Learning in a Library

How Active Learning Classrooms & Informal Learning Spaces Contribute to Student Engagement, Effective Teaching & Coordinated Assessment

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IN THE HEART OF CAMPUS
STAKEHOLDERS

Office of the Provost
- Office of Planning and Budgeting
- UW Architectural Commission

Finance & Facilities
- Capital Projects Office

University Libraries
- Odegaard Undergraduate Library
- Suzzallo and Allen Libraries
- Research Commons

Undergraduate Academic Affairs
- Classroom Support Services
  - Center for Teaching & Learning

UW Information Technology
- Classroom Technology & Events
- Learning Technologies
- Academic & Collaborative Applications
- Planning, Facilities & Data Centers

Student government
- Associated Students of the University of Washington
- Graduate & Professional Student Senate

College of Arts and Sciences
- Odegaard Writing and Research Center Faculty

Student Life
- Housing & Food Services
ACTIVE LEARNING CLASSROOM

CAPACITY:
90
10 tables of 9

SF: 2,829
Who’s Teaching?

Fall 2013
- BIOL 355
- CHIN 101
- COM 546
- E E 447
- HCDE 310
- HSERV 481
- HSMGMT 506
- IMT 540
- INFO 101
- PB AF 511
- PSYCH 443
- SCAND 232

Winter 2014
- AES 340
- BIOL 401
- CHIN 102
- COM 529
- EDUC 210
- ENGL 297
- ENV H 510
- ENVIR 439
- HSERV 481
- MSE 170
- PB AF 512
- PSYCH 445
- SPHSC 504

Spring 2014
- AMATH 483/583
- BIOL 355
- BIOST 579
- CHIN 103
- ENGL 345
- GWSS 241
- HONORS 222
- HSERV 482
- HSERV 510
- JSISC 336
- PHIL 460
- PSYCH 345
- SPHSC 461

+ one-time workshops
WHAT DID WE WANT TO LEARN?

gather actionable data on:

1. instructor training and pedagogical support needs
2. classroom features: modifications to ALCs + recommendations for campus planning
3. policies that help ensure instructor success
WHAT DID WE ASK INSTRUCTORS?

- support and operations
- teaching and learning goals
- use of classroom features to achieve pedagogical goals
WHAT DID WE ASK STUDENTS?

- how their experience in the ALC differed from their experience in traditional lecture classrooms
- the effect the ALC features had on their ability to learn in the course
RESEARCH


- active learning raises average student exam grades by half a letter
- student failure rates are 55% higher under traditional lecturing


- student behavior is shaped by instructor behavior, classroom activities and space
METHODS: ACTIVE LEARNING CLASSROOMS

SURVEYS
FOCUS GROUPS
OBSERVATIONS
COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT PROCESS
FINDINGS: FORMAL LEARNING SPACES
SPACE
INSTRUCTOR FINDINGS - TEACHING & LEARNING

instructor goals for teaching in the ALCs:
- promote increased interaction among students through small group work
- use active learning pedagogy and move away from lecturing

what would instructors do differently or plan for next time?
- re-structure the small student groups
- expand their own active learning pedagogy and avoid lecturing
- course preparation time is significant
- implement the use of the different ALC features earlier on
INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS

Small groups: “There’s no corners on a round table, as a student said ‘you can see everybody’ -- they felt more engaged, democratic.”

Active learning pedagogy: “Being at peace with chaos is a general piece of advice for [future ALC] instructors, having the room being loud and raucous is a good thing.”

Lecturing challenges: “My hope was that students would be working on projects instead of listening to me lecture, but some days I tried to present a lot of material and got a little carried away [with lecturing].”
STUDENT FINDINGS - TEACHING & LEARNING

- students learned more (or about the same) in the ALC vs. traditional lecture classroom
- ALC provided students more opportunities to engage with their peers, instructors and learning
- instructor activity design and use of ALC had a direct impact on student experience in the ALC
STUDENT COMMENTS

Small groups: “I was much more involved with my peers than in other classrooms, and I spent less time asking the teacher for answers and more time discussing it with my peers.”

Overall: “The active learning classroom was a phenomenal idea.”

Challenges: “I actually found the room actually very frustrating. I consistently felt as if I was trying to get comfortable in room, either because I couldn't see the screen when the professor was lecturing, or I couldn't hear someone because the mics weren't working or people forgot to use them, etc.”
ACTIONS TAKEN

- in-depth ALC scheduling policy
- best practices for teaching in the ALC
- ALC modifications
- ALC Learning Community
ASSESSING INFORMAL LEARNING SPACES

IN-LIBRARY USE SURVEY
SNAPSHOT SURVEY
WHAT DID WE WANT TO LEARN?

How are students using Odegaard?

- working individually
- working in groups
- eating
- using whiteboards
- using shared monitors (Mediascape mobile, ALC monitors)
- using personal devices (laptops, smartphones, tablets, etc.)
- logged into 2nd floor computer lab computers

What spaces/services in Odegaard are most important to students?

- quiet areas
- collaborative spaces and tools
- online/print collections
- Odegaard Writing & Research Center
- technology assistance
- course reserves
FINDINGS: INFORMAL LEARNING SPACES
STUDENTS SAY

- resources for learning & doing
- well-designed, reliable, clean, comfy
- good place to study individually or with friends
- big crowded busy
- very useful and resourceful
- needs a lot more outlets
- crowded but helpful study space
- great place to focus
- home, quiet, loud, social, life
FINDINGS

- 90% of Odegaard users are UW undergraduates
- 122% increase in number of library users in 2014 over 2011
- Individual work space remains critically important, confirmed by both surveys; a 70/30% distribution of individual/group study observed
- Students study alone both in the designated quiet floor and on the collaborative 1st floor
- 40% to 60% of students use personal devices (depending on time of day)
- Access to online/print collections, assistance from staff, lab computers, collaborative tools also all ranked as important or very important
LESSONS LEARNED
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● challenging to manage and support ALCs and simultaneously assess the spaces
● ALCs are complex and require in-depth, robust support and partner involvement
● staff training, funding, course scheduling and instructor orientations are some of the library functions that support the operation of the ALCs
● space does not automatically create active learning and engagement
● multiple ways are needed to support faculty course transformations into active learning: Faculty Learning Communities, workshops, online communities using Canvas or other tools, campus support
LESSONS LEARNED, PART 2

- collaborative assessment works
  - partners bring unique strengths, experience, viewpoints, skills
- growing roles for librarians in assessment, teaching & learning, space planning
- informal learning spaces are heavily used by students; the library is a central provider of these spaces
FUTURE DIRECTIONS
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● Odegaard Library and UW-IT will publish a report to UW campus community on assessment results and recommendations

● Odegaard Library will continue to lead collaborative assessment with a refinement of survey instruments and further data analysis

● Odegaard Library and our partners will support professional development for instructors through cohort building and resource sharing about active learning
THANK YOU!

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