Addressing Students As a Whole person. Academic Librarians' Perceptions of the Makerspace in Academic Libraries: A Phenomenological Study

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Background of academic library spaces

- From information commons to the Makerspace
- Rapid development of information and communication technology that led to a change in users' needs and expectations
- Creation of knowledge
- Higher education competitive environment

what is a makerspace ?

- Makerspace is collaborative learning environments where people come together to share materials and learn new skills. Makerspaces are not defined by a specific set of materials or spaces, but rather a mindset of community partnerships, collaboration, and creation" (The Library as Incubator Project 2013).

The research

- The goal of this phenomenological investigation was to explore academic librarians' lived experience with the Makerspace phenomenon in academic libraries to understand the influence of such a creative program in academic libraries.

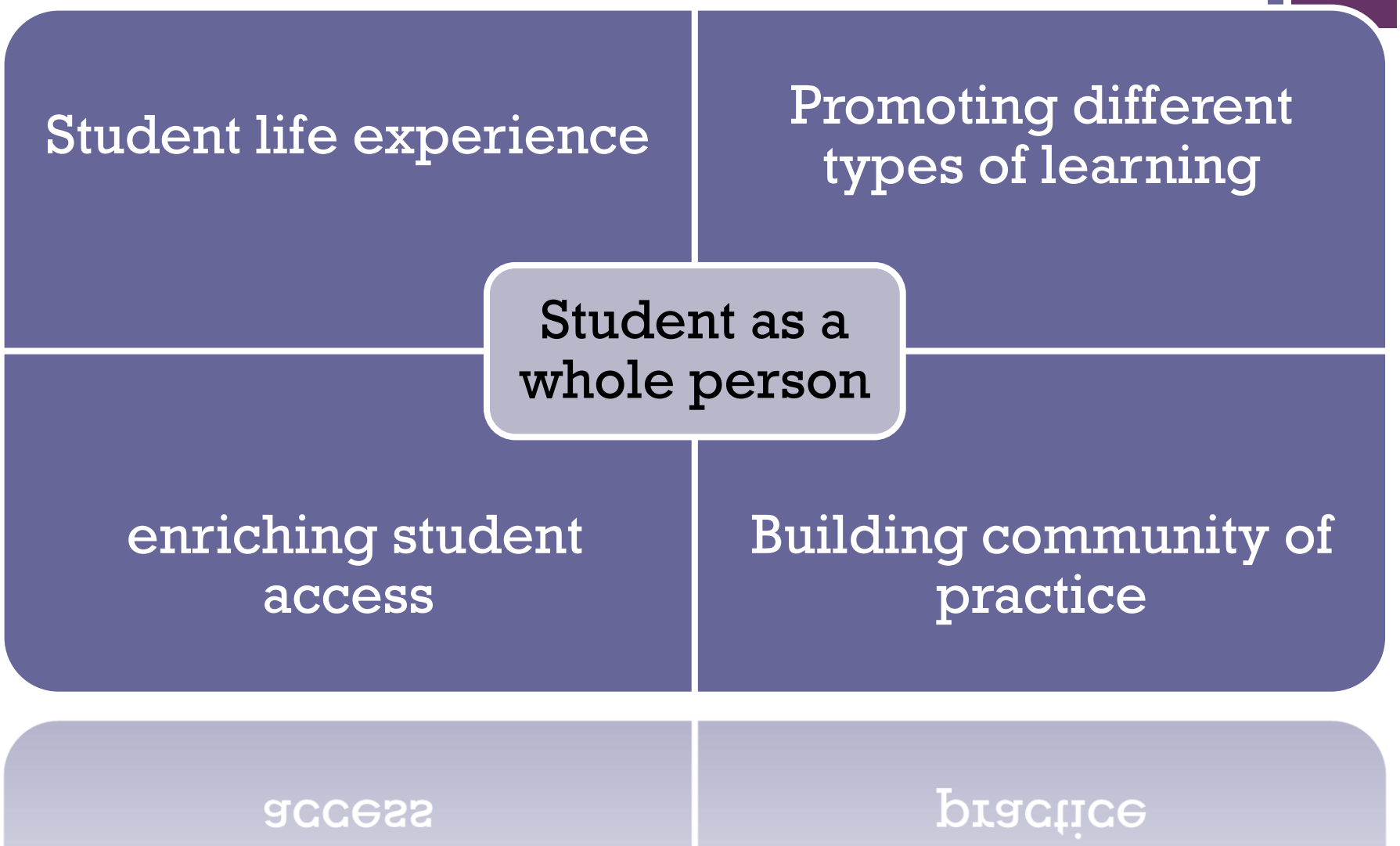
- Research question:
  - what are academic librarians' perceptions of the Makerspace phenomenon in academic libraries ?

The research procedure and participants

- Convenient and purposive sampling strategies to select the participants.
- Data collected through semi-structured interviews with 5 academic librarians.
- 4 assistant librarians and 1 center director
- Participants experience in academic library :2 years to 15 years
- Participants comes from different gender and ethnicity
- Participants comes from three different Colleges in Boston.

Data analysis& themes

- A thematic analysis was employed, to generate themes and categories that has been addressed by the participants.
- The analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in two core themes related to the participants' experiences with the Makerspace in their libraries
- Themes:
  - **The student as a whole person**
  - The library as a place


Student life experience
Promoting different types of learning
Student as a whole person
enriching student access
Building community of practice

Student life experience

- The importance addressing students' life experience
- Investing in students' differences
- Support classroom learning
- Responding to students needs and social justice issues.

Student life experience

- " students are in particular craving an opportunity to do something creative and inject personal narratives into their scholarly work and they don't really get a chance to do that if all they're doing is writing papers" (P1)
- " we're giving them that outlet that's connected to their cores and to talk about personal stuff creatively " (P2).

Promoting different types of learning.

- Learning By playing
- Collaborative and creative learning
- Learning by making
- Hands-on learning.
- Learning by failing.

Promoting different types of learning.

- "students need more play. Your brain thinks differently when you're doing something creative" (P3).
- "We try to give them a little bit of help to make sure that they're going to succeed but at the same time, we do want to let them fail and learn" (P5).
- " People won't do things without permission. I used to liken it to goats. Goats are really, really smart. But what keeps them in that pen? It's kind of habit and in a way it's like not having permission to leave" (P2).

Enriching student access to tools

- Types of resources
- Address different needs
- Cost

Enriching student access to tools

- “ They can check out a zine-making kit, which I also think is so radical of an idea that we are going to provide students with the material to do that thing” (P4).

- “ There's other resources for 3D printing on campus but typically, it's restricted to students who are taking a particular class or are in a particular discipline We wanted to give everybody access to some of the stuff”(P5).

Building a community of practice.

- Targeting students skills(creativity) and learning.
- Linking students with other peers as well as experts in certain areas

Building a community of practice.

- Students will be surrounded by other folks who are doing something, too. This develops communities of practice that I think might form naturally in there" (P3)
- " I see friendships getting built in our makerspace because you bring a lot of like-minded people together in that kind of space. I think at our college it is a great to offer a place where students can meet other people who have the same interests" (P5).

Lessons learned/ conclusion

- Potential outlet to strengthen academic library case in higher education institution.
- Academic librarians showed great commitment to address critical issues as well as students learning and live experience
- Better understanding of the phenomenon that could help other academic libraries to develop makerspace that fits their patrons
- Different uses and types
- The library space can be a start point to rethink the library role and services that advance the community learning and engagement with the library .

Future research

- Large scale research project
- Studying students experience with the makerspaces in academic libraries.

Thank you attendance

Q& A