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Library learning spaces: fostering engagement in informal and structured learning spaces

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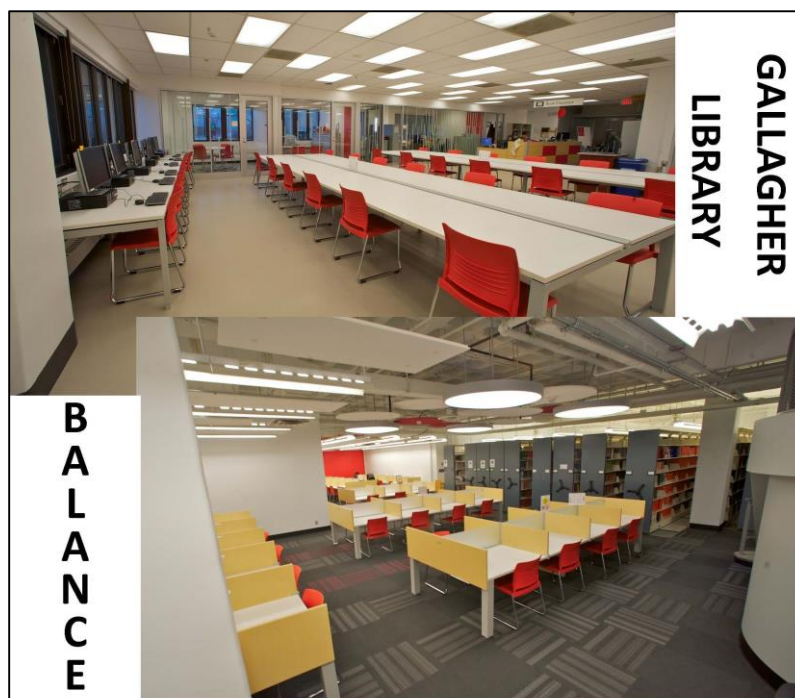
Library Learning Spaces: fostering engagement in informal and structured learning spaces, roundtable discussion

Design for learning fostering deep learning engagement and critical thinking, University of Calgary May 13, 2015

Roundtable Presenters: Susan Beatty, Leeanne Morrow, Dylan Tetrault, University of Calgary

Introduction: Space Overview

Gallagher Library (Leeanne Morrow)



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LIBRARY**

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Features

- Project work room
- Open study space
- Study carrels
- 6 Computer workstations
- Program space with touch table


Gallagher Library (science and engineering focus) is located in the Earth Sciences building. It was renovated in spring 2014. The idea behind the space redesign was to balance out our users' interest in quiet space with the desire for staff to create a more dynamic, active learning environment.

When we asked our users what they wanted they asked for more electrical outlets to plug in their devices as well as more quiet space. Being that this was a renovation and not a rebuild it was tricky to ensure we gave them everything they wanted. In the original space there were sixteen student carrels designated as quiet study located in our basement. By moving a collection of unique books from our basement to offsite storage we were able to increase our seating capacity from sixteen to fifty five seats. Four of these carrels were designed and designated for students with disabilities. We remodeled the ceiling, changed lighting, painted bright colours and added in new carpet all to make the space more comfortable, open and safe.

Staff in the Gallagher Library wanted to be able to offer more services and programming to engage students and support their learning on campus. In order to do this we needed different spaces to make this happen. First we were able to enclose a small alcove at the back of the Library with glass doors. This “multipurpose room” is now a spot where staff from other learning units on campus, including the Student Success Centre, can come and offer sessions for students in science and engineering. Staff are also now able to organize more opportunities for informal learning like peer to peer research lectures, talks from “in the field” experts and other outside community events. The last room added was a new small “project room” where students can come together to collaborate as a group on a specific project. This room is managed on a “first come first served” basis and is very popular with students from across faculties and departments.

The Gallagher Library renovation and redesign was a small project that looked to offer more value to the student learning experiences. By balancing out students interests and staff priorities we created an effective space where learning can happen in a variety of ways.

Digital Media Commons, Taylor Family Digital Library (Dylan Tetrault)



**DIGITAL MEDIA
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Features

- Unique technologies: digital globe, DJ mixing board, electronic keyboard, touch table, 3D printer, audio-video mixing software, PC and console gaming
- Technology as a tool
- Discovery vs. formal programming and learning

Digital Media Commons in the Taylor Family Digital Library consists of space and technology for students, faculty and the public to explore emerging digital collections and to provide multimedia production applications and tools to students from any program across the University of Calgary. The DMC facilitates and supports exploration and creation of new media forms such as animation, soundscapes, graphics design, digital video, interactive media/gaming and 3D modelling, printing and scanning. Exposure to these forms of media creation takes place formally with student-lead one-on-one tutorials and consultations, open workshops, and support for research and instruction in related topics, as well as informally through open discovery and play. These interests sometimes conflict with one another, and the goal is to try to find balance between rigid formal programming, and potentially disruptive public access.

Taylor Family Digital Library, formal instruction classrooms, 4th floor
(Susan Beatty)



**INSTRUCTION
SPACE**

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Features

- Structured and collaborative instruction space
- Whiteboard walls
- Collaborative software
- Distributed display screens

These classrooms were designed for traditional instruction (linear layout) and collaborative learning (round tables). The classrooms can accommodate 120 people, or be divided into four smaller collaboration rooms. They include not only a standard instruction podium and projector, but two 70-inch touch screens in each room. The walls that are used to divide the room into four smaller rooms double as white boards enhancing the multi-surface instruction space.

Learning activities

Normally instruction occurs as a result of faculty request to have library- related instruction in the classrooms. These rooms are not part of the University booking system and are reserved for this library related purpose. Student Success Centre also uses the rooms as their services are also co-located in the TFDL.

We also offer library workshops such as bibliographic software instruction for EndNote, how to use thesis template software and collaborative events such as workshops for Grad Success Week, and end of term wrap-up sessions.

Preference from the instructors is for the round table collaborative arrangement, however if there is a class over 25 it needs to be held in the linear classroom arrangement. Breakout rooms (see photo on reverse of handout) were intended to allow for collaboration but that has yet to happen. Our issues are, how to create more collaborative opportunities in the linear arranged classroom and how to generate more instructional interactions with faculty in the library.

Summary of Roundtable Discussion

- Game based learning and digital game based learning provide spaces for experiential learning. Communicate what is available and how it can improve learning outcomes. How might faculty learn about this? In some cases it is obvious, in other cases we have to make the case for how space can contribute to learning outcomes. Perhaps use the media walls and display pictures of faculty/learners working and learning within the spaces.
- The University of Lethbridge has a new scale up classroom. Highlight a feature wall with a bold colour and with images of what is happening in the space. The UofL space is fully booked for fall 2015. You want to match your outcomes to the space.
 - Teach application sessions with key faculty, teaching/graduate assistants around pedagogically structured outcomes.
- How can you measure learning that continues outside of the classroom?
 - Little evidence in the literature. Faculty at Harvard could not articulate this.
- A Learning Designer from Athabasca encouraged everyone to think of space as a learning tool. What does this look like from a course design perspective? Research in this area is emergent
- Develop more programming around the space through learning sessions in the space. Model with various curriculum examples
- Space specific around course design
- Do student support services want to be in your spaces (in reference to programming in Gallagher?)

Other spaces for your consideration



Visualization studio



Breakout room



Collaborative workspaces



Special Collections classroom

Discussion questions

1. How can engagement and learning be fostered in your spaces? What are you doing now to use your space better?
2. New technologies need a place in the learning space. How would you pilot new technology?
3. How can the spaces be used to engage students beyond play to learning?
4. What is the role of faculty in encouraging learning outside of the classroom?
5. How can faculty/students be motivated to move outside of the classroom to different learning spaces?
6. Students tend to own the spaces they are in, how can we influence the learning activities more effectively?
7. What is the relationship between learning spaces, faculty role, student learning and engagement?
8. If you are an instructor how are you designing your assignments to take advantage of the new learning spaces?
9. How can you assist instructors in designing assignments to take advantage of the new learning spaces on campus?
10. What is the tension between engagement and capacity/scalability in your learning space?

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