Promoting Learning Transfer with Learning Spaces

Peter Looker
Head Teaching, Learning and Pedagogy Division

4 December, 2014
Learning transfer or the capacity to generalise learning to new situations
Learning transfer or the capacity to generalise learning to new situations

“…what is learned in one situation affects or influences what the learner is capable of doing in another situation”

Marton F. (2006)
Learning transfer or the capacity to generalise learning to new situations

**Negative transfer**

Learning in one context inhibits its use in another context
Old, front-facing tutorial rooms
Old, front-facing tutorial rooms

- Students face front
- Students work individually
- Teacher faces students
- No room for movement
- Difficult to share work
New TR+ tutorial rooms
New TR+ tutorial rooms

• Students work in groups facing each other
• No fixed position for professor
• Multiple opportunities for sharing work
What effect does classroom design have on what is learned in the classroom, and how it is used afterwards?
What is learned underwater is better recalled underwater. Godden & Baddeley (1975)
And vice versa. What is learned on land...
Context-dependent memory: what is learned here...
Might better be recalled here...
Or here
Than here...
Greater similarity between new classroom and many office spaces
The effect of social environment on "transfer"
What can or can’t happen?

- It is very difficult in the old classroom to have multiple forms of interaction – the social environment is constrained.
- (In the case of NTU) the new classroom allow both interactivity, collaborative learning, and free movement, with the ability to use monitors for displaying work.
Some proposals

• Design of physical space can create continuity with the world outside the classroom – better chance of activating context-dependent memory
Some proposals

- Design of learning spaces provides potential for creating the social environment (forms of relationship and interactions) that may influence learning transfer by the kinds of activities undertaken.
Discontinuity
THANK YOU!