

Creativity & Learning Spaces

Kashmira T. Dhirawani *

*** Assistant Librarian**

SNDT Women's University,
Knowledge Resource Centre,
Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.

QR Code



Abstract: - *This Paper explores the recent trend in libraries: that of the establishment of spaces specifically set aside for creative work, and discusses the practicalities of developing certain kinds of creative spaces. Focuses on library service spaces are the evidence of creation & innovations. Also new developments at IIT Mumbai library has been considered as creative spaces examples. Observational method has been employed for this paper. Personal visit to the IIT Library Mumbai was selected as the new developments had been taken place when visited. Phone interview held with Architect Sanjay Udamale for his views on this creation; and verbal consent has been received from him for using his photo gallery of this paper.*

Keywords: Creativity, Library spaces, Creative place, Physical space, Digital space, Makerspaces, Media centers, IIT Library Mumbai

Introduction

Learning takes place only when any individual involves himself in it. It involves different actors such as teachers, learners, learning institutions, learning content providers, and family, friends, colleagues and other peers (including virtual ones — via chat.) The place where all these actors meet and interconnect for learning purposes or for sharing experiences could be conceived as a learning space. An individual's learning space could be, for instance, a personal space on the Internet that contains all relevant learning information. Location of learning space its architecture should provide meeting points that

differ from traditional class-room teaching style settings. Such creative learning space has learner's engagement with the learning process, their motivation to explore, experience and discover (i.e. to be creative), and on them becoming more active, autonomous learners.

Creative spaces in libraries have appeared lately into existence in the library scene, they are creative spaces in libraries as the philosophies, values, and missions of libraries in both their long-standing forms and in recent evolutions; the rise of participatory culture as a result of inexpensive technologies and improved means to build community and share results of efforts (i.e., the influence of the Internet & social

media); and library experience and historical practice in matters related to creativity, an experience and history which means libraries need these new developments. Until now it has not been possible for libraries to support creative effort. Modern libraries focus on making information resources and services across a range of media available in support of the acquiring content rather than its creation. Now, with available resources with the help of consortia/s with cheaper rates, ease of use as the user hold smart technology on hand, familiarity with both the products and processes of creative endeavors providing them literacy training, library creative spaces are now responsible for creativity (Bonn & Furlough, 2015). The spaces primarily support creativity in one or more forms. They are appropriate in libraries because the kinds of creativity they support are at heart about the integration of information (i.e., knowledge creation) and the sharing of the same.

Literature

Cunningham and Tabur (2012) discussed a four-level hierarchy of attributes in relation to the ideal learning space. According to Lippincott(2010)Information Commons are popular with millennial (also called net generation) students, who often work in groups, use technology avidly, and combine their academic and social lives. P21(n.d.) Partnership for 21 Century Learning - advocates that 21st century students need to master among the

Review

skills, knowledge, and expertise on which they focus. The Association of College & Research Libraries(2015a)states five year goals to transform learning, instructional practices through innovative collaboration (2015b). “Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education” defines information creation as a process and emphasize on media literacy. American Library Association in its strategic plan, adopted in June (2015), articulates a number of related points like core organizational values is a commitment to excellence and innovation, recognizes the use of technology as necessary literacy. Public Library Association- a division of the American Library Association (2014),states that library is a place for content creation. Horrigan (2015) presents a new survey from Pew Research Center, reporting that libraries are important community institutions and profess interest in libraries offering a range of new program possibilities. Sanjay Udamale (2017) architect of IIT, Mumbai, explains that there was the requirement of additional space for physical & digital functions of library & the library was considered as core of knowledge at this campus.

Library Creative Spaces

The term “library creative spaces” is used here to encompass a number of different kinds of library service spaces that focus wholly or in part on content creation. Likewise under this definition, the entire library could be considered

a creative space – as it is – the term here is used specifically to refer to spaces that are set aside within a library to focus on the creation of non-textual content, which could include drawings and photographs, audio materials, videos, three-dimensional objects (whether handmade or 3D printed), programmed electronic devices, computer coding and other programming, web-based multimedia, and more. Such spaces typically will offer:

- Dedicated space-that in no way resembles normal working conditions. The features which characterize it are: privacy, multiple media for working, including whiteboard walls and technology to capture thoughts and ideas, and a distinctive design of layout and decoration.
- Tools, materials, and equipment for use by learners in co-operative ways of working which encourage the contribution of all. This includes computer-assisted collaborative working tools, such as anonymous brainstorming software, and the use of a variety of facilitation techniques to stimulate and capture this contribution. Such tools have the additional benefit of relieving the group of the need to stop and write up as they go – both ideas and plans are captured in the process of working.
- Some level of support, whether in the form of staff expertise and facilitation, classes and instruction, online resources,

or some combination of those. Facilitation techniques to stimulate open, creative thinking, and to lead the group in focusing and extracting useable outcomes from this thinking.

- Aesthetics – described as clean, nicely furnished/decorated – and doesn't feel like classroom, better space than most of our other teaching spaces and unique environment, modern efficient, warm comfortable, well equipped, place.
- Its unique atmosphere – It is a positive experience in an informal environment, the room influences creative thinking, more open in that interaction is possible. Meaning a much more enjoyable time, much more personal, feel open to comment honestly, with technological equipment available and the round tables make it a creative space.
- A range of uses –the space is excellent for group discussions, seminars, tutorials, team work, workshops and training sessions. involving students in creative thinking, problem solving, planning for the future and presenting their ideas, especially with the use of writable whiteboard and anonymous software.

Another modern library-based creative space is the media center, media services center, digital media center, or other designated space dedicated to the use of media creation tools for the creation and sharing of knowledge. Such

spaces might include cameras, video recorders, audio recorders, production studios, sound booths, and hardware and software associated with creating, editing, and distributing graphics, recordings, and other media products.

Lately Makerspaces came into library existence is a group of people dedicated to craftsmanship and creation. These spaces are collaborative learning environments where people come together to share materials and learn new skills not necessarily born out of a specific set of materials or spaces, but rather a mindset of community partnership, collaboration, and creation.(Hussain&Faizal, 2017)

Creativity Defined

Creativity is the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions. Creativity involves two processes: thinking, then producing.(<https://www.creativityatwork.com/>)

Library creativity as a general rule is less concerned the expression of a new “mental combination” in the world. In recent years, theorists in a number of fields have identified a number of skills, practices, and habits of mind as being particularly important and useful for the 21st century learners.

Twenty-First-Century Skills

P21-Partnership for 21 Century Learning, a national nonprofit with membership drawn from educational organizations and businesses that advocates for “21st century readiness for every student,” has identified a set of student outcomes that they believe students need to master (P21, n.d.). Among the skills, knowledge, and expertise on which they focus are found:

Learning and Innovation Skills, including creativity and innovation; critical thinking and problem solving; and communication and collaboration.

Information, Media and Technology Skills, including media literacy, which entails both media analysis and media creation, and ICT (information and communications technology) literacy.

Life and Career Skills, including flexibility and adaptability; initiative & self-direction; and social & cross-cultural skills.

The Association of College & Research Libraries (2015b) “Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” filed recently by the ACRL board as one of several such documents around information literacy, include similar creativity-oriented standards for students in colleges and universities. In defining information creation as a process, the authors of

the framework emphasize analytical media literacy when suggesting that the information creation process “could result in a range of information formats and modes of delivery” and that “the dynamic nature of information creation and dissemination requires ongoing attention to understand evolving creation processes.” They emphasize the need to understand media formats and their impact on the information being conveyed.

Libraries and educational institutions of all kinds are clearly placing emphasis on the support of creativity as core to their missions moving deeper into the current century. It pays attention to creativity and support of the exploration of new technology that are already core values of libraries and are seen by the public as part of their mission. It helps local businesses, job seekers, and those upgrading their work skills, embrace new technologies such as 3-D printers and provide services to help learners to learn about high-tech gadgetry (Horrigan, 2015). The Values, Philosophies, and Missions of Libraries as articulated within professional organizations point the way toward library support of creativity within their walls.

American Library Association in its strategic plan, adopted in June 2015, the American Library Association articulates a number of related points. Among their Core Organizational Values is a commitment to excellence and innovation. In one “Key Action Area” on the

equitable access to information and library services, the Association “recognizes the critical need for access to library and information resources, services, and technologies by all people,” especially those facing a number of challenging barriers, the organization similarly recognizes the use of technology as a necessary literacy (p. 2) and further,

ALA provides leadership in the transformation of libraries and library services in a dynamic and increasingly global digital information environment. Every library is a hub of community engagement, innovation and continual learning. (p. 3)

Among the goals of their advocacy initiative, the ALA declares that “the library is a hub of community engagement and continual learning: a place to form the critical thinking skills fundamental to learning in a technologically evolving world, to access information, and to create and share new knowledge.” (p. 3)

Association of College and Research Libraries holds as a core organizational value a commitment to “visionary leadership, transformation, new ideas, and global perspectives” and one of their five-year goals is “Librarians transform student learning, pedagogy, and instructional practices through creative and innovative collaborations.” Two relevant objectives help meet this goal: “Identify innovative practices in learning environments and instruction that enable

academic librarians to transform learning” and “Increase understanding of new models of information fluency as pedagogy evolves”. (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2015a)

Public Library Association- a division of the American Library Association(2014),“The library as a place for content creation will continue to grow, More and more people will use the library’s technology resources, Technology will allow libraries the opportunity to attract and serve new client groups, Technology will affect everything libraries do, Technology training will continue to be a challenge, Online social networking will continue to evolve. There will be a greater interest and demand for user-generated content.”

IIT Mumbai Library- Library Spaces

IIT Bombay’s Central Library is like IIT Bombay – user-focused, innovative, and excellence driven. The library has always benefited from the institutes’ culture, is pioneer in adopting new technology, and is far ahead than many libraries in the country. The Central Library manages knowledge, both in print and digital formats, ensures seamless discovery and access to these scholarly resources, and provides faculty, students, and staff with professional support to find, evaluate, manage, and use such resources. It provides high-quality ambiance for both reflective and collaborative work and study with resources

of 4.40 lakh items is used by more than 11000 members and others. The library extensively uses social media for improved communication and interaction.

Renovation Plans – Creative Spaces

IIT Bombay Library has planned for a major renovation of its building infrastructure and other facilities including addition of a new floor. Envisages complete face lift of its entrance and circulation area, with a beautiful lobby and exhibit area, reorganization of reference and periodicals reading halls, providing a variety of users spaces for individual and group studies, creation of digital knowledge lab and language lab, improved staff work areas and a large reading hall open for 24×7. (Fig.1-6)

Architectural plan of library has taken care of inspiring environment, natural lights to make it as pleasant ambience. Extension to the building is planned seamlessly for external & internal space. Entire library site is redesigned as open plan & views across various spaces surrounding greens. The main entrance is designed as a large canopy above the glass box giving great institutional feel with a café & landscape for informal sittings. Building is fully air conditioned creating comfort, Natural light, white color & pastel shades texture and furniture create a calm, peaceful, refreshing atmosphere for study in concentrations.

Conclusion

Creativity has been valued throughout human generation to generations. Robust technologies are available for relatively minimal costs. Libraries that have long-standing commitments to their communities and missions to serve information gathering and knowledge creation have new tools available to them. Libraries having long public recognition and support for their role in information access and preservation. As of now new tools permit new ways of creating and expressing knowledge, and dedicating spaces to supporting that creativity is a natural way. Another way to help determine exactly what kind of creative space is appropriate for the organization is to look closely at the vision and mission of the library.

Fig.1-6 The Central Library, IIT Bombay, Mumbai (Photo gallery @ [http:// www.e-architect.co.uk/India/iitbl-central-library-iit-bombay-mumbai/](http://www.e-architect.co.uk/India/iitbl-central-library-iit-bombay-mumbai/))

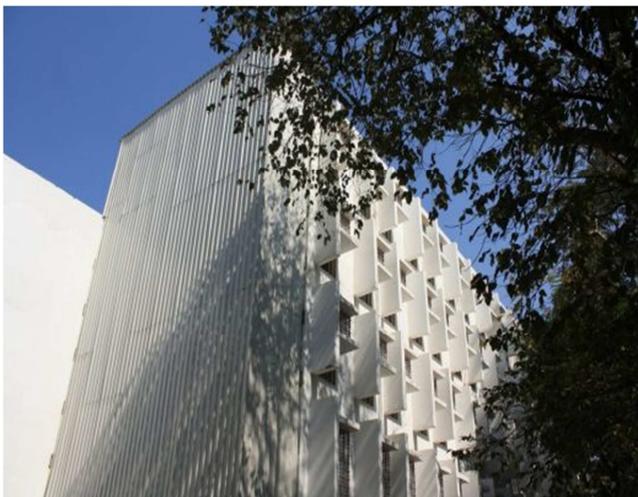


Fig.1 Library building



Fig.2 24X7 Reading Room



Fig 3Periodicals Inter View



Fig 4 Periodicals Outview



Fig 5 Digital Knowledge Lab



Fig 6 Language Laboratory

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