**Second Symposium on Social Learning Space:
Redesigning Universities**

Parallel Workshop Sessions

Tuesday 20 March 2007, Warwick University

11:35-12:20 Parallel Session 1:

Jan Howden, Saltire Centre concepts and the first year, *Glasgow Caledonian University*

The Saltire Centre at Glasgow Caledonian University is one year old. This paper considers the growing aspirations that were placed on the Saltire Centre by its developers and others such as JISC who were keen to engage the wider HE community in developing open access technology rich learning environments. This paper considers the successes and the problems, and also suggests how the developers want to move on.

Berry O'Donovan & Martyn Greenwood, A small-scale experiment in the developing of social-learning space, ASKe CETL, *Oxford Brookes University*

The closure of a student union bar on Wheatley Campus (a satellite campus of Oxford Brookes University), and its subsequent renovation, provided the opportunity for us to carry out a small-scale experiment in the development of a social learning space. We monitored the usage of the new space over one semester.

In this workshop, we will present and analyse our findings about the usage of that space, as well as make some conclusions about the design of such spaces. These conclusions have informed the interior design of ASKe's new building—a social learning space that is due to open on Wheatley Campus in September 2007.

There will be opportunities for the audience to ask questions and engage in discussion throughout the workshop.

Martin Jenkins & Carolyn Roberts, Learning spaces for active learning: design and evaluation, Centre for Active Learning, *University of Gloucestershire*

The Centre for Active Learning, at the University of Gloucestershire, has been established to review, develop, promote and embed, inclusive and exemplary active learning for students. As part of this project CeAL have developed The Centre for Active Learning Building. This space is designed to provide active support and encouragement for innovation, experimentation and evaluation into active learning, and also to become a focus for ongoing research into active learning.

Active learning is seen as more than 'learning by doing' and enables students to construct theoretical understanding through reflection on practical activities. This makes it effective and inclusive for all learners (disabled, mature and distance) and styles of learning. This session will explain how this philosophy informed the design and development of the building and the issues it raised.

The CeAL Building opened for use in September 2006, providing both drop-in learning spaces and teaching facilities. This period, which has seen a steady increase in use, has raised a number of foreseen and unforeseen issues but has culminated in very positive feedback from both students and staff. This session will report on this first period of use, the issues encountered, feedback gathered both students and staff and the mechanisms used to gather this feedback.

Maja Jankowska, Use of creative space in enhancing students' engagement, *University of Bedfordshire*

Key words: creativity, creative space ('c-space'), engagement, exploration, motivation, students.

This paper explores the effect teaching in a 'creative space' has on students' engagement with the learning process, their motivation to explore, experience and discover (i.e. to be creative), and on them becoming more active, autonomous learners. The presentation will examine the notion of creative space, how it has been made a reality as part of the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at the University of Bedfordshire, how it differs from teaching and learning in a typical classroom environment and the impact it has on students and staff.

Staff, students, technology and the curriculum come together in the physical environment and the way in which it is configured (see, for example, 'Spaces for Learning' – a research report prepared for the Scottish Funding Council'[1]). A literature review indicates that the physical environment is one of the important aspects of learning, especially in learning by doing, creativity problem solving and reflective practice. Creative space can give a sense of surprise and challenge, and the switch from 'ordinary' teaching may influence students' attention, motivation to learn and their way of thinking. It also supports the notion of playfulness and fun as essential factors in innovative and creative thinking (De Bono, 1986)[2]. Offering both advanced technology and a place with its own unique atmosphere, a creative space can be an environment which invites social interactions, enhances group work and stimulates the free flow of thoughts (especially with the use of specialist brainstorming software such as FacilitatePro which allows complete anonymity).

It is not an easy task to measure the effectiveness of any learning space as there are many variables: teacher style, learning techniques, the method of delivery, etc.[1]. This presentation will report on the initial findings of using such a space in a variety of subjects in an attempt to make a difference to students' learning and their creative capacity

Jill Armstrong, Carol Elston, Bob Glass, Vikki Illingsworth, Christine Keenan, Sandra Sinfield & Kate Smith, Innovative learning spaces for 'learning' development, *LearnHigher CETL*

This workshop will showcase the learning spaces created as part of the Learnhigher CETL, a collaboration between sixteen universities and the HE Academy. LearnHigher will be a gateway to tried and tested resources in a broad range of

learning areas and will produce research into study practices and build evidence about what works in what circumstances.

All Learnhigher universities were awarded funding to create innovative learning 'spaces' to enhance their students' learning development and engage academic staff in new methods of teaching. Each learning space is designed to address the needs for a particular learning area championed by the coordinating university. Many of these spaces have experimental technology and have been used to develop new practices.

Contributors will present plans, photographs and feedback on their learning 'space' and the audience will have the opportunity to engage in discussions. We will focus on the issues associated with the design of learning spaces for 'learning development' and future use of technologies where participants can relate practice in their own institution.

Tom Hamilton, More than simply social: designing technology and spaces to support constructivist learning, InQbate CETL, *University of Sussex*

In part supported by the HEFCE CETL programme, there has been a recent wave of HE initiatives around the design of new flexible social learning spaces. Many of these use refreshment points, embedded technology and reconfigurable furniture to promote interaction, give a sense of ownership to learners and soften the distinction between formal and informal learning.

This workshop will explore how this welcome, and long-overdue, focus on learner-learner interaction and collaboration can be further enhanced by renewed attention to the 'constructivist' part of the 'social constructivist' equation, and the application of imaginative use of AV technology and theatre and gallery design. Drawing on our experience in considering the teaching and practice within the creative disciplines as part of the design of the InQbate (The CETL in Creativity) space, this session will discuss how innovative technology and space design can be employed to best support; un-guided, guided and structured discovery learning, construction and 'constructionism', PBL and situated learning, reflection, and learner ownership of learning and environment for a variety of non-Arts and Design subjects.

The event will take the form of a learning exhibition, where, after a short introductory explanation, participants will be encouraged to form groups and explore the key themes that have shaped our thinking, through a variety of interactive and non-interactive exhibits around the space. This will be followed by a period of reflection, before group discussion to share experiences and understanding.

13:05 – 13.50 Parallel Session 2:

Tarsem Singh Cooner & Ann Davis, Technology in social spaces: early reflections on promoting interdisciplinary education, *University of Birmingham*

This interactive session will share the work undertaken, and the lessons learned by the Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Mental Health (CEIMH) at the University of Birmingham in promoting collaborative teaching and learning between a range of partners and stakeholders inside and outside the University.

The session will focus on two areas. First, a reflective account of the lessons learnt by staff about engaging with a University in order to influence the design of a derelict laboratory space into a modern and flexible teaching and learning environment. Second, an account of how information and communication technology has been embedded into the design of the building to encourage debate, activity and development of pedagogic approaches that overcome some of the 'traditional barriers' to interdisciplinary education. Through providing an account of CEIMH activities, the presenters are interested to learn from the experiences and ideas of participants.

Amanda J Lewis, Internet café with or without the coffee? C-Scaipe CETL, *Kingston University*

At C-SCAIPE's new premises we have discovered that colour co-ordinated, soft, squishy shapes have stimulated dialogue and encouraged a participative approach to individual and group activities. The Debating Chamber is sufficiently different to ensure students do not know exactly what to expect i.e. neither 2 hours monologue nor death by power point. The Reading Room allows not only for reading books or emails but also the space to hold formal poster assessment sessions or informal student group project discussions. All this AND granting the student the respect to drink a cup of coffee and not spill it on the furniture: our first social learning, internet café.

Ivan Moore & Sarah Bamforth, Learning spaces evaluation workshop, engCETL, *Loughborough University*

The interactive presentation will begin with an overview and description of the outcomes of a Learning Spaces Evaluation workshop that took place with the network of East Midlands CETL's in February. Like the workshop in February, which was instigated by engCETL as part of its own detailed evaluation, the session will give participants the opportunity to consider how they might go about evaluating their own learning spaces; identifying any questions that maybe common between the CETL's, and learning that might come from the process. Participants will be encouraged to share practice on how they went about designing their spaces, the needs analysis that took place, the design process, and intended and potential usage. The session will conclude with a plenary, drawing together common experiences identified in the activity.

The planned session complements the symposium themes of:
Sharing experience of designing learning spaces and discussing approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of the designs.
Disseminating findings from a similar workshop attended by CETL's in the East Midlands.

The audience will interact in the session via the discussion activity.

Alison Price, Design for learning modes, *Institute for Enterprise, Leeds Metropolitan University*

Small group working and learning through dialogue often requires more space and movement than many existing lecture theatres allow.
Highly dependent upon engagement and exchange, teaching enterprise remains complex within the traditional learning space of the classroom, as the need to

challenge the student to experience entrepreneurship places high demands upon the lecturer as well as the learning environment in which they find themselves.

Enterprise education is recognised as a social activity, driven through networks and interaction (Lucas 2004) and therefore students need social learning spaces that support entrepreneurial modes of learning (Gibb 2002). Gibb (1993) first articulated the importance of the learning environment for enterprise education, identifying the need for "flexible learning situations" as a core requirement to advancing enterprise within the curriculum. This call, together with the experience of US universities, which highlighted the need to create an enterprise culture (Lucas and Copper 2004) through use of environment, was at the heart of the Leeds Met vision for its CETL spaces.

This presentation will focus upon how the establishment of our CETL "Institute for Enterprise" has allowed us to create three new complementary learning spaces.

The audience will be invited to undertake a brief sample of enterprise learning techniques to stimulate and illuminate the debate on designing learning spaces. By engaging the audience in short tasks, we will demonstrate our approach to enterprise education and the challenges this has posed for the creation of our social learning spaces. We will then disseminate our experiences.

References:
Lucas, B (2004) Unpublished presentation to CMI-MIT network "Influencing the Enterprise Environment"
Gibb, A (1993) "The Enterprise Culture and Education" International Small Business Journal 11 (3)
Gibb, A (2002) "Creating conducive environments for learning and entrepreneurship" Industry and Higher Education June 2002 Pp 135-148
Lucas, B and Copper (2004) Unpublished report MIT "Influencing the Enterprise Environment

John Davey & Helen Jamieson, Collections collaboration and cappuccino: enhancing learning in a library setting, *SOLSTICE CETL, Edge Hill University*

Prompted by developing teaching and learning environments and changing student expectations and practices, Learning Services at Edge Hill University in collaboration with SOLSTICE - the institution's HEFCE-funded Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) - redeveloped the ground floor of its Learning Resource Centre over the summer of 2006 to create a social learning space.

At a total cost of only £80,000 this development represents excellent value for money and has redefined a relatively 'traditional' library space to incorporate a variety of features which benefit both students and staff, including:

- Group study areas - informal lounge seating, group areas and rooms
- Wireless technology for use with students' own and loaned laptops
- Café area
- Express PCs for walk-in access to e-mail, the internet and library catalogue
- Facilities and resources area - photocopiers, printers, binders and laminators etc.

This presentation will outline the underlying reasons for developing the social learning space within a library setting, will describe the development in detail, and will present the outcomes of early evaluations of use of the space.

The audience will be able to see images of the space, including interactive images of the space in use over time, and will be invited, at specific points within the presentation, to consider some of the issues associated with such developments and the potential for similar types of developments at their own institutions.

Stig A. Walsh, Making the most of your orange segment – a social learning space packed with vitamin C, Direct CETL, *University of Portsmouth*

Foundation Degree (FD) students often have a major time constraints related to work placements and family, and learning environment design for such students represents new challenges and careful planning. Foundation Direct (Portsmouth University) has recently opened the doors of its newly built centre to the c. 600 FD students currently studying on the University's 11 courses. The centre comprises book able seminar rooms for informal group working, and a drop-in centre shaped rather like an orange segment in plan view. The drop-in centre acts as a central point for academic and mentoring support, yet with comfortable chairs and coffee-making facilities, it is also an informal space where students can meet tutors and other students to discuss aspects of their course. The area is relatively small but well-lit, and its unusual shape adds to the informality of the space.

How did we get the most from our 'orange segment'? This presentation focuses on how the drop-in centre concept has evolved from an ideal, to a reality shaped by architect's plans, available space and, most importantly, by what the students themselves want. I will illustrate how this physical social learning space integrates with Foundation Direct's PDU, Mentoring Direct and Pre-Entry initiatives, and how these feed back into a growing *virtual* social learning space via online discussion boards and chat rooms used for teaching purposes. How best to integrate the physical and virtual spaces to maximise learning potential and how this 'blended' learning space might evolve, will be debated in open audience discussion forums.