

*Active Learning*

## Learnlab at the Humboldt University, Berlin

In companies, schools, public institutions and universities, teachers and students battle with various challenges.



There is a call to replace lecture based teaching with interactive forms of learning, yet in many places, out-of-date classroom designs are unable to evolve with this change. Contemporary didactic methods and approaches in education are one thing – but creating and shaping the right learning environment is another.

### BACKGROUND

The Seminar for Rural Development (SRD) at the Humboldt University in Berlin recognized at an early stage that teaching and learning success is based on participative and problem-solving approaches. The SRD TRAINING Department reached the limits of incorporating this learning style because of its out-of-date equipment: The atmosphere of the austere rooms did not correspond to the image that the modern institute had of itself and did not reflect its development culture. The SRD was also restricted in its teaching by the inflexible furniture. During a course rooms had to be changed or chairs and table laboriously carried back and forth depending on the teaching situation. This was an annoying waste of time and energy and interrupted the learning session. The implementation of participative didactic teaching methods was made considerably more difficult by the inflexible, out-of-date equipment.



## IMPLEMENTATION

To provide optimum support for students and staff, classrooms were completely re-equipped. The SRD focused on creating a learning environment that reflects and encourages participative based teaching methods while remaining functional, flexible and also sustainably produced.

The SRD found the solution at Steelcase, which furnished the rooms as a future-oriented LearnLab: with flexible furniture, integrated technology, a lounge area and inspiring colors. Flexible furniture now allows a variety of different room layouts, and integrated technology further promotes the interaction between students and teachers. Lounge furniture, desks and standing height desks encourage students to adopt different ergonomic body postures throughout the class.



## RESULT

The rooms are now in line with the SRD's participative teaching approach, modern atmosphere and standards for sustainability. This benefits not only the staff, students and trainers – external groups frequently rent the classrooms for meetings and events.

Overall, the equipment in the LearnLab promotes engagement from students which leads to improved student success. A Steelcase Education assessment researched the effects of the new environment through student and teacher ratings. The results were added to a continued study on the effectiveness of active learning spaces.



The initial results of the study confirm that the LearnLab conditions have a positive effect on engagement. All the students in the new classroom describe themselves as engaged, with 71 percent even describing themselves as highly engaged. In comparison with other learning spaces, the students particularly value the opportunity to participate in multiple activities in one room and the collaborative environment that helps them build better relationships with their peers. The team workspaces are their new favorite location above the lounge area and desks. These positive results reinforce the benefits of active learning teaching methods and environments. The SDR is left with improved spaces that encourage student engagement, support collaboration and increase the wellbeing of their students.

## Featured Products

---

© 1996 - 2019 Steelcase Inc. is the global leader in office furniture, interior architecture and space solutions for offices, hospitals and classrooms. Our furniture is inspired by innovative research in workspace design.