

case study^o

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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Creating a learning environment

that takes the School of Design at Hong Kong Polytechnic University into the future.

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The Jockey Club Innovation Tower, home to The School of Design at Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Polytechnic University), was created as the new driving force in the development of Hong Kong as a design hub in Asia. Designed by Pritzker Prize winning architect Zaha Hadid, who won an international design competition in 2007, construction work began in 2009 and the whole project was completed in August 2013. It has 15,000 square metres of floor area spread over 13 floors, and can accommodate approximately 1,800 staff and students. The tower houses a lecture hall, 10 classrooms, design studios and workshops, as well as exhibition spaces and a communal viewing lounge.



The new landmark building presented Polytechnic University with the unique opportunity to re-examine and shape a creative multidisciplinary environment, bringing together the various programs of the school previously in scattered locations on campus into one building. Steelcase Asia Pacific became involved with the Innovation Tower project from 2010, not only to assist Polytechnic University to prepare for the move to a new home on campus, but more importantly to help create a learning environment that would take the University into the future. As a result of this closely coordinated approach, the building and the furniture grew up together.

To establish the best possible use of each space by students and faculty to meet the challenges of education in the 21st century, we applied our global knowledge to create a research program that included

observation, interviews and visual diaries in various spaces on the existing campus. This in-depth research helped us to better understand the specific dynamics at Polytechnic University, including:

- The nature of learning and teaching that occurs in the classroom and studio spaces
- How space design can promote progressive pedagogical approaches that support a variety of learning theories and styles
- How space design can support the behaviours of traditional as well as non-traditional students

In addition, we conducted brainstorming sessions with faculty, and organized visits by faculty to Stanford D. School, and the project consultants to the Steelcase Global Business Centre in Kuala Lumpur. These initiatives enabled the team to form a shared spatial concept for deeper understanding of each area, and determine the fundamental furniture

requirements for a pilot trial, which in turn generated very specific feedback on the usage, flexibility and furniture for specific spaces.

This feedback drove numerous discussions with end users, to enable us to shape our recommendations for optimizing the use of each space, and finalize the product specifications which were put out to competitive tender. Steelcase then won the contract to supply the furniture throughout the building including classrooms, project rooms, design studio, staff office, and meeting rooms.

For the faculty and students, the change of space has been quite startling, from dark low spaces in the old building to high open spaces with natural lighting in the new building, which enhances a feeling of wellbeing, and well as giving true colours that are critical for design students. The use of space and furnishing has been just

as dramatic. Most notably, the use of Node chairs in all the classrooms has revolutionized modes of teaching. Node supports a variety of student learning styles by allowing quick and seamless transitions from one teaching mode to the next, creating flexible and barrier-free classrooms, and encouraging spontaneous groupings and work.



flexible seat, without pneumatic adjustments to worry about, keeps students comfortable in a variety of postures.

comfort without upholstery means easy maintenance.

open seat design offers easy access, while arms serve as backpack hooks.

personal worksurface is adjustable, non-handed, and large enough to support digital and analog resources.

Steelcase warranty with elevated durability testing makes node an easy choice.

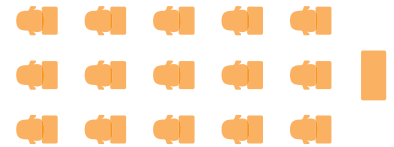
swivel seat keeps open sightlines between student and instructor, whiteboard, and other students.

casters lend mobility for quick, easy transitions between classroom modes.

base keeps backpacks and personal belongings out of the aisle.



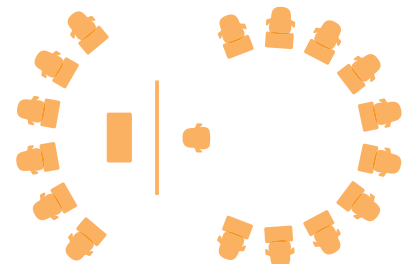
LECTURE



SMALL GROUP PROJECT



LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION AND INTERACTIVE LECTURE



“The Design School plays a role as a catalyst for innovation... design can work with others creatively... productively...”

Cees de Bont
Dean of School of Design & Swire Chair
Professor of Design

Overall the furniture is proving very durable, standing up to very hard conditions of daily use by design students in the studio spaces who are creating a variety of art using a wide range of materials. With the studio spaces being occupied by students for a term at a time, the set-up has many of the characteristics of a workplace, with the student’s ability to personalize their space, with privacy for working, secure storage, together with easy connectivity for sharing and interaction.

The spaces have flexibility to support a wide range of art studies, from integrated IT for heavy users of digital technology such as advertising, communication design and digital media students, through to the ability to make physical prototypes by product and environment design students.

“The Node chairs are very popular, because of the flexibility they offer... for classroom sessions you’ll cluster in group and then reorganize into lecture modes.”

Tim Jachna
Associate Dean (Academic Programmes)

The new building is seen as a landmark, making the whole campus vivid and exciting, and gaining wider recognition for the importance of design in Hong Kong. It is a welcoming and inviting space that students are proud of, and has boosted the status of design studies. The lasting impact of the new ways of studying, and the flexibility of the furnishing and spaces within the building, set the stage for Polytechnic University to meet the changing demands of education in the future.



Light open classrooms enhance a feeling of wellbeing. Node seating with casters supports active learning, switching between different teaching modes in moments.

Node’s open seat design enables students to change postures and positions, offering comfort in multiple settings. The integrated storage base keeps personal items close at hand, and off the floor, enhancing the mobility and freedom of movement in the classroom.



Meeting rooms have flexible furnishings that support meetings both large and small. Integrated cabling enables plug and play at the worksurface, speeding the sharing of information

The new campus numbers:

Faculty and students: 1800 approx.

Floor space: 15,000 m²

Workspaces: Lecture hall
Classrooms
Design studios
Workshops
Exhibition spaces
Communal viewing lounge

PRODUCTS

- Node®
- Lexicon®
- Reply® Chair
- Think® Chair
- Flip Top® Twin
- Media:scape® Mobile