

Teaching Excellence at Yale

Flexible teaching spaces offer pedagogical advantages: Teaching in CTL classrooms

For **Heather Klemann**, Director of Expository Writing and Course Director and instructor of English 114, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) classroom encourages collaboration among students and the seamless integration of audio/visual materials. “[Modular tables allow me to shift readily from a whole-class seminar discussion into small-group activities](#). We move around a lot; the room supports the faster pace at which I like to teach writing composition and revision. At a moment’s notice, I can pull up Google docs on Canvas through the touchscreen carts and launch a workshop on student writing while everyone follows along.” All this, Klemann states, has turned her classroom into a sandbox in which students and instructor alike spend more time reflecting on how they learn to write.

“For better or for worse, the Panopticon effect is in play,” she continues. “With glass walls, people can observe your teaching all the time.” Knowing that her classroom is fully visible reminds her that teaching is a performance art, she states, but now with multiple audiences. Moreover, the layout makes her more interested in what other technologists



and faculty members are doing to utilize the space. “I get new ideas for my class,” Klemann says, “just by walking by other CTL rooms.”

Klemann finds that the classrooms’ proximity to the library stacks and the writing center within the CTL makes students much more likely to use both. Proximity to digital resource help has also made teaching more convenient. “Twenty minutes before a class in which we had a much-anticipated guest speaker, a student’s dean emailed to say that a student was out sick. Technologist Bryan Pauze showed me how to record the class and post it to the media library on Canvas so that the student could view the entire class from her bed.”

(Above Photo: Klemann stands with guest experts during a “Shark Tank” class session)



Teaching Excellence at Yale

Research exploring the impact of learning spaces:

D. Christopher Brooks, a Research Fellow at the University of Minnesota, studies the impact of two learning spaces “on instructor behavior, classroom activities, and levels of on-task student behavior.” Read “[Space and consequences: The impact of different formal learning spaces on instructor and student behavior](#)” online via the Journal of Learning Spaces.

Paul Temple, formerly from the Institute of Education at the University of London, presents a literature review on the design and use of space in higher education. The reviews shows that higher education spaces can be considered in various ways. Read “[Learning Spaces in higher education: An under-researched topic](#)” online via the London Review of Education.

Teaching in the CTL (301 York Street)

Most teaching in the CTL classrooms is by application, allowing instructors to self-select based on their desire to experiment with a modular or flexible classroom and to receive support using a specific pedagogical practice or digital tool. Rooms are pre-assigned before most Yale classrooms, allowing time for lesson planning that incorporates the features of the space. To maximize the number of faculty who teach in the CTL, assignments rotate each semester. This enables instructors to establish best practices for using a fully supported environment and adapt the practices for traditional classrooms

Share with us or a colleague:

View this edition of Teaching Excellence at Yale on the CTL website:

<http://ctl.yale.edu/TeachingExcellence>

Send us your feedback and suggestions by emailing: dpctl@yale.edu

Follow us on Twitter or Instagram: [@YaleCTL](#)

To opt-out of the email version of this newsletter, please visit Yale’s messaging service website < <http://messages.yale.edu/subscribe/> >