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Unknown and Underused – Sad! Making the Curriculum Lab Great Again

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Arcadia University’s Landman Library is collaborating with students and faculty in the School of Education to revitalize our Curriculum Lab. The project began in Fall 2016 with a partnership between the liaison librarian and ED 411: Designing Learning Environments, and continues today through an Advisory Group.

Easy Wins

- Remove unused furniture
- Replace large, immovable table with smaller, wheeled tables
- Improve identifying signage to be placed outside of the room
- Replace faded, outdated posters with new posters that are more relevant to curriculum and lesson planning

Collaboratively Articulated Mission Statement



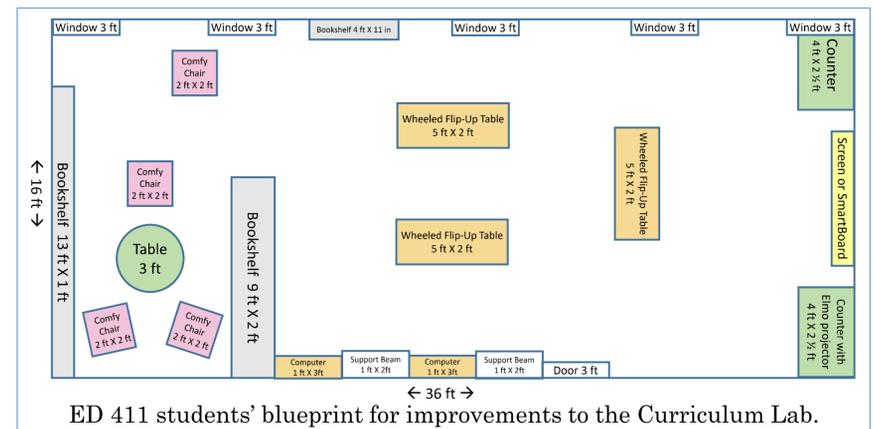
A word cloud exposed common themes in students’ individual visions for the Curriculum Lab, including creating separate areas to support both individual and collaborative learning.

Using their See-Think-Wonder responses as a guide, students individually wrote their vision for the Curriculum Lab. The librarian turned the students’ visions into a word cloud to expose common themes, and presented the students with a draft mission statement based on their work. We edited the mission statement as a group, adopting the following:

Our mission for the Arcadia University Curriculum Lab is to provide an intentional, functional, and inclusive space for the community of preservice and current educators to explore print and technological pedagogical resources for curriculum development. By purposefully designing both individual and collaborative work areas, we hope to cultivate an active and diverse atmosphere to enhance teaching preparation, practice, and instruction.

ED 411 Students Present Their Ideas

- With the mission statement in mind, students drafted a blueprint for suggested changes to the Curriculum Lab.
- Students worked in small teams to gather the physical dimensions of the room, measuring the perimeters, shelf space, and linear feet of the current collection.
- Using oversized paper, students drew a scale model of what they would want the remodeled Curriculum Lab to look like.
- Students presented their Curriculum Lab work to the Dean of the School of Education and the Dean of the Library.



ED 411 students’ blueprint for improvements to the Curriculum Lab.

Identifying Space and Collection Issues

- Students spent a class session in the Curriculum Lab using a See-Think-Wonder exercise to consider the space as it is and its potential.
- The librarian attended the following class to debrief and chart a path forward.
- The group identified easy wins we could accomplish quickly.
- Before making big changes, we needed a mission statement.

See - Think - Wonder (your name: Student's Name Redacted)		
<p>What do you see in this space?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I see a lot of children's books • Materials that are focused on pre-k to lower elem. students • I see one large table with six chairs surrounding it. • I see one computer • I see cassette tapes and records • I see one "comfy" chair in the back aisle. • I see a lot of empty shelves. 	<p>What are you thinking as you look at the space?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is age-focused to the elem. pre-service teachers. • The space is very sectioned off -> rows of books, large empty space, one table. • There is a lot of space not being utilized - bookshelves - cubbies - filing cabinet • It has the potential for great natural light. • There is only one, older computer 	<p>What wonderings do you have about this space?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who funds the resources for the lab? • I wonder why the resources are so outdated? • I wonder why the half-full bookshelves are not condensed and create more space? • Why does a lab reflect a different message than the @ program promotes. • How hard/long does process take?

Some common themes in students’ See-Think-Wonder exercises included inefficient use of space, unused furniture, and outdated materials.

Advisory Group and Future of the Project

- Since ED 411 is offered once a year in the Fall semester, the project was in danger of losing steam after the course ended.
- The librarian and the professor met to develop a strategy to maintain momentum.
- We decided to invite the ED 411 students, as well as other students and faculty in the School of Education, to form a Curriculum Lab Advisory Group (CLAG).
- CLAG meets periodically to plan next steps for the project, including adopting a collection development policy, forming partnerships with student groups such as the Education Club, and selecting new posters for the room.
- Google Groups, Forms, and Drive facilitate communication between CLAG meetings.
- Next steps in the project include weeding, reducing shelving, purchasing new K-12 textbooks and curriculum guides, reclassifying the children’s collection to improve browsing, and considering furniture and technology for the space.