

North Melbourne Primary School

Parent Forum Presentation

13 April 2016

Openness, meaning flexible ideas about time and space for learning, is a concept that is changing perceptions of teaching and learning.

(Alterator & Deed, 2013)

Research findings

- Alterator & Deed (2013) identify 3 affordances of open learning spaces for teachers:
 - adaptability
 - intensification of day-to-day practice
 - intra- and inter-personal knowledge and skills

Research findings

The take-up of the affordances of new learning spaces depends on teachers identifying and using this potential (Woolner, Hall, Higgins, McCaughey, & Wall, 2007).

(Alterator & Deed, 2013)

Research findings

Flexibility

Before, it used to be one size fits all: we know what we're doing and the kids are just going to learn it. Now there's the constant questioning and how we can change what we're doing to meet the needs of students.

(Teacher D: Alterator & Deed, 2013)

Research findings

Increased visibility and scrutiny

There are more informal interactions. You are accessible. You are in constant contact with kids and colleagues all day. There's a lot more informal talk than there was. There are no walls, just windows. It's a good thing. I reckon you need that.

(Teacher B: Alterator & Deed, 2013)

Research findings

Increased visibility and scrutiny

There's much more pressure on us to perform. These learning spaces are much more than four walls.

(Teacher A: Alterator & Deed, 2013)

People can see your lesson. There is no privacy in your lesson. You feel like your teaching style is always being looked at by your peers and you're under pressure.

(Teacher B: Alterator & Deed, 2013)

Research findings

Increased visibility and scrutiny

There is usually more than one set of eyes on them [students]... it changes their behaviour in a positive way.

(Teacher A: Alterator & Deed, 2013)

I see the gains of an open learning space – I think a classroom is much more than four walls in terms of student learning and outcomes – ...it enables teachers to have that informal contact with students even though you don't teach them or you don't teach them regularly. You are walking past them communicating. It builds relationships between teachers and students. I believe it changes the behaviour of students: they are becoming more responsible for their actions.

(Teacher A: Alterator & Deed, 2013)

Research findings

Learning with and from one another

You can have conversations with teachers if they're teaching across from you. It is easy. You can have a conversation, rather than saying 'have you got ten minutes?'

(Teacher A: Alterator & Deed, 2013)

Mr P came to show me how to use the distillation machine. He just took the opportunity to show me. No planning. You couldn't really do that before. You would have to go out of your class. Knock on their door. Wait for an answer. Come in and ask... That sort of stuff happens more often.

(Teacher B: Alterator & Deed, 2013)

Research findings

Team orientation

Team orientation is the result of the combination of high levels of accountability as a result of visibility, joint planning, delivery and assessment; as well as the demands the space places on considering its use.

Now there's the constant questioning and how can we change what we're doing to meet the needs of the kids. This has fostered the teamwork. It's not just about photocopy costs. Now it is about learning. That in itself fosters team work. If the focus is on the learning and on the kids then everyone is coming from the same viewpoint. ...You've got this group of people together who have a common goal, a shared goal in terms of helping these kids learn. A shared goal makes a good team.

(Teacher D: Alterator & Deed, 2013)

Research findings

Learning places not learning spaces

We would suggest that the focus should be on people and learning places and not spaces... Place attachment can be produced through how learning spaces are designed and used. It is place attachment and various bounded places that impact on social interactions critical to student engagement and learning.

(Blackmore et al., 2011)

Research findings

Does the space make a difference?

The long-term success of the learning spaces movement lies in the hands of the classroom teacher. It is clear that a teacher's environmental competency is a clear predictor of any spaces impact to facilitate its intended pedagogical function.

(Byers & Imms, 2016)

References

Alterator, S. & Deed, C. (2013). Teacher adaptation to open learning spaces. *Issues in Educational Research*, 23(3), 315-

Byers, T. & Imms, W. (2016). *Does the space make a difference?* Brisbane: Churchie (Anglican Church Grammar School).

Blackmore, J., Bateman, D., O'Mara, J. & Loughlin, J. (2011). *The connections between learning spaces and learning outcomes: people and learning places?* Melbourne: Deakin University.