

Active Learning Impact + Outcomes Report

Exploring what's possible in
spaces made for active learning.

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Since 2016, Steelcase Learning has partnered with primary and secondary educational institutions across North America to understand how teaching and learning are evolving — and how smarter, more active environments can help.

Together, with a cohort of over 110 diverse institutions serving thousands of students at all levels, we studied what’s possible and surfaced exciting results.

About the Study

Methodology

Measuring perceptions related to engagement and student success.

The Steelcase Learning Environment Evaluation (LEE) is a set of online surveys that gather student and instructor perceptions relative to a number of factors that suggest engagement and student success. Questions seek to detect cognitive, behavioral, emotional and academic engagement and align with the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Questions also seek to gauge behaviors and attitudes linked with student success factors, including mindset, sense of belonging, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and communication.

Responding by degree.

LEE surveys present students and instructors with five-point Likert scale questions to give respondents a range of options, including:

- **Level of agreement:**
strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree
- **Frequency:**
never, rarely (1–2x/month), sometimes (at least 1x/week), often (multiple times/week), always (multiple times/class)
- **Level of difficulty:**
very difficult, difficult, neutral, easy, very easy
- **Direct comparison:**
much worse, sometimes worse, about the same, somewhat better, much better

Comparing experiences.

To provide a basis for qualitative and quantitative comparison, surveys were administered for both groups after they had used and reflected on their experience in a traditional, row-by-column desk/table classroom and then again in a learning environment designed for active learning, featuring more casual, mobile furniture and learning tools arranged in thoughtful proximities.

Scope

Since 2016, this study of instructor and student perceptions involved:

112

Educational institutions

including 78 K-12 schools and 34 colleges/universities

16,594

Students surveyed

and observed by their instructors

664

Instructors surveyed



Clipboard 1:
#1) Think about a 20-second memo in your life...
#2) What qualifies them a memo?
#3) Discuss your answers with your small group.

Clipboard 2:
"What five letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?"

Clipboard 3: (Blank)

Posters:
- "punctuation" (colorful chart)
- "RABBIT HUNTS" (comic strip)
- "EUREKA" (comic strip)
- "GALATHEA" (comic strip)

Whiteboard text:
"Jet down your thoughts about the meanings of the following symbols as you read:"
• Colors (White, gold, green)
• Galathea's House
• East v. West Egg

Woman 1: Seated in an orange ergonomic chair, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. She is working on a laptop. A blue water bottle is in a holder on the desk. A blue bag is on the floor tray of the chair.

Woman 2: Seated in an orange ergonomic chair, wearing a blue denim jacket over a plaid shirt and black pants. She is looking at a tablet. A white standing desk is positioned between her and the first woman. She is wearing black strappy heels.

Person 3: Partially visible on the right side of the frame, wearing blue jeans and brown leather shoes. A laptop is open on a desk in front of them.

Students



Key Findings

Students reported notable gains in movement, communication, creativity, critical thinking and collaboration. Comparing their time in two types of classrooms, 79% of students reported that the experience in the environment designed for active learning was somewhat or much better than in the traditional classroom.

Major Gains

In the active learning space, students reported significantly higher levels of:

- Movement through the classroom
- Communication with peers and instructor(s)
- Creative activities
- Critical thinking
- Collaborative learning

Smaller Gains

Transitioning from traditional to active classroom, students reported gains or similar levels in:

- Mindsets associated with learning
- Sense of belonging

All data reported are statistically significant unless otherwise noted.



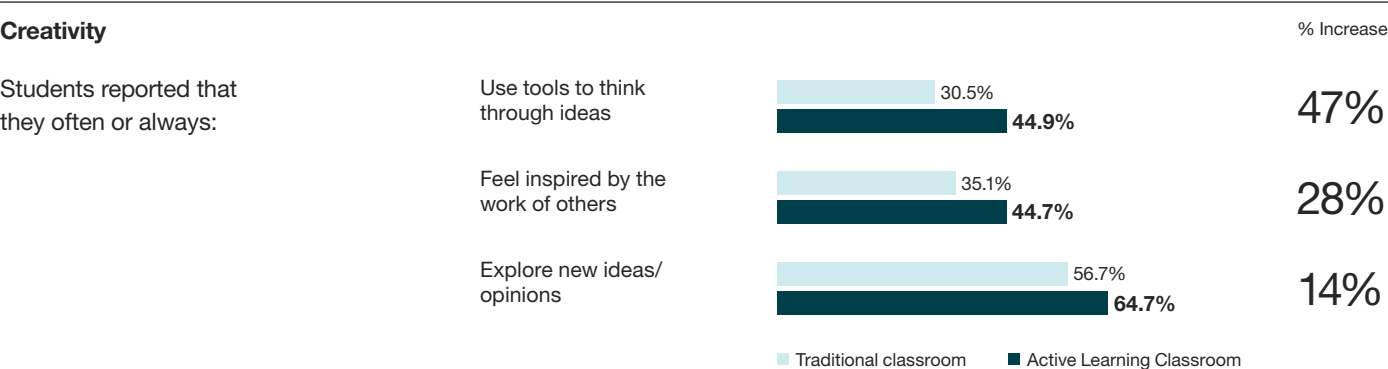
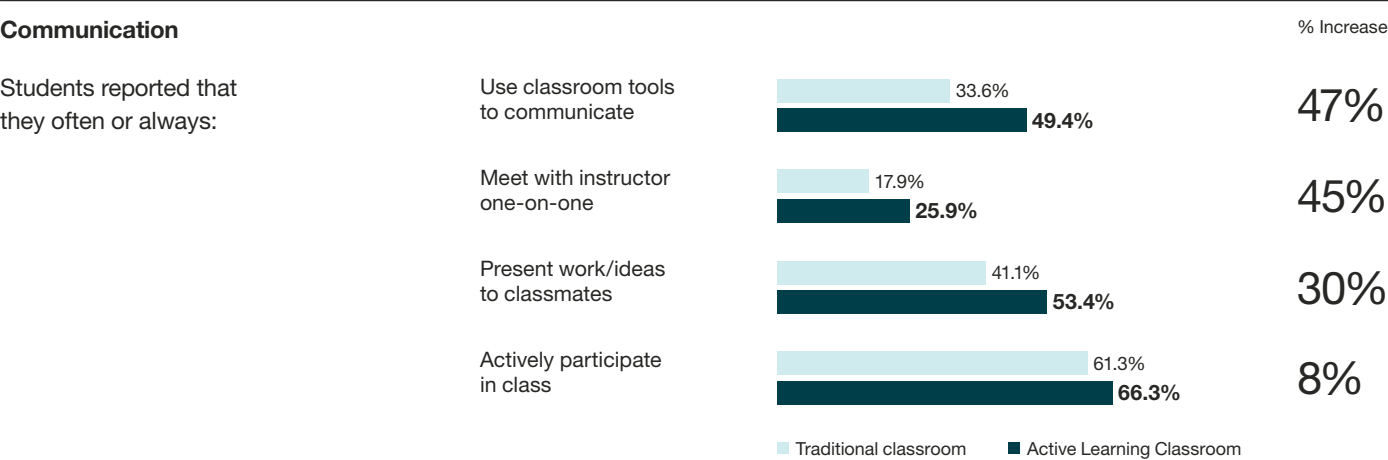
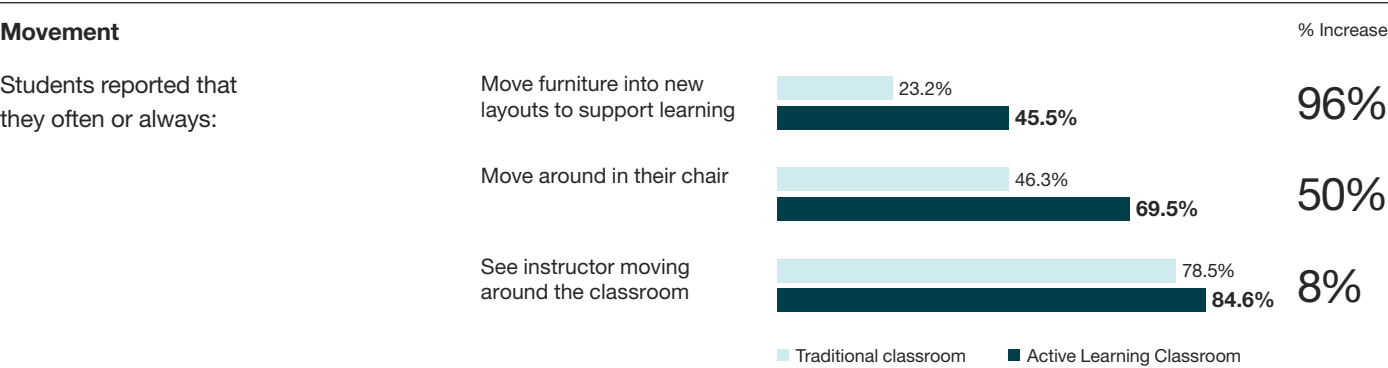
“The physical environment improves my focus and concentration, which in turn allows me to get more work done. Also, I feel more comfortable in class, which improves my learning experience drastically.”

Student Reflection
On the Active Learning Classroom

Student Survey Results

(16,594 students surveyed)

The results summarized below highlight the positive impact that the active learning environment had on key indicators pertaining to student engagement and success.

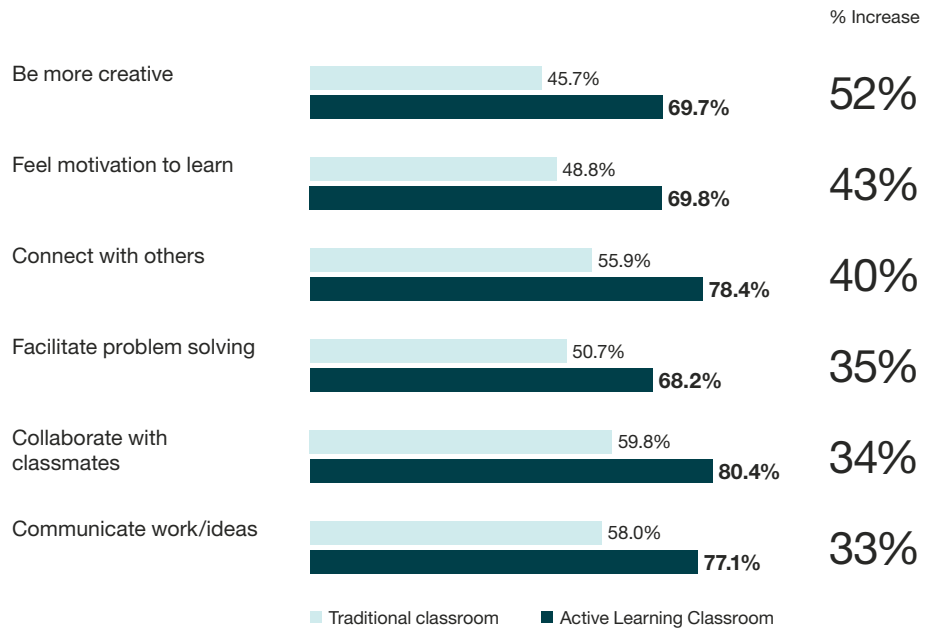


Student Survey Results

(16,594 students surveyed)

Classroom Experience

Students agreed or strongly agreed that the classroom helped them:



“The Steelcase room was great for coming up with new ideas and for working as a team. The environment is more relaxed than a regular classroom and gives us the ability to move around and get creative.”

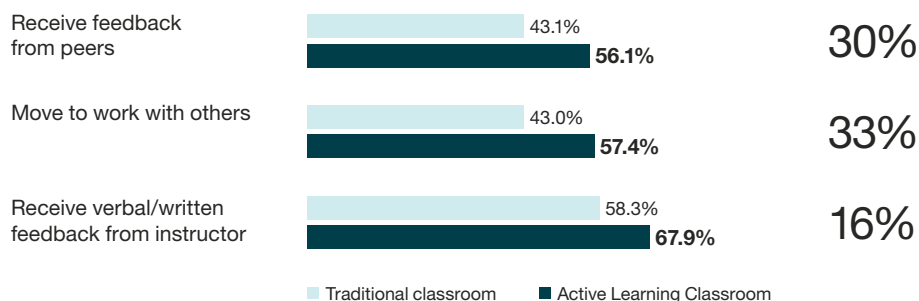
Student Reflection
On the Active Learning Classroom



Collaborative Learning

% Increase

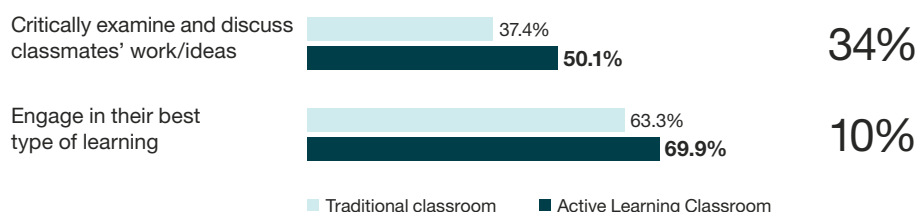
Students reported that they often or always:



Critical Thinking

% Increase

Students reported that they often or always:

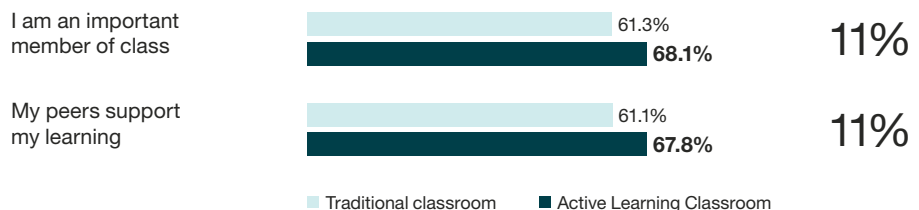


Students reported similarly on the *frequency in which they work independently and focus* with only a slightly significant increase in the active learning classroom: 76% in traditional classroom, 76% in active learning classroom.

Learner Belonging

% Increase

Students agreed or strongly agreed that:

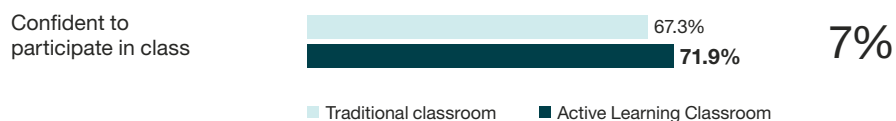


Additionally, students reported positively on several dimensions of learner belonging in both types of classrooms. They overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed that *my instructor cares about me* (83% in traditional classroom, 85% in the active learning classroom), that *my instructor supports my learning* (88% in both classroom settings), and that *I have a friend in class* (83% in traditional classroom, 87% in active learning classroom).

Learner Mindset

% Increase

Students agreed or strongly agreed that they are:



Students also displayed mild change in two more dimensions of Learner Mindset. In the traditional classroom environment 66% of students agreed or strongly agreed that *what they are learning would help them to succeed in the future*. That percentage increased to 68% in the active learning environment. In both classroom environments 83% of students agreed or strongly agreed that *they could achieve a high grade in class*.





Instructors

Key Findings

Instructors reported that the new space supports the type of teaching and learning that they want in their classroom and noticed improved student behaviors and mindsets. Instructors also favored the time they spent teaching in an active learning classroom when comparing the experience to that in a traditional classroom.

Major Gains

In the active learning space, instructors reported significantly higher levels of the following:

- The furniture and tools support desired teaching/learning and help to better execute their preferred teaching strategies
- Instructor behaviors associated with movement, collaboration, meaningful interactions and relationship development
- Student behaviors associated with content co-creation, movement, engagement in discussions, collaborative work and application of new concepts

Smaller Gains

Transitioning from traditional to active classrooms, instructors reported smaller gains or similar levels in:

- Instructor behaviors associated with differentiation of instruction, movement to maintain focus and movement to coach and mentor
- Instructor mindsets associated with being innovative, continuous learning, feeling prepared to teach and feeling responsible for coaching and mentoring

All data reported are statistically significant unless otherwise noted.



“[Students] seem to form community much faster/earlier in the semester. I think the environment enables more one-on-one than in a traditional classroom which I believe impacts a student’s learning.”

Instructor Reflection
On the Active Learning Classroom

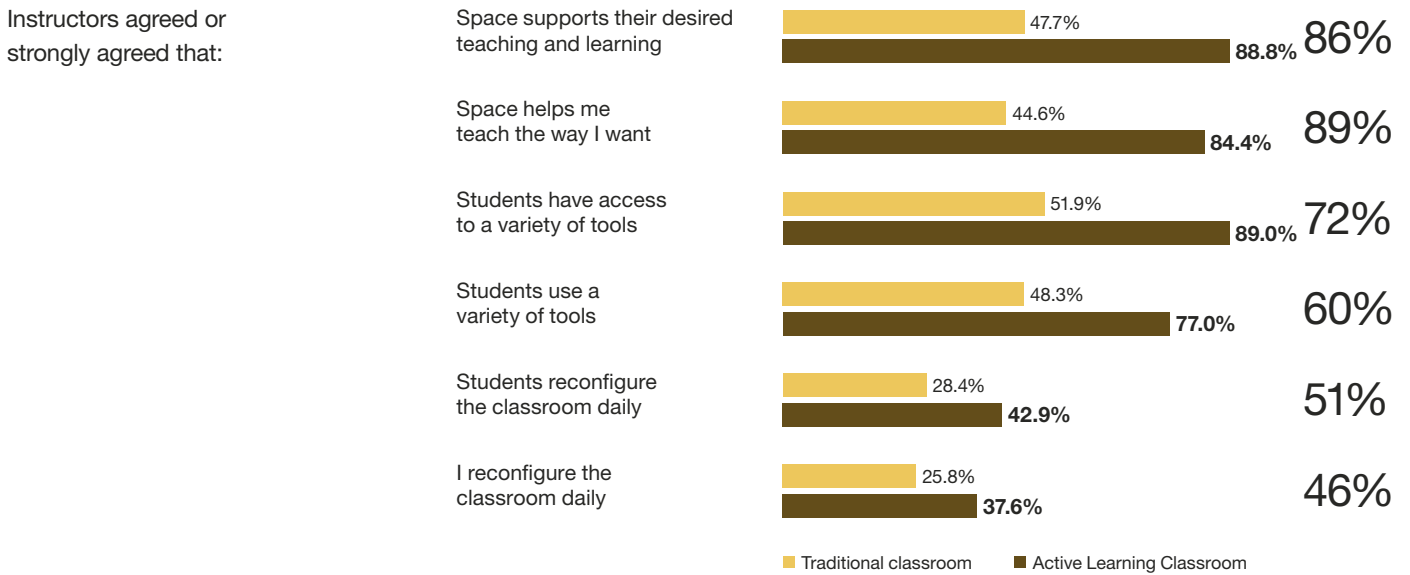
Instructor Survey Results

(664 instructors surveyed)

Instructors perceived new advantages that supported desired teaching strategies and observed improvements in behaviors and mindsets.

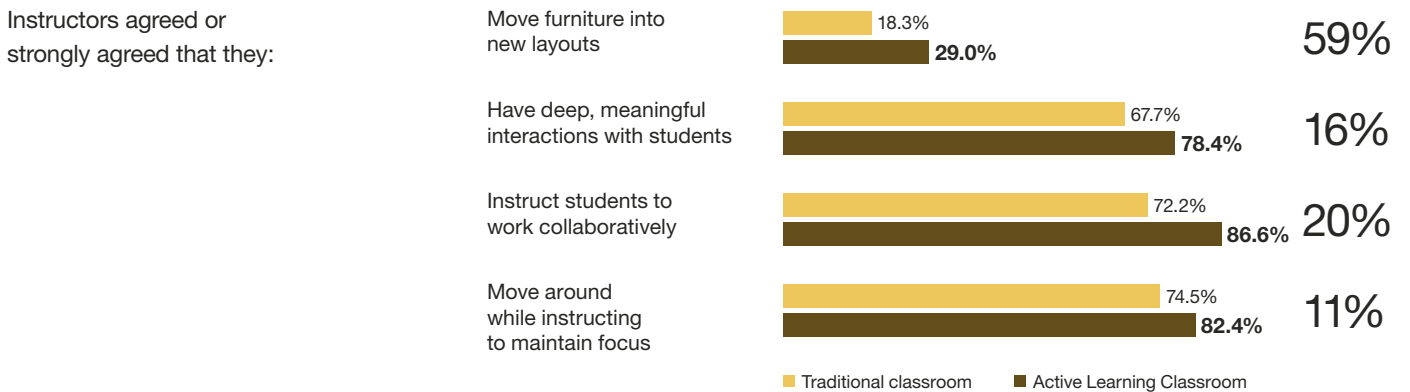
Use of Furniture and Tools

% Increase



Positive Instructor Behaviors

% Increase

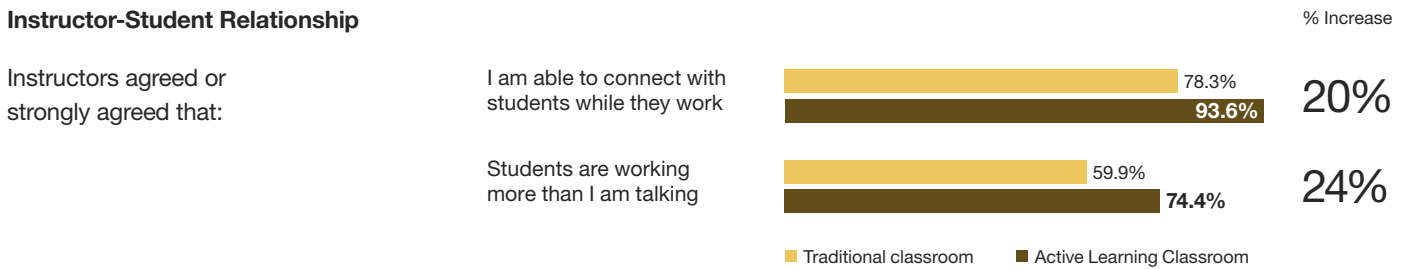
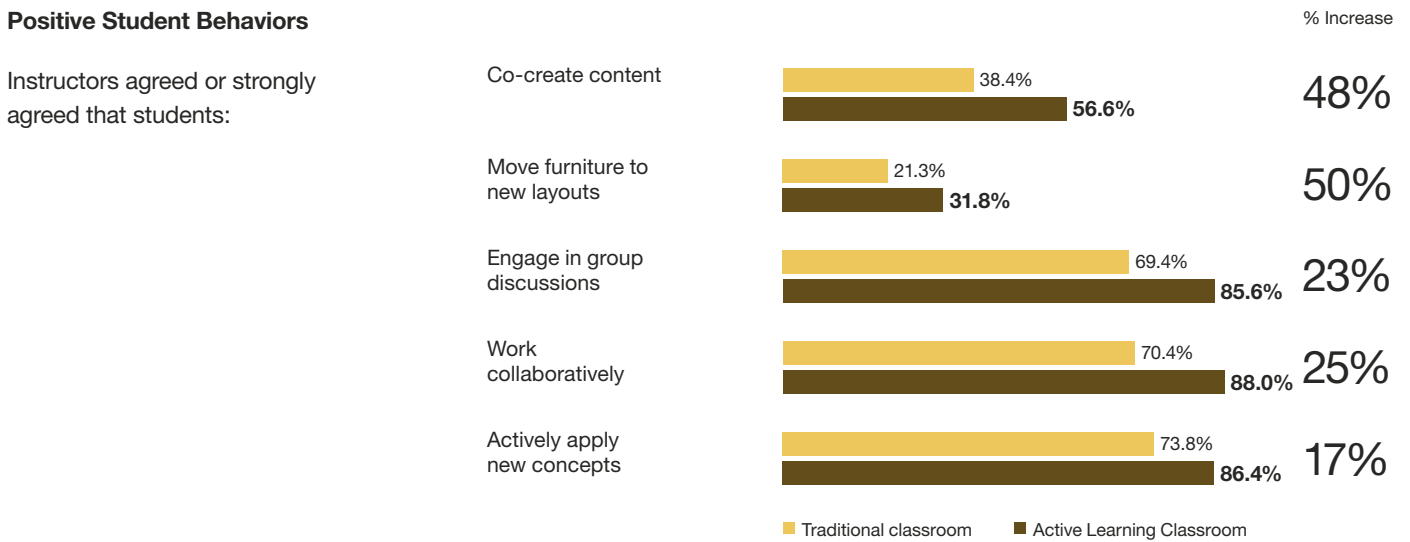


Instructors reported positively in both classroom environments on the two other dimensions around instructor behavior. Instructors who agreed or strongly agreed that they *differentiate instruction based on students' needs* increased from 72% in traditional the classroom to 76% in the active learning classroom. Instructors who *move around to coach and mentor* increased from 80% in the traditional classroom to 86% in active the learning classroom.

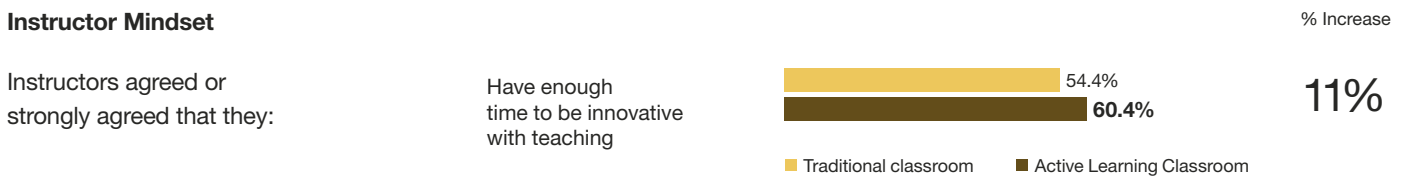
Instructor Survey Results

(664 instructors surveyed)

Instructors perceived new advantages that supported desired teaching strategies and observed improvements in behaviors and mindsets.



In the active learning classroom, instructors were more likely to agree or strongly agree that they have become more student centric in the last two to three months (52% in traditional classroom, 56% in active learning classroom) and that they have established strong relationships (88% in traditional classroom, 92% in active learning classroom).



Not statistically significant: Instructors overwhelmingly reported that they had positive mindsets in both classroom types, agreeing or strongly agreeing that they feel safe to try new innovative activities (93% in traditional classroom, 95% in active learning classroom), believe continuous learning makes them better (95% in traditional classroom, 96% in active learning classroom), feel prepared to teach (87% in traditional classroom, 90% in active learning classroom) and view their role as coach/mentor to learning (96% in traditional classroom, 97% in active learning classroom).



Next Steps

Set your goals.

Steelcase Learning invites educational leaders to use the findings in this report to understand what's possible when the physical environment is designed to support more active teaching and learning experiences. We invite you to use this information for inspiration and goal setting.

Get started.

Whether you want to experience a virtual tour of our spaces or need inspiration to visualize your own spaces, our learning experts are here to support your active learning goals. Connect with us at education@steelcase.com to get started.

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LEARNING

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