

Education Library Renovation Update

CHRISTINA JONES
Head, Education Library
IU Libraries, Bloomington

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

After more than thirty years, the Education Library, which sits at the heart of the Wendel Wright Education Building, is undergoing an extensive renovation thanks to a generous multimillion dollar contribution from the School of Education combined with a substantial financial contribution from the IU Libraries. The new design leverages new furnishings to take advantage of architectural features, introduces new spaces for collaboration and creativity, and hosts the Instructional Consultant for the School of Education. Altogether, the newly renovated library will serve as a connective space where users may discover, learn, connect, and create.

The unique wedge shape of the library affords a huge expanse of windows overlooking green space just outside the building. Prior to the renovation, tall shelves arranged in straight rows obfuscated the view of the windows. The new design employs shorter shelving that allows most users to easily see over the top and all the way to the windows. Moreover, the shelves are arranged along the radius of the curved window, providing a much more natural flow of movement throughout the space. Along with greater visibility throughout the library, additional furnishings provide permanent areas for rotating thematic children's literature displays and new books. Furnishings along the glass perimeter of the space promote solitary quiet study – an often-cited reason users enjoyed studying at the Education Library in the past. Through careful design and planning, the arrangement of thoughtfully selected furniture will offer stunning views, promote discovery of library materials, as well as provide an oasis for reflection and study.

More than just furnishings, the renovation includes several new spaces for collaborative learning and creativity. The WORKshop is a space designed to simulate K-12 classroom environments and provide a place to explore and practice the myriad ways of bringing books and stories to life. Along with demonstration space, there will be materials commonly found in K-12 schools that support the creation of displays and other learning aids in the classroom. The idea for the WORKshop grew from a similar space piloted in the Education Library in an underutilized large work room, furnished with an area rug, large felt board and a library of storytelling supplies such as puppets and felt board sets to be utilized by Education majors in their field experiences. The room immediately proved popular, hosting more than a hundred class sessions in one year despite pandemic concerns about in-person learning. Education Library team members hosted crafting events, such as "Flannel Friday," in which participants made a felt story using patterns and supplies provided by the Libraries (*Pete the Cat and his Four Groovy Buttons* was a big hit). The new WORKshop is sure to help students

and faculty discover new ways to bring stories to life in the K-12 classroom. A new Book Discussion Area adjoins the WORKshop and provides furnishings and technology that facilitates community conversations within the School of Education. In the past, the Education Library hosted events such as the Social Justice Read Aloud, in which campus partners would help lead a discussion on a social justice topic, using children's literature as a starting off point. A striking feature of the Book Discussion Area is a hanging acrylic display in which scanned pages of picture books may be featured and read by users walking along the panels. This idea sprung from the "Story Walks" that have proliferated in the public library sphere. Along with new spaces, the renovation design expands existing services. The number of study rooms jumped from two to seven! It is hoped that students, faculty, and staff will view these spaces in the Education Library as a place to connect, collaborate, and innovate.



Figure 1. Demonstration room pre-renovation, a.



Figure 2. Demonstration room pre-renovation, b.

Along with new furnishings and spaces, the Education Library is the new home of the School of Education Instruction Consulting Office. A natural partnership, the Instructional Consultant will work in proximity to the myriad information resources offered by the Libraries. Faculty will enjoy a one-stop shop of teaching support and the ability to leverage the ever growing and changing collection in the Education Library.

New services, spaces, and furnishings are only outward signs of the Education Library rejuvenation. With greater visibility and expanded offerings, the Education Library will serve as the connective tissue across and among individual departments and units within the School of Education. With new flexible furnishings and spaces, an ever-growing collection of diverse children's literature and education scholarship, and increased outreach among School of Education faculty and students and beyond, the renovated Education Library is poised to serve users far into the future.



Figure 3. Demonstration room pre-renovation with class.



Figure 4. Flannel Friday, Pete the Cat program