

Focus group for instructional designers on classroom space & improvement

Assembly Room

March 24, 2006

What are the teaching and learning needs on this campus...from the instructional designer perspective? All types of learning spaces....

What types of learning spaces (beyond what we provide) could improve education in a variety of disciplines?

-- Ask myself what kind of things do I want to teach my students that I can't right now?

- Collaborative spaces such as the Emporium at VA Tech

Leazar lab with roaming help

Peer-to-peer—helping facilitate those issues among folks with similar problems

Having break out rooms to pull people together

What kinds of problems do peer-to-peer relationships work with?

- only long enough to deal with problem they're having right then
- getting immediate feedback

Trying to transform large section biology

- smaller groups,
- active learning during the 75-minute once-a-week sections, getting away from
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- no rooms available for small group settings in a larger class setting
- inviting, informal space, tables and chairs,
- mobile wireless computing
- comfy seating that minus the lava lamps
- we can't keep bolting things to the floor
- issues of maintaining space like that
- spaces designed by students, faculty and administrators
- access to valued resources, creative spaces, wireless information
- location is important
 - o if you're in the chemistry dept in these spaces, you will bump into people in your discipline,
 - o co-location with faculty

ability to control your learning space, e.g. in my apt. I can change, have flexibility

McDonalds meetings with kids playing in the playground.

If you want us to be connected, have to provide for our lifestyle (kids, different aged constituency)

Ownership within a building you spend a lot of time in.

Do you get critical mass for a learning space in a large public space, compared to individual spaces within a particular discipline.

Informal learning spaces have many cross-disciplinary similarities, but there are some unique needs for some disciplines

How to provide these spaces virtually as well. Some happens through IM. Possibilities of virtual spaces, e.g. active worlds.

Describe the technical and/or pedagogical support that you feel faculty need to teach effectively in the classroom.

- clickers
 - o need it to be easy to use, with devices students already have
 - o needs to be seamless and available in the spaces we already have
 - o example—snr level mgt class, linear programming to look at how to allocate resources for greatest return on investment. Need to help students understand algorithm as a base for interpreting answers. Does everyone in the class understand that principle.

- reasons for not bringing personally-owned laptops...
 - o need for laptop carts with inexpensive machines to provide

- dedicated professionals who work with faculty to use the tools and the pedagogy in appropriate ways.
 - o E.g. making up questions is an art, special skills needed
 - o Thinking of the process as a team effort. Need for more faculty peer interaction. The spread of “something good” through the dept.
 - o Also some assurance that it won’t take a huge investment to get it implemented, so either through support (someone) or else it’s simple enough to easily do themselves
 - o

- How to improve instruction, not just change mode.
- Capture the good examples of space being used well (and then find way to get faculty see/experience that)

- Hugh’s entirely flexible space, but also completely capable of electronic
 - o Trapezoidal tables, everything on wheels
 - o Five “pods”
 - o Mobile visualization (rolling displays)
 - o About 30 students
 - o Facilitate group work, but able to work on computer

- Culture of including 10% of faculty time for review process.

- Faculty reviewing teaching of non-tenured classes, used to promote good things that are going on in these spaces, pass it on.
- Time is the biggest issue; faculty want to do better, improve

What are the most effective learning spaces? What are the most effective learning spaces?

- depends on the teaching style, and how easy is it for instructional designers to support the instructors in
- McDonalds, the leather chairs in
- No one thinks that students have any stuff, but they have backpacks, coats, umbrellas; they come to campus for the whole day and carry everything with them. So...a place for more stuff.
- Needs to be spaces for convenience factors such as food
- A one-to-many room can be a very effective learning space
 - Depends on comfort level and instructor's ability
 - Need combination of these and more flexible spaces
 - At least have a seat that swivels in large rooms with bolted down seats

What obstacles to learning appear in the learning spaces at NC State in which you support the development of curriculum....

- A mindset of what a classroom is supposed to look like
- Not sufficient electrical outlets to plug laptops
- Lighting
- Acoustics
- Heating/cooling
- More time between classes if there is a need to rearrange classroom spaces
- Ease of ability to
- Informal spaces take up more space so more needed relative to people served
- Organizational barriers to trying new things/techniques

Blended learning—there are things that can be done better one way than another and vice versa.