

Actions Arising from Ivan Moore's Final Evaluation Report on the engCETL Learning Spaces (July 2008)

Introduction

This paper outlines a list of possible actions arising from Ivan Moore's Final Evaluation Report on the engCETL Learning Spaces (July 2008). It is intended that this paper provides a stimulus for internal discussions by the engCETL team before a decision is made on which actions to progress and when. These would then be built into the engCETL Operational Plan.

Suggested Actions

1. Consider additional strategies to engage more academics and students with the engCETL learning space, such as:
 - Encourage other (non teaching) use of the space by staff, for example, departmental staff meetings, so that more people are exposed to the space and see the equipment being used.
 - Focus on how individuals can be given an increased feeling of ownership of the engCETL space (which the evaluation showed can be related directly to increased usage of the space).
 - Encourage staff to use the space with students early in a semester to ensure the students are aware of the space and that they can book it themselves.
 - Trial extending opening hours for students during certain periods. Analyse student usage (perhaps through graphical means) to decide best times to offer.
 - Produce a promotional leaflet which is a collection of mini case studies with quotes on the different models of use of the space, including teaching, student group work, student informal use, meetings, events and exhibitions. There could be versions for both staff and students.

2. Increase and review use of the equipment:
 - Make it clearer what is available – for example, that an OHP is available if required.
 - Increase what we use ourselves to set an example, for example, the interactive whiteboard and Visualiser at engCETL Staff and Advisory board meetings.
 - Consider possible improvements, for example, can we enable a local file share between the seminar and breakout rooms?
 - Further develop and review any quick start guides (including awareness and availability of them).
 - Consider holding a trial set of training sessions for both staff and students (especially for interactive whiteboards). Focus on the start of the academic year.
 - Make better use of the Promethean slates. Are staff aware of their existence and what they might do with them?
 - Improve the ease of connection of laptops to overhead projectors.
 - Focus on checking knowledge of simple things, for example, are all students aware they can use the floor panels to access power sockets etc?
 - Review and increase application-specific software where possible, based on a study of needs.

3. Develop and publish a strategy for the long term maintenance of the space, equipment updates/replacement and furniture refurbishment/replacement etc. In particular,

consider how this space will maintain its position as a flagship space as this has proved to have many benefits, both direct and indirect.

4. Investigate the feasibility, costs, advantages and disadvantages of installing a mains supplied water fountain for student use.
5. Identify the potential for exploiting the lessons learned across the University through re-interviewing Anne Mumford from Media Services and any others as required. This perhaps could include researching if the engCETL space has influenced staff perception of the quality of space required i.e. is it pulling up standards elsewhere in the engCETL departments or the university? Is it influencing thinking and design? Etc.
6. Consider the possibility of producing a journal paper based on this evaluation report. This might work better following interviews with Media Services so it has a focus of lessons learned to enable input into the design of future learning spaces.
7. An alternative/additional focus for a journal paper could be a more pedagogical approach about the space acting as an agent of change – the space was designed according to an extensive needs analysis, this created a new innovative learning space, which in turn now offers further opportunities to change the teaching practice of both the lecturers who planned to use it as designed and those who now use it but had no involvement in its design. In other words how has teaching practice changed as a result of the new learning space.
8. Evaluate the departmental learning spaces as a logical next step from this main evaluation. This could include:
 - Were lessons learned from the design and use of the main engCETL space?
 - Are the spaces of high quality, well used, meet the original design aims etc.
 - Check the spaces have met the original engCETL aims. For example, has the existence of these spaces resulted in higher usage of central space? Does the existence of these 'local' engCETL spaces overcome any 'inertia' issues related to the main space?
9. Given known limits on staff time, consider what of the above might be carried out as student projects, either as part of curriculum or paid. Seconded academics might be able to offer some of the above as projects they could supervise.
10. Follow up any subsequent research (or perhaps do alongside) with an engineering-wide, university-wide or cetl-wide symposium on learning spaces which could share the lessons about the design, use and development of learning spaces. A possible focus could be 'changing rooms: if you change learning spaces, you change learning practices'. There would be potential for strands for CETLs, estates, academics and technologists. You could have both a backward-looking (what has been done, how and why) and a forward-looking (what learning and teaching changes have resulted from the new spaces) perspective. What about a video poster session rather than just poster session to make the most of technology etc.

Fiona Lamb, August 2008