Books Review:

Cases on Higher Education Spaces: Innovation, Collaboration, and Technology

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I am fortunate to teach at a university called Hakodate Mirai Daigaku in northern Japan (http://www.fun.ac.jp/en/). The English translation of the university’s name is Future University, and its motto is Open Space, Open Mind. The university is an all-glass structure, and classes can be easily observed as you wander around the five floors of the building. You can also see post-graduate students in their open labs working on robot projects and design students creating digital 3D artifacts. In theory, students can ‘walk in’ to any class or project underway.

The pedagogy is informed by the practice of project-based learning. Future University is unique in Japan, and the staff and students work very hard at following its motto, but there have been obstacles and barriers. Although the structure of the building promotes an open space, much still needs to be done to develop the true implementation of Open Mind. Much has been learned by the academic staff, researchers, management, administrators, and contractors since the university’s inception twelve years ago. The benefit of hindsight is wonderful, and although we have the macro vision of Open Space, Open Mind, it has often been felt that progress within its details has been indeterminate. There has been a lack of clarity on how to implement the Open Mind philosophy. After reading Cases on Higher Education Spaces: Innovation, Collaboration, and Technology, I felt Future University is not alone in tackling the challenges brought...
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