zF8eR-WzXWF8ywnLfFrWczM/edit#gid=0) summarizes our findings (there were very few differences between what students and faculty want).

We could measure whether there are more active learning spaces by working with campus partners to add a metric of whether a classroom, instructional lab space or student flexible space supports active learning, as part of the annual inventory of spaces. Key partners are aware of work done by the Educause ELI community, their metric and the flexible spaces exchange (http://flexspace.org).

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL RESOURCES ⓘ

For our engagement sessions and our strategy development, we used images of innovative learning spaces from campuses across the world. Critically, the Active + Adaptive initiative at PSU is funded in large part by a grant from APLU (with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation).

Internal resources included drawing on our budding expertise, and increasing cultural acceptance, with design thinking approaches to co-creating the development of solutions with students and faculty. We also used a small amount of funding to provide gift card incentives for student participation in the student session, as well as food and refreshments for the faculty session.

NEXT CRITICAL STEPS ⓘ

- Using the findings from this work to continue to influence the planning for Neuberger Hall major renovation.
- Investigating ways to more formally incorporate the faculty and voices into ongoing and future decisions around learning spaces.

This Learning Log was co-authored by Johannes De Gruyter, Executive Director, Office of Academic Innovation and Hans VanDerSchaaf, Senior Project Manager, Office of Academic Affairs.

OPPORTUNITIES/CHALLENGES ⓘ

Opportunities - The major remodel of Neuberger Hall, which holds numerous classes and has many other learning spaces, presents a timely opportunity to influence the design of spaces to support active learning; there is clear alignment between faculty and students about what constitutes appropriate active learning environments, helping to ease any possible tensions about how learning spaces could be enhanced. It will also make the implementation of active learning strategies easier for faculty, as lecturing will no longer be the default setup in a classroom.

Challenges - While improving learning spaces in support of active learning does not require significant capital expenditures in many cases, there are additional costs - in a time of incredibly tight budgets, we will want to continue to advocate for the importance of these changes. New learning spaces will only be used effectively if they are implemented in combination with faculty development and student support.

QUESTIONS/REQUESTS ⓘ

- Who is responsible for conversations about (future) learning spaces at your institution?
- How are faculty part of these conversations and are they taking place on a recurring basis?

STATUS

Final

Completion Date ⓘ

5/24/2017

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