

2-6B The design of spaces for different modes of learning – a case study of Teesside University Library

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This presentation will draw on our experiences of designing student-centric learning spaces in the library at Teesside University and will discuss the importance of the design of physical spaces for different modes of learning. There is growing interest in the development of learning spaces that facilitate learner-centric pedagogies in higher education and the design of learning spaces is recognised as an important factor that motivates and engages students (UK Higher Education Learning Space Toolkit, 2016). Higher Education institutions face increasing competition to attract new students as well as retain and engage existing ones. Investment in the Learning environment is therefore driven by various agendas but evaluation of the usage of these is vital to ensure that they have pedagogical value. Students work in a variety of ways so variation and flexibility in layouts is important (Rex, 2014)

The library at Teesside University has undergone a major refurbishment creating a vibrant environment for student engagement and learning. The space is designed to provide different types of spaces for different types of learning, moving from informal learning on the Ground Floor to silent study areas on the 3rd Floor.

Reflecting the fact that learners have increased choices about where and when they work and will therefore choose to work in spaces that they like, students have been involved in the design phases of the refurbishment through focus groups and the use of mood boards, as well as sitting on the project board. The learning spaces have been evaluated through mixed methods analysis, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore how the space is used. The presentation will share the findings of this analysis, discussing the factors that influence choice of spaces as well as how the design of the spaces benefits learning (Arora, 2013).

References

Arora, B. (2013) Why well-designed learning spaces pay educational dividends. Times Higher Education. 29 August 2013.

Rex, C. (2014) Maximising value from the physical environment. In Peberdy, D. (ed) Active Learning Spaces and Technology: Advances in Higher and Further Education. Worcestershire, DroitwichNet.

SCHOMS, AUDE and UCISA (2016) UK Higher Education Learning Space Toolkit.