

Stakeholder summary

Learning studios improve student and faculty satisfaction at Lambton College

Learning studios, which offer enhanced teaching and learning technologies, flexible furnishings and an open layout, are gaining popularity in many educational institutions. But what impact do they have on student achievement and success, as well as student and faculty satisfaction?

A study of learning studios at Lambton College, from the **Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)**, finds increased satisfaction from both students and faculty, largely driven by the expanded use of active learning strategies such as group work, discussions, analysis and problem-solving.

Measuring Student Success and Satisfaction in Technology-Enhanced Learning Studio Environments also finds that faculty are very satisfied with their teaching experience in learning studios.

Project description

Using a quantitative and qualitative approach, the authors seized the opportunity of Lambton College's conversion of a few classrooms into learning studios and the migration of courses to the new format. The study examined 11 courses where a section was taught one year in a classroom and the following year in a learning studio.

With the classroom as the control and the learning studio as the experimental venue, the achievement of learning outcomes, student completion of the course and the satisfaction of both students and faculty were compared for the two venues through analysis of demographic and administrative data as well as surveys and focus groups.

Findings

Overall, the study found a pattern of increased student satisfaction with learning studio sections. The students consistently noted that learning studios created an environment that was both physically and psychologically comfortable, and almost unanimously identified this as the most important impact of the space on the learning process and outcomes.

Students and faculty both noted that learning studios had a positive impact in encouraging and facilitating group and teamwork, and commented positively on the effect of the space in flattening the power hierarchy in classrooms – although this latter view was embraced more widely by students than faculty.

Students said that faculty adopted a broad range of active learning strategies in learning studios. With equal enthusiasm, faculty described how learning studios encouraged the adoption and implementation of active learning strategies that had not been possible or had failed in traditional classrooms. The majority of faculty members said neither the shift in teaching strategy nor the transition to learning studios created greater work for them.

The study did not find strong or significant evidence of improved student achievement and course completion in learning studios, although the authors note that the levels of student achievement and success were already quite high in the classroom sections and this might have made it difficult to find observable and statistically significant improvements.

Among shortcomings in the facilities, according to the study: a majority of students said that learning studio technologies were not fully or even adequately utilized, while faculty members said that their training in the use of these technologies was inadequate. The constant need to rearrange the furniture and set up the room at the beginning of each class was an irritant to the faculty and the IT infrastructure was not consistently capable of supporting smooth and uninterrupted operation of studio technology.

Further research/Policy implications

While the use of active learning strategies appears to improve satisfaction in the learning studio setting, the authors say more research is needed in this area. They also note that the success of the learning studio initiative will inevitably lead to pressures on the institution to direct additional resources to more learning studios.

*Authors of *Measuring Student Success and Satisfaction in Technology-Enhanced Learning Studio Environments* are Jim Elliott and Rachel Colquhoun, Lambton College.*