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Learning Space: What difference does it make?

A history of learning space research
Research concentrates on technical and physical issues, or learning within a virtual space, NOT learning behaviour.

What’s the difference with our research?
We have focussed on:
• Learning spaces, specifically in the library, and how students relate to it
• Staff feedback on the impact of space on their work and support

How we gathered data
• Reflective logs and quantitative monitoring of desk enquiries (staff)
• Surveys, learning logs, monitoring space occupancy, and interviews (students)

What difference does it make?

Learning Space: What difference does it make?

• How does learning space impact on the learning behaviour of it’s users?
• How do students use our spaces?
• How does learning space impact on the physical space impacting on learning behaviour?
• How do students view spaces

Discoveries - How students view spaces
Study goals are simplistic, to finish what they are working on.
They do know that they like particular types of library space for specific reasons. Frequently these are practical e.g. near resources, silent or group studying.
Students find the library spaces conducive to learning, as it is “the place to get work done”, or where others study.

Discoveries - Impact on staff support
Subject team staff have experienced an increase in enquiries since refurbishment, and now primarily deal with IT enquiries.

Floor 2 Furniture Occupancy

Floor 3 Furniture Occupancy

Floor 5 Furniture Occupancy

Floor 6 Furniture Occupancy

Furniture Occupancy
• Soft furniture i.e. armchairs, sofas, largely unpopular (4 to 31%)
• Computers most popular, but occupancy still varies from 14 to 88%, depending on location and furniture provision (e.g. high bench computers are used as a last resort)
• Desk without computers still needed, but vary between 12 and 52% occupancy

Project recommendations
• Re-evaluate what student needs are for support
• Encourage independent learning
• Revise staffing and modify the subject team format
• Play with our spaces more! Experiment with furniture configuration
• Reconsider our own expectations of spaces and student interpretation

Plans for the future
We want to:
• Conduct more research into whether our data matches other universities in this country
• Embed our research methods into the curriculum to discover more habits across a wider variety of space types
• Continue evaluation of our learning spaces