

**Stream:** Sharing Good Practice

**Submission title:**

Active Learning Classrooms: What's in the name?

**Presenters:**

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In response to changing trends in teaching as well as shifting student expectations on how they learn Universities are looking to invest in flexible and technology-enhanced classrooms (King et al 2015). Whilst some argue that "flexible teaching spaces will liberate teachers and students" (Benade 2017 P.805) there is also recognition that this will not happen overnight and not without some resistance (Benade 2017). To maximise the benefit of new teaching spaces there is a need for collaboration between teaching staff and learning technologists to explore how these flexible structures can facilitate a range of learning styles and meet student's expectations (Joy et al 2014). Flexible teaching spaces may provide opportunities for academics to develop their teaching methods, but there is a need for support for many staff to help them imagine these new approaches. Confidence in the technology remains a barrier to full adoption of the possibilities (Joy et al 2014), and there may be a disconnect between what academics and student perceive as "new" (McLaughlin & Faulkner 2012).

Three standard classrooms at Craiglockhart have been converted to flexible learning spaces which incorporate a range of movable furniture and interactive technologies to help facilitate small group activities. The affordances of a space to support learning are not necessarily identifiable when initially launched, and will only emerge once these spaces are purposefully used by students (Thomas 2010). Moreover, shifting from didactic approaches to active learning does not guarantee high levels of attendance or engagement from students, particularly for those who have yet to develop attributes for collaborative learning (White et al 2014). Each room contains different furniture, fittings and technologies, and academics have worked with Information Services to incorporate these elements in a range of learning and teaching contexts. This session will provide an overview of the rooms and initial observations on the impact they have had on student engagement and teaching approaches. The sessions also aims to prompt a discussion on how the University could adapt standard classrooms to support active learning more widely.

**References**

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