Collaborative Design:
Partnering with Students to Improve Library Spaces and Services

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Project Overview

Junior Interior Architecture Studio

Project Title: Fine Arts Library of the Future

• Program: explore broadly and deeply
  – Response: books
  – Response: programmatic offerings (beyond aesthetics)
  – Response: human support

• Evidence-based design
Librarian Consultation

• Tour of library
• Overview of library mission
• Overview of library operations and initiatives
• Practical considerations
  – Day-to-day work needs
  – Practicality of furniture
The Fine Arts Library of the Future

Kristin Stubbs

Research

Academia is library today lacks the ability to accommodate the growing need for collaborative spaces. Libraries today provide more of a quiet, individual, and isolated work environment rather than a collaborative and social environment. In recent years, the academic research team led by Kristin Stubbs and colleagues found that 75% of students are working on their devices, 75% are working alone, and only 25% are working with another student or a group of three or more. Students are multitasking and working on their phones while doing other work. Students also report that collaborative study spaces are not available or are not well equipped to support collaborative learning. The research team observed that only 30% of the study spaces are well-equipped to support collaborative learning. Students also reported that the study spaces are not well-equipped to support group work and that students are not using the study spaces effectively. The researchers also noted that the study spaces are not well-equipped to support group work and that students are not using the study spaces effectively.

This research was presented by Kristin Stubbs at the 2021 AALL Conference and Exhibition. At the conference, students were surveyed to determine how they use the library to find a quiet and isolated place to study. In a recent study, the research team led by Kristin Stubbs collected data from 500 students at the library over a period of three months. The researchers found that 75% of students are working on their devices, 75% are working alone, and only 25% are working with another student or a group of three or more. Students are multitasking and working on their phones while doing other work. Students also report that collaborative study spaces are not available or are not well equipped to support collaborative learning.

Concept Statement

The fine arts library of the future is a place to empower students to further develop studies, projects, and experiences at the university. It's a place to supply the specific demands for the fine arts students such as relevant books, computer software, and enough space to achieve work on small and large projects. The library itself is a flexible space that encourages students to use it as they need.

Sources

A FINE ARTS LIBRARY OF THE FUTURE

CONCEPT STATEMENT

The overall design of the Fine Arts Library of the Future is centered on an approach that integrates technology, collaboration, and student engagement. The library will be a space where students can engage in creative processes, collaborate with peers, and access resources in a manner that supports their unique needs and learning styles. The library design will incorporate flexible workspaces, technology-rich environments, and areas dedicated to group study and individual research. The goal is to create a learning environment that fosters creativity, innovation, and collaboration, while providing students with the tools and resources they need to succeed.

COLLABORATION

The library will be designed to support collaborative learning, with spaces dedicated to group study and project-based learning. The idea is to create a space where students can work together, share ideas, and engage in meaningful discussions. The library will feature areas with moveable furniture, flexible layouts, and technology that supports collaborative projects.

CONNECTION

The library will be connected to other learning spaces through a series of open-air walkways and pathways. This design will allow students to move freely between spaces, facilitating a seamless transition from one learning environment to another. The walkways will be designed to accommodate group study, individual research, and casual meetings, creating a dynamic learning space.

ENGAGEMENT

The library will be designed to engage students by providing a variety of spaces that cater to different learning styles. The idea is to create a space where students can find a place that suits their needs, whether it be a quiet study area, a collaborative workspace, or a space dedicated to group study. The library will feature technology-rich areas, multimedia spaces, and traditional reading areas, all designed to support student engagement and success.

MATERIAL OPTIONS

The library will feature a variety of materials that are durable, functional, and visually appealing. The materials will be selected to create a space that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing, while also being sustainable and environmentally friendly. The library will feature a variety of finishes, from natural wood to durable finishes that can withstand heavy use.

“Now designing libraries, so people have a better understanding of the library appeals to everyone.”

The library will be designed to appeal to a wide range of students and faculty, with spaces that cater to different learning styles and needs. The goal is to create a space that is welcoming, functional, and engaging, providing students with the resources and support they need to succeed.
EXPANDING EDUCATION
SAM SHAW

Libraries Re-defined

Libraries have historically been recognized to be preservers of knowledge, book heavy, quiet and sometimes inaccessible to the public. Often when someone is asked, “what’s the first thing you think of when you hear the word library?” they say “books.” Traditionally libraries were exclusively book text and were treated very well as this was the main way of learning new information. In the last 30 years we have seen a need for other resources than just books as new technologies and opportunities are available. This includes computers, electronic books, downloading scholarly articles and creative technologies such as 3D printers and scanners. Over time the definition of what a library is has changed drastically due to the communities needs and varying learning personalities that come to learn in the space. Libraries have expanded to become very community based serving as a free resource to all. With the commitment that the library serves not only a few individuals successfully but caters to many different learners, private/public space, individual/group and demographics.

Materials

CONNECT

Allowing students the opportunities to collaborate in environments that enhance their abilities to learn with one another. Furniture is a key element to helping make these experiences successful. This design includes a variety of re-configurable furniture such as Campfire Lounge Seating by Steelcase, Turnstone educational tables/chairs and whiteboard scattered dividers that allow for students to design their own space for the time being and feel comfortable to focus as best they can.

EDUCATE

The Library has always been a place of knowledge and stimulation throughout their existence. Redefining how everyone learns and understanding new technologies that allow us different access is a very important step to the success of individuals who come to learn, focus or discover new information. In this design, there is a clear communication of the need for a change in the definition of this space; Books are no longer the primary source of information but they still have a very important and aesthetic role to the library. There are 40 book stacks separated into 5 groupings that have been turned into compact shelving. This reduces space.

CREATE

An newer concept as to what a library can do for its community is creation and enhancing imagination through space. Included in this design is a fully equipped maker space that includes a collaborative area and 2 private studios. It includes technologies such as 3D printers, 3D scanners and light space accessible to all who would like to use them. This is a very collaborative based area, encourages people to learn and grow from one another and encourages conversation about the technologies/cliques of the arts. All of the Turnstone tables/chairs are movable to be configured into individual or group environments so people can really work at their best.

FOCUS

Libraries have traditionally been quiet spaces to allow for focus and concentration for the individual. Through the transformation we understand it is important for areas of collaboration and noise as well. With this comes the challenge of noise control and areas where you can successfully concentrate. A great furniture tool used in this design would be the Brody System which puts the individual in their own environment by the usage of partial walling built into it. This gives the user a protected hearing and also helps control any noises going on in the area. Incorporated well are Fix Sci Acoustic Tiling sets that drastically absorb noise that could be potentially distracting to a user of the library. Another focus aspect integrated into this design are the three larger conference rooms, three 2-person rooms and a larger study room. These rooms are a popular feature especially approaching finals week for students at a university and meetings for staff of a school. Another problem that static libraries have faced is not being equipped with enough outlets for charging devices that are brought in. Every piece of furniture aside from movable tables have built in outlets and pop up stations are available heavily around finished areas to accommodate for these devices.

APPLY

This design is centered around the importance of education and beyond. It is faceted with tools that allow for the utmost use of the space to learn and create individually and collaboratively. The vision is to help communities grow now, but also using the experiences one gains to be used in the future and enhance lives.
Primary Elements

• Service
• Resources
• Space
Makerspaces

18 of 20 students included a "makerspace"
meet > make > critique

- size varied
- centralized versus decentralized
- collaborative, social
Takeaways

• Students may still desire interaction with library staff
• Multi-functional space
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