

A LIVING/MAKING COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

Spaces for Making

A ROUNDTABLE REPORT

What does a live/make space look like?

We are not talking about a live/work place, or a makerspace out in the world. We are asking *what might a makerspace be like if you live and work in the same place?*

Our justification for this question is reflected in the list of items on our poster. We want to know what life/work/discovery is. We talked about the close proximity of your makerspace to your living space, so you could roll out of bed and implement an idea as opposed to getting dressed, eating breakfast, and going out into the world with your public face on before you make something.

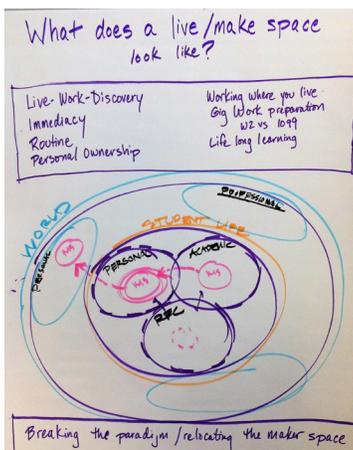
How might this be different when the space for making is part of your living routine, when you have personal ownership of the space, when the spaces feels more like yours and less like a space that belongs to the institution, where working where you live is important in career preparation.

This is a time when we are preparing our learners for the gig economy, when the W-2 form is giving way to the 1099. What might this do for facilitating life-long learning, if what you associate with learning is associated with where you live rather than an institutional space.

This theory emerged when we started to look at where makerspaces are most often located on a campus. It is generally in the academic zone, sometimes departmental, sometimes non-departmental, but in a space that is understood as academic, within the structures of academe. This is distinct from within the structures of student life that contain both the academic and the personal.

We are thinking about makerspaces as shifting from the academic world to the personal world. We are thinking that the immediacy of learning happens day one for students, not day 100, not day 200. We hear from students that they do not get to do things until they are well into their majors, often the 5th or 6th semester. We hear that they want to do something as soon as they arrive on campus. That is what we are trying to illustrate in our poster.

Our theory is about blending the space for making into the personal world, into the student bubble, into their residence hall, into the world where different disciplines live. In their living spaces, students are next to students learning in many different disciplines, preparing for different kinds of professional lives and personal worlds.



What if these spaces were live/make spaces? Such an arrangement would help students experience creating a culture out of makerspaces in a place where it becomes a part of who they are.

— I like the idea of the cross-section. I think what you are getting at with the residential piece is the cross-section. I come from a student affairs background and it is intriguing to think about what other large groups of students who are not classified by major?

— It would be interesting to run a pilot with student athletes and put a makerspace and innovation hub in the athletic center, where athletes from different academic backgrounds come together.

— Then, begin to ask: "what did it mean to an athlete to have this space for innovation, for making, in terms of how they approached it from the 'coachability' perspective? What would it mean to have a makerspace just for Greek life, to bring makerspaces into various natural communities of students, to have different kinds of makers?"

— I think it would be interesting to talk about what happens in makerspaces—is it classwork, is it academic work, or is it group work with a diverse group of people, all working together on something they are interested in and excited about, and all of that influences your work?

Comments from Roundtable Colleagues



Here is something really interesting is to think about: if makerspaces in libraries are successful because they are located in neutral territory, making them more accessible to a diverse range of learners, then it makes sense to think about moving makerspaces on campus to where students live and to other spaces in the student life bubble. Does that make sense? And what would this mean as we are coming recognize all the dimensions of diversity that exist in today's student body?

Our poster shows the three spheres of student life: personal, academic, and recreational. The orange circle is the sphere of student life. Are there makerspaces there? Should they be in the recreation space? Are makerspaces agnostic? Is there a space in the recreation realm of student life that has makerspaces, a space that allows something different than makerspaces in recreation areas?

We talked a lot about spaces in which play occurs and about the role of play in learning and creativity. What we were talking about is breaking the current paradigm of what a makerspace is. We know that, for some people, this is a new paradigm, but we want to relocate it, to make it an option that can be relocated within the daily lives of students.

We thought about the trend (perhaps also an old paradigm) of the living-learning community, in which campuses assign students to living areas based on major or discipline. You then look at the engineering residence hall and ask if this is the place for makerspaces? We thought about the learning community approach as offering a gradation of learning spaces, in which students tinker in their living space, then coming together in larger library makerspaces where they are among other makers.

The heart of what we are asking is this:

How might there be different kinds of makerspaces across the academic career of a student?

How would we know what was the right blend of students, and the right mix of makerspace locations?

How would we know how to assess their impact?

How might this plan for makerspaces affect students at different stages of their academic career?

We know there are places where something like this is already happening—at least in part. How do we gather evidence from these places? What questions have they addressed in planning, in assessing?



— I like what I think you are saying about the benefits of gradation of spaces, that there a places for tinkering and learning the basics (perhaps when they roll out of bed), then moving to a great space like in the library, for tinkering and prototyping and then move to a makerspace in which they find all relevant tools for making a tinker space, where people are learning the basics.

Then come together in larger library makerspaces where you are really among other makers of diverse backgrounds, then finally to the makerspace with the right tools and spaces to complete the making.

Comment from a Roundtable Colleague

WHAT KEEPS ME UP AT NIGHT WHEN THINKING ABOUT LEARNING SPACES

— Figuring out how to think about how the concept of makerspaces connects to what else students are involved with—their leadership clubs, their co-curricular activities.

— How do we see these places as not something we design space and programming for them, but spaces in which they are given responsibility as leaders, giving them ownership of the spaces and the programming? How do we prepare them to take such leadership responsibility?

Roundtable Questions & Answers

- An LSC Roundtable on Spaces for Making: VentureWell Post-Conference Event <http://www.pkallsc.org/events/lsc-roundtable-spaces-making-venturewell-post-conference-event>
- <http://www.pkallsc.org/partners/venturewell>

