

Making the Case for Active Learning Classrooms — The University of California Berkeley Experience

October 11, 2012

4:00 p.m. EDT



Agenda

- What is the context now?
2012 – Dwinelle 127
- What was the catalyst?
2009 – Moffitt Library
Renovation
- What was the process from then
to now?
2009 – 2012
- What lessons have we learned?



Brenda R. Farmer,
Senior Learning
Environments Designer



Learning Outcomes

- A deeper understanding of a process for reimagining, using, and assessing general-assignment (GA) classrooms.
- Insights into the characteristics of desirable learning, reflecting perspectives of the broader Berkeley community.
- How lessons learned in this reimagining process are shaping institutional policies and practices for shaping GA classrooms into the future.



UC Berkeley: Characteristics of a Desirable Learning Space

- Aesthetics or ambience (colors, natural light, etc.)
- Comfortable and flexible furniture
- Enough 'space' to easily move around the room
- Lighting options/scenes
- Wireless networking
- Plenty of infrastructure
- Up-to-date hardware, software & projection equipment
- Writing surfaces
- HVAC, creature comfort
- Maintenance & support



Where we are now



- *Insights from students: classrooms with more comfortable and flexible furniture*



Where we are now

- Plenty of Infrastructure
- *Insights from faculty: The computer lab is very traditional with rows of workstations.*



Where we are now



- Wireless Networking
- *Insights from faculty: How do you bring the outdoors indoors? – Like an Imax movie!*



Where we are now



- Student ownership of their learning
- *Faculty observation: “I could watch students as they built their ideas rather than just hear the result in response to my question.”*



Confessions from an active learning classroom

“In the new classroom, I feel more comfortable to talk, and I actually share more of my ideas in the group discussions.”

“The poster board (huddle whiteboards) really helps my partner and me to make an agreement on the ideas that we are going to share with the class. We can put our thoughts on the poster board, and then make changes to them together. The post board enables us to visualize the progress of our group work . . . ”

“I think that the new room and the uses we have got from it like using the screens (2-65” flat screen plasmas) and laptops have made me engage and stay on top of everything in class. I think it has kept me entertained in a good way, that allows me to stay focused . . . ”

“The space and facilities of this new classroom make the class feel like an interactive workshop rather than a one-sided lecture. For the size of the class this works much better for engaging students in activities and interactions.



Questions?



The Test Kitchen – Dwinelle 127



- 2nd largest UCB building.
- Completed in 1952.
- Houses ETS classrooms & departmental offices.





ETS' Videoconference Room, 1995

- Dwinelle 127 prior to construction



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
200 CALIFORNIA HALL #1100

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720-1300

July 7, 2009

Re: Active Learning Classrooms working group

Dear Colleagues:

In recent meetings of the Moffitt Program Committee, which is overseeing the renovation of Moffitt Library, it has become apparent that now is a good time for the campus to rethink what we want our general assignment classrooms to look like in the 21st century. To what degree should we be investing in the development of "active learning" classrooms? If we agree that we need them, how should they be equipped? Should they be one size or many? It is critical that we involve faculty members extensively in this discussion.

Because of your stated interest in this issue, or because you are already engaged in rethinking classroom design, technology, and pedagogy, we hope that you are willing to serve on a working group to take a systematic approach to these questions. We have asked Deborah Nolan to chair the group and coordinate the drafting of recommendations. We will be ex officio members and participate to some extent in meetings.

Colleagues with expertise in areas related to teaching and learning have been asked to serve as resources to the working group. LaVern Lazzereschi of the Office of the Registrar, Brenda Farmer of ETS, and Steve Tollefson of the Office of Educational Development will be available to provide data or information to inform your discussions. In addition, we suggest you contact the following faculty for input: Whitney Davis of Art History, Ole Hald of Mathematics, Alastair Iles of ESPM, Jasper Rine of MCB, or other teaching innovators of whom you are aware.

The group will meet during the summer and intensively during the fall in order to produce recommendations by the end of the semester. We intend for the findings of the working group to be applied immediately to the work in Moffitt, set to begin in early 2010.

Sarah Nathe in VP Koshland's office and Cynthia Schrager in VP Maslach's office will staff the working group. Elizabeth Albee in VP Koshland's office will contact you soon to schedule the first meetings.

Thank you for your assistance in addressing this important issue. There is no need to reply to this invitation unless you are unable to serve. However, if you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact any of us.

Best regards,

Catherine Koshland
Vice Provost-Academic Planning and Facilities
& Co-chair CCCPM

Harry LeGarde
Vice Chancellor-Student Affairs
& Co-chair CCCPM

Christina Maslach
Vice Provost-Teaching and Learning

The Moffitt Library

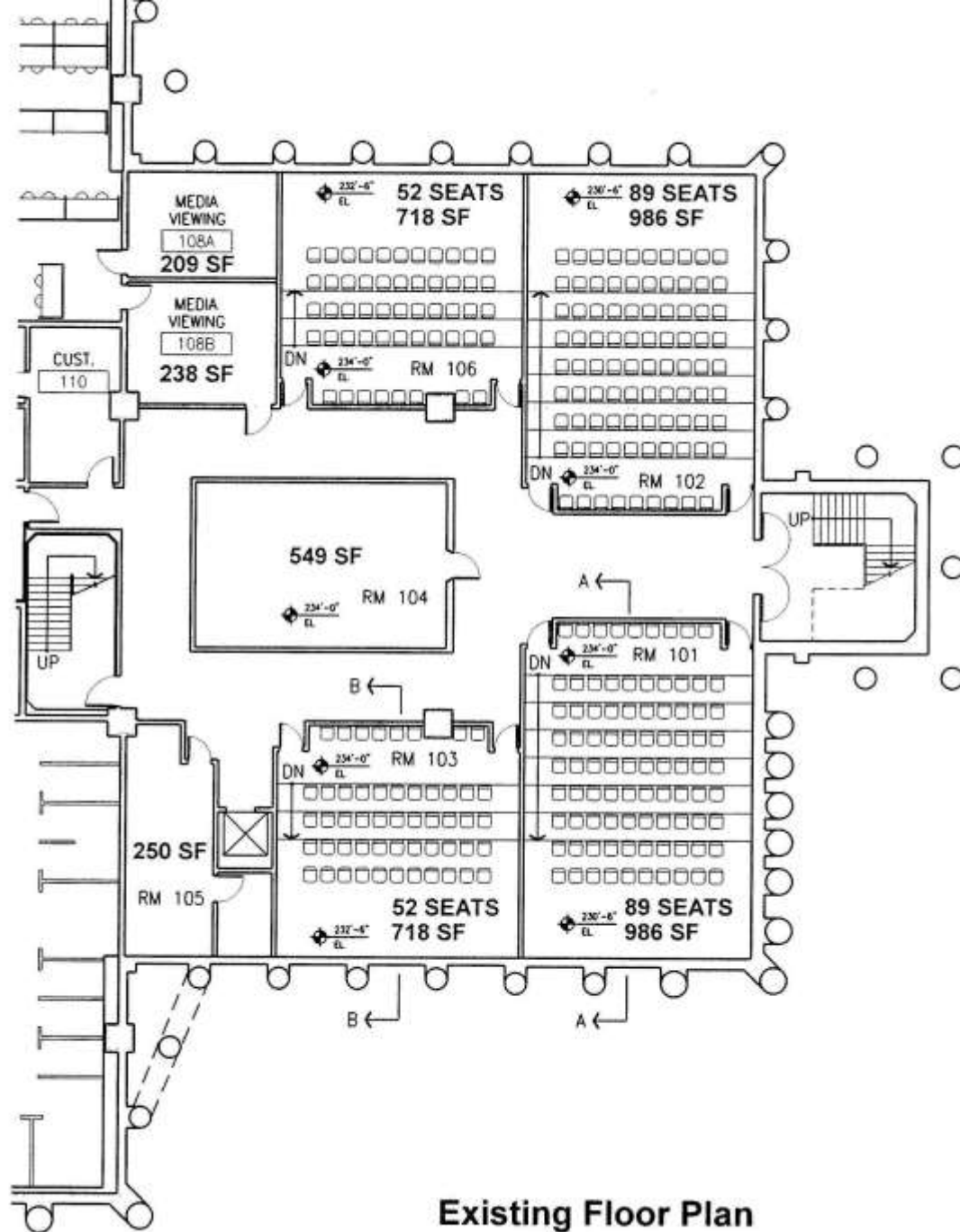
- Serves as a gateway for many Berkeley undergraduates introducing them to the scholarly community.



The Catalyst

Remodeling of
Moffitt
Library—
opportunity
for
reimagining
21st century
classrooms





Existing Floor Plan

1/16"=1'-0"



The Process

Faculty feedback

- *Rooms without windows don't work*
- *Steeply sloped rooms a disaster*
- *Need "Oprah-like" spaces.*



The Process



Student feedback

- *Some spaces feel like prisons*
- *Not enough space on campus for groups to work*
- *All cafes on campus are hot spots.*



- Classrooms becoming spaces for innovating
- Classrooms becoming laboratories for learning
- Classroom policies given campus-wide attention.

The Process

- Insights from peers



University of Minnesota,
Minneapolis



Questions?



The Case for Active Learning Classrooms

Final report for Moffitt Classrooms, 2010

- Build an active learning classroom in Moffitt
- Improve one of the large 80-seat lecture halls in Moffitt by installing flexible seating
- Create an informal learning space next to the Moffitt Classrooms
- Develop an incentive program to encourage creation of informal learning spaces in department space
- Develop other ALCs on campus ~ when classrooms are renovated, use flexible furnishings
- Offer instructional design support to faculty interested in adopting courses to active learning classrooms.

Enough 'space' to easily navigate the room



Room Layouts



Collaborations with Huddleboards



Collaborations with Huddleboards



Flexible Furniture



Flexible Furniture



Technology



Ambiance

- Lighting options/
scenes
(dark-out
shades for
video clips,
etc.)



Ambiance

- Connecting to the outside

Questions?



Lessons Learned

Recommendations - Faculty

- Work with early-adaptors: Drop-in lunches for those teaching in the new space to exchange ideas, showcase best practices, share war stories; allowing faculty applying to teach in the new space opportunity to work with an instructional designer and technologist.



Lessons Learned

Recommendations - Faculty

- Organize a formal 'fellowship' colloquium: Faculty piloting courses in the new environment meet monthly with each other and key instructional support staff; fellowships with stipend.



Lessons Learned

Recommendations - Faculty

- Promote and market the new space: Panel discussions; department chairs invited to nominate faculty to use the new room; partner with other offices and departments supporting active-learning; publish profiles of faculty and students teaching and learning in Moffitt.



Lessons Learned

Recommendations - Faculty

- The critical need for top-down, bottom-up leadership.



Confessions from an active learning classroom

“The new classroom space definitely has a better vibe than our old cramped classroom, at least giving me the illusion that I am able to learn better because I feel more ‘free’. Since more group work is possible, it turned me more into an active learner than a passive learner . . . ”

“I was more comfortable and the resources available such as the TV monitor and whiteboards allowed me to be more engaged in a more nontraditional way of learning (taking notes and listening to lecture). ”

“...the chairs make it easy for me not to fall asleep because I could move and it gives rhythm to my learning. I feel that I am actively participating in the conversation because I am not falling asleep and I am actively listening. I love the room.”

“I believe that this room is giving us resources that most classrooms are not able to [enjoy], thus, we are benefiting and using this room to it’s fullest.”



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Upcoming LSC Webinars

- LSC Webinar: The University of Minnesota Experience with Active Learning Classrooms: Connecting the dots between developing and assessing program, pedagogy, faculty, and space.
 - November 14, 2012 / 4:00 p.m. EST
- LSC Webinar: The University of Illinois at Chicago Experience with Project Oasis, an Informal Learning Space Program
 - December 11, 2012 / 4:00 p.m. EST



Contact Information

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For more information:

<http://www.pkallsc.org/>