

SCC Study Group, Spring 2014 - Maker Spaces
Final Report

1. Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

Our initial goal was to learn about Maker Spaces and investigate the idea of creating a Maker Space for students at Seton Catholic Central High School so that students might work in a creative manner, learning through self-exploration and experimentation. As time progressed we determined that a physical Maker Space within the High School was not practical due to logistical issues, safety concerns, and lack of supervision.

2. Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

We met once a week for two hours to view videos, discuss the books that we had obtained through the Teacher Center for this project, and talk about how the concepts therein might apply to our own practices. As time progressed we collectively decided that a Maker Space was not feasible within the High School.

3. Describe how the action plan was implemented.

An action plan was never implemented due to the knowledge that a Maker Space did not seem to fit our school's culture and needs at this time.

4. Evaluate the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance. How has this study group changed you as a teacher? Do you anticipate that any of your teaching practices will have changed?

Although we do not see the possibility of creating a dedicated Maker Space within the building, we discussed the possibilities for integrating the ideas integral to such spaces within the curriculum of various classes, especially in the Arts. Having two Art teachers in our Group, the Maker Space has much more direct implications for their classrooms, and they both plan to give their students the possibility of creating sculptures or designing more functional objects out of

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random materials. There are also possibilities for integrating Maker Space ideas within the Sciences, especially in the context of innovative investigation, whether self-directed or as part of a larger unit. This implementation of student directed lessons will allow for greater involvement, creativity, and critical thinking skills to be developed.

5. What evidence do you expect to see of student achievement improving as a result of your participating in this study group?

We expect to see a greater sense of self motivation rather than grade driven motivation; students working to learn and experiment rather than to receive a grade. Often students are very literal and set in their thinking, so we expect the implication of some aspects of the Maker Space would allow students to see that it is alright to try, to make mistakes and learn from them, to explore how things are constructed and made.

6. What evidence is there that the goals of the study group have / have not been met?

Our initial goal was to investigate whether or not a Maker Space would work in our High School. Upon analysis it seems that that is not the right goal for Seton at this current time. Since our goal was to investigate and learn enough to make an informed decision about the feasibility of a Maker Space - whether or not the decision was positive - the goal has been met.

7. Comment on the value of the study group process. Did it work for you?

The study group process worked wonderfully for us being able to have a group in which we could bounce ideas off of and collaborate with each other. It was easy for all of us to brainstorm more efficiently with the help of our co-workers as a group. It was also a great exercise for us to show how arts, science, and research integration can play a role within the classroom.

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8. How can we make this study group program better?

We all enjoyed the group collaborative process and it has proven to be beneficial for the kind of projects we have done this time and in the past. At this time we would not change the program. But there are some questions in this Final Report that do not really apply to us, since we were not looking at or including students in our plan, so while the study group is fine, the format and questions in the report might use some adjustment.