

March 2020



Transforming the Instructional Landscape Becoming Trusted Partners in Classroom (re)Design

Themes and Insights: Design-Thinking Summary



Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>Methods</i>	4
<i>Themes and Insights</i>	4
Theme One: Trust Through Transparency	5
Theme Two: Owning the Process	8
Theme Three: Playing to Strengths	12
<i>Design Principles</i>	15
<i>Journey Map</i>	16
<i>Next Steps</i>	17
<i>Conclusion</i>	17
<i>Student Contributors</i>	18

Introduction

University of Toronto (UofT) community members spend so much time in classrooms, whether they are learning, teaching, or supporting those who do. But classroom design does not always reflect what they need from their teaching and learning environments, especially as educational practices evolve. To ensure classrooms are designed for the needs of all who use them, Academic and Campus Events (ACE) leads the Transforming the Instructional Landscape (TIL) project.

TIL supports quality teaching by "developing accessible, innovative, and effective purpose-built classrooms."¹ Since its launch in 2017, it has renovated 87 classrooms with input from 1188 stakeholders. In total, it plans to "upgrade 17 classrooms in 23 buildings across the St. George campus, [which] will impact almost 6000 courses and [...] affect the experience of almost every student and instructor."²

To help collect stakeholder input, ACE works with the Innovation Hub, an office in the Division of Student Life. Together, we create opportunities for feedback and delve into participants' responses to uncover pressing needs. When our partnership started in 2017, we focused on student needs. But we quickly recognized the diverse players who also use classrooms and expanded our project to include instructors, instructional-technology-team members, administrative staff, accessibility-services providers, and more.

From this larger group, we learned about the key factors affecting the classroom experience. Classrooms are places of connection—interpersonal, physical, and digital. How well those connections work, and how well they suit the needs of teachers and learners, will affect emotional experiences and accessibility.³ In this report, we build on our previous work by critically examining the stakeholder-feedback process used over the last two years. Together with ACE, the Innovation Hub asked, "How might we create a collaborative classroom-design process at UofT that meets the needs of all stakeholders?"

We conducted long-form interviews and a journey-mapping session to understand how different stakeholders experience the current design process. Through this data, we learned that trust is key. When participants trust each other, they buy into the process and feel heard. Designers can build trust in multiple ways: by communicating transparently about design decisions and logistics; by giving instructors and administrators a sense of ownership in the design process; and by identify, supporting, and utilizing the strengths of stakeholders. We explore these themes in the following text.

¹ Learn more at: <https://ace.utoronto.ca/>

² Ibid.

³ An online report is available at uoft.me/TILReport

Methods

For this project, the Innovation Hub team interviewed ACE staff, university administrators, and instructors. We asked open-ended questions so participants could guide the discussions and share their most personally compelling experiences. We also incorporated data from the Innovation Hub narrative bank, which includes stories from hundreds of individuals from the UofT community. From our data, we developed a holistic understanding of participants' experiences with the TIL redesign process.

Themes and Insights

Becoming Trusted Partners

We found that the key to community collaboration is trust. By establishing relations of trust with stakeholders, TIL can deliver both a better classroom experience and a better classroom-design experience. Further, it can be a leader in connecting often-siloed groups at UofT.

Under the banner of trust, we further organize our insights into three key themes. First, "**Trust Through Transparency**" encourages designers to give stakeholders a window into the design process. Second, "**Owning The Process**" describes the attachment stakeholders feel to their working and learning spaces. Finally, "**Playing to Strengths**" reveals the benefits of giving participants clearly delineated roles and responsibilities.

We hope these insights—and the key theme of building trust—will help TIL to build a consultation process that celebrates collaborative design and uses it to create human-friendly instructional spaces.

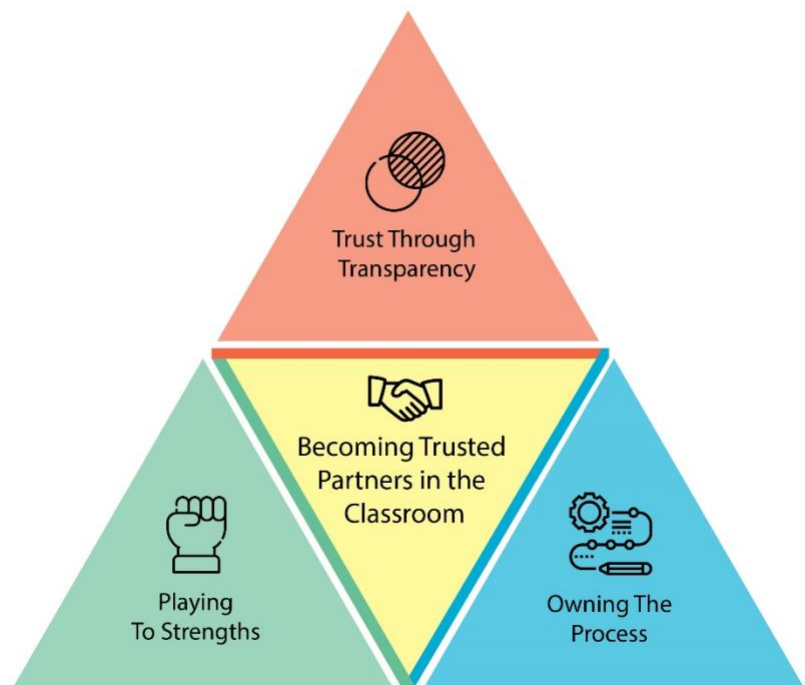
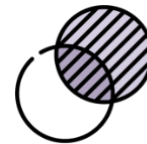


Figure 1. Visualization of three themes

Theme One: Trust Through Transparency



Stakeholders want transparency in the classroom-redesign process. After they give feedback, they want to know how their advice translated into the final design. When their spaces are being renovated, they want to know how their project fits into the overall TIL project. And during the redesign and construction, they want frequent progress updates.

Seeing Your Voice in the Design

Renovating a classroom requires expertise—in design, architecture, research, and budget and project management. Stakeholder feedback informs these processes, but it often cannot be used as-is. Designers and stakeholders must translate user feedback into cost-effective, real-world designs that meet multiple needs.

“Design is a lot of somebody saying they want something, but the reason designers exist is because everyday people ... don't [know]; it's not their profession [...].”

“People ... usually want weird things like windows in the interior of the [building] or—like we had an instructor say they wanted the walls painted red. We're not going to do that because red is scientifically proven to cause anxiety and make students more stressed out. So, for that reason, either we're going to disregard something because it's not possible, like windows, or something like red [paint]. It's based on our design knowledge and our research.”

After this translation, participants may find it difficult to recognize how, or whether, their feedback guided a design. One person's very specific request may illuminate a broader issue. Yet the eventual solution may take a very different form from the original suggestion.

“And once the solution is implemented ... it's not easy to make people understand why it went that way, because some people will assume, they voiced it. Unfortunately, in some cases, it's not the way how it goes. Because they start to notice that what they were asking doesn't really show on paper or show in a way that they don't really understand. So that requires a lot of effort, trying to make them understand.”

“We go in there, cables scattered everywhere, TVs all around the walls, and it looks high-tech, but it's not right for the ... purpose of the room. So, there was something missing [in] the communication process. The room was drastically changed, but people who looked at it weren't told about it, and it was a shock.”

Instructors want to feel and see their feedback in action when they step into a renovated room. Thus, transparent consultation needs to include the aftermath: not just asking

participants for their thoughts before the design, but also explaining how their thoughts translated into design decisions. Our interviewees thought it was important to close the understanding gap through storytelling. By narrating the design process, from participants' initial concerns and hopes, to how those fit into the larger TIL vision, to how the final design materialized, designers clarify the connection between feedback and action.

“I think bringing people back reinforces with them that their input is valuable. That they gave us feedback and here's what [it] resulted in. So, it's that idea that they feel connected with the process. And the benefit is, is then you've kind of got these [people] that are going to then [say], ‘Oh, this is a great process,’ and they can be your sort of champion out in the world, so it kind of creates a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy.”

The design process can be rewarding for stakeholders—not only when they see a completed room, but also when they understand how designers and architects turned their insights into actual features.

Part of a Larger Vision

TIL's vision encompasses the whole campus and is necessarily collaborative. It wants to build spaces that are dynamic and accessible, that accommodate emerging pedagogical styles and fit the changing needs of instructors and students. No single project stands alone; all emerge from this same vision and connect to other redesigns on campus. Stakeholders express a need for this sense of place, where all community members better understand how their specific projects fit into the wider conversation.

“We're here to have conversations with our community about what these spaces should look like. That's an ongoing conversation, and [it] should be an ongoing conversation.”

TIL invites its stakeholders into this holistic view of space and pedagogy at UofT. However, many project stakeholders, concerned about their ability to deliver lecture content and courses, focus primarily on their immediate classroom needs. They may not recognize that their classroom redesign is part of a broader initiative driven by TIL's vision.

“I only know surface information and basically some bits and pieces that I've read in correspondence, but beyond that, I only know it loosely [that] they are working on this project.”

“I think I've been contacted in the past for some input here and there, they did an online forum but again, I don't really have a great concrete idea of who ... what exactly the project is.”

Though stakeholders enter the conversation through the redesign of their own classroom spaces, they can be connected to the campus-wide transformation through better communication.

Transparent Timelines

Shifting project timelines are an inevitable part of the construction process. Unfortunately, they also cause anxiety and confusion for stakeholders. Interviewees wanted reassurance and clarity as plans changed. They requested broad-strokes updates on renovation progress and on expected time to completion. In the absence of communication, speculation and misinformation can spread.

“Better, more communication of what's happening in terms of the revitalization of the classrooms would be great. I would presume a lot of the construction and renovation would happen before or after the semester anyways. When I heard of our renovation, my knee-jerk reaction is: How many classrooms are we really losing, and what is this going to look like for next year?”

“It can sort of be like this classroom is under construction; I see New College will be under construction, Law, and then Victoria College and Trinity all that kind of stuff. Again, it's just more for our information. I know a lot of people won't invest time to look at it. But at least it's good information to have.”

Instructors at UofT conduct research, secure grants, supervise students, and serve administrative roles in addition to teaching. With so much on their minds, they need time to adapt to change. They explicitly mentioned this in terms of classroom scheduling: they wanted more time to familiarize themselves with redesigned classrooms and to change their lesson plans.

“People get assigned to these rooms [and] they don't know what to do. They don't know what they can do. They're given like a tour between the final exam and Christmas for the winter semester, [to] have like a quick like 15-minute tour of the room.”

At each stage of the redesign process, clear, transparent, and timely communication gives stakeholders an opportunity to adapt to change.

Theme Two: Owning the Process



Stakeholders have a strong sense of ownership over their classrooms, and for good reason: space matters to those who use it every day. TIL can deepen these feelings of attachment and pride in campus space. In discussions with stakeholders, they extended this sense of ownership from the spaces to the consultation process and design.

A Personal Stake

Departments are eager to contribute to the design decisions that shape their spaces. Sometimes, they reflect disciplinary identity through the way they want to use space: a chemistry instructor, for example, has different assumptions regarding the common-sense features of a classroom than a history instructor. Interviewees stressed that classroom redesign should start from a detailed understanding of how they use space daily.

"It's very discipline-specific ... to me that's the biggest hurdle. You know, you're creating these rooms, [where] you're going to put all kinds of different profs from different disciplines. And you just don't know what they do in these disciplines."

"Just [ACE] even knowing what we do in the classroom and what activities are required, that we need [certain kinds of] spaces. That would be helpful."

While interviewees knew that they could express their concerns or make inquiries through the TIL website or via email, they wanted to feel that their feedback had been heard. Even simple confirmation gestures, like a thank-you reply, make the sharing of feedback feel like a conversation between two (or more) active and engaged parties. Since feedback is often provided through indirect contact, TIL and its team members can feel abstract and anonymous to stakeholders.

"It's kind of challenging because we tend to send an email out into the void, and hope that somebody in the void will respond back to us."

"Maybe there will be action in the future, but I didn't get any feedback. [I would like something] just like, 'Oh, thank you,' 'Oh, that's a good idea,' 'Oh, why didn't we think of that?'"

"There was just a matter of responding to the email chains. I'm trying to think about the time between when we had the communication, and the decision being made. I am not sure, but I think there was a bit of a gap between sort of the discussion about it, and then they sort of [...] came back with final plans".

Instructors want to provide feedback, because they are invested in their teaching spaces and want to feel included in discussions about them. Conversely, when they are not given a chance

to have their say, they feel disconnected from the renovated classroom and from the redesign process.

“But my perspective, my personal experience with the rooms was that something else is going on, rooms are changing on campus. And it's totally independent from me, I have to just deal with it when I get there [It's] going to be frustrating for us to teach.”

Instructors expect that their pedagogical needs will be understood and incorporated into redesigns. Providing confirmation and assurance that their voices have been heard—and understood—builds confidence in the redesign process.

From One Person to Another

When instructors have direct exchanges with staff working on TIL, they express satisfaction with the feedback experience. Person-to-person interactions put a face on TIL, actively signal cooperation and collaboration, and help instructors feel that their insights are contributing to concrete changes. Instructors with direct connections to architects and designers viewed those encounters positively and expressed attachment to and investment in the redesign process.

“Like [Architect], I met her for a few times. I thought she was fantastic. When I have direct contact with someone like that, I could say, ‘Look, I need this for the room,’ and she'd take care of it. I needed a big strong desk for some of the demonstrations I do. I explained it, and they would be just like, ‘Okay, yeah, we'll take care of it.’ I thought that was just fantastic.”

“I was thinking maybe, if there's the time and resources to do it, if you just came and gave a talk at one of our faculty meetings and say, ‘Hey, we're redesigning This is who we are. And this is how we work; this is how we do things. We're trying to involve users in the process. So you may get a message from us.’”

Similarly, targeted and personalized requests for feedback were viewed positively. Interviewees said they would be more inclined to participate if they felt their unique expertise was being directly sought.

“So, it's really about involving people at the beginning, especially the profs who potentially light up [at] this, and say, ‘Yeah, I'm really interested in this, like I could see myself teaching in one of those rooms.’ So then, you really attach yourself to these people because they're motivated from the get-go, right? You talk to them, you get their thoughts, their feedback.”

“We're redesigning the classroom, and we're reaching out because you teach in that classroom. We're asking you for feedback on the design, since you're more familiar with it operationally.’ I was like, ‘Oh, that's actually true. That's really great that you're doing that.’”

In sum, stakeholders build a relationship to the TIL redesign process by building relationships with people. Personalized exchanges, whether online or in person, were a highlight for many interviewees. When stakeholders felt they were heard and that their concerns and unique

needs were taken into consideration, they expressed trust in the process and increased buy-in for new spaces.

Getting and Staying in Touch

Though interviewees want to share their thoughts and be active in the redesign process, the busyness of everyday life means that chances to participate pass them by. Broadly targeted outreach and feedback requests go unnoticed, especially when sent to those not acquainted with TIL. This issue is not unique to TIL: as other Innovation Hub projects have repeatedly illustrated, communication between and within UofT departments is complex. Interviewees highlighted the difficulty of circulating information in their departments.⁴

"I get so many emails that I tend to just ignore things that I'm not expecting or that don't look familiar. I'd almost just put it [a feedback request] into an ignore category. Now this could just be me. But [when I was contacted by ACE], something in my head went, 'Don't ignore it. Open it.' So, I opened it and read it. There was this part of me [that] was like, 'Who are these people?'"

"Yeah, I mean the message, it's hard to communicate at such a big group, right? Maybe some ... personalized emails or something, like where it's not just a ... if it's an email that's like clearly that's gone out to a lot of people, it's very easy to just ignore it, right?"

These missed opportunities can have a material effect on renovations. If people miss early stages of feedback, they may provide vital information later, for which ACE will need to belatedly compensate.

"Sometimes very important feedback comes in way too late. And then it becomes a lot of stress for [us] to try to change the design to accommodate that request."

Some interviewees explained that different departments require different approaches to spreading information. Administrators and faculty maintain their own hard-earned and extensive networks of contacts. These specialized networks are often very efficient at sourcing participants for events, both because they are targeted towards certain interest groups, and because these administrators and faculty have an intimate knowledge of the inner workings of their departments.

"[It's] the culture of information and how it's disseminated outwards, to reach out to folks saying that as much as you have used this classroom for 10 years, your classroom is not specifically this classroom itself, you may have it moved into the classroom, so that might be the case. Getting that out to faculty members and having them understand that situation will help, of course, this whole process."

"I can email directly all of my teaching staff, and most of them will be using the classrooms at the college, and they would have the best insight of what they would like I can sort of solicit

⁴ Learn more at uoft.me/innovationhub

or at least provide you with the distribution list, so that you can target our sessionals. That's the hardest part is targeting sessional people, because they're contracted for the year. Faculty members, you can find them easily, but it's sessionals who have to deal with the classrooms. I think getting their feedback is just as important."

Opening multiple channels for dialogue with stakeholders is vital to the success of the classroom-redesign process. Increasing the regularity of contact with stakeholders also has logistical benefits from the perspective of project management, helping to prevent costly delays in later project stages.

Theme Three: Playing to Strengths



TIL stakeholders bring unique strengths to the table, such as years of architectural training or insider knowledge on students' classroom habits. To make best use of each person's strengths, interviewees revealed a pressing need for clear roles and responsibilities. Which stakeholders possess which strengths? When and how can their skills be used? Interviewees wanted better definitions of scope, assigned accountability, and set expectations.

Whose Mandate is This?

TIL stakeholders each have their own mandate at UofT, which they work to fulfill while managing unpredictable timelines, budgetary requirements, and the mandates of their partners. But it is not always clear where one stakeholder's responsibilities end and another's begin. Thus, interviewees sought clarification about TIL's exact mandate.

"So maybe as a question: What does TIL entail? Does it entail all of the furnishing and the painting and the repairs?"

In one example, a department did not know if ACE was responsible for painting the walls in their rooms as part of the TIL renovation. Although staff had a positive experience working with ACE and the redesign process overall, this misunderstanding led to the perception that the project was incomplete.

"[...] If you're doing all these upgrades, what do you want? Do you want to have a look and feel of a new space or look and feel of old and new? Because if you spend so much money during the carpeting, and doing all the chairs or the seats, you would also be nice and great if you do a refresh of the paint. [...] It should be part and parcel. So, looking at the total, and ensuring that the total is complete."

When an issue arises in a classroom, instructors and administrators are often unsure who is responsible for solving the problem. This uncertainty extends beyond the redesign process into everyday management. For example, one interviewee described an instance where people were confused about who should be conducting classroom inspections. They mistakenly believed that this fell under ACE's responsibilities, and though they found ACE helpful once the classroom issues were relayed to them, the moment of confusion stood out in their minds.

"The ACE [classrooms] had been getting complaints that the seats were ripped, the walls were not okay, we're having leaks. [...] So, we went in and did an inspection, and then brought that to the attention [of ACE]. I would have thought they would have done an inspection of all the rooms [...]."

"I don't have any problems with how they manage the rooms. They're pretty efficient; they're responsive."

These examples highlight the importance of clarifying—and celebrating—the unique work performed by each TIL stakeholder in designing and maintaining instructional space.

Supporting Instructor Strengths

As the 2018–19 TIL report discussed, an instructor’s willingness to adopt new classroom equipment is contingent on trust.⁵ To teach with confidence, instructors need to feel assured of reliable technology and technical support. Interviewees sometimes expressed apprehension when moving between rooms, because they had a history of dealing with inconsistent equipment between classrooms.

“The designs are technically meeting certain check-offs. But we aren’t given the idea of what those are ... Being able to utilize a blackboard and maybe a projector at the same time is possible in some rooms and not possible in other rooms.”

“Having said that, looking through ACE rooms—even like the fancy ones—I’ve noticed that there’s no consistency a lot of times ... with even the technology.”

The need for consistency extends to classroom scheduling. Instructors are wary of revising their entire teaching approach for a classroom when they cannot be guaranteed the same space next semester or year. Room assignments often change, so instructors feel their access to a particular classroom is tenuous. This means that curricula designed for enhanced classrooms may not be usable in next year’s space and that instructors may forget to how to use equipment if they are cycled out of classrooms where they use it regularly.

“So if you’re going to put me in that room, that one semester, and I’m going to put a lot of time and effort to change my interactive learning into like this, but then you’re not going to guarantee me, then in the next four years, I’ll be in that room again, or [a] similar room, why would I change my stuff? I could be back in a traditional classroom next week, or the week or next semester.”

“This is typical problem with training, is if you’re trained and you don’t use the room, then you forget very quickly, because it’s technology. And it’s, it’s not that it’s complex, it’s just that you need to know what you’re doing. And if you’ve never done it for six months, then you’re going to forget.”

The “transformation” in Transforming the Instructional Landscape is twofold: it is at once a physical transformation of classroom spaces and a transformation of pedagogical approaches. Once construction is completed, instructors can contribute their strengths to TIL by experimenting with new classroom equipment and implementing innovative teaching strategies. They need to be supported and accommodated as they transition into these new spaces.

⁵ An online report is available at uoft.me/TILReport

“I think that it wasn't that instructors assigned to rooms didn't know how to teach in it. It was that instructors who didn't want to teach in the space were assigned to it. So, I think that the mistake was made assigning instructors without asking for their feedback or preference.”

“It's still really tricky for anyone to show up there and teach in a different way that they have been teaching And it's not just you; it's the students get stuck in their ways of learning. So, we have these things called systemic commitments—that we're kind of disposed toward certain patterns of teaching and learning.”

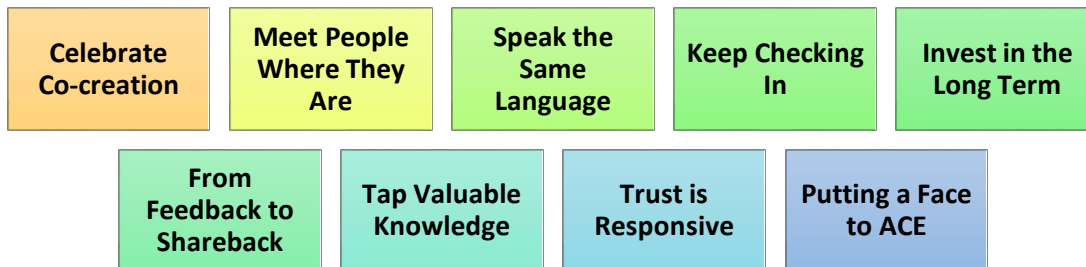
The responsibility for providing this support is shared among TIL stakeholders. Interviewees noted the importance of peer learning and collaboration alongside formal instruction in the use of classroom equipment.

“[...] If we want [a] prof to adopt this, they're probably going to adopt it by learning and from their colleagues.”

Theme 2, “Owning the Process”, described the feelings of attachment instructors have to classroom space. Here, interviewees reiterated this need for a feeling of ownership—one that persists through the redesign process and into the early years of a renovated classroom's lifecycle—in order to bring their unique strengths to bear on TIL.

Design Principles

The following design principles emerged from the themes and insights. They provide guidelines for designing a welcoming and inclusive process:



- 1) **Celebrate Co-creation:** Participatory design is a core part of TIL’s mandate and this collaboration should be celebrated as a vital aspect of the process. Expressing this principle lets stakeholders know that feedback and consultation are heard, considered, and are an important part of the process.
- 2) **Meet People Where They Are:** The redesign process should strive to engage with stakeholders on their own terms. Provide a range of diverse ways to participate in the design process. This expands the scope of consultations so that everyone can feel they have a say.
- 3) **Speak the Same Language:** Care should be taken to avoid technical or unfamiliar language so that a shared understanding can be built. Try whenever possible to speak to stakeholders using their terms.
- 4) **Keep Checking In:** Community buy-in should be renewed throughout the redesign process. Regular contact with stakeholders will help ensure the redesign is on the right track and provide an opportunity to refresh timelines to avoid unwelcome surprises.
- 5) **Invest in the Long Term:** For stakeholders, participation in TIL means committing to long-term support and collaboration around classroom spaces. It is important to maintain a dialogue and work to continually improve classrooms even after construction is complete.
- 6) **From Feedback to Shareback:** Even Explaining how stakeholder feedback has impacted design decisions allows them to see their experiences reflected in those changes. Stakeholders are more inclined to embrace design decisions when they see their feedback echoed back to them.
- 7) **Tap Valuable Knowledge:** Community Instructors, divisional staff, and students all have valuable knowledge and unique needs which should be reflected in classroom design decisions. Making use of every avenue to contact relevant stakeholders for consultation will ensure rich information is collected.
- 8) **Trust is Responsive:** Community ACE should respond quickly and in its own voice in the face of unexpected complications. This will help to foster a trusting relationship with concerned stakeholders.
- 9) **Putting a face to ACE:** Stakeholder stressed the importance of personalized consultation and face to face interactions in developing the sort of trust that facilitates the complicated process of classroom redesign. Even brief interactions can make lasting impressions.

Journey Map

A journey map highlights the ups and downs for ACE, staff and instructors, and illustrates the complexity of this process and of classroom design. By understanding each stakeholder's journey, core needs and potential process changes come to light for future redesign and partnership opportunities.

PHASES		PRE-DESIGN	CONSULTATION	DESIGN	CONSULTATION	CONSTRUCTION	ON-GOING
STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS	ACE	"What is the state of the classroom? What have people said about it?"	"What do classroom users want?"	"What are the best design options while also minimizing cost?"	"Are users happy with our interpretation of their feedback?"	"Everything is going smoothly and on schedule!"	"What can we learn from these renovated spaces that are now in use?"
	STAFF	"Which classrooms are they planning to renovate?"	"How does the process work?"	"We need specific types of rooms for our division."	"How will our instructors respond to these changes?"	"I wish we could let our instructors know when they can use these rooms."	"Who is maintaining the rooms?"
	INSTRUCTORS	"What is TIL?"	"Are they going to implement our ideas?"	"Will the room be truly functional for my class?"	"How can I make use of this cool new equipment?"	"Will I be teaching in this room post-renovation?"	"How do I use the equipment in this classroom?"
PAIN POINTS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty sorting through past feedback Limited understanding of the TIL process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited numbers who can speak directly with ACE Outreach methods for responses Low engagement with feedback sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeting and timeline constraints Stakeholders don't know what is going on No clear channel of communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some might feel their feedback is not being taken into consideration Some stakeholders are consulted late in the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classrooms are out of commission Stakeholders might be unaware of progress & classroom changes Limited training time Unclear division of responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help needed for arising classroom problems Unclear processes for room feedback, TIL timelines and follow-up sessions Some stakeholders surprised by changes
CORE NEEDS		... to understand the process as a whole.	... to be heard.	... to be kept in the loop.	... to see their voice in the final design.	... to know what's going on.	... to see commitment to an ongoing partnership.
POTENTIAL PROCESS CHANGES		Explaining the TIL redesign process so stakeholders know what to expect.	Personalizing outreach, and gathering diverse perspectives for initial feedback.	Sending regular process updates to involved stakeholders.	Having broad follow-ups (ie. "Explore, Imagine, Play" events) to share design intentions with the community.	Sending regular process updates to involved stakeholders.	Creating diverse channels for continued feedback on spaces; scheduling post-launch room follow-ups with users.

Next Steps

The insights presented in this report serve as a foundation for creating a human-centered classroom-design process, one that considers the needs of all stakeholders while balancing constraints such as project deadlines and competing priorities. The design principles provide a guide for successfully consulting and building trust with the community. With these guidelines in mind, an opportunity is open to create an innovative, well-documented process for classroom redesign under the TIL banner.

The Innovation Hub is well positioned to lead the design of this human-centric process in collaboration with key partners. First steps in this process could include:

- Deeper conversations with TIL partners including ACE, CTSI, and departmental-specific supports (for example, Education Commons at OISE)
- Identifying critical junctures for consultation in the design/redesign process
- Defining high-, medium-, and low-touch consultation opportunities to ensure flexibility that suits scheduling demands, departmental needs and other identified constraints

Once the process has been designed, the Innovation Hub can also produce the support materials required to operationalize the process, such as:

- Process visuals designed to facilitate communication between stakeholders and establish a common language
- Process documentation and customizable support material for consultations (scripts, checklists, etc.)
- Reference documents that suggest a variety of human-centered connection strategies for connecting with departments, faculty, and students throughout the process
- An assessment/evaluation plan that can help track success and facilitate improvements along the way

Much learning has been gained from the first few years of the TIL initiative. Translating the insights from these experiences into tangible actions will fuel the transformation of teaching and learning at the University of Toronto.

Conclusion

The data gathered in this research project demonstrates the importance of trusted partnerships in facilitating the redesign process. Consultations are an opportunity to develop this trust. Bringing together stakeholders from across the university, TIL can bridge departmental gaps and encourage collaboration that extends beyond classroom renovations. Key to relationships of trust is transparency throughout the redesign process, shared ownership of the process with stakeholders, and the promotion of the strengths of project partners (while clarifying their responsibilities). Future efforts to document in detail the consultation process will build on the insights presented here.

Student Contributors



Jason Batten-Carew, Design Research Team Lead, Master of Information Candidate, User Experience Design

Anoosheh Ghazanfari, Design Research Assistant, Master of Information Candidate, User Experience Design

Natasha Cuneo, Design Research Assistant, Master of Arts Candidate, Social Cultural Anthropology

Jeanne Lee, Design Research Assistant, Master of Public Policy Candidate

Meg Clare, Design Research Assistant, 4th-Year Undergraduate, Architectural Studies

Komal Noor, Design Research Volunteer, Master of Information Candidate, User Experience Design

Maia Chapman, Design Research Volunteer, Master of Information Candidate, User Experience Design



For more information, or to work with the Innovation Hub, please contact
Julia Smeed at julia.smeed@utoronto.ca or 416-978-8619, or visit our blog at
uoft.me/innovationhub