

Make Your Space Mobile: Designing a Portable Makerspace to Support Experiential Learning

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Many academic libraries are incorporating makerspaces or hackerspace into their library buildings. Makerspaces are areas for students to use various forms of technology to create or fabricate items. Makerspaces often include a blend of both high and low technology components such as 3D printers, robotic parts, molding clay and building bricks. One requirement for traditional makerspaces is ample dedicated space to house the equipment which may pose a problem if free space is scarce in a library or on campus. At Suffolk County Community College, the Eastern Campus Library has created a mobile model of a makerspace thereby removing the requirement of dedicated space. This flexible learning environment allows the technology to be moved across the campus and College to offer students a variety of opportunities to interact with the technology. The poster presentation will discuss the challenges of designing and implementing a mobile makerspace as well as the benefits to student learning.

The portable makerspace model at Suffolk County Community College consists of both a video production component as well as a 3D printing setup. The video production portion of the makerspace was designed to provide students with informal experiential learning opportunities. The video cameras and lighting were selected to fit the portable space model. The presentation will include discussion on how the video production process was scaled back to allow students to work independently to produce a video project. The video production setup is available for both open campus workshops as well as course projects. The other half of the makerspace focused on 3D printing technology and 3D object design. The 3D printing technology was made available to students in 3D design classes as well as through open workshops on the campus. The 3D printing workshops and events afforded students the opportunity to interact with the technology in an open and informal environment. The portable design of the makerspace allows the equipment to easily be moved throughout the campus and college to support student learning.

The poster will include an overview of preliminary assessment data from the mobile makerspace workshops and events. A discussion of best practices and challenges for creating a mobile makerspace will be presented as well as future plans for the expansion of the mobile makerspace model.