



STEM-ulating minds:

Facilitating a user-lead active learning environment
with the FabLab ConFab



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FABLAB

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About the UT Arlington FabLab

Maker Movement

- Vision & staffing of the UTA FabLab
- Why the name?

UT Arlington Libraries

- Role in knowledge acquisition and creation
- Role on campus



About Our Users

Students, Faculty, and Staff

- Developing a community on campus
- Integrating the FabLab into learning assignments



About Our Users

Community Members

- K-12 initiatives
- Professionals involved in the space



About the ConFab

The what?

A project consultation, or an in-depth conversation to develop a plan of action around a user's particular need.

Now, in library terms?

It's like a reference interview for the FabLab.





Why the ConFab?

Transitioning Library Roles

As librarians, we are familiar with connecting people with information sources. With new technology, we may feel less capable.

“I keep getting an error message...”

“My 3D print keeps warping at the base!”

“How can I create a Freddy Krueger



Outcome of the ConFab

Customer Satisfaction

- By providing a stepwise process for employees to provide great customer service
- By developing a clearer understanding of needs
- By letting the user guide the process



Example Scenarios

- **User: I would like to create a heart.**
 - **Need to know:** How much time to take? Working in 3D or 2D? Subtractive or additive software? Knowledge level of the person? For personal or class?
- **User: Can you help me with Arduino?**
 - **Need to know:** For personal knowledge, skill development, class assignment, etc.? How much knowledge does the person already have? What timeline to look at?



The ConFab Process

More
listening

C – Circumstance

O – Outcome

N – Newness

F – Familiarity

A – Answers

B – Back up & Be complete

More
talking



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The ConFab Process

Circumstance

- Understanding the circumstances around their need and clarifying to be sure of what is being asked.

Outcome

- For a class assignment?
- For a personal project?
- What would your ideal look like when it's done?



The ConFab Process

More
listening



More
talking

C – Circumstance

O – Outcome

N – **Newness**

F – **Familiarity**

A – Answers

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The ConFab Process

Newness

- Experience with that particular technology
-

Familiarity

- Comfort & ease in developing familiarity

Let them “drive”!



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Image retrieved from <http://www.carthrottle.com/post/k3TU2Z/>

The ConFab Process

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The ConFab Process

Answers

- Provide solutions without talking down to people.
 - If necessary, refer a person to someone more knowledgeable.
-

Back Up

- Needs not met? Allow the user to clarify.

Be Complete



- Check back to be sure they're satisfied.

The ConFab

Looking forward...

The ConFab is a developing model of user interaction and engagement. As the FabLab expands, our assumptions will be tested and the process will be refined.





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