MAKING SPACE FOR MAKERSPACES

Redefining Library Spaces: Shanon Ashley, David Ballinger, Charlotte Dunn, Aubrey Jenkins, Jessica White

A makerspace is one way libraries can remain relevant in a period of unprecedented digital progress.

What is a makerspace?

A place where people …

- create, build, and invent with technology (Nichols, Melo, and Dewland, 2017)
- connect with ideas and collaborate (Barniskis, 2016)
- access learning and making opportunities, not limited to STEM/STEAM, 3D printing, fiber arts, visual arts, and woodworking

Why redefine library spaces?

- to provide more varied spaces and accommodate different needs of learners (Turner, Welch, and Reynolds, 2013)
- to encourage knowledge creation via group interaction and peer socialization (Sinclair, 2007)
- to satisfy users by creating physical spaces that make people want to come in (McArthur & Graham, 2015)

Who benefits from a makerspace?

- individuals synthesizing knowledge across disciplinary boundaries (Colegrove, 2013)
- users looking for a safe space in which to interact with their peers and take part in activities to help establish their identities (ex. LGBTQ community) (Moorefield-Lang & Kitzie, 2018)
- ELL students bonding with others, enhancing language acquisition, confidence, and cultural fluency (Murphy, 2018)

How does a makerspace serve the community?

- invites the customers to use the library as a platform, i.e., a set of resources (services, data, tools, studios, working areas, and other spaces), and enables them to independently create and experiment
- sets the library up as a "little city hall" which supports public involvement and allows residents to find information to influence the city and be involved in its decision making (Miettinen, 2018)

Makerspace in focus:
Richland Library

RICHLAND LIBRARY access freely.

- ✓ opened makerspace in 2016 at Columbia, S.C. Main branch
- ✓ 9 staff with skills ranging from studio arts to creative entrepreneurship
- ✓ media arts most popular followed by woodworking and fiberworks

(K. Andrus, personal communication, Nov. 6, 2018)

Conclusion

Makerspaces build relationships and strengthen communal learning. By creating shared spaces and experiences where authentic learning happens (digital or not), makerspaces are definitively how libraries stay current by defining the culture of their communities. We believe makerspaces are a benefit to not only the library, but the community, allowing it to learn and grow together.

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