



Lorain County Community College (OH)

Consultation Summary

January 13-14, 2009



Submitted To:

Dr. Karen Wells
Provost/Vice President
Lorain County Community College
1005 N Abbe Road
Elyria, OH 44035



Prepared By:

Homero Lopez, Ph.D.
Higher Education Consultant
homerolopez04@yahoo.com

Linda L. García, Ph.D.
Higher Education Consultant
lindagarcia@DesignofLearningSpaces.com

January 27, 2009

Table of Contents

Large Group Presentation -“Setting the Vision”	3
Focus Groups	6
Vision Statement.....	8
Criteria for Utilization of the Multipurpose Center	8
Final Thoughts to The Learning Space Team	9
Credentials.....	10



Learning spaces across the country are being designed purposely to enhance student learning, following principles that keep educational issues, learning experiences, and

the role of technology/information resources at the center of space plans. A basic premise is emerging—the effective design of learning spaces can facilitate student engagement, and thereby enhance teaching and learning!

The *Learning Studio* model has emerged to replace the traditional “space-challenged” classroom. It features flexibility, collaborative social interaction integrated technology, comfort, and ambiance and facilitates engagement between teachers and students.

Lorain County Community College (LCCC) has the opportunity to rethink traditional approaches to facilitate development and challenge old assumptions about instructional space. As a result, LCCC invited two higher education consultants (Dr. Homero Lopez and Dr. Linda L. García) to facilitate the process in “Setting the Vision” of the Multipurpose Center. The consultants visit included:

- Large Group Presentation: “Setting the Vision”
- Facilitation of up to five Focus Groups (includes preparation)
- Meeting with Learning Space Design Team

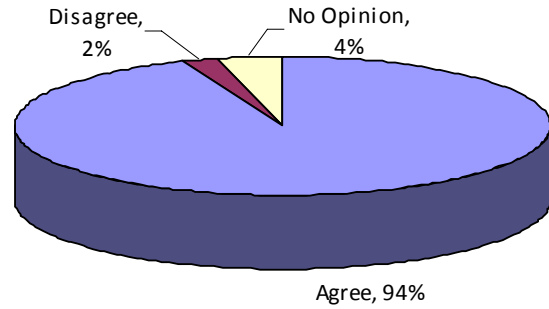
Large Group Presentation - “Setting the Vision”

Dr. Lopez and Dr. García began the presentation by conducting a polling exercise with the participants. Seven questions were asked to gain a better understanding of the participants’ perspective on physical aspects, classroom layout, faculty roles, and room reconfiguration of learning environments. The following page shows their responses.



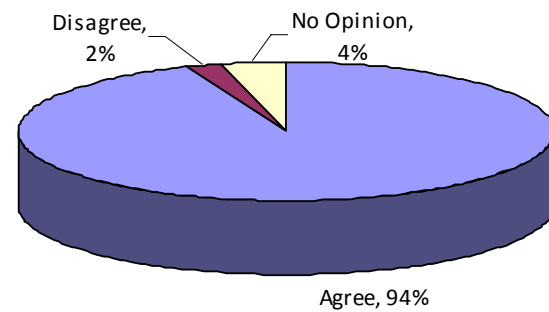
Question 1

The physical aspects of a campus convey nonverbal messages-welcoming or discouraging, valuing or disrespecting-even more powerful than verbal messages.



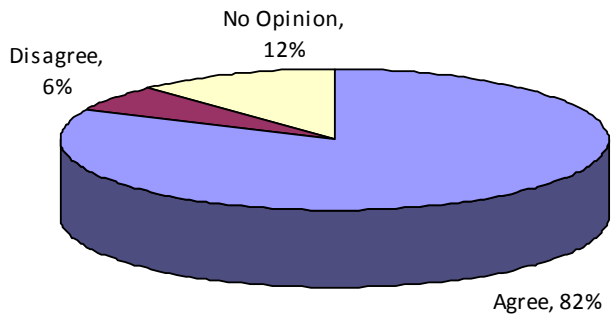
Question 2

The layout, location, and arrangement of instructional space encourage some teaching methods over others.



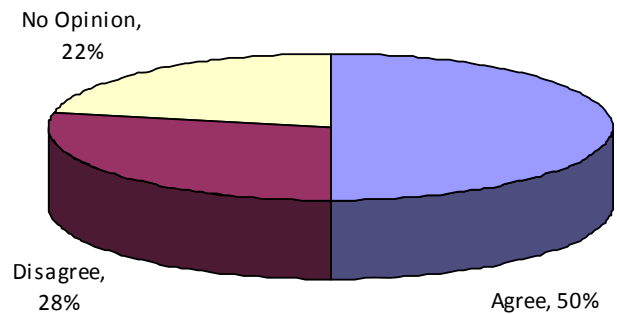
Question 3

New learning spaces should be furnished with tables and chairs for grouping or clustering students rather than seating them in rows. They should also allow for multiple focal points, not just a single focal point at the front of the room.



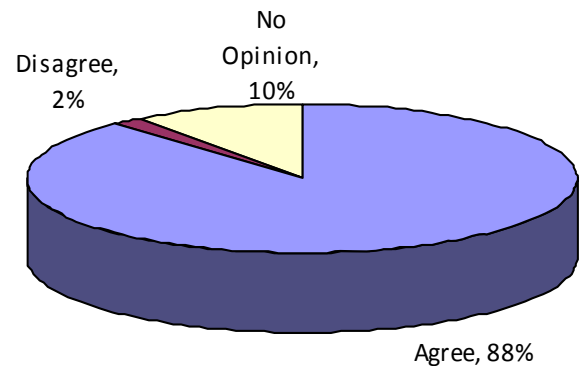
Question 4

The design in traditional classrooms encourages the instructor role of transmitting information to students.



Question 5

It makes better sense to construct learning spaces capable of quick reconfiguration to support different kinds of activity—for example, a group of learners should be able to move from listening to one speaker to working in groups, to working independently—all within the same learning spaces.



Question 6

In your opinion, what are the 2 most important features for great learning space?

- Facilitates faculty to student and student to student engagement
- Impacts student learning

Question 7

In order to “effectively design” an innovative teaching & learning space, what 2 areas are most important to be involved?

- Input from teachers & students
- Commitment from college leadership

Additionally, Dr. Lopez and Dr. García discussed the following topics during the presentation:

- **EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI)** – Learning is at the center of higher education. It is an essential part of the mission of all colleges and universities. ELI is a community of higher education institutions and organizations committed to improving learning, which requires a solid understanding of learners and how they learn.
- **Today’s Students (the Millennial Generation)** – The waves of Millennial students bring learning styles and modes of interaction that are “out of sync” with traditional learning spaces. Millennials tend to tune out when they are relegated to the role of passive learners, when they are not actively engaged in the learning process, and when their dependency on technology is absent as a stimulus in the learning process. As a result, Millennials “collide” with the physical learning spaces found within higher education.

- **Types of Learning Spaces** – Three types of learning spaces were highlighted: (1) Traditional Classrooms Transformed into Learning Studios; (2) Large Enrollment and Specialized Spaces; and (3) Open and Informal Learning Spaces. These learning environments feature flexibility, space for collaborative and social interaction, integrated technology, comfort, and ambiance
- **How Learning Studios Facilitate Student Engagement** – To analyze how Learning Studios facilitate student engagement, focus group and survey data from different colleges were analyzed and discussed. The findings coincided with three of the five student engagement benchmarks from the Center for Community College Student Engagement (formally known as the Community College Survey of Student Engagement): active and collaborative learning, student and faculty interaction, and supportive environment.
- **Creating Learning Spaces** – To create effective learning spaces the following is recommended: Challenge Traditional Assumptions; Design based on Learning Principles; Learn from Others; Experiment, Create Prototypes, Replicate, Partner; Research and Seek User Feedback; Develop Best Practices; and Increase Student Engagement
- **“Setting the Vision” for LCCC’s New Multipurpose Center** – The presentation concluded with stating *“LCCC has the opportunity rethink traditional approaches to facility development and challenge old assumptions about instructional space...help create the vision for new learning spaces on our campus.”*

Videos shown to the group included:

- Learning Spaces: LCCC Students’ Perspective:
www.scrapblog.com/viewer/viewer.aspx?sbid=1247729
- LCCC Showcase: <http://animoto.com/play/ulNE76pikOv19RI0QIcOTQ>

Focus Groups



The five focus groups were an opportunity for direct input on the creation of new learning spaces at LCCC. Participants described their “ideal learning environment” in regards to six themes: Appearance, Technology, Teaching Style, Emotions, Classroom Mood/Personality, and Interactions. The following table shows some of their feedback:

Theme	Responses	
<p>Appearance</p> <p>(Preferred appearance in the “ideal” classroom)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Windows for Natural Lighting ▪ Open Spaces ▪ Calming Colors ▪ Writing Surfaces ▪ Work Spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adjustable/Mobile Furniture ▪ Adjustable Lighting ▪ Comfortable Chairs ▪ Storage/Shelves ▪ Carpeted Floors
<p>Technology</p> <p>(Types of technology in the “ideal” classroom)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Laptops ▪ Technical Support ▪ Network Access ▪ Portable Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moveable Cameras ▪ Multiple Screens ▪ Smart Boards ▪ Power Sources
<p>Teaching Style</p> <p>(Desired teaching style in the “ideal” classroom)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborative ▪ Interactive ▪ Entertaining ▪ Group Activities ▪ Engaging ▪ Coaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Team Oriented ▪ Group Discussions ▪ Hands On ▪ Mentorship ▪ Creative ▪ Motivating
<p>Emotions</p> <p>(How individuals want to feel in the classroom)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accepted ▪ Comfortable ▪ Desire to Return to Class ▪ Safe ▪ Confident ▪ Motivated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exciting ▪ Valued ▪ Empowered ▪ Calming ▪ Positive ▪ Energized
<p>Classroom Mood/Personality</p> <p>(The cues sent by the classroom to the participant)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comfortable ▪ Accessible ▪ Flexible ▪ Inviting ▪ Forward Thinking ▪ Welcoming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Friendly ▪ Fun ▪ High Technology ▪ Unlimited Possibilities ▪ Exploration ▪ Informal
<p>Interactions</p> <p>(Interactions between student-student and student-faculty)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher Accessible ▪ Student Moveable ▪ Teamwork ▪ Connecting with Faculty ▪ Open Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connecting with Students ▪ Engaged ▪ Removable Barriers ▪ Lively

Vision Statement

Based on the ideas generated from each theme, a “vision statement” was developed to guide the development of new learning spaces in the Multipurpose Center. A vision statement is a declaration of a shared sense of purpose. It expresses ideas about how LCCC views the learning space to be created. The following vision statement was created from the participants’ feedback:

Lorain County Community College will create innovative state of the art learning spaces where Design is driven by pedagogy, and technology supports learning by being embedded, seamless, and on demand. In our learning spaces, teachers facilitate student engagement through deep learning experiences. Key features of our learning spaces include:

- *Flexibility & comfort*
- *Technology, power, and access on demand*
- *Support of a wide array of social and collaborative learning activities*
- *Aesthetically and visually stimulating environments*
- *Creative use of space*
- *Ample space for movement and circulation*
- *Adaptability to future improvements and changes*

Criteria for Utilization of the Multipurpose Center

Collectively, the focus groups identified the following criteria (guidelines), which they recommend for faculty to commit to when utilizing the learning spaces in the Multipurpose Center:

- Comfortable with technology
- Problem solver/trouble shooter with technology
- Demonstrated commitment to technology
- Open to flexibility and embraces a wide array of teaching styles
- Encourages group and team work and hands on learning
- High demand and high enrollment classes
- Participate in assessments, feedback, blogging, and classroom research
- Preferred courses: Hybrid and blended courses/College 101
- Values strong faculty-student relationships
- Demonstrated use of multiple teaching tools



- Exhibited creativity in approaches to teaching
- Level of preparedness to teach in an innovative learning space
- Expressed desire to successful teach in an innovative learning space
- Commitment to share best teaching practices with other faculty
- Provide evidence of active and collaborative learning in their syllabi

Final Thoughts to The Learning Space Team

As Dr. Lopez and Dr. García shared the vision statement and criteria to the Learning Space Design Team, they also discussed the following final assessments as LCCC begins to plan for the Multipurpose Center:

1. Agree on the Major Features of the Learning Spaces
2. Assign major responsibility for faculty development to the Center for Teaching Excellence
3. Develop key “skill sets” for faculty teaching in the new learning spaces
4. Create size categories for learning spaces
5. Establish common sets of specifications for aspects such as interiors, infrastructure, technology & media, furniture, etc.
6. Utilize the Experimental Classroom now for faculty teaching of classes (class meetings or sections)
7. Create a website for progress on the transformation of the new facility and learning space development
8. Name the old library something with “WOW!”



Credentials

Homero Lopez, Ph.D. Higher Education Consultant

Pioneered the Learning Studio at Estrella Mountain Community College



Dr. Homero Lopez is a higher education consultant and was the founding president of Estrella Mountain Community College of the Maricopa Community Colleges (AZ) where he pioneered the Learning Studio initiative. He recently retired after 32 years of accomplishments as an instructional and administrative community college leader. He built Estrella Mountain into a nationally recognized showcase of innovation including its “Learning Studio” model classroom design in partnership with Herman Miller, Inc. and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI).

He was a long-time consultant-evaluator for the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and served on the American Association of Community Colleges Commission on Academic, Student and Community Development. He served on the National Advisory Boards for the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and the National Community College Hispanic Council (NCCHC). He was known locally and nationally as a visionary leader and was recognized as a "Distinguished Graduate" of the Community College Leadership Program of the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin. He was selected as Laredo Community College's (TX) Top 50 Distinguished Alumni. Dr. Lopez holds the B.A. and Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin (Community College Leadership Program), and the M.A. from the University of Michigan. He also received an A.A. from Laredo Community College (TX).

Linda L. García, Ph.D., Higher Education Consultant

Completed dissertation study on the Learning Studio



Dr. Linda L. García has conducted research on the Learning Studio environment and the Millennial generation students. She has facilitated focus groups with faculty and students to understand how the Learning Studios impact engagement in the classroom. She has served as a higher education consultant to colleges and to the Learning Spaces Research Program initiative conducted by Herman Miller, Inc.

As a former development research associate at The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College (UTB/TSC), Dr. García had the experience in developing grant proposals (state,

federal, private) with administrators, faculty, local schools, and community organizations. The goals were to increase college retention, graduation rates, and help students transition into the workforce or the next level of higher education.

Dr. García has also worked for ADISA Public Relations, Inc. as a public relations assistant; the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) as a Hook'Em Up newsletter editor and membership liaison; and Estrella Mountain Community College (Arizona) as a doctoral intern. She earned her Bachelor's in Journalism and Doctorate in Educational Administration from The University of Texas at Austin, and she received her Master's in Interdisciplinary Studies from The University of Texas at Brownsville.

Consulting Background

Dr. Lopez and Dr. García have shared their expertise on how flexible learning environments (known as Learning Studios) can increase student engagement. They have consulted and guided community colleges and universities on how to utilize space as a tool to increase active and collaborative learning, strengthen student/faculty interactions, and provide a supportive learning environment. Dr. Lopez and Dr. García have recently consulted with:

- Butler Community College
- Eastfield College
- Kansas State System Council of Chief Academic Officers
- Lorain County Community College
- South Texas College
- University of Massachusetts Boston

Also, Dr. Lopez and Dr. García have presented this topic at the following conferences:

- American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE)
- EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI)
- National Community College Hispanic Council (NCCHC)
- NISOD's International Conference on Teaching and Learning Excellence
- Society for College and University Planning (SCUP)
- Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE)

Their publications on Learning Studios are the following:

- García, L.L., Lopez, H., & Herman Miller. (2008). *Engaging students: Using space as a tool to connect with Millennials*.

- García, L. L. (2007). *Millennial students' and faculty's perceptions of a new generation of learning classrooms*. (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, Community College Leadership Program).
- Lopez, H. & Gee, L. (2006). *The learning studios project*. In Oblinger, D.G. (Eds.). *Learning Spaces*.
- Lopez, H. & Gee, L., & Yohe, R. (n.d.). *Designing learning spaces and integrating technology to promote student success*.
- Oblinger, D. G. (2006). *Radical flexibility and student success: An interview with Homero Lopez*. *EDUCAUSE Review*, 41(1), 45-54.

Please visit our website for online access to the publications
and for additional information:

DesignofLearningSpaces.com