

ASSESSING HOW SPACES ENABLE COMFORT AND BELONGING

REPORTING OUT: A ROUNDTABLE GROUP

"We began by exploring questions of diversity, sparked by a question from a person on our team about how to meet the needs of the individual learner in a time when the focus is on team-learning and we soon focused in on this question. We were intrigued by the notion of a learning space as lab, a space in which both student and faculty have agency, where both student and faculty have a sense of wellness, control, and belonging."

"How space for the individual learner can be incorporated into spaces designed for collaborative, team-learning?"

"Then we considered how to determine whether a learning space enables such a sense of comfort and ownership. This is when attention to assessment and research methodologies came into our discussion. **We talked about the importance of mixed methods research, particularly the importance of triangulating qualitative research with quantitative research, the importance of bringing student and faculty voices into that space.** The importance of asking them about affect, control, comfort, community, belonging in the context of a particular space.

Findings from such research are of great value on many levels. **On many campuses such assessments can be a driving force for change, particularly at institutions where numbers are valued (quantitative research).** Moreover, the importance of the individual voice can be particularly powerful for faculty and administrators not yet convinced of this model for learning and spaces for learning (qualitative research)."

"As an architect, I would like to know why these questions are important?"

"We are talking about not privileging one type of pedagogy over another. We've been stuck in the lecture phase for a long time. Now we are in the active learning phase and we should be cautious about becoming stuck again without continuing to assess how spaces matter to all students."



For me this discussion, was a reinforcement about the importance of the role of the faculty member in this environment.

Reminding me that we really have to think about a learning space as a tool that enables each person to do his or her best work.

Ultimately, it is giving everyone a sense of agency, that everyone in the space feels as though I can do my best work here.

If I feel like this space is my own, if I have a sense of belonging, this space is going to be important to my success.

We all knew that intuitively, but this discussion really reinforced that for me.

— Comment from a Roundtable Colleague

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