

Introduction

The Next Generation Learning Spaces project (NGLS) focuses on the activities taking place in learning spaces within higher education institutions. A major contribution of the NGLS research is the creation of a coherent and comprehensive framework for guiding the design and implementation of new learning spaces. This research is at the leading edge of enhancing learning environments and outcomes in higher education.

The Pedagogy–Space–Technology (PST) framework was developed, rigorously tested, and thoroughly evaluated before being disseminated widely through two national colloquia. The framework, developed through a collaborative process, acknowledges the needs of different academic disciplines, and was pioneered at the University of Queensland.

Three distinct types of learning environments were designed, demonstrated, and evaluated using the unified approach made possible by the framework; Next Generation Libraries (connected learning experiences beyond information), Collaborative Learning Centres (challenging our assumptions and pushing the boundaries), and the Advanced Concept Teaching Spaces (the interactive lecture

theatre of the future). These spaces embody new learning modes, innovative uses of space, and emerging popular technology. They are exemplars at the very cutting edge of worldwide learning practice.

The Pedagogy–Space–Technology framework provides a robust basis from which to develop design briefs, assess alternative concepts, and evaluate learning environments. Its format enables concepts for learning spaces to be replicated and applied in various contexts around the country, and beyond.

The detailed case studies in this publication were presented at the NGLS 2008 Colloquium, and focus on the successes and obstacles in designing next generation learning spaces. The case studies illustrate the importance of the PST framework in the operation and evaluation of new learning spaces.

The information provided in the following chapters and case studies is the result of research and testing new ideas in learning spaces. The outcomes have significantly improved the learning experience for students and have also informed pedagogical and technological approaches to teaching in the university environment.

The following people brought their expertise to the NGLS project. Professor David Radcliffe has a sustained history of teaching and learning innovation, research and scholarship in engineering education and learning centre design. Hamilton Wilson is the Managing Director of Wilson Architects. As a working architect he has extensive experience of delivering major projects to a variety of clients but especially in the higher education sector. Wilson Architects are focused on the design of university libraries and learning environments, and Hamilton is particularly interested in creating design solutions that help meet student diversity in study behaviour. Derek Powell brings a broad perspective to the application of technology to learning spaces. He conceived the Advanced Concept Teaching Space initiative and directed the technology research and development used in this space.

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