A Culture of Improvement: Learning & Living

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Project Plan: Data-based decisions

- Develop the questions to guide the project
- Gather data, clarify the issues, and evaluate the results
- Develop living learning spaces
- Evaluate the impact of living learning spaces
Understanding the Student Experience

Student learning and development is predicated upon our understanding of:

- how students come to our institutions
- how they prefer to learn
- how our institutions are supporting or are not supporting them in this process
Why is our understanding of the student experience important to UD?

- Marianist tradition
- Accountability for effectiveness
- Student and faculty engagement
- Facilities development
Developing the Questions

1. **Review the Literature**

2. **Define the key elements**
   - Learning Space
   - Academic Engagement
   - Learning Outcomes

3. **Establish goals**

4. **Generate questions**
General Model for Assessing Change in College Students

Growth is a function of:

- Student background & precollege traits
- Structural & organizational features of the institution
- Interaction with agents of socialization
- Quality of study effort (which is shaped by the previous factors)

Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005
Person-Environment Interaction
Theories and Models

- Physical surroundings encourage or constrain behavior

- Individuals create or define environments as a result of collective socialization

- Environments are influenced by organizational goals, complexity, centralization, formalization, stratification, production, and efficiency

- Perceptions of a setting are influenced by environmental press, social climate, and campus cultures

*Strange & Banning, 2001*
Theory of Involvement

“Students learn by becoming involved.”

Astin, 1985
Defining Learning Space

**Traditional/Industrial Model of Learning & Space**

- Environment – Physical considerations, cost effectiveness, efficiency, station occupancy rates
- Time – Scheduled, controlled, efficiency, station occupancy rates
- Structure – Information delivery, expert model, faculty fiefdom
- Content – Fact based
Defining Academic Engagement

- Student Engagement – time, interaction, investment, quality, satisfaction, results

- Faculty Engagement – time, interaction, investment, quality, satisfaction, results
Defining Learning Outcomes

- Observable, measurable, positive results
  - Knowledge-base
  - Skills-based

- Outcome levels
  - University-wide
  - Program specific
  - Individually designed
Long-Term Goal

To create optimal learning-living environments that have a positive impact the learning and development of University of Dayton students.
The Questions

1. Does the traditional/industrial model of learning space reflect U.D. student preferences?

2. To what extent does the U.D. environment have an impact on student & faculty engagement?

3. To what extent does the U.D. environment have an impact on student learning?

4. How can we make the U.D. living learning environment better?

5. How will we know if we have accomplished our goal?
Stage I: Data Gathering
Living Learning Research Project

Learning and Engagement

Built Environment
- Photographic Studies
  - Three innovative spaces
  - University library
- Surveys of Students
- Formal interviews and focus groups with faculty and students
- Informal interviews

Academic Program
- NSSE
- Surveys of Students
- Photography of classrooms
- Interviews & Focus Groups
The Learning Complex
University of Dayton
Integrating Learning and Living: Marianist Hall
Integrating Learning and Living: ArtStreet
Ryan C. Harris Learning Teaching Center
Studio Community of Practice
Stage I Results

- U.D. students prefer a new model for living & learning.
- Physical surroundings encourage or constrain behavior.
- Individuals create or define environments as a result of collective socialization.
- Measurement of student learning needs further development at U.D.
- Students are more engaged with engaged faculty.
Learning Living Model

*Students lead fully integrated lives which include facilitated and self directed learning experiences.*
“Students resist a one dimensional conceptualization of academic life.”
# The New Learning SPACE

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<tr>
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<th>Formal Learning</th>
<th>Informal Learning</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Environment</strong></td>
<td>Physical &amp; Virtual</td>
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<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>Scheduled &amp; Self-selected &amp; Flexible</td>
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<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Self-directed</td>
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Impact of the Physical Environment

There is an emotional reaction related to the environment that encourages or discourages engagement.
Emotional Reaction Involves 5 Senses

- Feeling – comfort, seating, flexibility, space
Emotional Reaction Involves 5 Senses

- Sound –
  - Access to information
  - Limiting distractions
Emotional Reaction Involves 5 Senses

- Vision – Visibility, lighting, aesthetics
Emotional Reaction Involves 5 Senses

- **Vision** – Visibility, lighting, aesthetics
Emotional Reaction Involves 5 Senses

- Vision – Visibility, lighting, aesthetics
Emotional Reaction Involves 5 Senses

- Smell – welcoming, attractive
- Taste – food, comfort
“It’s like there is a conference going on every day and you know that when you walk in. I think the students relate to that, they know there is already work in progress.”

– Susan, a faculty member in Marianist Hall
Student Engagement: UD students

- believe that they learn the most when they are highly engaged

- are highly engaged in social activities and computer-based activities

- prefer UD learning-living environments which integrate social, technological, and academic elements

- prefer academic experiences that involve communication or interaction with others

- prefer to study and get school work completed in comfortable, convenient, quiet spaces that are free of distractions

- report that they learn the most where they spend the most time, or where their program or course is located
Setting Factors and Engagement

Engagement is encouraged by:

- learning spaces that are comfortable, big & open, flexible, and appeal to the emotions
- learning spaces that support and integrate both facilitated program-based learning and self-directed learning
- learning spaces & academic programs that facilitate group interaction, as well as, individual, independent, self directed learning
“...there are students who are hungry for that and they want places for solitude and quiet and the opportunity for serious study, but they’re also pleasant and inviting and fun. You know that combination really comes across here.”

– Jane, a faculty member in Marianist Hall
“Professors seem a lot more at our level, like the professors I meet with in other buildings, the set up of the room, they are like in the front of the room and like they have more of a position of superiority and here we’re in a circle and they’re a part of us and we’re a part of them. And also the fact that this is our living space, they are, like, coming in to our home and we have more possession of the space than they do… I get the feeling that they respect that and we meet on a more similar level.”

- Alex, in Marianist Hall
Taxonomy of Significant Learning

- Foundational Knowledge
- Application
- Integration
- Human Dimension
- Caring
- Learning How to Learn

L. Dee Fink, 2003
Setting Factors and Engagement

Engagement is discouraged by:

- learning spaces that have uncomfortable conditions, are distracting, and fail to address the emotions
- learning spaces that are limited to program-based learning
- learning spaces & academic programs that are limited in structure and/or have content restrictions
- learning spaces & academic programs that inhibit group interaction
Stage II

1. Faculty engagement
2. Graduate student learning environment preferences
3. Library use patterns
4. Learning outcomes assessment
Faculty Engagement

To what extent does a faculty community of practice impact faculty engagement and utilization of both physical and technological aspects of the living learning environment?

College Park Center Project
Graduate Student Learning Preferences

Do graduate students prefer the same learning environment characteristics that were preferred by undergraduate students?

College Park Center Project
Library Use Patterns

To what extent will a change in the library’s physical environment impact patterns of use? Can we encourage more collaborative learning?

Library Project
Learning Outcomes Assessment

What is the best approach for systematically assessing student learning outcomes?

Learning Teaching Center Pilot Project
A Culture of Improvement: Learning & Living

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