The learning commons, by which we mean the integration of a variety of educational services into a common location, usually the university library, is a concept which in the last decade has developed across the world. In part this concept has been a reaction to the growth of technology and the need for university libraries to maintain their relevance in the age of electronic resources and for universities to serve a new generation of students.

However it has also been part of a broader university shift to student centered environments characterized by a "culture of learning that is learning-oriented, learner-centred, flexible, collaborative, university-wide and community building' (Keating & Gabb 2005, p.2).In this presentation we describe the evolution and creation of learning commons at two seemingly dissimilar universities located at opposite side of the world, Victoria University (VU) in Melbourne Australia and The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) in El Paso, USA. A close relationship between the two universities has developed since 2006 as both institutions recognize a common mission to provide excellent and accessible education to students from culturally and socially diverse communities who are often the first in their families to attend university.

In 2004 Victoria University embarked on a deliberate strategic commitment to implement Learning Commons throughout its library spaces, featuring the extensive integration of technology, collaborative service delivery and revitalization of student spaces supporting collaborative learning and the social dimension of learning. Apart from the transformation of the library learning spaces, all locations feature educational support services and programs provided through collaboration between the Library and a variety of other campus entities. What currently distinguishes the Learning Commons approach at Victoria University from most others in this field is its commitment to student mentorship and the benefits students gain from the advice and support of fellow student's acting as mentors.

In 2005 UTEP Library leadership began to investigate ways to increase both the Library building's utilization and campus use of digital resources and at the same time support UTEP's commitment to educational access. What evolved was a plan to provide services to support student success through information literacy instruction combined with technological support; student support services and a more hospitable environment. UTEP's key strategy was to establish the Library as the location of choice for students wishing to access technology to include mass computer labs; high end computer

systems; technology enhanced group study rooms; and ubiquitous wireless coverage. At some point in this process it was recognized that students also needed assistance and encouragement to fully utilize the technologies and resources being made available. To achieve this UTEP has transformed its library subject research specialists into being learning facilitators and moved them from behind reference counters to the spaces where they actively engage students in utilizing educational resources. These library staff members are supplemented by well-trained student workers.

A feature of the evolution of UTEP and VU learning commons was the way each institution influenced the other in the development of learning spaces, service delivery, and student mentoring roles. A healthy exchange of principles, design data and service models was reinforced by video conferencing and visiting delegations within a context of student exchanges and joint VU/UTEP programs offered in other parts of the university. This relationship has now been extended from project work and service evolution to planning for the next phase of learning commons development through an exercise in rethinking the concept and purpose of Learning Commons to ensure a stronger alignment with new curriculum and university pedagogies as well as new technologies and delivery modes.

This presentation will explore some of the results of this revisualization in moving to a more general concept of the university organizing itself as an extended learning commons in order to serve a broader audience than it currently serves by utilizing a wide variety of like strategies to support the learning process. The changing role of the learning commons is assessed within an environment becoming dominated by digital information resources accessed through a broader range of mobile technologies. Learning commons' spaces are reviewed in new blended learning contexts where learning is differentiated between online and physical environments with a consequential impact on learning space design and use. Spaces and services are also rethought as negotiated learning is practiced in environments encourage students to be co-creators and participants in curricula and assessment design.

Keating, S, and Gabb, R (2005) Putting learning into the Learning Commons: A literature review, Post-Compulsory Education Centre, Victoria University, Footscray, VIC.