Scaling Up: Lessons from Launching Very Large Active Learning Classrooms

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Wheeler 212 under construction
Wheeler 212 (seats 120 students)  
Launched Fall 2018
Test Kitchen

Barrows 110, seats 55 students

2011
Test Kitchen Opens

2012
AV/IT Installed in Test Kitchen

2015
Four ALCs Created

2017
Wheeler 100 Opens

2018
Wheeler 212 Opens

...
ALCs grow on campus
Classroom Observations
Instructor Intake Process

Instructors are asked to submit a brief one-time application and an optional course syllabus for review and approval of priority registration into an ALC, based on pedagogical alignment.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Once approved, an instructor remains in the priority pool for future semesters. Please note that having your application approved through this process does not guarantee assignment in an active learning classroom.
Findings from Smaller ALCs

Frequency of Student Engagement with Classroom Features (n=10)

- Small group discussion
- Whole class discussion
- Lecture
- Team activities using computers, display technology
- Team activities without using digital technology
- Collaborative documents using display technology
- Writing on the whiteboards and/or huddleboards
- Moving around the room, changing seats

Legend:
- Never
- A few times
- Half the time
- Most of the time
- Always

Spring 2018
60% Agreed or Strongly Agreed ALC Tech Influenced how Instructors Approached Teaching

80% Agreed or Strongly Agreed ALC Tech Enriched Students’ Learning Experience

60% Agreed or Strongly Agreed ALC Technology Encouraged Active Participation

90% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that ALC Tech Allowed Instructors to Incorporate New Activities
Wheeler 212 Features
Dual Projection
Collaboration Stations w/shared video displays
Instructor Lectern
What do you think will be the most important component of the space to support your learning? (n=70)

- **Technology -- display screens, projectors, etc., 49%**
- **Flexible Furniture, 29%**
- **Whiteboards and huddle boards, 20%**
- **Other, 2%**
Scheduling

Collaborate with Office of the Registrar to receive list of potential classes

Research Classes and Instructors

Individual Outreach

Show Instructors the Classroom + “Test Run” if desired

Coordinate with OR to schedule class
Launching

- Semester Kickoff ALC Meeting
- Individual Orientations
- Semester Start
- Mid Semester Meetup
- End of the Semester Meetup
Fall 2018 Instructors

- Chemistry
- Linguistics
- Nutritional Science
- English
- Interdisciplinary St.
- Geography

Fall Semester Kickoff 2018
Spring 2019 Instructors

- Legal Studies
- African American Studies
- Comparative Literature
- Ethnic Studies
- Chemistry
- Civic Engineering
- Molecular Cell Biology
- English
- Theater
First Day of Classes, Fall 2018

November 2018
Faculty reflections on teaching in AL classrooms (n=21)...

100% agreed or strongly agreed classroom space influenced their approach to teaching course

90% agreed or strongly agreed classroom space encouraged active participation of students

90% agreed or strongly agreed classroom space enriched students’ learning experience

67% agreed or strongly agreed classroom tech encouraged active participation of students
Frequency of activities in AL Classrooms (n=21)

- Moving around room
- Whiteboards & huddleboards
- Collaborative documents with classroom tech
- Team activities without classroom tech
- Team activities with classroom tech
- Listening to presentation/lecture
- Whole class discussion
- Small group discussion

Legend:
- Never
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Activities in large ALC

Frequency of activities in large AL classroom (n=4)

- Moving around room
- Whiteboards & huddleboards
- Collaborative documents with classroom tech
- Team activities without classroom tech
- Team activities with classroom tech
- Listening to presentation/lecture
- Whole class discussion
- Small group discussion

Never | A few times | Half the time | Most of the time | Always
---|---|---|---|---

Berkeley
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
How & to what extent did you change course design?

“I was already using active learning, but struggling with spaces that were not designed to support my efforts...I have notice that students feel comfortable in the space and enjoy being there.”

“Pretty radical change in the [course] design. Working exercises in-class made it possible to use our section meeting times to focus on a term paper, and improved their work on the paper quite a lot.”
A Chemistry faculty member already experienced with active learning said...

“I had the best experience as an instructor this past Fall in my >30 year career as an instructor at Berkeley in Wheeler 212!”
Faculty feedback, Fall 2018

“The novel environment (of the AL classroom) was hugely valuable in helping students accept and embrace the very different approach to learning and assessment taken in this course.... [and] **set the stage from day one** that this course would not be listen, memorize, and regurgitate. Cafe style seating around tables invites discussions with peers. Monitors and whiteboards encourage group exploration of ideas. **These features draw eyes and minds away from a single instructor at the front of the room**, away from the ticking clock and the ‘will this be on the exam?’ **To end class, I would have to interrupt discussions and drag students away from screens so the next class could start.**”  -- Professor, Environmental Science
What we’re learning...

- Additional Technology desired -- handheld mics, clickers, etc.
- Pros and Cons of a whole class discussion
- Scheduling process -- working with Registrar, year to year changes, etc.
- Resources
Thank you!