INNOVATIVE SPACES IN ARL LIBRARIES:
RESULTS OF A 2008 STUDY

SUBTOPIC: FLEXIBLE, MALLEABLE SPACES

The Innovative Spaces survey produced 98 instances of special or noteworthy projects being supported in ARL libraries. A comprehensive PDF file of these projects can be found at http://www.arl.org/bm-doc/innovative-spaces-2009.pdf, arranged alphabetically by institution.

In order to assist readers with focused interests, 17 “subtopics” have been assigned that group only those survey responses that relate in whole or in part to that topic. This report contains survey responses that touch on the subtopic that is identified above.

For readers who would extract information not covered by the subtopics, key word searching can be applied to the comprehensive list.

Subtopics:
- Branch & Subject Libraries
- Café / Refreshment
- Classrooms, Workshops, Instruction
- Collaboration
- Digital Centers
- Faculty Development
- Faculty / Graduate Student Spaces
- Flexible, Malleable Spaces
- Galleries, Art, Exhibits, Performances, Events
- Literacy Instruction
- Multimedia
- Presentation Practice
- Technology Support
- Tutoring & Peer Support
- User-centered Programming of Spaces
- Videoconferencing
- Writing Support

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http://www.arl.org/rtl/space/2008study/
The Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, University of British Columbia Library: 200,000 square feet of new space and more than 46,000 square feet of renovated space. Phase 2 opened in winter 2008. The complex includes:

- innovative learning spaces, including a 157-seat theatre - new technologies, flexible furniture to support large and small space work;
- breakout rooms;
- new spaces for the rare books collections;
- an array of seminar/study rooms and classrooms, for groups ranging from 6 to 110 people
- support for onsite webcasting and video-conferencing capabilities
- simulation and gaming technologies for learning support
- office and study spaces for Arts One, Science One and Coordinated Arts Programs
- labs and offices for UBC's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies
- offices and other facilities for the university's Centre for Teaching and Academic Group (TAG)
- media commons -learning commons -many different study corners (beautiful spaces).
- Chapman Learning Commons offering learning support, services, and programs for writing & research, study skills, multimedia software, and tutoring support. [http://www.library.ubc.ca/clc/](http://www.library.ubc.ca/clc/)
- [http://www.ikebarberlearningcentre.ubc.ca](http://www.ikebarberlearningcentre.ubc.ca)

Indicators of success:

- space filled with people since day 1
- the Chapman Learning Commons was filled as soon as it opened.

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The University Libraries are currently planning and soliciting funding for the creation of two new, hands-on, state-of-the-art computer classrooms in library spaces. The classrooms will be for the use of librarians teaching credit-bearing and course-related information literacy sessions, and will be managed by the Libraries. We envision two rooms, each seating 50-60 students, equipped with laptop computers, projection systems and movable furniture and room dividers to accommodate large and small groups. The need for these classrooms arises from factors related to the nature of course-related information literacy sessions - which are often one session scheduled in a short timeframe of one to two weeks -
and a general shortage of hands-on computer classrooms on campus. The ones in existence are booked for entire semesters, and are generally not available for one-time use. The current Libraries' classrooms are too small to accommodate most class sizes. [http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/ext/LearningLab.pdf](http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/ext/LearningLab.pdf)

**Indicators of success:**

- Increased usage
- Greater flexibility
- Positive learning experiences for students

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**UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE, LIBRARIES**

**Classroom to provide flexibilities for learning moments.**

The UCI Libraries are beginning to plan for a new flexible high-tech classroom. Although we are still in the early stages of planning, we hope to incorporate a number of innovative elements including flexible seating that can be quickly reconfigured for a variety of group and lecture based instruction sessions. This would include the ability to relocate the instructor's podium and projector depending on the type of instruction taking place. In addition, we plan to incorporate technology that allows students or groups to display their work on several large plasma screens located on the walls of the classroom.

**Indicators of success:**

- Positive user feedback.
- Incorporation of new technology and space flexibility into library instruction

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**UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARY**

**New training and instruction classroom capitalizes on technology and re-configurability.**

The Kathleen A. Zar Room, honoring the late director of the John Crerar Library, is a renovation of the Library’s former Microforms area into a technology-equipped classroom. Existing glass partitions already separate the room from the general reading area. New window shades have been installed to provide privacy and decrease light glare during presentations. The existing tables and chairs were replaced with easily reconfigurable furniture. A screen and whiteboard were added to the walls. Two projector carts and a flat panel display provide multiple viewing options. The room is intended for both formal training and instruction by Library staff and faculty as well as informal group study space for students. The Zar room is also a venue for a speaker series.
Indicators of success:

- Evidence of informal use of the space
- Positive user feedback
- Faculty requests to use space for instruction

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARY

Remodeled classroom improves flexibility; doubles as student collaboration space.
Room 207 in Joseph Regenstein Library (JRL 207) was a glass-walled room seating 15-20. The room could be reserved by faculty for seminars, and was otherwise available on a first-come first-serve basis for group study. After surveying the Library’s Outreach and Instruction Committee, and all faculty who had recently taught in JRL 207, the Library decided to remodel the space into a technology-equipped classroom. A ceiling-mounted projector, speakers, and a retractable screen, wall whiteboard, and privacy shades were installed. An audiovisual station in the south closet contains a multi-region DVD player and audio/video inputs for a laptop. New tables and chairs provide more flexible arrangements. To increase room capacity (a request of some faculty), the Library added soft seating in the east alcove behind the door for another 3-4 students. The room is intended primarily for faculty teaching, with a secondary purpose providing space for collaborative student work involving multimedia (e.g., watching assigned film clips).

Indicators of success:

- Faculty bookings of space for teaching
- Evidence of informal use by students on evenings/weekends
- Positive user feedback

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE LIBRARY

Library collaborates with other units to support undergraduate group work, writing, and research needs.

We relocated our Document Delivery services and repurposed existing space on our main service floor of Baker-Berry Library to be a shared collaborative space. This room has video projection, a variety of group workspaces, the ability to share information on multiple laptops, converts to a practice presentation space, and for approximately 30 hours/week is the space for our student peer tutoring center. This is a collaborative effort with the Writing Program, Library, and Academic Computing, which is called the Research, Writing, and Information Technology Center [RWIT]. [http://www.dartmouth.edu/~rwit/index.html]
Indicators of success:

- RWIT Center is fully scheduled most available timeslots, including beginning parts of the term
- Other campus partners are interested in joining and supporting this collaboration [Career Services, for instance]

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Reconfigurable classrooms accommodate individual instruction and learning styles.

In the past two years we have created 3 dedicated technology-enhanced classrooms. The most recent two are completely reconfigurable. The furniture can be easily rearranged to accommodate individual teaching styles; the classrooms can be separated or combined into a single large room; there are Smartboards on each end and a tablet pc for the instructor that can be easily moved so the instructor is not tied to a podium.

Indicators of success:

- increased usage--number of classes taught
- positive user feedback (students and faculty)
- learning outcomes (self-reported by students) from active learning applied in this space

GEORGIA TECH LIBRARY

Second-phase learning commons informed by massive student input.

This renovated area complements the West Commons as a team-based support facility. Programming was derived from a multitude of user-centered discovery exercises, with considerable contributions and oversight from a student advisory council. The heterogeneous environment includes 40 workstations set up for collaborative work; study spaces that transform into lecture / performance areas; micro-exhibits and student art; and power cords hanging from ceilings. All furniture is on wheels so students may contrive personalized configurations for collaboration as needed. The East Commons was mentioned as a key factor in the library winning the ARCL University Library of Excellence award in 2007.

http://librarycommons.gatech.edu/lec

Indicators of success:

- Increased door count 25 %
- ACRL award winning
- Student documentaries and newspaper editorials extolling the space
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY LIBRARIES

Retrofit of new library delivers commons facility for multimedia and general productivity.

The University of Kentucky Libraries opened our information commons, the Hub, in March 2007. The target audience is undergraduate students. One of our noteworthy elements is our “video windows”—six projectors that display student art and other exhibits that rotate on a monthly basis. I’ve written more about the “video windows” here:

Here is a general description of the Hub: Located in the basement of William T. Young Library, the Hub @ WT’s provides library research assistance and IT help in one convenient location. The Hub features over 200 Windows computers as well as a Mac lab for student use. Mac video editing suites with Final Cut Pro are now available, and two presentation practice rooms will be completed in spring 2008. The Hub offers flexible, comfortable furniture for students to arrange to meet their group study needs, including rolling cubicle walls and whiteboards. In addition, the Hub features snack and beverage machines in the lounge area.
http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/Hub

Indicators of success:

• Positive user feedback
• Positive user feedback
• Increased usage of the basement

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL LIBRARIES

Collaboratory supports faculty online course development and student digital and multimedia projects.

The Collaboratory, located in the UNC House Undergraduate Library, is a space designed to help faculty and instructional staff with online course development and for students and faculty to work together on projects involving digitization and web development. The Collaboratory is managed by our Instructional Design and Technology Librarian who trains a staff of graduate assistants and who is always on call when more in-depth assistance is needed. In addition to the individual and collaborative workstations, the room doubles as an instruction lab where training sessions can be scheduled. The library often offers joint workshops with our colleagues from ITS Teaching and Learning, the people on campus who manage the University’s course management system.
http://www.lib.unc.edu/house/collaboratories.html
Indicators of success:

- Increased usage
- Positive user feedback
- Anecdotal evidence of integration into academic coursework

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University of Rochester Libraries

Gleason Library learning spaces benefit from exceptional user-centered discovery.

The learning commons space in Gleason Library is designed specifically for undergraduate students to support collaborative learning. No service desk occupies the space—rather it is a self-regulated environment. Furniture is quite light so that the students can rearrange the space to fit their needs. Lots of white boards; no private rooms, but 8 areas that give some sense of privacy for a group to work in. The commons space includes a popular "quieter" study area. Located near a cafe and just above the main campus computing center. http://docushare.lib.rochester.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-27280/chapter_four.pdf

Indicators of success:

- consistently in high use
- positive comments on "feedback" flip charts
- positive editorials in the student paper

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University of Tennessee Knoxville Libraries

Richly comprised learning commons reflects advantages of collaborating with logical campus partners.

In the library’s commons, the targeted audiences are undergraduates and those who work with undergraduates. More specifically it is designed to accommodate both groups and individuals in a 24-hour space. Ours is an equal partnership (administratively and fiscally) between the University Libraries and the campus Office of Information Technology. Units offering services in the space include Reference, Circulation, Media Center, and Studio employees from the Libraries; and Lab Services, Help Desk, Innovative Technology Center from the Office of Information Technology; and various academic service units that offer instruction or tutoring such as the Writing Center and the Stat Lab. The Student Success Center on campus also sets up informal tutoring sessions. Instructors often hold study group sessions in the Commons as well. We offer reference, circulation, media production services, paging services when the stacks are closed, a media collection, media reservations, and group media presentation rooms that may be reserved for classes by faculty. We check out laptops,
scanners, disk drives, head phones, etc. We have about 150 desktop computers (PC and Mac) loaded with the same software offered in computer labs and we have about 50 laptops for circulation. The Help Desk offers assistance with wireless registration (the wireless network is available throughout the libraries), operating system and computer repair, password assistance, etc. The ITC supports the two practice presentation spaces available with Smart Symposiums and Smart Boards for reservation and provides assistance to faculty who are setting up Black board pages etc. We also offer digitizing services for instructors in support of teaching. Furnishings are geared to be flexible and the newly renovated space is divided in “pods” or zones to help with noise control (not all that successfully when the space is full at night). There are both mobile and fixed white boards, group rooms, and one enclosed room designated as quiet between the hours of midnight and 7:30. That same room acts as a faculty lounge and reception area during the day. There is a 24-hour Starbucks with an adjacent study lounge and there is a small store that sells supplies, food, and drink.

http://commons.utk.edu/

Indicators of success:
NA

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**University of Texas at Austin Libraries**

**Student Learning Commons renovation features malleable furnishings and multi-purpose spaces.**

The new Student Learning Commons is a newly renovated space made possible by a generous gift from the University Federal Credit Union. We renovated a large space on the entry floor of the Perry-Castañeda Library, including new ergonomic, flexible (and movable) tables and chairs, new carpet, new wall and window treatments, and new lighting. We installed several modular group study pods that have proven to be an extremely popular way to increase group study space without building walls. The pods are wired for electricity and have dry erase boards built into the fabric walls. We also added new study tables wired for electricity, as well as adding dozens of additional outlets around the room. The entire space is covered by our wireless network. The room is also equipped with a retractable projection system and screen and can be reserved by student groups for events. The Libraries can also use the space for events as needed. This space is targeted at undergraduate students and is hugely popular as a study facility. It was designed to promote collaborative study, but interestingly students have claimed it as a quiet study space (except for the group study pods). We’ve also included a small (200 - 250 titles) popular magazine and journal collection in this space. [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/pcl/commons/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/pcl/commons/index.html)
Indicators of success:

- Massively increased usage
- Positive feedback from students including pressure to renovate more library spaces in this manner
- Positive coverage in the student press

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA LIBRARY

Adaptations to existing study space emphasize comfort and accommodations for personal computers.

Clemons Virtual Lab (pending implementation Spring and Summer 2008) --Large area on main floor of undergraduate library where students would bring their own laptops and mobile devices (i.e., no computing would be provided by the UVa library, although laptop chargers, mouse, larger monitors, etc., would be provided). Atmosphere would emphasize comfortable environment, natural lighting, numerous convenient outlets, flexible workstations and space intended to accommodate group or individual study.

Indicators of success:
NA

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA LIBRARY

Small-group study/teaching rooms with multipurpose capacities.

In 2007, School of Medicine and the Library collaborated on building 12 small group study/teaching spaces. Funding was provided by the School of Medicine, space was provided by the Library. The rooms hold 10-17 people, each contain projector, instructor computer, whiteboard, and light box (for medical images), and moveable furniture. Rooms are used primarily for small group instruction for first- and second-year medical students Principles of Medicine courses, but are also frequently reserved by other constituencies of the Library for educational purposes. Rooms are also available on a first-come, first-served and short-term reservation basis for student study. The Library’s entire book collection was relocated to carve out the space for these rooms. http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/library/wdc-lib/admin/policy/group-study.cfm

Indicators of success:

- increased usage
- requests for changes or enhancements
University of Virginia Library

Flexible special collections space serves both instruction and researchers’ needs. (Special Collections)

We have a small room located off our main reading room named the Seymour I. Schwartz map room. It serves both as a small classroom and as a room for researchers needing to look at oversized items and researchers who are working in small groups needing to talk. Initially, it was furnished just like our reading room with heavy wood tables and armchairs. This past year, we changed the furniture in this room from the solid but hard-to-move furniture to a more nimble and flexible set-up. We purchased five flip-top tables and 20 stackable metal with mesh chairs that are on casters. The tables are Vecta and the chairs are Jersey both made by Steelcase. We have found this furniture to be very easy to set up and very flexible for all different kinds of groups. The furniture arrangement can easily be changed in 5 minutes by one person.

Indicators of success:

• positive user feedback