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January 2016

Makerspaces and the remaking of higher education

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Recommended Citation

McDonald, Fiona; O'Donnell, Marcus; Mitew, Teodor E.; and Cairns, Neil R.: Makerspaces and the remaking of higher education 2016.
<https://ro.uow.edu.au/asdpapers/586>

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Keywords

remaking, higher, makerspaces, education

Publication Details

McDonald, F., O'Donnell, M., Mitew, T. E. & Cairns, N. R. (2016). Makerspaces and the remaking of higher education. Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA 2016) Australia: Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Inc.

Makerspaces and the remaking of higher education

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This paper describes the evolution of Makerspaces at the University of Wollongong (UOW) as a central part of its Curriculum Transformation Project. Makerspaces embody the four themes of the UOW Curriculum Model: a learning environment that is intellectually challenging, real world focused, research led and technology enriched. Makerspaces in higher education have been championed by campus libraries as part of their evolution from information archives to learning commons and have been largely analysed in this context. However this paper argues that the sudden emergence of Makerspaces in the university contains critical messages about the future shape of higher education not just the shape of university libraries and learning space design. They mark a move from formal to informal, self-designed, student-driven learning. They emphasise a move to interdisciplinary collaboration and sharing. They promote a holistic student experience that prepares future graduates as adaptable lifelong learners. We argue that while designated Makerspaces can have transformative effects, only a move from Makerspaces to Maker-education, which conceptualises every classroom as a Makerspace, leverages the full potential of this innovation.