

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE LIBRARY  
LEARNING SPACES IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION

# INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING AND LEARNING

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INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING  
AND LEARNING VOLUME 29

**DESIGNING EFFECTIVE LIBRARY  
LEARNING SPACES IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION**

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# SERIES EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this series is to publish current research and scholarship on innovative teaching and learning practices in higher education. The series is developed around the premise that teaching and learning are more effective when instructors and students are actively and meaningfully engaged in the teaching–learning process.

The main objectives of this series are to:

- (1) present how innovative teaching and learning practices are being used in higher education institutions around the world across a wide variety of disciplines and countries;
- (2) present the latest models, theories, concepts, paradigms, and frameworks that educators should consider when adopting, implementing, assessing, and evaluating innovative teaching and learning practices; and
- (3) consider the implications of theory and practice on policy, strategy, and leadership.

This series will appeal to anyone in higher education who is involved in the teaching and learning process from any discipline, institutional type, or nationality. The volumes in this series will focus on a variety of authentic case studies and other empirical research that illustrates how educators from around the world are using innovative approaches to create more effective and meaningful learning environments.

Innovation teaching and learning is any approach, strategy, method, practice, or means that has been shown to improve, enhance, or transform the teaching–learning environment. Innovation involves doing things differently or in a novel way in order to improve outcomes. In short, innovation is positive change. With respect to teaching and learning, innovation is the implementation of new or improved educational practices that result in improved educational and learning outcomes. This innovation can be any positive change related to teaching, curriculum, assessment, technology, or other tools, programs, policies, or processes that leads to improved educational and learning outcomes. Innovation can occur in institutional development, program development, professional development, or learning development.

The volumes in this series will not only highlight the benefits and theoretical frameworks of such innovations through authentic case studies and other empirical research but also look at the challenges and contexts associated with implementing and assessing innovative teaching and learning practices. The volumes represent all disciplines from a wide range of national, cultural, and

organizational contexts. The volumes in this series will explore a wide variety of teaching and learning topics such as active learning, integrative learning, transformative learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, meaningful learning, blended learning, creative learning, experiential learning, lifelong and lifewide learning, global learning, learning assessment and analytics, student research, faculty and student learning communities, as well as other topics.

This series brings together distinguished scholars and educational practitioners from around the world to disseminate the latest knowledge on innovative teaching and learning scholarship and practices. The authors offer a range of disciplinary perspectives from different cultural contexts. This series provides a unique and valuable resource for instructors, administrators, and anyone interested in improving and transforming teaching and learning.

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PART I

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING  
SPACE

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO DESIGNING EFFECTIVE LIBRARY LEARNING SPACES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Enakshi Sengupta, Patrick Blessinger and  
Milton D. Cox

### ABSTRACT

*A university without an academic library is unimaginable since the library serves as a pivot for both learning and research. Freeman (2005), while talking about the importance of a library in academic life, stated that it holds a unique position, symbolizing the heart of the institution. A good library is not only one that stacks printed material or has portals to access online resources but also provides a flexible learning space with reading rooms, facilitates discussion and encourages collaborative learning and scholarship. With limited resources, it is increasingly difficult for universities to allocate funds to re-design library spaces. Modern academic libraries have to respond not only to pedagogical changes but also to technological changes, accommodating them in the library space design and management. Modern libraries are trying to integrate features of the traditional form of learning as well as the digital form. This book will present case studies and empirical evidence discussing the changing face of libraries. It will talk about re-modeling of existing libraries with the help of new architectural design to utilize the space and inculcate the digital literacy development. Scholars discuss, in the chapters, how they meet users' needs and how they use in stakeholders' inputs to design innovative library spaces.*

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**Keywords:** Design; stakeholders; digital literacy; student centered; learning space; collaborative learning; traditional; resources; technological changes; architectural design; scholarship

## INTRODUCTION

Tracing the emergence of the concept of a library takes us to Mesopotamian civilization, where knowledge was baked in a clay tablet called cuneiform and alphabets were pictographs. The civilization had designated space where the clay tablets were kept for people to access and read, and thus started the organized form of a library. The medieval period also showed the growth of monastic libraries in cathedrals and churches, usually accessed by the religious communities. According to [Edoka \(2000\)](#), the concept of universities having their own dedicated library space started with Bologna and Salerno in Italy, Paris in France and Oxford in England. Gradually libraries occupied a prime position in the university and their non-existence became unimaginable. Discovery of printing revolutionized the concept of reading and broadening the distribution of knowledge through libraries. With the growth of universities and colleges, the number of libraries also grew rapidly. Libraries were meant to enhance the goal of teaching and learning and create an atmosphere of student-centered learning. They were meant to support students, faculty, academic and non-academic staff members and help them in their teaching and research agenda.

Modern libraries are no longer dingy dark rooms with dust-covered jackets and badly stacked books decaying in a damp atmosphere. The traditional model of long winding corridors of a library with bookshelves has transformed, making space to accommodate the digital age. The library of today is redesigned to a range of teaching and learning activities as well as an avid research agenda along with the rapid changing environment of information technology. Libraries are no longer designed by an individual alone but transformed after a stakeholders' meeting, keeping with the resources and facilities available. [Freeman \(2005\)](#), while talking about the importance of a library in academic life, stated that it holds a unique position, symbolizing the heart of the institution.

Some academics view the concept of a library as slowly becoming redundant. [Carlson \(2001\)](#) argues that libraries can be referred to as "deserted library" due to the increasing popularity of the internet. While other academicians have stated that the importance of the library, as an integral part of teaching and learning, remains as important as it was yesterday. The pertinent question that a librarian faces these days is the blend of virtual and physical facilities and what would be the best practices in planning that can accommodate the demands of both worlds. With the turn of the century, the electronic world is gaining precedence over the real. Students are now used to access online teaching, easy to work assignments that are submitted via emails, term papers, teaching videos, etc.

However, it doesn't mean that students are abandoning the concept of accessing a library. Students are choosing the physical library as much as they would use

it earlier and even in increasing numbers in renovated libraries (Shill & Tonner, 2003). The usage of print material has reduced considerably but students are still engaged in academic work inside the premises of a library (Foster, 2010; Foster & Gibbons, 2007; Suarez, 2007).

The main stakeholders of a library are the students who are changing rapidly and they are a diverse group that varies in terms of age, ethnicity, experience and preference. In this complex and shifting landscape, there is no standard method that can be applied for all libraries. The role of a librarian remains somewhat fuzzy and our expectations from them. Nonetheless, librarians are in search of a time-tested model that can predict the effective use of library space and its resources. The paradigm shift of a library from a print-based medium to that of an electronic one calls for a critical viewpoint of usage of library space and its resources. Academic librarians, architects and those who are appointed as library administrators are now collaborating to ensure libraries are used as space and place where convenient learning and research environment is provided to both students and faculty.

Space has been the single most important element in a library apart from the resources it stores (Okwor & Ihekwoaba, 2011). When one is designing the space, one needs to keep three things in consideration and they are functionality, usability and attractiveness of the space. Cohen and Cohen (1979) believe that these three things need to be integrated to create attractiveness and usage of the library space. Space needs to be re-arranged in keeping with the fact that people find it easy to maneuver and use it often for their work.

Cohen and Cohen (1979) further noted that everything found in the library such as the furniture, layout, people, traffic flow, light, acoustic and even the color scheme used in the library has a profound effect on the user including the staff. Interior design and the management of the library determine to a large extent the usability of a library. It has been noted that a perpetually noisy place or a dimly lit one deters the users from frequenting the place, as much as dusty racks or books kept in a haphazard manner. The library space ought to have capacity for expansion and addition of collection. At the same time, it should be comfortable and ergonomic in nature. Esthetic beauty does play a vital role in attracting traffic and an ill kept library talks about the disorganization and poor morale of its management and staff.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Academics have been emphasizing the importance of a well-designed library space as a collaborative learning space. McDonald (1996, p. 3) argues that a library "... has shifted the balance from teaching in classrooms to learning in libraries," with emphasis given for space management. Brindley (1995, p. 4), acknowledges the changing pattern of a library and states that "we are all guilty of not paying enough attention to implementation matters in a complex and holistic way demanded by the challenge of student-centered learning."

Furthermore, Brophy (2002, p. 5) agrees, "Academic libraries must make every effort to integrate their services into the mainstream learning, teaching and

research of their institution.” One cannot delineate the changing role of libraries as an aid toward learning, and the qualities and features of academic library space that helps contribute toward student-centered learning. Brophy (2002) advocates the adoption of institutions of higher education the concept of managed learning environments which calls for libraries to organize a coordinated effort to integrate its resources (notably electronic, printed and spatial) which helps in supporting the “language of pedagogy,” “... tailored to the learning styles of students and the learning modes which teachers have adopted” (p. 5).

Changes in the teaching–learning process have undergone rapid changes with the advancement of information communication technology. The demand for electronic resources has led to an integration of both print and electronic mediums in traditional libraries, adopting a system of convergence and bringing together computing services with books and other printed mediums of knowledge. Commenting on such convergence Brawne (1997, p. 6) suggests that buildings that housed libraries in the last decade act as “architectural explorations” of the pedagogical and technological challenges faced by library designers, and so:

[...] no single example could be said to be definitive.” Seeking a benchmark in library design to incorporate both the worlds is nearly impossible as “no single blueprint and no simple prescriptions can be developed. (Joint Funding Councils 1993, p.25)

Hence, Metcalf, Leighton, and Weber (1986) suggested that no general principle can be applied with regard to accommodating both the virtual and real world and every institution must understand its own unique and special position that it has created with regard to its institution-specific teaching and learning and research objectives. The focus should be toward creating the functionality or fitness of the purpose of achieving objectives like “ease of use and economy of operation” (McDonald, 1998, p. 191).

The paradigm shift in teaching–learning process is far removed from the traditional process where students were expected to absorb information, synthesize them and reproduce. Modern-day students should be able to explore, experiment, solve problems, work in teams, think laterally and think creatively; they are expected to use their knowledge to find global solutions to problems. Libraries should be designed so that students can “access the information while carrying out some other activity” (Rusbridge, 1998). De Castell (2000, p. 365) argues libraries must “nurture literate communities” and suggests that new digital literacies (DLs) are incorporated in a modern-day library that facilitates the use of emerging technologies. Juceviciene and Tautkeviciene (2003) state that modern ways of learning are facilitated not only in classroom settings but wherever learners can access information and resources that can help them in solving problems or constructing a new meaning.

Adeogun (2008) advocates that the traditional role of librarians has given way to those who are now viewed as consultants in information and resource management teams who act as coordinators of information and technology applications, support research methods and provide instructions to both students and faculty ineffective usage of information and technology to enhance the teaching–learning process. Learning, according to Adeogun (2008), takes place in a library which provides a vibrant learning environment in the university. Hardwick (1996,

p. 107) asserts, “librarians need to be schooled in the pedagogical issues implicit in designing a learning environment that promotes reflective and critical thinking.” For effective learning [Dowler \(1997\)](#) and [Wilkinson \(1997\)](#) state that students should be provided with the necessary space to actively engage in reading, discussing and problem-solving, along with required resources and services which will help facilitate learning.

The fundamental challenge for any library is to become the gateway which will work as an active partner in contributing toward the educational mission of an institution, providing a space that helps enable students to integrate different forms of information, teaching them to effectively manage the information toward enhancement of their evaluating skills. Users of the internet should be guided to select appropriate and authentic resources with an understanding of quality issues. [Lyman \(1997, p. 145\)](#) warns that “students have learned about digital technologies ... in the commercial world of entertainment, in which images and information are to be enjoyed but not analyzed in any scholarly sense.”

Designing a library should relate to its location and its context. There is always a danger of compromising an interior designer’s dreams and functionality of the library. [Brawne \(1997, p. 8\)](#) warns that library “design considerations go beyond those that have to do with the main function of the building.” [Corrall and Brewerton \(1999, p. 218\)](#) talk about “tensions and trade-offs, including differences in priorities between librarians (concerned with function and use) and architects (interested in form and look).” The priority of library space is to serve its stakeholders and not to impress them with its beauty, although [Edwards \(1990, p. 2\)](#) points out that the concept of “beauty and practicality are not incompatible.”

## CONCLUSION

A shift in pedagogical approach doesn’t confine the student to a classroom environment alone but encourages them to work independently or in a group collaborating with their peers and working on assignments that will help them in understanding a subject rather than just sitting in the class and attending lectures. Libraries need to be designed in such a way that they provide “learning support” and create and manage an environment that is conducive for individuals as well as for collaborative teams to work together. Librarians are no longer confined to their traditional role of issuing and receiving printed books but act as an information guide, directing students to the right kind of resources that they need for their subjects and even explaining how effectively the information can be used by them. Library spaces have to be designed to integrate both digital and traditional learning space and encourage students to access printed material as well gain proficiency in DL. Academic libraries should be used as centers of learning and scholarship. Librarians with adequate knowledge and understanding of the library space can help being a part of the technicalities of designing a library.

A modern library can only be effective when it combines features such as flexibility, openness, multi-functionality and artistry. A library housing print, audio-visual and digital resources are imperative for its survival in modern era

of liberal education. Academic community and students should be sensitized in the operational features and usage of the library and its space to enhance the teaching–learning outcomes of the institution.

## CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

“From ‘Dust to The Dawn of a New Age’: Creating a 21st Century Active Learning Classroom,” authored by Afra Bolefski, explores the idea of active learning classrooms (ALCs) in post-secondary institutions across North America, which is not new and it continues to gain prominence (Davis, 2018; Ellern & Buchanan, 2018; Park & Choi, 2014). Research shows that these dynamic classrooms increased student comprehension of key concepts, problem-solving ability, improved attitude toward learning and overall learning gains (Cotner, Loper, Walker, & Brooks, 2013; Park & Choi, 2014). Not surprisingly then, there has been a growing number of academic libraries who see the potential benefits and have incorporated ALCs, or elements of such, into their spaces (Ellern & Buchanan, 2018; Karasic, 2016; Soderdahl, 2011). This chapter presents a case study on the 2017 redesign of a Canadian academic library, the Albert D. Cohen Management Library at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. Once considered a “study hall,” the renovated business library has been transformed into a modern student learning space. The library is outfitted with a modular ALC equipped to accommodate the varied learning needs of the twenty-first-century students at the Asper School of Business. The author provides a detailed first-hand account of the ALC planning process, key partnerships, challenges and post-launch reaction.

“Library Collections at Georgia Tech and the Affordable Learning Georgia Initiative,” by Alexis Linoski, Sofia Slutskaya and Elizabeth Holdsworth, shows how for the past several years, libraries have been evolving. The traditional academic library housed print collections and provided space for studying was usually a quiet space. With the advances in technology, libraries have had their own metamorphosis. No longer are they constrained by a physical space – they now have virtual spaces, which include virtual collections. During the same time, the cost of higher education and textbooks has been on the rise. Universities and the federal government have enacted policies and laws in an effort to combat these rising costs. In support of the students and affordable textbook initiatives, libraries have become partners in helping lower the cost of textbooks for students through either purchasing them electronically or other means, such as course reserves. Indeed, a single library purchase can now provide course materials for an entire class. This chapter will present an overview of the Affordable Learning Georgia Initiative and how the Georgia Tech Library has updated their collection development policies to support this initiative.

“Designing Effective Library Learning Spaces – Student2Scholar: A Case Study,” written by Christena A. McKillop, examines Student2Scholar, an online e-learning resource for graduate students in the social sciences, as a case study that coalesces around effective learning design, innovation and collaboration to meet and overcome the changes, challenges and opportunities that have arisen in