

The Fourth Symposium on Social Learning Space: Learning Outside the Square

Monday 6 April 2009, Oxford Brookes University

11.30 am Parallel session 1:

Dr. Cath Lambert, Danny Wilding, Dr Elisabeth Simbuerger

Reinventing Spaces
(A101)

This interactive workshop will present and examine selected data and emergent findings from an ongoing qualitative research project called *Reinventing Spaces*. This research explores the relationships between curriculum, pedagogy and space in, and between, school and university settings. It is being carried out by a collaborative team of Sociology staff and students (doctoral, postgraduate and undergraduate) at the University of Warwick. Using exempla material generated by a range of ethnographic methods, workshop participants will have the opportunity to work with the primary data in order to undertake some preliminary analysis and share their ideas with others in the workshop. The expected diversity in terms of participants' own locations and perspectives (social, institutional, theoretical, methodological, disciplinary, etc.) will, it is hoped, lead to a range of critical and interesting responses which in turn address the complex and dynamic quality of educational spaces.

Hilaire Graham

Stick, straw, brick: signposting the student experience through the built environment
(A 106)

This workshop draws on research undertaken as part of an EdD at the Institute of Education. The research seeks initially to establish if the built environment is used to 'signpost' the student experience by evoking images of place and what these images say about the university, its place and its society. This workshop will address the conference theme of 'Learning outside the Square' by linking the physical footprint of the 'Square' with an imagined expectation of experience beyond four walls.

This workshop fits the sub-theme of building a learning community and suggests that a community is constructed each year for each cohort through the university applications process and the use of the university websites together information. This community is initially wall-less, bounded-less.....but begins to create its own envelope. The allusion to stick, straw and brick reflects the possible degrees of permanence, accessibility and definition of place that support the community of students in their learning.

The workshop will engage attendees in actively considering various signposts of the student experience through the built environment that are used by universities. The signposts will be assessed and evaluated to uncover their meaning and message using visual methodology research methods. Members of the audience will have the opportunity to use and reflect on these research methods with respect of research outcomes.

This research is grounded in the literature of semiotics, phenomenology and visual research methodologies.

Huw Morris and Robert Ready

Social Learning Space: Scholarly, Student, Academic Staff and Senior Management Perspectives (A108)

This paper critically reviews three scholarly literatures which can be used to examine the design of social learning spaces and uses online participative learning tools to evaluate these places from the perspectives of higher education students, staff and senior managers. The paper begins with an overview of the literatures on social learning spaces (c.f. JISC, 2006; Oblinger, 2006) third places (c.f. Oldenburg, 1989) and social and situated learning theory (c.f. Bandura, 1970; Lave and Wenger, 1998). The second section of the paper draws on the results of an online evaluation by 30 students, staff and senior managers at a large new university in the North West of England of 30 different social learning sites in the UK, USA and Europe. Analysis of the feedback obtained from this group suggests that the success or otherwise of particular social learning spaces reflects alignments between the construction of the space, the characteristics of the users, the content of the curriculum and the broader social and economic context within which these activities are situated.

The session will begin with a short outline of the three scholarly approaches before moving on to review different social learning sites drawing on comments posted to a Flickr website by students and staff at the new university. Participants in the session will be asked to participate by discussing points raised in the analysis of these comments as well as posting their comments to this site during and after the session using laptops, mobile phones and PDAs.

References

Bandura, A. (1977).. *Social Learning Theory*. New York, General Learning Press.

JISC (2006) *Designing Spaces for Effective Learning: A guide to 21st century learning space design*, [Online] Available at:

<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/publications/learningspaces.pdf> Last accessed 15th March 2007.

Lave, J., and Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Oblinger, D. (2006). (Ed) *Learning Spaces*, Educause, Bolder, CO. [Online] Available at <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/PUB7102.pdf> Last accessed 10th April 2007.

Oldenburg, R. (1989) *Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Community Centres, Beauty Parlours, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts and How They Get You Through the Day*, Paragon House, St Pauls Minnesota, Paragon House.

Becky Kiddle

Evaluating new social learning spaces
(A109)

This workshop outlines research undertaken which evaluates the success of an amalgam of new physical learning spaces, the Simon Williams Undergraduate Centre based in the Business School at Oxford Brookes University, during its first year of inception. The research seeks to understand the strength with which the spaces encourage social learning and contribute to a community of practice.

Findings are discussed as they relate to the development of design principles for achieving successful social learning spaces. Principles include the need for higher level thinking when designing such spaces, to ensure they are considered within the system of spaces in which they sit, i.e. the campus and surrounding neighbourhood and city. Findings also highlighted the need for a range of spaces to ensure that students and staff have the opportunity to be both part of a community of learners and be able to access solitude.

Scott Rickard

A case study of technology supported collaborative learning between students on work placements
(Reinvention Centre)

Internal funding from the Blended Learning Unit (CETL) was used to develop a video resource which acted as a trigger for collaborative learning between students on work placements across the South East of England. Group wikis, containing video analysis, students' personal

experiences, and general information about infection prevention in a wide range of clinical environments, were developed by the students. There is considerable literature on collaborative learning, although the field of computer supported collaborative learning is relatively young (Strijbos et al., 2004, Orvis and Lassiter, 2007), with limited literature that looks at the student experience (Sharpe et al., 2005). This case will discuss the experiences of a group of first year Physiotherapy students, drawing on teacher observations and student data. Issues will include the quality of student engagement in this non-assessed task, the level of collaborative learning, student training for the use of wikis, and evaluations of the student voice.

This workshop will fall under the virtual social learning space theme. In the workshop there will be opportunity for the participants to see and hear both some of the students' work and staff reflections, as well as experience a simulated exercise that mirrors some of the student activity. This will form the basis of a group discussion about technology enhanced off-site collaborative learning.

Aims

- To discuss the planning, design and value of technology enhanced collaborative learning environments for non-campus based study
- To discuss my experiences of the implementation of this with one particular group of students

ORVIS, K. L. & LASSITER, A. L. R. (2007) *Computer-supported Collaborative Learning: Best practices and principles for Instructors*, Ideas group Inc.

STRIJBOS, J. W., KIRSCHNER, P. A. & MARTENS, R. L. (2004) *What We Know About CSCL And Implementing It In Higher Education*, Massachusetts, Kluwer Academic Publishers

2-2.45 pm Parallel session 2:

Prof. Mike Neary & Gary Saunders

Learning landscapes in higher education

(A101)

This workshop explores the relationship between pedagogy and space, looking at ways in which academics can affect the design of innovative teaching and learning spaces, which support new and different pedagogical approaches in higher education. The session will be based on data gathered as part of a research project, including material from semi-structured interviews with academics, members of estates departments, professional staff and students from eleven Universities in England, Scotland and Wales. The research project, Learning Landscapes in Higher Education, is sponsored by UK HE funding councils and looks specifically at issues to do with leadership, management and governance in the decision making process related to designing teaching and learning spaces in higher education. This includes consideration of the status of ideas, the dynamics of institutional power relations and organisational structures.

Consideration of the themes developed from the findings of the Learning Landscapes research allows an exploration of processes which either help or hinder innovatory design. This includes looking at institutional practices that encourage and support academics in thinking 'outside of the box' in relation to the design of teaching and learning space in higher education.

These issues will be discussed in a workshop using Open Space methodology, which encourages participants to set their own agendas within the framework of the issue under review. Open Space allows groups to explore complex and controversial issues in an environment which is conducive to producing meaningful dialogue between members, who have a diverse range of skills and experience and a genuine passion about the topic.

Alison Dickens

Between concept and context: the café as a social space for learning

(A106)

This session will address the themes of building learning communities and the relationship between pedagogy and space. It will explore the use of the learning café to create learning communities beyond formal education contexts. It will examine the creation of social spaces for learning that conceptualise and/or contextualise learning in 'café culture'. Examples will be presented from the *Language Café Project* which set up Language Cafés in 8 European countries www.languagecafe.eu. These will demonstrate the various roles of culture (educational and social), concept (the café as a 'social situation') and context (cafés as physical spaces) in the development of the Language Cafés as well as the tensions that existed between them. For example, the main aim of the project was to provide learning that was driven by the café-goers (the term café-goer rather than learner was preferred) but the cafés were initially set up by representatives of more formal educational modes and spaces (teacher-driven). The workshop will reflect on the effectiveness of the café as a social learning space and explore the ways in which this aligns with notions of social learning (Vygotsky), communities of practice and situated learning (Lave and Wenger), informal/non-formal learning (Eraut) and discourse and communication in second language acquisition (Firth & Wagner). Workshop participants will engage in collaborative and reflective activities to explore their own experience of learning in different contexts and their personal response to the notion of café-based learning.

Prof. Joy Hendry

Space and learning in contemporary indigenous/aboriginal communities

(A108)

I would like to introduce for trial and discussion some ideas about space and learning that I have picked up from recent research with Aboriginal people in Canada, where one of the points often emphasized has been that learning is better done outside "the square". Although the people I have been working with would probably explain that they are drawing on traditional ideas, I think this session might fit into the first category of "innovative design: creating new/different teaching and learning opportunities" in a European context because I have successfully applied some of the methods in my own teaching here. However, more academically, it could also fall under the heading, "the relationship between pedagogy and space".

Basic principles of the methods used are to ensure first that the people in a group know a little about each other, and this exchange is best done in a situation where everyone can see each other, so people may need to move around within the space before things start. Then, the person in the role of "teacher" can build up a way of drawing on pre-existing knowledge and experience within the group, again highly related to the space the group occupies, so the method itself is intrinsically interactive from the outset. I would propose to lead the workshop to run in a way that illustrates the points as it goes along.

As for existing literature, there is quite an abundance written by people in different parts of the world, but as my own learning in this field has been largely participatory, rather than through reading, I provide reference only to one good indicative online piece as follows:

Fitznor, L. (2005). *Aboriginal Educational Teaching Experiences: Foregrounding Aboriginal/Indigenous Knowledges and Processes*. Online proceedings from the conference First Nations, First Thoughts, held at the Centre for Canadian Studies, University of Edinburgh in 2005.

http://www.cst.ed.ac.uk/2005conference/papers/Fitznor_paper.pdf

Liz Aspden & Deborah Harrop *Extending learning: constructing community through space design*

(A109)

During a recent project to redevelop our institution's Learning Centres we took the opportunity to take a fresh look at library space design. This session will review the development, management and evaluation of a space which is connected to, yet separate from, the main body of the Learning Centre. It aligns space design with the institution's expressed pedagogical beliefs, and our session will also reflect on the relationship between this space, the main body of the Learning Centre, and wider campus environment.

In the current climate, a number of factors have increased institutions' awareness of the importance of learning spaces. For example, changing approaches to learning and teaching and the "emergence of the constructivist paradigm" (Brown & Long, 2006) mean students are increasingly expected - and expecting - to learn actively and participate in groupwork. Traditional classroom and library design, however, constrains opportunities for students to engage with work of this nature on campus. It is imperative therefore that we start to acknowledge and address notions of 'built pedagogy' (Monahan, 2002) by using approaches such as human-centred design guidelines (Gee, 2006).

Participants in this workshop will be invited to develop and share a representation of their preferred learning environment(s). We will then pick up on the preferred elements of spaces and demonstrate how we translated our students' preferences into space design. We will also facilitate a discussion about practical ways of moving forward with space projects including small-scale, low-cost changes to existing environments as well as large-scale complex new builds.

Brown, M. & Long, P.D. (2006) Trends In Learning Space Design. In D. Oblinger (ed) Learning Spaces. Educause. e-book available online at url:
<http://www.educause.edu/books/learningspaces/10569>

Gee, L. (2006) Human-Centred Design Guidelines. In D. Oblinger (ed) Learning Spaces. Educause. e-book available online at url:
<http://www.educause.edu/books/learningspaces/10569>

Monahan, T. (2002) Flexible Space & Built Pedagogy: emerging IT embodiments. Paper available online at url:
http://www.doit.gmu.edu/inventio/past/display_past.asp?plD=spring02&slD=monahan

Jill Beard; Linda Byles and Dr. Barbara Newland

Technology rich learning spaces – opportunities and risks
(Reinvention Centre)

In this workshop participants explore the potential of the technology rich group learning spaces such as those in Bournemouth University's SCONUL Library Design Award winning *The Sir Michael Cobham Library*. The development of these spaces was informed by the research undertaken by Educause¹ and the outcomes of Bournemouth's eRes^{2,3}, which focussed on the pedagogies influencing e-learning with e-resources.

Participants will be assigned to groups with individuals selecting different profiles such as netgen⁴, digital immigrant⁵ and a virtual group member. The concept of technology rich learning space will be introduced before the groups engage in a "learning activity" to consider the relationships between technology, space and learning outcomes. The group will then identify and share opportunities and challenges from the student and staff perspective.

This workshop was successfully used in November 2008 with Bournemouth University's PGCert students, who have already begun to incorporate the opportunities presented by technology rich learning spaces into their teaching.

References:

1. <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/P7102cs4.pdf> [accessed 20 November 2008]
2. <http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/eds/eres/index.html> [accessed 20 November 2008]
3. Ball, D. Beard, J. Newland, B., 2007. E-books and virtual learning environments: responses to transformational Technology. *The Acquisitions Librarian* 19(3-4): 165-182
4. Oblinger, D.G. & Oblinger, J.L. 2005 Is it age or IT: first steps towards understanding the Net generation. In: *Educating the Net Generation* [online]. Educause. Available from: <http://www.educause.edu/educatingthenetgen/> [accessed 20 November 2008]
5. Prensky, M. 2001. Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon* 9(5):1-6

2.55 pm Parallel session 3:

Dr. Jos Boys

Enacting space differently; re-imagining relationships between pedagogy and design
(A101)

There is now a considerable amount of literature about, and examples of, innovatively designed learning spaces. Most of these designs have been informed by a perceived shift from formal to informal learning; that is, away from traditional tutor-focussed lecture theatres and classrooms and towards more student-centred learning zones, based on flexibility, variety, lack of hierarchy, liveliness and ubiquitous technologies. In this workshop, I want to look critically at some of the underlying assumptions behind these developments; so as to open up issues in how formal and informal learning are articulated, and in how relationships between physical space and its occupation are conceptualised.

To do this, the workshop will start from a different 'place', with participants interacting with, and manipulating the physical qualities of the workshop space itself. This will enable us to explore both some basic questions about how space and the activities that happen in are connected, and some possibilities for design beyond the formal/informal learning divide.

The approach taken starts from some contemporary architectural practices, particularly in relation to participation and inclusion (Till and Petrescu: 2005, Petrescu: 2007) and from social sciences, particularly around embodiment (Ryave and Schenkein:1974, Ahmed: 2000).

Following an introduction, workshop participants will first explore some of the everyday, embedded social and spatial practices through which learning is accomplished via a series of enacted encounters; and then play with the design of the workshop environment as a means of envisioning innovative, creative and appropriate relationships between learners, teachers, artefacts and spaces.

Ahmed, S. 2000 *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* Routledge

Ryave, A. L, and Schenkein, j, N. 1974. "Notes on the Art of Walking" in Turner, R. (ed) *Ethnomethodology* Harmondsworth: Penguin pp 65- 274

Till, J. and Petrescu, D. (eds) 2005 *Architecture and Participation* Spon Press

Petrescu, D (ed) 2007 *Altering Practices: feminist politics and poetics of space* Routledge

Dr. Nicholas Monk

RSC²: Chemistry and Performance
(A106)

In November of 2007 the CAPITAL Centre (one of Warwick University's CETLs, set up for the purposes of researching creativity and performance in teaching and learning) ran, in conjunction with the Department of Chemistry, a number of two hour workshops for Chemistry's first year cohort (120 students). The four identical sessions took place either in CAPITAL's purpose-built studio or rehearsal room. Each student was allocated a particular element, and required to keep this "chemical identity" to themselves. My colleague, Jonny Heron, and I then designed, with the help and support of colleagues from Chemistry, a session that required students to embody the properties of their element, produce a number of tableaux, demonstrate – physically – the effects of temperature and ionisation on their elements and, finally, arrange themselves into a representation of the periodic table. The main activity in our session for the symposium will require the facilitators to involve participants in reconstructing sections of the original workshops. We hope, also, to discuss issues of space in relation to teaching and learning in this context, and to present a selection of findings from our analysis of student and observer feedback. We think that the Chemistry workshops are a strong example of innovative design, offer a model for the creation of an interdisciplinary working community, and are directly relevant to the relationship between pedagogy and space. I am unaware of any specific literature on chemistry and performance, but the large body of work on experiential and embodied learning has been directly relevant to our methodology.

Kerry Dobbins & Andrew Walsh

"Teachers open the door. You enter by yourself" (Chinese proverb): Development and use of collaborative learning space in a health care education setting.
(A108)

"Teachers open the door. You enter by yourself" (Chinese proverb): Development and use of collaborative learning space in a health care education setting.

In 2006 the CETL in the Faculty of Health at Birmingham City University began a series of consultations about the teaching environment and the learning that occurs within it. Staff and students agreed that the traditional design of classrooms and lecture theatres discouraged active and collaborative learning. Recent literature demonstrates the influence of the physical environment in directing the nature of learning taking place (e.g. Jankowska and Atlay, 2008). Birmingham City University is keen to move away from a didactic 'knowledge delivery' approach towards one more in line with the social constructivist views of collaborative knowledge building (Bruner, 2003).

This ethos and the findings from the consultation resulted in the university creating three CETL Teaching Development Suites that aim to address the need for greater social learning. The suites provide open and flexible spaces to encourage sessions based around collaborative learning and group working activities.

The workshop will present the experiences of the university in creating these suites with discussion focused around their innovative design and the learning opportunities created. Participants will be actively involved in the workshop and will take part in a demonstration of an interactive teaching session. They will be asked to reflect on their reactions to the session and share aspects about learning environments within their own contexts. The overall aim for the workshop is to share our own experiences and for everyone to learn from the participants' views and shared experiences.

References:

- Bruner, J. (2003) The culture of education, in Gergen, M. and Gergen, K. J. (Eds) *Social Constructivism: a reader* (London: Sage Publications) pp.169-172.
Jankowska, M. and Atlay, M. (2008) Use of creative space in enhancing students' engagement, *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, vol.45, no.3, pp.271-279

Phil Cheeseman and Faye Jackson

8 Out of 10 Cats! Exploring the perceptions of school children and their relevance in future proofing learning space design
(A109)

At Roehampton University London we have implemented a range of flexible learning spaces, both formal and social. In addition, the University will be investing in a new library building. Part of the brief for this is to include a variety of learning spaces to meet the needs of a diverse student group.

Research into learning space design often focuses on user experiences or attempts to establish the impact that learning spaces have on learning outcomes¹. Some studies have consulted students in relation to improving and/or developing the learning environment^{2,3}, whilst others explore study habits and in particular the use of technology⁴.

We have drawn together these elements by looking at how study behaviours relate to the expectations of future students and how this can inform our plans for building learning spaces that are future-proofed. We have carried out a study with children aged 12-15 yrs from a number of local schools. We asked them about their study preferences, their use of libraries and learning spaces, technologies and their expectations.

The study makes use of a range of technologies to engage with school children and provide an opportunity for them to think about and contribute creatively to concepts of learning space design. In this workshop we will replicate some of the activities undertaken with the children, present the

findings of the study and provide delegates with an opportunity to explore and discuss the relevance of engaging with this group.

1. Temple, P. (2007) **Learning Spaces For The 21st Century**

URL:

http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/research/Learning_spaces_v3.pdf

2. Flutter, Julia(2006)'**This place could help you learn': student participation in creating better school environments**, Educational Review,58:2,183 — 193

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/00131910600584116

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131910600584116>

3.Haug, J.C. (2008) **Learning Curve: Adapting Library Workspaces**

URL: <http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/EQM08412.pdf>

**Angela Nash &
Prof. Roy Newton**

*Good designing the use of e-learning environments on campus
(Reinvention Centre)*

This project examines not delivery of learning and teaching via e-learning, but how HEIs can design buildings and spaces on campus, and manage the infrastructure to provide effective e-learning. This project is being delivered by the Higher Education Design Quality forum and the University of Wolverhampton.