Spotlighting Classrooms: Designing Collaborative Learning Spaces for Learners of Writing

April 23, 2013
4:00 p.m. EDT
Agenda

• Context
  ▪ Institutional
  ▪ Disciplinary

• Evolution

• Impact
  ▪ Student
  ▪ Department
  ▪ Community of writing teachers

• Lessons learned

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Learning Outcomes

• The value of *user-centered design*, with clear goals for the student learning that happens in the renewed spaces

• The reality that—no matter the field of study—21st century learners need access to spaces that enable engaged, *team-based learning*

• The value of *iterative planning, piloting, and assessing*

• The power of planning from a perspective of *real-world writing practice*
PLANNING FOR A LAB REDESIGN
History of space

- Departmentally owned space
- 1983 – origin as a “computer lab”
- 1990 – moved to a new departmental home. Department had no choice of design
- 1995 – moved again
- 2005 – “new” surplus furniture procured
- 2007 – Suite Lab
Lab space in 2006
Lab space in 2006
Redesigned lab space in 2007
Redesigned lab space in 2007
Redesigned lab space in 2007
Redesigned lab space in 2011
Goals for Room 101

• Students collaborate

• Understand writing as a collaborative act.
Why redesign?
Physical space is a type of text that helps people achieve specific goals.

- Multimodalities
- Multiliteracies
- Multiple Intelligences
Goals for Suite Lab

• Mobility, informality, a social environment

• Get beyond the ideology that computer labs are quiet, for individual learners

• Move toward the ideology of student-owned spaces
Questions?
BUILDING & EVALUATING REDESIGN
Process of Planning

• Examined the literature

• Examined work of peers

• Arrived at a common vision/language about what works
What works: Structural Layout
What works: Structural Layout
What works: Mobility
What works: Computers
What works: Furniture
What works: Color
What works

• Seeking informal student reactions

• Responding to student reactions

• Considering options
What works: Personnel

• Trained consultants
• Seeking formal student reactions
What works: Users

• Seeking formal student reactions
• Conducted a “usability test”
Lessons Learned

• About student sense of ownership

• About roles of labcons

• About the space worked and why.
Lessons Learned: Student-Users

• The value of **user-centered design**, with clear goals for the student learning that happens in the renewed spaces

• The reality that—no matter the field of study—21\textsuperscript{st} century learners need access to spaces that enable engaged, **team-based learning**
Lessons Learned: Lab Cons

• The value of iterative planning, piloting, and assessing
• The power of planning from a perspective of real-world writing practice
Lessons Learned: Space

• The value of **user-centered design**, with clear goals for the student learning that happens in the renewed spaces

• The value of **iterative planning, piloting, and assessing**

• The power of planning from a perspective of real-world writing practice
Questions?
IMPACT OF SUITE LAB REDESIGN
Impact

• On students

• On the department

• On us personally

• On our community of peers
Student Impact

• Sense of community between students

• Foster relations between faculty and students
Department Impact: Before
Department Impact: After
Us as change agents

• Why and how to make a difference

• Being part of a growing natural community of change agent peers.
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Questions?
Changing Space

Changes in space help facilitate reflection and redesign of pedagogical styles. If spaces reflect 21st century writing practices, our pedagogies are more likely to follow suit.