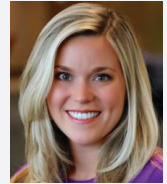


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Mobility solutions are transforming the way we learn, work and study

Developments in learning spaces, resources and equality are trends to watch out for throughout the year

How are physical learning spaces expected to change in the near future?

Computer labs filled with rows of computers no longer work for today's students. Since the average student owns three or more mobile devices, they need anywhere, anytime access to resources and a space to collaborate with others. Open-use labs will decrease or be done away with completely and transformed into comfortable coffee shop-like spaces that offer creative learning areas with improved Wi-Fi, large-screen monitors and plenty of outlets where students can bring their own devices and work together.

What about the resources that students will be using in these spaces?

Since each student is unique, learning solutions can no longer be one-size-fits-all. IT teams are being challenged to find customizable solutions that can change and adapt to students' varied needs. When IT implements flexible, mobile workspaces, they increase access to learning resources and reach students wherever and whenever they feel most productive and inspired.

As institutions aim to close equality gaps, how will IT play a role?

New technologies are being implemented and expanded to provide an equal learning experience regardless of each student's socioeconomic status. IT services and resources must be able to work anywhere and on any device—whether it's a brand-new laptop or aging equipment. Schools are also increasingly bolstering physical environments by adding remote campus locations and online courses in order to reach more students and to make learning opportunities more readily available.

What are the challenges around implementing new technologies?

Providing students with the latest technology and new devices such as tablets, thin clients and 3D printers is becoming common at institutions. But without the proper back-end infrastructure to support and deliver services to these devices, they are not providing the value or innovation they intended. As a result, IT teams are transforming the challenges of device proliferation into mobility strategies and new opportunities for learning.

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What opportunity will technology provide for learning continuity?

Every student loves a good snow day, but snow days also mean that valuable learning time is lost. In response, more schools are implementing technologies that enable virtual school days—not only to make up for days lost due to weather but also to keep students from falling behind due to illness or extended periods away from campus, such as winter break or study abroad. With virtualization and other mobility solutions, students have access to everything they need to have a productive, fulfilling learning experience at home or anywhere.

At Citrix Synergy back in May, you met with several schools that shared technology success stories and challenges. What were some pieces of advice shared that were particularly intriguing?

What impressed me most about the schools that presented at Citrix Synergy was how small IT teams at large universities and community colleges can take the lead and create a truly mobile campus. For example, the University of Central Florida (UCF) began their mobility strategy with just a few colleges, hoping to eventually take the project campuswide. It was so successful that within a few months, the entire university signed on. UCF accomplished this feat by involving students and faculty in the design and rollout of their strategy. The more end-users you can incorporate into the release of a new technology or service, the more invested they feel in its success.

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