Chapter 16
Studio Pedagogy:
A Model for Collaboration, Innovation, and Space Design

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter establishes a studio pedagogy for space design that integrates concepts from communication, collaboration, and innovation in its approach. The model offered is derived from the experience of designing and implementing the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity that has had a campus-wide impact at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). In this chapter, the authors discuss a rationale for a studio pedagogy, the need for a studio approach, the technological implications of space design, and the value and impact of a studio model, explaining the importance of designing student-centered spaces. The authors begin by addressing the need identified by EKU administrators and explaining the process that brought multiple voices around the same table to develop an initial and sustained support unit for program development.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Educational efficacy is not a new concern. For many years, educators have examined, critiqued, and refined education practices, from course design to instructional methods to testing and assessment. Nair (2011) foregrounded the recent focus on space and environment design in the *Education Week* article, "The Classroom is Obsolete: It's Time for Something New," emphasizing the importance of transitioning traditional classroom settings into "learning studios" or "learning suites." These spaces, according to Nair, allow for collaboration and integration of content knowledge, application, skills, and technology necessary for twenty-first century learners. Nair suggests that we re-examine spaces, looking not only at what works but also at spaces and practices that need new life, pedagogies that need rethinking, and redesigns of spaces created for optimal learning that are responsive to (1) the collaborative nature of the 21st-century workplace, (2) a renewed interest in creative thinking in the corporate world, and (3) students' development of written, oral, research, visual, and technological literacies. A studio pedagogy for space design appreciates multimodal communication and provides opportunities for students to take the lead in designing effective products through a collaborative, inspirational, and supportive environment and program. Privileging a pedagogical approach—rather than an architectural approach—highlights the importance of the programming that takes place within a space, using pedagogy as a guide from the outset rather than as an afterthought.

The Noel Studio is an example of what can be accomplished through visionary leadership and teamwork in 21st-century spaces, positioning support services for written communication, oral communication, and library research all in one central location, thus allowing students to realize their synergistic relationship.

Like many traditional writing centers, EKU's former writing center operated in isolation, though not by choice. Tucked discretely into the basement of a hybrid dormitory/office building and containing little in the way of technology, the writing center was staffed by well-trained, well-meaning English graduate assistants, excited to spend their graduate years as writing tutors; however, these excited and skilled writing consultants were difficult to find at best, completely hidden from the uninitiated freshman unfamiliar with campus. Furthermore, writing tutors were often the first to identify a student who was lacking the research to support his or her ideas, but they had little to no access to the valuable resources housed within the library walls and were often unfamiliar with the myriad of online resources purchased and supported by the library outside of those within their own discipline. Additionally, the writing tutor and student had a difficult time accessing such resources without the necessary technology, and, as a result, writing tutors were left with no choice but

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