

## LibITS

Collaborative Efforts of Library & Information Technology Services  
Lead to Success  
Educause 2009

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The Library and the Division of Information and Technology Services have cooperated on multiple projects over the years that have been well received by students and faculty. These are some examples of the best practices for collaborative working relationships used by the Library, in the Division of Academic Affairs, and Information and Technology Services (ITS), illustrating the successes and the challenges of selected projects.

Many of the technology projects that have succeeded at Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU) because of collaboration and cooperation between the Library and Information Technology Services have been major undertakings, requiring significant funding from multiple sources and significant planning by people in different divisions. Planning is time consuming, “cross-cultural communication” between departments and divisions can be challenging, and thinking cooperatively is a non-traditional skill. Our results show that when the focus is on student needs, the cooperative thought process is more likely to lead to success.



**Student Study Rooms** – *part of a major library remodeling project; carved out 6 group study rooms with 32" LCD Display, projection control system, computer and space for 6-8 students.* The use of collaborative learning approaches by our faculty and the expressed need for more group study space by our students led to this initiative, which provides students with technology-enhanced group study rooms and a place to practice presentations with technology similar to that of MSU classrooms.



**Library Information Commons** – *book stacks moved and reconfigured by the Library, opening up large space for technology.* Custom-designed by ITS, “pods” make effective use of building support pillars, wrapping around them for access to power and networking. Pods are cloverleaf-shaped workspaces with 8 computers that allow privacy for the single user while facilitating group work by clusters of 2-3 students. A variety of other seating choices (individual soft armchairs, love seats, and café height tables) provide multiple comfort options to match the way students choose to study. Space that previously housed books and presented a fortress-like image has been turned into a vibrant, comfortable, active, student friendly destination for studying. This technology space houses more than 140 computers equipped with the Office suite and other software to support coursework. A conveniently located Reference Desk and adjoining Technology Help Station provide students with a one-stop location for all their assignment needs.

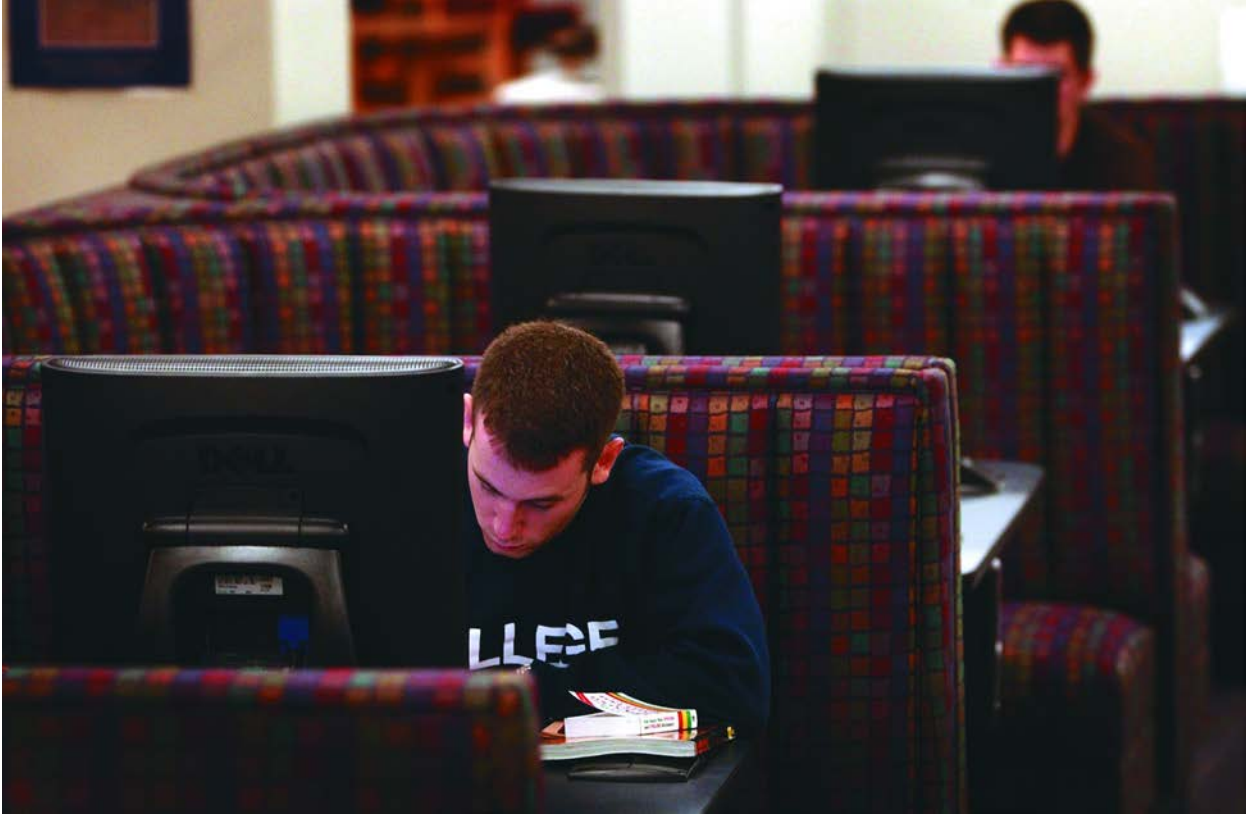


**Library Instruction Lab** – a variety of spaces created within the Library, meeting campus demand for bibliographic instruction. With the main library classroom located in the basement of the Library building, but outside the confines of the Library, there was need for computer classroom labs of various sizes within the Library. In a collaborative effort, ITS provided design, specification and installation expertise; the Library and Academic Affairs provided the funding. Although departments that use nearby book collections quickly recognized the potential of incorporating these spaces into their computerized curriculum, the Library needed flexible scheduling for a wide range of instructional uses. As a result, this space is not available for regularly scheduled classes.



**Seminar Room** – *another response to the need for group meeting/working space.* This large meeting room features two 50” plasma screens on opposing walls and a 10-station laptop conference table that hides the laptops when not in use. ITS helped with the planning and installation of the equipment, the Library provided the funding and the space, and the result is a perfect setup for meetings, small group instruction, or seminars.

**TnT – Teaching and Technology lab** – *space provided within the library building for faculty and staff development.* The Library collaborated with ITS by sharing some underutilized space. With a 22-seat computerized training lab, an executive conference room, and a multimedia production studio with video capabilities, this space now benefits faculty and staff campus-wide.



**Casual Collaborative Computer Lab and Global Learning Lab** – space provided by the Library, with collaborative funding by the Library, ITS Student Technology Fee, and the Department of Modern Languages. Custom software allows students to learn and practice a language skill, collaborate on group projects, or work independently at computer workstations or with their own laptops, taking advantage of the ubiquitous wireless access on the MSU campus. Flexibility in study styles is the key to this uniquely designed space.



**Laptop Checkout-** 50 Dell Latitude laptop computers check out for a week at a time. This very popular service has students waiting in line for the next available laptop. The laptops are purchased from technology funds and circulated by the Library.

**Outcomes:**

Through collaboration and cooperation, the Library and the Division of Information and Technology Services have created multiple creative, flexible, enticing –and well-used– student study facilities and campus-wide meeting rooms. Continued maintenance and upgrades of these various initiatives is jointly managed by the Library and ITS. Taken together, the collaborative efforts of these departments have brought stellar results on behalf of the students at Minnesota State University, Mankato. However, it takes individual and professional courage to be able to work together for the greater good. Not every effort will succeed easily, but keeping our focus on support for student success has helped us persist and achieve excellent outcomes.

**Importance or relevance to other institutions:**

Our university's mission is "to promote learning." Our approach is very simple: 1) Formally and informally, find out about student and faculty information needs. 2) Bring the key players to the table with a commitment to cooperation, collaboration, all students, and the university community. 3) Think together, take risks, and do what you can to help the team meet the project goals. The relevance of our experience to other institutions is that, with simple ground rules and a commitment to student outcomes rather than narrow departmental outcomes, we can all surprise ourselves – and each with the successes that cooperation can deliver.