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# all things Making

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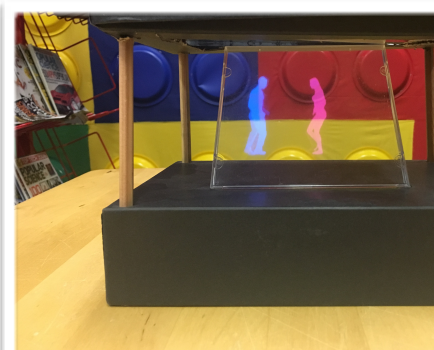
## Makerspace Mindset

Everywhere you turn, people are talking about makerspaces and asking lots of questions. Where should the makerspace be placed? What materials and resources are needed? How much is it going to cost? Is it in our budget? Who is going to maintain the makerspace? How will students utilize this space? These are certainly good questions, but the most important question that begs to be asked is WHY? Why do you need a makerspace?

In reality, a makerspace isn't a space at all, it's a mindset. It's about exploring, discovering new ideas, and creating. It's about being innovative and creating things that are new and better. It's about tinkering, inventing, building, problem solving, critical thinking, and taking risks. It's about collaborating and learning from others. It's about failing, learning from mistakes and trying again. It's about finding your passions and sharing them with others. It's about making!

At Cooper Upper Elementary, we transformed a dreary storage room into a vibrant makerspace that is utilized by fifth and sixth graders. Two of these students, Evan and Robby, were especially energized by this new learning space last year. The doors were not officially opened, but the boys immediately felt safe to share some of the innovative projects that they had been creating at home because they didn't feel that their passion for innovating had any place at school.

Ouch! Talk about a punch to the gut. Up until that moment, our words spoke of innovation, but in the eyes of the students, our actions did not. As your school contemplates the *why* for a makerspace, there is no better testimonial then that of these two young men.



### Evan's Makerspace Thoughts ...

At the beginning of the school year of 2015, I had no idea what a makerspace was but quickly I realized that the makerspace would change the way this school interacts with technology, creative arts and lots of other things. The makerspace really gets everyone motivated and satisfied with learning at school.

Throughout last school year, and this school year, I and many others have learned to be innovative, right in the Cooper Upper Elementary Makerspace. If it never existed and the old storage room was still there, I and others would not feel like Cooper is a home away from home and the special, unique school that it is today. If I were to give advice to other schools that don't have a Makerspace, I would say that a Makerspace is part of a large puzzle that makes up a school. That puzzle needs to be completed with a Makerspace. Even if your school does not have a room like ours, you can still promote being innovative through assemblies and any other ways possible because innovation is key to just about everything.

If anyone, anywhere thinks that they are not creative, they are so wrong. As Albert Einstein once said, "Creativity is a contagious passion," and with that, you should know that you are creative and innovative in your own unique ways. So don't give up and never get slowed down by anyone who thinks different.

Cooper's Makerspace has changed me and our school in many ways. I cannot even describe how much I appreciate the Makerspace and the library. I can almost see the creativity flow into kids' minds as they walk into the shiny almost glowing Makerspace door that leads to the sanctuary of innovation run by Mrs. Bowling, the media specialist at Cooper. For all schools and children and adults, one last thing I have to say: **Be the Innovation!**

### Robby's Makerspace Thoughts ...

Well, let me just start. My initial thought on the makerspace was, I am so excited! I can finally have a space to create and be who I want to be! The makerspace has definitely changed how I approach learning at school. I was (and still am) so much more excited about learning! It feels like I am always doing a "passion project." I can do what I want to do, hands on. If the makerspace was never built at Cooper, I don't think I would have remembered my experience at Cooper as fun. I would look back on my time at Cooper and I would remember things I didn't want to do. I would remember my recesses and LMC time to be boring. Listening to the teacher talk and then check out a book or two. If I had to offer advice to schools who don't have a makerspace, I would simply say, invest in it! It is so worth it! I am not just saying that because Mrs. Bowling is going to read this, honestly it is such a great idea! If I also had to offer advice to students who think they are not creative or innovative, you are so wrong! You just haven't found what sparks your creativity! And that might not come to you right away! Just keep going out of your comfort zone, and I promise you that you will find something that is just right for you! In fact, I didn't think I was creative and or innovative until just last year! I learned what makes me stand out and what I love to do! I say none of this for Mrs. Bowling, these are my honest opinions about the Makerspace and being innovative!