The Digital media commons and the digital literacy center collaborate: The growing pains of creating a sustainable learning space

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Abstract:

Learning spaces that focus on technology in addition to writing and speaking are quickly becoming the norm, much like the newest learning space at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. As "many of the traditional expectations of faculty and students about where and how learning occurs have become unstable … and the nature of knowledge production has changed drastically from print to pixels," technology-enhanced media labs, library commons spaces, and multimodal support services that were once unusual and new-fangled are starting to become a logical extension of the ways people learn, find information, know, and create content (Elmborg, 2005, p. 7).

Keywords: library planning | technology | program development | digital learning spaces | library infrastructure

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Introduction

Learning spaces that focus on technology in addition to writing and speaking are quickly becoming the norm, much like the newest learning space at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. As "many of the traditional expectations of faculty and students about where and how learning occurs have become unstable … and the nature of knowledge production has changed drastically from print to pixels," technology-enhanced media labs, library commons spaces, and multimodal support services that were once unusual and new-fangled are starting to become a logical extension of the ways people learn, find information, know, and create content (Elmborg, 2005, p. 7).

In response to these changes, over the past decade academic libraries have evolved from providing resources and services to also offering quality technology-enhanced learning environments for their campuses (Accardi, 2010; Bailey, 2008; Beagle, 2006). Many libraries include an information, knowledge, or learning commons where students may discover the information they need through these libraries' online and print resources, and students, using a

variety of productivity software, can then go on to create a finished product. More recently, these commons have grown to include multimedia or digital support so that students may create videos, podcasts, and other digital projects, as well as traditional research papers. These learning spaces include individual and group settings and provide staffing to help students find the needed information, use the technology, and complete the final product.

On many campuses other learning and teaching support offices including writing centers, speaking centers, and teaching and learning centers; some tutoring centers are also housed in libraries. One reason housing these units in the library makes sense might be because staff at these offices, like staff at the library, serve as mediators between students and faculty (Elmborg, 2005). The arrangement provides an optimum experience for students, as they work on course assignments, to have all these learning resources conveniently in one location. Good examples of conveniently located resources include the [Knowledge Commons, Marriot Library, University of Utah](), the [Digital Media Lab, Weigle Information Commons, Penn Libraries, University of Pennsylvania](), the [Writing and Research Center, Odegaard Undergraduate Library, University of Washington](), [The Noel Studio for Academic Creativity at Eastern Kentucky University](), and Grand Valley State University's [Mary Idema Pew Library Learning and Information Commons](). Having resources located near one another also can foster excellent cross-collaboration among the staff for joint programs, training, and faculty development.

Although sustainable learning spaces which feature technology support for patrons has not quite become the norm on all higher education campuses, it is clear that there is now a need for collaborative learning spaces that can meet the needs of learners in this new media literacy environment. Furthermore, while it is not unusual for libraries to have digital media learning spaces, it is unusual for libraries to pair with emerging multiliteracy centers in order to expand the services for media designers beyond functional support and into the critical and rhetorical contexts that new media projects demand. This unique collaboration adds support beyond helping patrons learn how to use technology. Patrons can also become effective designers, learning how to better convey messages through shape, space, style, and form.

As libraries shift from simply being thought of as locations of stored knowledge to places for generating new knowledge, one result can be the kind of collaboration between UNCG's Multiliteracy Centers and University Libraries that produced a learning space that we hope will be sustainable. And, as future designers think about the creation of such learning spaces, we hope the challenges and rewards that leadership encountered at UNCG can serve as an early road map in the creation of spaces that are flexible in ways that can support long-term physical, organizational, and relational sustainability.

In these early days of creating a new digital learning space in the library (when there were no models to reference), the collaboration produced the labor pains that are a natural part of such a process. Furthermore, not knowing what to expect only exacerbated the difficulties. As the collaboration between the libraries and the Multiliteracy Centers digital literacy center developed, the two constituencies worked to build on their evolving successes and address the challenges of creation, both of which are necessary for a productive long-term vision. In his discussion of how design and creativity impact both space and relationships over time, Newcomb (2012) recognized that long-term vision is an essential part of the creation and design process,

suggesting that the design of space (or writing assignments) is fundamentally rhetorical in nature, impacting all involved agents: authors (designers), audience (users, administrators, leadership), and message (purpose and goal of design). In particular, Newcomb argued for intentionally examining the way design decisions create a deep impact on physical space and human relationships. He argued that when "creating with design, … the creation is not basically one of expression but rather an innovative response to a perceived situation and need" (p. 594). And perhaps more importantly, he states that "design ultimately makes more than object or an arrangement—it makes new contexts and associations" (p. 594).

When designing learning spaces, it is Newcomb's approach that offers insight into why collaborations such as the renovation of UNCG's Jackson Library basement created such a strong ripple effect on the relationships of the people involved and the way the patrons used the space. Design doesn't (and can't) happen in a vacuum: it has consequences, some intentional, some unforeseen. Designing physical space creates "ongoing relationships," demanding attention to sustainability (Newcomb, 2012, p. 594).

Lee, Alfano, and Carpenter (2013) argued that flexibility is key for a sustainable future, especially since there is no way to know what specific types of space or services might be needed in the future. With flexibility as the key, what are the long-term consequences of creating sustainable learning spaces? How will the flexible design of these spaces impact the physical, organizational, and human relationships that result from its creation? Given how technology has changed in the last 20 years and that new learning spaces seem inextricably tied to and driven by technology (production, interpretation, and media), how do flexible learning spaces address these issues of sustainability? Or, in other words, as designers of flexible spaces, how do we account for long-term physical, organizational, and relational sustainability when we begin with such seemingly young, ephemeral, and evolving material practices and artifacts that will likely change faster than we can plan for, including the technology, the ways the space is used, and the relationships that our design generates?

The Libraries and the Multiliteracy Centers created two support offices: The Digital Media Commons (DMC) and the Digital Literacy Center (DLC), respectively. At the end of the first full semester of operation, our experiences revealed several key tensions, including a need for aligning missions and goals, navigating new space, training staff, and coordinating marketing efforts. To best position this new learning space to sustain itself in the coming years, as well as to best meet the needs of patrons and designers, this collaboration needed to negotiate these tensions with a mindful eye toward relationship building, supporting physical, organizational, and human relations needs. This chapter will first describe the background of the project in order to provide the context surrounding the development of the Digital Media Commons and the Digital Literacy Center. We will then address the challenges and rewards of each of these tensions. Finally, we will look at the long-term implications of trying to maintain a flexible learning space that seems, at times, inherently transient in nature.

Background and Context

The Libraries Brief History

At UNCG, the University Libraries have provided enhanced technology services for teaching and learning since 2007, when most of the computers available in both Jackson (the main campus library) and the Schiffman Music Library started including productivity software as well as access to the Libraries' catalogs, online resources, and the Internet. The seeds for the Libraries' Digital Media Commons were planted in 2009 when the Libraries began discussing the desire to house such a service in the main campus library. Many academic libraries already offered support for digital media, such as developing videos, podcasts, and web pages. It was clear that a digital media service would fit two of the Libraries' established goals of providing learning spaces:

- To provide quality information services, systems, facilities, and learning environments from which the University community would gather information and conduct research;
- To establish an environment for collaborative learning and individual reflection and ensure that the Libraries' services and resources supported student activities and research in partnership with academic faculty. (from http://library.uncg.edu/info/mission_statement.aspx)

In addition, a new active learning space would support a major learning goal of the University's 2009-2014 Strategic Plan:Goal 3.5: Infuse critical thinking, communication, and information literacy throughout the undergraduate curriculum (21st Century Skills). The 3.5 goal was to be met by offering conversations with trained DLC consultants during which designers would be "applauded for what they already [knew] and [were] supplied the rhetorical tools to move to the next stage of the production" (Gresham, 2010, p. 40).

To begin the investigation and gain more information, the library leadership formed a task force in Spring 2009, with the goals of conducting background research and making recommendations. The taskforce membership included Associate Dean for Public Services, Data Services Librarian, Head of Access Services, Associate Dean for Electronic Resources and Information Technology, and Distance Education Librarian. The task force began with an environmental scan of media support services at UNCG. It was clear that while there were media services for faculty in the University Teaching and Learning Center and a lab for students enrolled in Media Studies courses, there were no services for staff or the general student body. On other UNCG campuses, two of the three system peer institutions had media production technology for all students. In addition, five of UNCG's peer institutions at the time offered media production support.

The next step was to conduct a needs assessment of UNCG students. The University Libraries sent a survey to undergraduate and graduate students in Spring 2010, asking if they had developed a video for a class assignment, if it was required by the professor, what equipment they used, and if they received any assistance from an office on campus. The survey was conducted by the Libraries. (This survey was done before the library knew about adding the Digital Literacy Center to the Multiliteracy Centers.) The 835 student responses revealed a potential need for digital support services. While not a large number of the respondents (14%) indicated they completed a video project, of those who did, 60% reported that the projects were required by their professors, and 28% developed video projects because they decided such projects were the best way to fulfill assignments. A little more than half (52%) of students used their own digital camera or video camera, and 22% borrowed one from the University offices

that provided them at that time. Of those who developed a video, 77.6% did not receive any assistance, and 54% would have appreciated help with their productions. Most of the respondents (69%) were graduate students or upper-level undergraduates. When asked for suggestions to improve digital support services at UNCG, the responses indicated the following: better publicity about available services, more equipment available for checkout, and assistance available from media experts. The results of the survey and investigation led the task force to recommend that a digital media center be established by the Libraries, including equipment, infrastructure, and staff needs.

In summer 2011, the Libraries identified funds for constructing and outfitting a Digital Media Commons. Planning began with housing the Commons in the lower level of Jackson Library, the campus main library. This floor had been a major stack space for 60 years and was often referred to as the "creepy basement," so it was difficult to re-see it as service space. However, it was a large area with windows and pleasant natural light. Furthermore, it had small rooms originally used as faculty carrels that were perfect for media editing rooms. A weeding process, already started to clear that floor of books, was accelerated in order to get the space ready.

Figure 1: The ceiling of the library basement pre-construction

Figure 2: Stacks of shelving in the pre-construction basement

Figure 3: Rows of shelves in the pre-construction basement

Figures 1 - 3 show the room before construction began.

The Multiliteracy Centers Brief History

At about the same time, the Writing and Speaking Centers, part of the Multiliteracy Centers program housed in the Office of Undergraduate Studies on campus, proposed a digital literacy center to complement the Centers' services already in place. According to an October 2011 white paper, a digital literacy center would provide consultants who could assist students to "understand their multimedia projects as arguments and to negotiate the contexts of audience, genre, and occasion as they affect their projects" (Cuny, Ellis, Littlejohn, Whitaker, & Yarbrough p. 2).

As plans for the DLC were emerging, changes to the internal structure that would house the program were well underway. The University's writing and speaking curricular program, Communication across the Curriculum, served as the original unit home of the two centers. As this nearly ten-year-old organizational structure became outdated and center literature shifted focus to multimodal composing, a new unit called the Multiliteracy Centers (MLC) emerged. Today, the mission of the MLC is still to support students, faculty, and staff in their awareness of

how multiple literacies (written, oral, spatial, visual, gestural, and multimodal) impact ways of learning, communicating, and composing. This mission is realized in the work of each center.

The DLC would make its home in the Multiliteracy Centers program alongside its well-established sister centers. In particular, the speaking center would provide public, interpersonal, and group communication feedback, collaborative conversations, and instruction for individuals and groups, as well as workshops for speakers at any point in their speaking process. The speaking center provided approximately 7,500 contact interventions in 2010-2011 (this number includes one-on-one sessions, groups sessions, orientations and workshops). Similarly, the writing center primarily would provide one-on-one feedback for individuals and groups. The writing center had approximately 10,500 contact interventions in 2010-2011 (this number also includes one-on-one sessions, groups sessions, orientations, and workshops). The writing center was started in 1986; the speaking center began in 2003.

The resulting MLC organizational structure and leadership is unique. The centers are not competing for resources with one another, as is the case for some center programs across the country. Instead, the directors of each center co-direct the MLC. While this shared decision making and empowerment leadership model does not fit the traditions of our campus, it has been successful. The flexibility inherent in shared decision making, along with reporting directly to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, has led to a healthy and sustainable level of understanding, transparency, autonomy, and ownership over issues ranging from budgeting to branding.

The Collaboration Begins

When the Provost heard of these ideas, he strongly encouraged the two units to work together, and thus a collaborative effort was born. The work was fast-tracked by University Facilities Design & Construction at the Provost's direction. The expectation was that the project would be completed before the end of the fiscal year. That timeline gave the project team roughly eight months to complete all planning, construction, purchasing, and installation.

Because sharing "space provides an important enough concern to warrant dialogue and consensus-building," the two areas began a period of intensive meeting and planning (Inman, 2010, p. 22). Both were committed to providing this joint service for the students, faculty, and staff so that everyone on campus could receive assistance with technical and rhetorical aspects of creating a digital project. Although it could be considered a positive development, the accelerated schedule for opening this service also posed a great challenge for the DLC. While the Libraries provided the funding to create the physical space, the academic unit that housed the DLC provided little support for the project, which proved difficult for long-term planning because of the unsure footing this lack of funding created: accounting for tomorrow is difficult when today seems out of reach. Considering the funding situation and Inman's argument that center directors on such design teams "should strive to be respectful of the knowledge and experience of faculty, staff, and students with whom they come into contact because that respectfulness will engender greater willingness to collaborate and consider future possibilities," the Writing and Speaking Center Directors, acting as project consultants for undergraduate studies, moved forward carefully (2010, p. 26). Advocating strategically and successfully for a particular agenda is no easy task in such a situation. A key concern was how to privilege the

need to "think about the implications of space and how architecture facilitates (or inhibits) multimodal thinking and the composing process" while representing the unit which was offering no funding for the project (Lee, Alfano, & Carpenter, 2013, p. 44). This organizational situation would later provide ongoing tension, threatening the sustainability of human relations for the staff who work in the physical space each day.

Collaborative Costs and Contributions

Because the DMC was a major priority, the University Libraries directed considerable financial and staff resources toward the project. In preparation, staff from across the Libraries spent a great deal of time identifying print resources from the Libraries' collections to remove from the stacks. For the most part, these were journal back files to which the Libraries had online access, so important content was not lost. Once the weeding project was completed, another time-intensive shifting project successfully moved the remaining volumes among nine floors of stacks. Substantial staff time was also devoted to planning, designing, and installing equipment, software, and technology.

The Libraries earmarked nearly a half million dollars to devote to outfitting and furnishing the DMC. These funds, which had to be spent before the end of the academic year, went to support the design, infrastructure preparation, and renovation of the space. Once the space was cleared out, installation of additional electricity and data ports were needed, along with painting, carpeting, and other repairs. The design included four staff offices—two for Libraries staff and for DLC staff—as well as four collaborative group spaces for DLC consultations. These spaces were cubicles with fabric walls rather than fixed structures (for future flexibility). A variety of furniture, including comfortable seating, counter-height tables, and computer tables conducive to small group work, along with a central information desk and office furniture, outfitted the space. The technology purchases for the renovation came as a result of conversations focused on future usage of the space. As these conversations took part between all stakeholders, and flexibility of spaces was at the forefront of these talks, the sustainability of human relations benefitted. Purchases included:

- Personal computers (27 total, eight of which had dual monitors)
- Printer for patrons to use and a Pharos printing license
- Three scanners
- Adobe Premier and Adobe Creative Suite
- TextBridge (on all machines except for three scanners and the Pharos release station)
- Four wireless keyboards for consultation spaces
- Four plasma screens for consultation spaces
- One plasma TV for the screening room
- Microphones
- One camera
- Classroom multimedia podium
- One ceiling mounted projector and screen
- One Canon VIXIA HF M400 camcorder/tripod
- Agati inTouch
- DVS/VHS Converter/Player

- Assorted cables
- Four iPad 3's
- An Apple digital AV adapter and an iPad dock,
- Headphones and other peripherals. (T. Bucknall, personal communication, April 26, 2012)

The Libraries also support the DMC with ongoing human resources. Two vacant staff positions from other departments created leadership for the DMC. One was a daytime supervisor, and the other an evening/weekend supervisor. In addition, the Libraries supported two 20-hour per week graduate assistants to work in the DMC. Tuition waivers from teaching units on campus and the Libraries funded the stipends. There were also approximately 75 hours per week of undergraduate student assistant support. The DMC supervisors reported to the Head of Access Services, whose job description expanded to include the DMC. The Libraries' IT department offered ongoing support and maintenance of the computers and software, including those in the DLC offices. DLC staff reporting to Undergraduate Studies while working in a physical location belonging to the University Libraries could be a threat to the sustainability of human relations. IT support provided a good example of this threat as both the University Libraries and Undergraduate Studies have their own IT support people.

Lacking institutional support, the DLC was authorized, with seven thousand dollars of one-time funds, to purchase a MacBook for the DLC director, iPads and supplies for consultations, and a network printer for both DMC and DLC office use. Starting with the second semester of operation, with Title III funds, the future DLC director was a staff position reporting directly to Undergraduate Studies. The same funding source allowed for undergraduate wages, a graduate assistant director, marketing, and some equipment purchases over a five-year period. In accordance with all Title III funding, at the end of the five years, UNCG would have to sustain the ongoing cost of the DLC.

Project Planning

The Libraries initiated the first space planning discussions with faculty and staff from the Undergraduate Studies program's Communications Across the Curriculum (CAC), which was the previous home for the writing and speaking centers, Libraries Administration, University Planning, and other campus stakeholders. In the months that followed, a core project team emerged from this group that consisted of the Dean of Libraries, the Associate Dean for Public Services (Libraries), Assistant Dean for Administrative Services (Libraries), Assistant Dean for Electronic Resources and Information Technology (Libraries), Head of Access Services (Libraries), University Speaking Center Director (Undergraduate Studies), University Writing Center Director (Undergraduate Studies), and the Communications Across the Curriculum program Chair (Undergraduate Studies). Faculty from the Media Studies Department were periodically engaged in the space and service planning conversations as well.

In addition to this time constraint, building code and budgetary limitations dictated that the DMC plans could include no "new construction," meaning that no walls could be moved or built during the project. The Libraries had made successful use of partial walls to construct staff work spaces

in other parts of Jackson Library in the past, so this limitation was already well understood. The project team knew what acceptable enclosures could still be constructed.

The physical site for the DMC presented its own set of challenges to the project, many of which would ultimately dictate much of the layout for the Commons. For one, there was a lack of power and data throughout the space. During the construction phase, this was corrected by adding new or additional power and data to all of the columns throughout the basement space. Some data ports were added but not activated, giving the DMC some room to expand or change its technology footprint over time and as needed.

The basement space had poor lines of sight—it contained many small nooks and alcoves, and there were multiple entrances to the space. The area had low ceilings, numerous columns (many spaced in no clear or symmetric pattern), as well as exposed ductwork, pipes, valves, vents, and a loud air handler. Before construction, the basement area housed hundreds of rows of tall, iron shelving full of bound journals and books. Above each aisle and between these shelving stacks, a row of fluorescent ceiling lights were hung to brighten that space. After the shelving was removed and the DMC construction space was clear, some found the exposed overhead lighting intensely bright and perhaps less conducive to viewing and working with digital media on a screen. Others found the air handler too loud and the open presentation space with poor acoustics. There were no immediate funds to correct these issues, so adjustments were put on hold.

Figure 3 (repeated from above): Rows of shelves in the pre-construction basement

The project team began the planning discussions by generating a quick list of the features that all agreed must be present in the space: a service desk to be staffed by Libraries personnel during all hours of operation, four staff office spaces (two for library staff and two for Digital Literacy Center staff), a shared staff work space for printing, equipment and supplies storage, and media editing rooms.

The service desk required a central location, visible to patrons from any of the entrances to the Commons, and where desk staff could also view all sections of the facility at once. Because of the placement of columns and walls in the basement area, only two areas in the site met most of those requirements. A second requirement for the service desk was that it be near the computer workstation area, since it was believed those patrons would be most likely to need frequent,

hands-on, technical assistance from staff. The third requirement for the service desk was that it be placed close to the staff offices, with all staff offices together in the same area. Given these three requirements, only one location seemed feasible for the service desk.
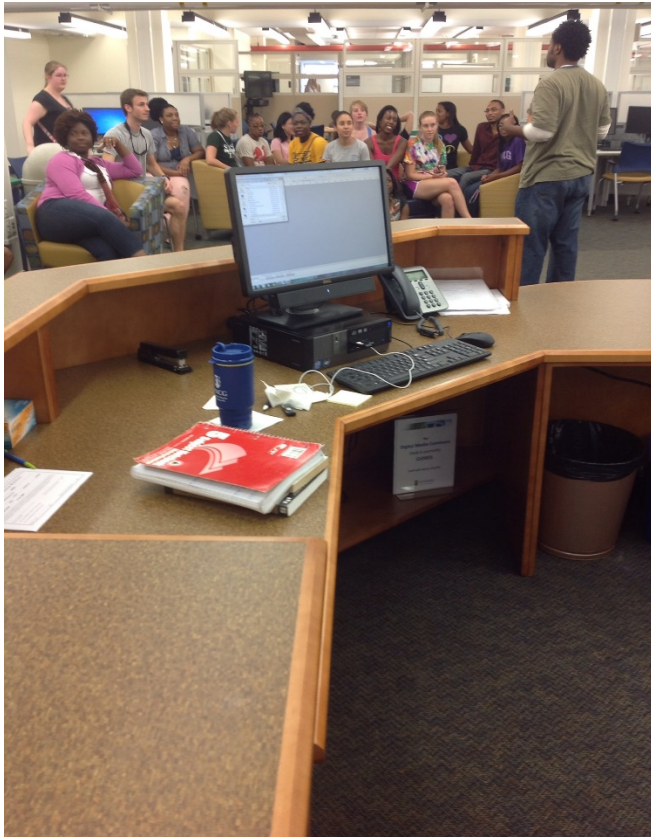

Figure 4: The service desk is in a central location

Inman (2010) cautioned that design teams like ours should have conversations in which we "consider whether single-user computer workstations provide one-to-one teaching and learning opportunities or instead turn the center into a standard campus computer lab, effectively devoid of the use-based foundation designed into other spaces in the center" (p. 27). We agreed that our computing workstations needed to be located together in a single area, for ease of support from DMC staff. They also needed to be out of the main traffic pattern of the Commons area. The goal was to foster and ensure a certain type of work atmosphere in one portion of the Commons—a semi-private environment that encouraged and supported either group or individual computing, with low to moderate noise levels and easy access to helpful staff. Littlejohn and Cuny (2013) questioned how a patron's experiences in the DMC might communicate that it is not just another computer lab.

Media Editing Rooms were another required feature for the space, based on the growing presence of video and audio creation and editing in current UNCG student assignments as well as recent literature and trends in pedagogy. As digital natives, our students tend to be digital native *consumers*, but it is even more important for higher education to prepare them to be "digital authors" of multimedia projects within their disciplines, and editing rooms were integral to making this shift (Lind, 2012; Lippincott, 2007). Although tensions from the cross-unit

organizational structure were building, our DMC/DLC partnership otherwise positioned us well as we looked to prepare students, faculty, and staff to become better informed digital authors with media editing and beyond.

Rooms

The library's basement space contained six small, enclosed office spaces originally designed as faculty study carrels. Because these small enclosures had all been outfitted with power and data over the past decade, they were ideal as media editing spaces. Best practices in speaking center administration illustrated the need for adding windows, and prior to the DMC opening, the doors of these rooms were equipped with small windows to improve security and visibility from the DMC service desk.

A Presentation Practice Room was planned for the project to support the work of Digital Literacy consultants and other student presentation needs. One of two existing enclosed rooms was repurposed for this use and outfitted with projection and recording equipment: an overhead digital projector, a wall-mounted and remote-controlled HD camcorder, a touch control console at the teaching station, and a direct phone line to the campus classroom technology help desk. The projector, teaching station, and phone line are standard features in all classrooms on campus, as is the support from the classroom technology (a support office in Undergraduate Studies). The camcorder and recording arrangement were new and unique technology offerings on campus.

Some of the more distinctive features of the new space were the four Consultation Rooms, designed primarily to support group consultations for the Digital Literacy Center staff. These rooms were important because, without them, consultants would not have "opportunities to learn and grow as one-to-one teachers" (Inman, 2010, p. 20). These rooms were constructed with partial walls, which left a gap of roughly 24" between the top of the wall and the ceiling. The top third of these walls were capped with glass at the request of the center directors, to provide improved sight lines between consultants in the rooms and supervisors, and to help service desk staff see and respond to patrons in those enclosed spaces. Each of the four rooms contained tables and seating for eight and, a dry erase marker board; three of the rooms also contained a PC and 32" LCD monitor mounted to a mobile stand. All rooms had whiteboards on wheels, and a wireless mouse and keyboard. The consultation rooms were constructed without doors, in order to allow the consultant or other patrons to enter and leave active group discussions with very little disruption. The rooms felt surprisingly private and managed to retain sound well. During the DMC's first semester of operation, Digital Literacy Center staff reserved these spaces for consultations, reserving ten morning and afternoon hours of operation each week. At times when the DLC consultants had the rooms reserved but did not need them, others were free to make use of them. This practice of transient squatting was consistent with patron practices in the Jackson Library's other reservable spaces. Different here was the dual use by the DLC. When not scheduled for consultations, these spaces were continuously reserved by other groups for collaborative work.

Figure 5: Consultation taking place

Figure 6: Students using the whiteboard

Figure 7: Small group discussion

Figure 8: Students work individually

A second existing enclosed room in the basement was repurposed as a multi-use "Large Group Study Room" and became the location for DLC weekly staff training. The room was equipped with a large, wall-mounted dry erase marker board and tables with seating for 14 patrons. The planning team decided to leave this reservable room minimally designed so it could "continue to be transformed and adapted" (Lee, Alfano, & Carpenter, 2013, p. 55).

The planning team chose to commit roughly one-fourth of the overall Commons "open" or public area specifically to computing space. To this end, the space included powered computing tabletop areas—some with workstations provided by the libraries—and tables left empty for patrons supplying their own laptops or other mobile devices. These computing tables were clustered together around columns to take advantage of the power and data, to maximize the use of the limited space, and also to provide a semi-private working environment.

All of the rooms in the DMC, including the consultation rooms, could be reserved through the Libraries' online room reservation system. Patrons could reserve rooms, in 30-minute blocks, for up to two hours. They made reservations online by using their UNCG computing credentials. DMC staff and the Digital Literacy Consultants, in particular, would have priority when making reservations for any of the DMC's four Consultation Rooms. During any hours when the DMC/DLC had not scheduled those rooms, the spaces were open for reservation by any UNCG student, staff, or faculty member. All DMC spaces, with one exception, remained unlocked during all hours of operation. In order to protect the equipment and preserve the Presentation Practice Room, that space was locked when not in use. Patrons could reserve the room online, but DMC staff needed to unlock the room for patrons at the time of their appointments. This information was provided online through the reservation interface.

Computing

Computing software selection for the DMC was based on the user needs identified in the 2010 student survey, a review of similar spaces in peer institutions, discussions with Center directors about the anticipated work and needs, the strengths of the Libraries' internal Information Technology department, student advisory council consultants, and conversations with the Media Studies department. Given that the DMC's primary audience would be undergraduate students with little to no multimedia expertise, and recognizing that the Libraries' limited number of Information Technology staff were currently supporting only Windows-based workstations, the Libraries' leadership selected 128-bit Windows-based workstations with the full Adobe Elements package, Adobe Premiere video editing software, the 2010 MS Office suite, Windows Movie Maker, and the freeware audio recording and editing software, Audacity. All of these applications (aside from Audacity) were available for the Libraries to purchase through campus-wide licensing agreements. Each workstation was also equipped with dual 17" flat panel monitors to better facilitate consultations with DMC or DLC staff, document comparisons, and multitasking duties.

Like the other 130+ public computers in Jackson Library, the DMC workstations would be managed and maintained by the Libraries' Information Technology department, using a standard base computer image created by the campus IT Department. Public computers in the Libraries typically were replaced on a five-year cycle. However, because of its technology focus and demands, the DMC would receive the newest computers the Libraries would purchase—annually, if budgets held—and the previous year's DMC computers would be used to replace other public computers throughout the library.

The DMC also utilized three Bookscan Station flat-bed scanners for fast, high-resolution scanning of images and documents. Scanning was managed through a user-friendly, touch-screen interface, enabling patrons to scan in color, black and white, or grayscale to several possible formats (.html, .PDF, searchable .PDF, MS Word, .JPEG, and .TIFF), and sending scanned files to email, a USB flash drive, Google Docs, or to the Libraries' fee-based printer. During the first fall semester, over 800 images were scanned.

Challenges and Rewards

Aligning Mission and Goals

Although the goals of the two programs are clearly distinct and Selber's (2004) three technological literacies of functional, critical, and rhetorical are present, confusion about the mission statements seemed inescapable for those inside and outside of the project. To clarify, the purpose of the DMC is to provide support in digital information literacy—how to locate, evaluate, and cite media resources—as well as functional technological literacy—how to use the hardware and software tools necessary to create digital projects. In contrast, the purpose of the DLC is to provide support in critical and rhetorical technological literacies: Critical literacy helps designers understand the political, cultural, and economic context of digital media projects; Rhetorical literacy helps designers match medium, message, and context to create projects in order to most effectively deliver their messages to chosen audiences. Even though the two goals seemed distinct, the mission statements did not clearly reflect these differences, nor did the

statements speak to each other. The Libraries' vision/mission/goals for the DMC stated the following:

Vision

> The Digital Media Commons in Jackson Library supports 21st-century thinking and learning at UNCG by providing the space, technology, resources, and services to support the digital creation and communication of projects and ideas, from concept to final production and presentation.

Mission

- Provide a unique space, resources, services, and technology to support digital creation and communication of projects and ideas, from concept to final production and presentation
- Support the UNCG curriculum goals in information and media literacy and communication skills
- Provide a dynamic learning experience through the combination and interaction of innovative technology and highly trained consultants

Goals

- Provide the technology, tools, and expertise to assist UNCG students, faculty, and staff in developing media for their instructional and professional needs
- Provide technology, tools, and expertise to assist UNCG students, faculty, and staff to communicate their media to their audience
- Provide the space and technology to practice presentations using media in a group setting
- Provide the space and technology to screen and edit films and other media
- Provide a variety of collaborative and individual learning spaces

While this vision statement is well suited to the DMC, it did not quite articulate the specific critical and rhetorical vision and mission of the DLC. The DLC mission reads:

> The DLC supports students, faculty, and staff in their effective creation or incorporation of digital media into projects. DLC consultants are students who are a trained, engaged audience, providing feedback on slide presentations, video projects, podcasts, digital photography, websites, and blogs by offering collaborative, dialog-based consultations.

Furthermore, the DLC practiced a collaborative approach to consultation, in which designers and consultants engaged in one-on-one conversations about projects—conversations that focused on shared knowledge and expertise, as opposed to hierarchical instruction. Reducing or eliminating hierarchical power structures created an environment for students to feel safer as they struggled with the complexity of the composing work products. Pensoneau-Conway and Romerhausen (2012) argued that "by providing access to a site wherein students can better meet the educational outcomes of communication while avoiding conventional assessment, such a communication center can effectively avoid the traditional hindrances of power that are inherent

to a conventional classroom setting" (p. 39). The goal of the DLC sessions, then, was to help content creators become better designers and, to that end, they were encouraged to be in control of their projects and to participate actively in the conversational consultation. The missions were in alignment and did not conflict with each other, but neither mission captured the goals of the services.

During planning for this new learning space, the staff from the Libraries shared their mission and goals and asked for feedback. At the time, the Writing and Speaking Center Directors, serving as project consultants for Undergraduate Studies, thought they were reviewing mission and goals for the DMC. As center directors, both knew the importance of discussing purpose, audience, and message when asked for feedback; however, neither did. In hindsight, it was discovered that DMC leadership thought both offices were functioning under the Libraries' single mission and goals statement. With no DLC director at the initial planning meetings, there was no official mission to present to DMC leadership. This lack of DLC mission made it appear as if all were knowingly working under the same mission. This was an important discovery, as it helped to explain some of the confusion leadership experienced during the first semester of operation. In planning for sustainable next-gen learning spaces, a discussion of missions and goals needs to happen early. All parties must have a clear understanding concerning what will happen, since human agents are enacting the mission through both space planning and relationship building. Just as Elmborg (2005) noted for writing center library partnerships, this new learning space partnership would have benefitted from early conversations welcoming professional talks, possibly leading to observations, insights, and intersections of each other's mission and goals. In turn, these interactions would have set the groundwork for a different first semester, with less confusion and easier patron referrals. Fortunately, the directors of the DMC and DLC maintained their working relationships. The maintenance of relationships should be at the forefront during the first year of collobrations like ours. It was essential for all to believe that, as long as the collaborative nature of these relationships was preserved, the long-term sustainability of the physical space would be in good standing.

Staff Training

The elision of mission and vision contributed to confusion for the staff members of both centers as well as faculty, other university staff, and students. In part, this ongoing mission confusion was caused by a lack of integrated staff training. However, collaborative staff training had been difficult to coordinate and was exacerbated by the two distinct organizational structures and their respective columns of leadership. The DLC had a Director and Assistant Director, and consultants that worked with designers on multimodal compositions. The DMC had a Coordinator, two Assistant Directors, two graduate students, and several undergraduate students who staffed the reception desk.

DMC staff was hired with a combination of multimedia skills, library public service experience, and student and project management abilities. DMC student employees were selected based on their combination of multimedia and customer service skills, with a preference for students who had worked in a library environment before. DMC staff discovered early on that customer service skills and a willingness to openly explore unfamiliar software and problems with patrons was as important as actual multimedia software expertise, if not more so. A matrix outlining the

core competencies and service expectations of all DMC staff members was very useful in developing early training models and models for desk scheduling.

The DLC had a series of interim directors. Given more time to make persuasive arguments to upper level administration, the DLC might have been able to secure staffing and leadership at the time of opening. The Writing Center and Speaking Center Directors, though involved in the planning stages of this project as consultants, eventually stepped in as the first interim leadership providing a stop-gap solution in order to launch the DLC in a timely manner and avoid having empty space for the DLC portion of the collaboration. The center directors extended their already successful "franchise" operations into the DLC, which happened very late in the planning phase, one month prior to launch.

The need for quick implementation and launch of services necessitated that DLC consultants be pre-trained. Drawing on the small pool of cross-trained staff who currently worked at both the Speaking and Writing Center, the directors trained four consultants in visual and digital rhetoric to address the critical and rhetorical literacies that would be required in DLC sessions. Joining the four was a graduate assistant with previous multimodal consulting experience at The Noel Studio. In addition, the directors created DLC infrastructure to schedule sessions, collect data, and document and annotate sessions, all while they were in the process of establishing operational policies.

The DMC and the DLC staffs have decidedly different types of work. The DLC focuses on theory informing practice that results in helping designers look at their own work with a more critical eye. In contrast, the DMC focuses on steps for successful communication and delivery of information product for patrons to use. The different emphases on process and product create some tensions. As Elmborg (2005) noted, in order to educate users about the purpose of the DMC and the DLC, staff members need to understand the philosophies and practices that inform the mission statements of both programs. Since the DMC and the DLC are both engaged with the teaching of multiple literacies, such as functional, rhetorical and critical, collaborative training that works to sustain next-gen learning spaces can begin with theories of multiliteracies.

If we are to succeed in the preparation of digital composers, then our new learning spaces need to follow Inman's (2010) best approaches to multiliteracy design by starting "with the evaluation of what clients will actually be doing. The key question is what clients will do in multiliteracy centers, and beginning to understand these possible uses requires an understanding of multiliteracy pedagogy" (p. 22). While some salient questions that address these concerns were asked at UNCG, more time should have been spent on exploring such before space design conversations started because of the "important role space plays in encouraging and supporting the visual or multimodal learning that happens in new media consultations" (Lee, Alfano, & Carpenter, 2013, p. 54).

Integrated staff training needs to be based on theory and practice rather than being based on an articulation of a series of steps for staff members to execute. In other words, all staff members would benefit from understanding why the work of each program is distinct. Theories of multiliteracies include valuing the many ways that communication occurs beyond the printed word. Although logocentrism has dominated academia for centuries, the persistence of the digital

age suggests that literacy must mean more than just reading and writing (New London Group, 1996; Kress 2000). Lee, Alfano, and Carpenter (2013) in writing about "the correlation between space design of writing centers and the learning goals of multimodal communication" (p. 42) offer two reasons to promote and teach multiliteracies:

> Communication in our present century is intensely reliant on "sight and sound," transforming the real practice of our students. Our everyday immersion in multimodal communication, in itself, argues for our need as educators to promote multiple literacies. The second reason rests on the concept of persuasion: that multimedia arguments can actually be more memorable and effective than arguments in single modes and that, as rhetoricians, we ought to be able to help students gain the skills to make choices between written or multimedia texts. (p. 44)

What this suggests is that consulting staff that are well trained in theories of multiliteracy, because they are on the frontlines working with student composers, are best situated to "promote multiple literacies."

In fact, this shift toward new literacies was the underlying catalyst for the creation of the DMC and the DLC, since students, faculty, and staff now need more support when generating digital artifacts, for which there will only be an increasing demand, as the way cultural information is shaped and exchanged continues to evolve. Given the expansion of literacies and the awareness of their growing cultural importance, joint staff training needs to begin with foundational theories that make the work of the two centers meaningful. The more all staff members understand the relevance of multiliteracies, the clearer the differences in the missions will be.

In addition to providing a theoretical foundation for the DMC and DLC staff members, it is also essential to create a community of practice (Geller, Eodice, Condon, Carroll, & Bouquet, 2007) that reinforces relationships within the two groups. While new spaces designed for flexibility and innovation can foster the development of communities of practice (Wenger, 2008), Vizzier (2006) found in her ethnographic exploration of the community of practice at one communication center that it was the encouraging environment that actually created the community of practice. Although the two separate organizational structures are an institutional certainty at UNCG, how the staffs begin to comingle can be an intentional, mindful decision aimed at future good health. In order to sustain the DMC and DLC, all staff members need to feel connected to their co-workers through a shared understanding of the work, provided through an understanding of theory and practice, as well as opportunities to create a new work culture and community, which are both collaborative and encouraging. Without a thorough understanding of why the work of the DMC and DLC looks the way it does, a collaborative community cannot exist. Common understanding among the staff will drive a unified message of mission and purpose to users, which is a necessity if this new learning space is to avoid being misunderstood and underutilized. ([Listen to a radio interview of a director to learn more](.).)

There was and continues to be a need for cross-training among DMC and DLC staff and student workers. The goals and objectives of both of these dynamic, new campus programs are still developing. Initial meetings, in which all staff gathered, discussed, and described their work and current challenges, were very productive. More productive still was the first attempt at cross

training that resulted from those early meetings, from which DMC staff were directed to schedule and take advantage of DLC consultations, using assigned work projects as the focus of those meetings. Likewise, DLC student consultants were directed to make use of DMC student and staff technical assistance and expertise in the creation of multimedia projects for the DLC's Web page. In the coming semester and year, regularly scheduled all-staff meetings between these two programs need to become standard practice, as does a continued and more directed program of cross-training among both student workers and staff.

Navigating New Space

Another challenge of the DMC/DLC collaboration is location. The physical space was called the "basement" of the Jackson Library until August 2012. While the new space is now called the "lower level," there remains an institutional history that still conjures images of a dark basement filled with tall shelves of books and government documents and cabinets full of microfilm. This institutional lore is supported when patrons who enter by way of the main stairwell find a basement sign that remains on the DMC entrance door; however after opening that door, patrons see that this is an open, flexible space where learning no longer has the barriers presented in old library basements. Contributing to this shift in perception, the open floor plan, comfortable furniture, and bright lighting now shape the renovated space. Those who find their way to this space return. Room reservation data shows that the DMC rooms have a growing number of repeat users, and anecdotal data from service desk staff corroborates the idea that there is a growing base of "core" users.These users can be found at "their seats," much like the patrons at the bar of a television sitcom. While most student patrons have reported to DLC staff that they love the DMC, some have expressed no interest in telling others about it as they do not want it to become overcrowded.

Figure 9: Many students enjoy working at the same place

During the planning phase of the DMC, input from the Writing and Speaking Center directors was included, but the space that was allocated for use by the DLC was not dedicated solely for its use for consultations. When there are no appointments for the DLC, the space reverts to general use. As such, it functions the same as other Libraries' spaces, which can be reserved. While this configuration provides maximum flexibility, it also contributes to DLC consultants retreating into the DLC Director's office to do consultations, so as not to "kick people out" of the

consultation spaces that patrons of the library might be using in good faith. As Lee, Alfano, and Carpenter note "through our own consultation practice, we also learned that the space informs the composition process and the composition process, in turn, informs the use of the space" (p. 46). Gresham (2010) further supports this notion: "as students used the physical spaces for production and composition, they would change the process and products with which they worked" (p. 40). Clearly, this DLC shift out of the open spaces and into a closed office is not sustainable for the DLC's multimodal interaction.

While Inman (2010) stated that in multiliteracy centers some services "should have distinct, dedicated spaces," the prevailing reason not to have a dedicated space for the exclusive use of DLC is to maintain the goal of making the operations in the DMC look seamless (p. 24). The hope is that students who visit the DMC will see the work of the DLC as just one of the many services that the DMC provides. One of the space challenges, therefore, has been the reduced legibility for DLC services caused by the lack of dedicated space. Along with the seamlessness of services, this lack renders the work of the DLC invisible to anyone who visits the DMC, which, in part has contributed to ongoing mission confusion. Because the missions of the two centers are not legible to staff or patrons though space, signage, or names, the seemingly similar and overlapping work seems unclear for those wanting to use the DMC and DLC services.

Since the purpose and mission of the two organizations are not obvious through the language used to name the programs or mark the space they occupy, people who are not certain of what kind of help they might need must depend on the Library's desk staff to know which service can be most helpful and why. In this way, the Library controls how users flow through the space and thus the services, as the space doesn't address users' needs intuitively.

There is little doubt that patrons will need help in navigating the DMC. For example, in renovating the Parrish Library at Purdue University, designers used color changes to aid patrons in way finding. Doan and McGee (2013) stated that this was done because it was "critical that we incorporate directional signals to alert visitors where to go for assistance and what was appropriate within each space" (p. 277). When color changing between DMC & DLC usage in this shared space was suggested during planning at UNCG, it was spoken of as generally a good idea; however, it was limited to carpeting alone. Once carpeting was chosen, it was determined that the color change was not significant enough to help. As a result, designers and DMC staff made the decision to omit the previously agreed upon color change.

Figure 10: A color change for the DMC was originally suggested but not implemented

While the intended flexible, mobile, and adaptable furniture design aligns with Lee, Alfano, and Carpenter's (2013) principles for designing multimodal composing spaces, it seems that, coupled with the absence of color changing and other direction or usage cues, the centrally located DMC reception desk ends up being the only viable assistance in way finding. Since the Libraries provide staff for the reception desk and manage the ways that students determine which service they might need, the Libraries staff must be well informed and clearly understand the theory behind how the digital literacy center operates, in order to sustain long-term stability.

Marketing

Because of unintentional assumptions (shared or not shared), the vision and mission made by both the DMC and DLC planners, the Libraries' goal of seamlessness, though never hidden, became clearer as the first marketing efforts began. The DLC was subsumed, listed as one service among many services offered at the DMC, into the larger physical and service structure. The DMC became the overarching umbrella term for all of the space and its contents. Consistent with this approach, DMC services alone were announced through the normal campus channels— the University's Campus Weekly publication for faculty and staff; visits and announcements to the Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government; announcements on the Libraries' website and various Library-authored blogs; and notices through the Libraries' and the University's social media channels. Text about about DMC services was sent to mailing lists that instructors could incorporate into their syllabi.

During the first semester of operation, DMC staff provided campus faculty with several "overview" sessions of DMC services. Some of these sessions took place in the DMC; others were delivered in classrooms across campus. The same semester that the DMC opened, the UNCG campus also launched a newly revised and reimagined Faculty Teaching and Learning Commons (FTLC). This new FTLC was a logical, important partner for DMC services: FTLC would assist instructors with pedagogy, design, and assessment behind multimedia projects for students, and the DMC would provide those students with the hands-on technical support to complete the projects. The DMC/FTLC partnership led to similar partnerships with The University Speaking Center. The DMC co-sponsored the speaking center's already developed

and planned visual workshop offerings, and the speaking center moved the facilitation of these programs to the DMC. A second partnership formed between the FTLC and the speaking center, as some of the remaining workshops planned by the speaking center were co-sponsored by the FTLC. While the FTLC, DMC, and speaking center leadership soon recognized the benefits of collaboration, developing and co-hosting several programs during the Fall, the lines that previously separated what each office offered were blurred, which was new and not always easy to navigate.

More awareness-raising and co-sponsored instruction-focused programs are planned for the coming Spring. Other outreach events previously conducted by the DMC included the following: A graduate student networking event sponsored in conjunction with the University's Career Services program; several Family Game Night events, in collaboration with Campus Activities & Programs; and a week-long series of digital media-related workshops and seminars, developed by FTLC faculty and hosted in the DMC.

A soft opening of the DMC, for Libraries and Undergraduate Studies faculty and staff, was held just before the beginning of the inaugural semester. A month and a half into that first semester, a more formal Open House was held for the entire campus community. The Open House featured opening remarks from the University's Provost, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the Dean of Libraries, and others. At both opening events, DMC and DLC staff were available to demonstrate and describe different aspects of the Commons, as attendees embarked on self-guided tours of the new space. All of the publicity efforts were DMC driven rather than jointly articulated, and there was no formal announcement about the DLC and its purpose, leadership, or long-term goals made by the Libraries, Undergraduate Studies, or the Provost, which further contributed to the confusion about the DLC's purpose on campus.

In part, this lack of publicity was exacerbated by the lack of institutional support, as the DLC was charged with a soft launch. With funding for just ten hours of consultation a week, marketing efforts were strategically limited. To get the word out at the start of the semester, the Multiliteracy Centers orientation efforts were revamped to include an overview of all three centers (writing, speaking, and digital) for every classroom group that requested an orientation tour of the Writing or Speaking centers. To that end, the directors, assistant directors, graduate assistant directors, and student orientation team members of both the writing and speaking center addressed 71 classes on campus, reaching approximately 1500 students. The DLC directors, with technical support from staff in Undergraduate Studies, worked early to establish a Web presence for the DLC. Throughout the fall semester, the DLC consultants, under the supervision of the DLC directors, with input from the DLC graduate student director, and in consultation with DMC student-staff, developed a blog, memes, an informational Prezi, a Twitter feed, and an IM chat box to the new DLC Web page.

In October 2012, Undergraduate Studies was awarded a Federal Title III grant, part of which is to fund the DLC for five years. This external funding greatly altered the first-year plans for the DLC and offered a new level of sustainability for the Libraries' Undergraduate Studies partnership. Starting in January 2013, there would be ample funding spent on administration, marketing, and staffing. Focused branding and an integrated marketing plan that aids in getting the word out about what designers can accomplish in the DLC is certainly attainable now. In late

December 2012, the new DLC director had "been in discussions about changing the name of the center. Digital Literacy Center, and Digital Center, are apparently misleading students and faculty alike, including the Library staff, as to what it is the center actually is and does" (S. Yarbrough, personal communication, December 21, 2012). This third name change in five months for the digital consulting service offered within the DMC is well timed given the influx of grant funding and pending marketing plan. The long form of the new name is the Digital Action, Consultation, and Training Studio. In shorter form, it was anticipated to become the Digital ACT Studio or Digital ACTS. Shortly after the change, patrons were using D-ACT as a shortened name. Yet, without clear marketing efforts that educate designers about what the DMC and the DLC/DACT Studio can do, will people know to turn to this new learning space for support? Also, once they arrive, will they find consultants working there who are trained well enough to help in productive ways?

Conclusion

Building Sustainable Physical Relationships

Lee, Alfano, and Carpenter (2013) seemed to be writing about a sustainable physical space that embodies Newcomb's argument: "In the Noel Studio, the space is enhanced by mobile furniture options, allowing students to change the space to fit their invention process. Thus, the space changes with each student or group. In many cases, students in the Noel Studio, move the mobile furniture to accommodate their invention process, either by creating a semi-circle around a flat-screen monitor or assembling a space for drafting ideas and feedback on dry-erase boards" (p. 55). To that end, the renovated space in the lower level of Jackson Library is well positioned to be physically sustainable with its flexibility in furniture and walls, wheels under chairs and white boards, and open use spaces.

The DMC is distinct, as it is both a support program and a learning space. Currently, the DLC is only a support program. This arrangement certainly makes sense in terms of efficiency; however, it has caused some mild tension. Even when the consultation spaces are reserved by the DLC, students are often using them to study, and when a session is scheduled, or the DLC consultants need the space for training and development, the DLC must "kick the students out" of the consultation rooms. The DLC then risks developing the public relations problem of "causing trouble" in a way that might linger with DMC patrons. In addition, there is no dedicated space for the DLC staff to congregate, since the tables in the DMC can be claimed by anyone at any time. Consultants have solved this problem by migrating to one of the DLC leadership offices. This lack of visibility unnecessarily diminishes the DLC's impact and presence in the DMC. In effect, the Digital Center disappears since there is no obvious staff working there.

To better ensure this learning space's physical sustainability, the DLC will need visibly dedicated space, along with the shared and unshared working spaces it currently has. In the future, a Memorandum of Understanding must be drafted to protect and clarify the interests and needs of both parties. This document will further secure sustainability if it describes space agreements and builds human relationships beyond those who are currently in charge and/or those involved in the planning.

Building Sustainable Human Relationships

Though the sharing of space is always a challenge, the relationship between the library and the Digital Center is a healthy one. DLC directors nominated the DMC for an award, and Library leadership agreed to participate in the multi-source assessment of one of the DLC interim directors—both of which speak to the productive work environment and sustainability. Ongoing communication continues between leaders of both the DMC and DLC about the Libraries' processes and systems. In line with Elmborg's (2005) suggestion, DMC and DLC leaders have openly explored co-publishing opportunities and plan to engage more in conversations, which include DLC professional talk. Such conversations start with an invitation for both DMC graduate assistants and leadership to sit in on DLC consultation sessions.

To better position the sustainability of the human relationships of this next-gen Learning Space, we foresee regular leadership meetings to account for current operations and problem solving as well as future planning. Key for longstanding success, combined and separate DMC and DLC staff training will need to focus on integrating theory and practice to educate faculty, staff, and students. In discussing writing center and library collaborations, Elmborg (2005) offers useful insight for our DMC/DLC future, as he argued that the education of tutors needs to include information literacy, and the education of library staff should include scholarship in the instruction of writing. In our DMC/DLC learning space the scholarship of multiliteracy instruction would also need to be a part of the conversation. A new DMC/DLC team or "working together" identity, coupled with ongoing discussions about the shared and separate missions of each support office, will help. The new team's future conversations should be about sustaining this learning space. These conversations will help pull those working in both support office together.

With strong leadership and organizational support in place, such conversations "can give all a sense of pride in their ability to independently engage in shared decisions" (MacPhee, Wardrop, & Campbell, 2010, p. 1023). The successes of new learning spaces like these happen only with a commitment to the time and energy it takes to develop and maintain healthy workplace relationships that support ongoing flexibility. This commitment can lead to sustaining the human relationships of the space. As Elmborg (2005) noted, successful collaborations such as ours are full of energy, difficult, and worth. If cross-unit learning spaces like ours are to be sustainable, the leadership will need to continue a commitment to forging forward in what is essentially a new frontier on this campus.

Additional Takeaways

While libraries and literacy centers have different cultures and service paradigms, each provides essential services and are committed to student success. As collaborative space is planned it's essential to acknowledge and appreciate these differences and how space can be designed to accommodate these different service models.

MOU's should be established during the planning process so that all parties are clear who is supporting what in terms of staff, space and technology. It's especially important to establish who is supporting ongoing costs such as equipment and furniture replacement.

Having literacy centers in the library can be of two models: space within a space where the literacy centers are completely independent in terms of programming or a more collaborative effort where the centers work with the library on mutual goals for student success. The latter is preferable (to the library) so that students and faculty may benefit from combined expertise. Staff from centers and the library should work together to develop mutual program goals for their campus.

Opening the DMC & DLC at the same time in a shared space was difficult due partly to the separation of technological and rhetorical literacies. Learning to work collaboratively between the units was easier. It did not take long for the students who work in both to start inviting one another to help mid-session. DLC consultants were invited into DMC sessions and vice versa as the needs of those being supported changed. In a different time, the DMC & DLC might have functioned as competing support services. Once the working relationships of those who support students in the DMC & DLC were put into focus, the student workers lead the leadership to see exactly how these two can function as complimentary instructional support offices.

Sheridan's (2006) argument against separating technological and rhetorical literacies into different support units is not lost here. The DMC & DLC partnership had taught us that while we can offer continuous technology training, it is not realistic to expect every student who is trained in the theory and practice of digital centers to also be skilled at supporting technological literacies. In truth, while the literacies are split between the units' missions, the support of the literacies happens in the same physical space. The shared space might be the reason the separation is working, for now.

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Credit

Figure 1: Mike Crumpton
Figure 2: Mike Crumpton
Figure 3: Mike Crumpton
Figure 4: Kim Cuny
Figure 5: Taylor Williams
Figure 6: Doug Mokaren
Figure 7: Taylor Williams
Figure 8: Doug Mokaren
Figure 9: Doug Mokaren
Figure 10: Doug Mokaren