

Leadership and Learning Landscapes: the Struggle for the Idea of the University

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the academic involvement in the design and delivery of new teaching and learning spaces in higher education. The findings are based on research conducted at 12 universities within the United Kingdom. The paper examines the nature of academic involvement in the design and decision-making process of pedagogic space design, revealing some of the complexities and the tensions within this area of academic leadership. The research found that innovation and creativity on particular projects is often restricted by the project management decision-making processes and that broader institutional aims are often underplayed once the design process goes into project mode. The paper concludes by calling for greater academic involvement in the design process in ways that allow for critical reflexivity based on discussions around the concept of 'the idea of the university'.

Introduction

This paper is based on a research project into the extent of academic involvement in the design and delivery of new teaching and learning spaces. The research focuses on 12 universities across the UK, providing detailed case studies about the nature of academic leadership at all levels, as well as organisational decision-making structures. The paper uses a framework established by Bolden *et al.* (2008), involving a multi-level model of analysis supported by the sociological concepts of Bourdieu, to reveal the complexities and tensions of the academic leadership role. The research, *contra* Bolden *et al.* (2008) does not find that these complexities are resolved by forms of 'hybrid' leadership but that they remain unresolved, even unspoken, at the level of academic practice. The research concludes that academics are involved in the design and delivery of new

teaching spaces but are captured by the project-management process as clients and customers. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu, but again *contra* to Bolden *et al.* (2008), the paper recommends ways by which a more fundamental academic sensibility might be involved in the design of new teaching and learning spaces. These involve making spaces for collective critical reflexivity informed by research, linked to wider debates in the academic literature about the nature and purpose of higher education: ‘the idea of the university’.

Learning landscapes

The concept of learning landscapes has been used around the world to describe the changes that are being made to teaching and learning environments across the educational sectors (Dugdale, 2009). Originally used in relation to schools and colleges in Britain and internationally (Thody, 2008), the term has recently been applied to higher education to describe what is regarded as nothing less than a design in educational transformation (Harrison, 2006) and a silent revolution in the design of teaching and learning spaces in higher education (Chiddick, 2006).

These transformations are the result of, among other things, the possibilities offered by new technologies, the demands of students for more collaborative and immersive experiences and the requirements of academic staff for interdisciplinary research. This has led designers to conceive of different kinds of physical learning and teaching spaces including the specialised and the flexible, the formal and the informal and the ways in which physical spaces are networked through the use of information technology. At the core of these designs are new pedagogies based on student-centred learning, greater collaboration and engagement between staff and students and the connections that are being made with communities outside of the campus (Dugdale, 2009). Moreover, the paper also uses the concept of the learning landscape to refer to spaces for thinking critically and reflexively about the development of teaching and learning spaces; and, in that sense, it functions as both a descriptive and metaphorical idea (Savin-Baden, 2008).

Leadership in higher education

While the learning landscape concept provides a good description of what is going on at the surface of university design, it says nothing about the decision-making processes that lie beneath (Temple, 2007). A more robust framework for research into academic involvement by academics involved in the process of management of universities can be found in the leadership and management in higher education literature (Shattock,

2003; Bundy, 2004; Deem *et al.*, 2007) and, in particular for the purposes of this research, the work of Bolden *et al.* (2008). Bolden *et al.* (2008) argued that despite the increasingly sophisticated modelling of leadership in higher education, it has done nothing to make less complex the nature of leadership or the way that it works in practice (Bolden *et al.*, 2008). In order to more fully understand the complexity of leadership in higher education Bolden *et al.* (2008) divided leadership in higher education into a multi-level model of leadership practice based on five constituent parts.

The first three levels deal with the structuring processes of academic leadership: first, the personal, with a focus on the attributes of individual leaders; second, the social, which deals with informal networks, often operating outside of formal university and committee structures; third, the structural, which looks at the formal process through which an organisation is led and managed, including committee structures and strategic planning. These levels of leadership practice are then contextualised at a fourth level that includes the internal and external environment within which academic leaders are working. The former includes institutional strategies and organisational cultures while the latter takes account of political and economic pressures. The fifth level has a developmental dimension and looks at the ways in which leadership roles are shaped within a university over time in the context of institutional priorities and ongoing organisational transformations (Bolden *et al.*, 2008). Bolden *et al.* (2008) are keen to stress that while each of these levels offers a framework to examine aspects of leadership in higher education, none of these levels work independently of each other but operate concurrently in the real world of university governance.

This empirical model is conceptualised using the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Bolden *et al.* (2008) pointed to the similarities between their work and Bourdieu, in particular the notions of 'habitus', 'field' and 'intellectual capital', and the ways in which they support the social reproductive tendencies within institutions. For Bolden *et al.* (2008), 'intellectual capital' links to the significance of personal leadership, the notion of 'field' describes networks of social positions arranged through power relations and 'habitus' provides a structure defined by:

durable principles that generate and organise practices and representation that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53)

Bolden *et al.* (2008) argue that through an awareness of the intersections provided by these concepts it is possible that:

a deeper appreciation of what 'bonds' people together and 'bridges' social groups may be possible and thus a more powerful and relevant appreciation of how leadership is accomplished and may be enabled . . . particularly to the extent to which it is regarded as an opportunity for networking, collective sense making and 'identity work'. (Bolden *et al.*, 2008, p. 373)

Bolden *et al.*'s interpretation of Bourdieu emphasises the social reproductive tendencies in his work, a characteristic that is exemplified by their conclusion: conflicting managerial relationships find their resolution as hybrid managerial forms.

The position of this paper is that Bolden *et al.* (2008) underestimate the extent to which Bourdieu's theory of practical action allows for radical transformation through a process of struggle at institutional level (Calhoun, 1993; Swartz, 1997). There is no sense in Bolden *et al.* (2008) of the possibility for transformation at the institutional level. Their model of change refers mainly to academic leadership at an individual level rather than the institution as a whole; and, while their model does appreciate the socio-economic and political events in a context of temporal development, their work is very much defined as a contemporary issue, with no historic timescale. The result is that the dynamic principle on which transformation might be based is reduced to the imperatives of organisational management undermining the potential for a more critical sensibility based on the real conflicts and contradictions that remain embedded within the culture and tradition of academic principles and practice. The key issue for this paper is how to facilitate academic engagement through the promotion of a greater academic sensibility. The paper suggests that this can be done by utilising the work of Bourdieu, if in a very different way from that invoked by Bolden *et al.* (2008).

For Bourdieu this academic sensibility is contained in the concept of reflexivity, that is the way in which social science uses the core principles of its own academic practice to examine the principles on which that practice is based (Wacquant, 2007, p. 36). What makes Bourdieu's theory of reflexivity distinct is that it exists at the social rather than the individual level, defining a collective rather than personal activity, which seeks to strengthen the academic enterprise rather than undermine it by 'increasing the scope and solidity of social scientific knowledge' (Wacquant, 2007, p. 37). For Bourdieu this involves the social scientific field as a whole, through 'public debate and mutual critique' (Wacquant, 2007, p. 40), in a form that includes 'the occupants of all the antagonistic and complementary positions which constitute the scientific field' (Wacquant, 2007, pp. 40–41). Bourdieu insists on the importance of designing this process in ways that make it possible to 'institutionalise

reflexivity in mechanisms of training, dialogue and critical evaluation' (Wacquant, 2007, p. 41).

Consequently, key features for the research are the ways in which decision making about the design and development of teaching and learning spaces is based on the sort of critical reflexive processes advocated by Bourdieu. The issue becomes to what extent these processes are part of the institutional protocols of higher education and, if they are not prevalent, how they might be encouraged.

Case study research findings

The research was reported as a series of case studies based at 12 universities across England, Scotland and Wales. Each university served as an exemplifying case because they provided a suitable context for the research questions to be answered (Bryman, 2004), that is, they had all built or were in the process of building innovative teaching and learning spaces. The conceptual definition of innovative teaching and learning space used by this paper encompasses spaces that attempt to challenge traditional methods of teaching and learning and includes: social learning spaces; learning spaces over which students had some supervisory responsibilities; spaces which connected teaching and research; library spaces; technology-rich spaces; and postgraduate learning spaces (Neary *et al.*, 2010). The universities provided a convenient sample (Bryman, 2004) as many of the institutions involved in the research were part of another forum that examined the use of space in higher education, the Space Management Group. It was primarily through the Space Management Group that the sample was gathered. Other universities were added to the original group by employing a snowball sampling method. This allowed the research to explore emerging theoretical considerations as the research developed and examine a range of institutional provision across the sector: ancient and post-modern, red brick and campus, pre- and post-1992, as well as city-based universities (Neary *et al.*, 2010).

The sampling method employed at each university was limited to those individuals who had been involved in the development of innovative teaching and learning space at each institution. In total, the research was based on 60 individual face-to-face interviews with senior managers, academics, estates professionals, support staff, students and architects across all of the universities. In addition, the research analysed each of the participating universities' strategy documentation, with a particular focus on plans for teaching and learning and estates. The research questions focused on the inspirations for innovation, the relationship between innovation and a university's vision and mission statements, the

distributed leadership roles taken by academics as part of client group and project management teams as well as other formal and informal institutional decision-making structures. The research was particularly interested in the formulas by which new teaching and learning spaces are evaluated and assessed.

Although the research methodology allowed for an in-depth examination of the processes involved in the design of teaching and learning spaces, there were limitations. As the findings were based on a small number of interviews (five) conducted at each university and as the interviewees were selected by the universities themselves, the research cannot claim to be a comprehensive review of all shades of opinion within each institution; nor, as the research findings are based on personal perception, can it claim to be a definitive account. In addition, the primary research was conducted in a relatively small time scale, over three days in each institution, providing a snapshot of the everyday life of each of the participating universities and allowing for an examination of the design process. Nevertheless, the research did find consistency among the respondents at each of the participating universities, which indicated the generalisability of the findings. While consistency among a small biased sample does not imply generalisability *per se*, it does allow for credible and dependable results to be drawn from the data.

Multi-layered framework

The research is reported using the multi-layered distributed leadership categorisations set out by Bolden *et al.* (2008). While these categorisations involve some overlapping and interconnections they do provide a systematic way of unravelling and revealing some of the complexities and tensions associated with leadership in higher education in relation to the specific issue of the design and development of teaching and learning spaces.

Personal

Despite a shift in the academic leadership literature away from a focus on the importance of the 'heroic individual leader', the research found that personal leadership was an important component in driving the development of teaching and learning spaces. The significance of charismatic personal leadership extended across the range of professional roles, including academics, estates staff, service support and library staff, all of whom act as catalysts for innovation in design. The ability to drive forward projects was enhanced when issues of space and spatiality was a core research interest of academics in leadership roles.

While the research showed that new teaching and learning spaces benefit from charismatic ‘champions’ there are tensions inherent in design initiatives that are inspired by strong individual leaders. For example, when spaces inspired by the vision of an individual leader, demanding a radical change to the ways in which teaching is being delivered, are designed and built with little involvement from the academics that will be working in them. Tensions emerge when the radical vision that lies behind a design principle has not been fully communicated to staff and students who might use the space, resulting in some institutional confusion and under utility. This confusion is compounded when there is a lack of leadership on a project. As one architect put it:

It’s not always clear who the client is. I can speak to thirty or forty people. But only one of them counts, the problem is knowing which one. Sometimes I don’t know if they (the university) knew who the client was until I asked them the question. This is the case because the institution is new to these processes and is learning how to do it. (Architect)

Social

The research found that formal committee structures that characterise university decision making are not always the most appropriate forum for generating innovation. As a result, universities have developed less formal decision-making structures to promote innovation and experimentation. This point was made by an academic manager in a university with a track record for innovative teaching and learning spaces:

Higher education institutions need to provide a programme of formal planning that supports strategic experimentation. This programme needs to be based on a free-flowing process, as well as projects that are derived out of more central planning protocols. It may be that conventional committee structures and management procedures are not helpful in designing innovation into our teaching and learning spaces. (Senior Academic, Learning Resources)

A key issue arising out of informality is confidence in the decision-making abilities of colleagues from different professional groups. This is an issue where academics feel estates staff do not understand the processes involved in teaching and learning. Estates staff feel that academics often struggle with articulating the kind of teaching and learning space needed to support their activities. There is a strong feeling among academics and estates staff that both work in different paradigms and speak different languages. As one project manager put it:

I think it happens because the clients are usually academics and they're wrapped up in their own little worlds. Don't get me wrong, they're very intelligent people, and they'll be able to tell you every dot and comma about whatever their field is, but sometimes they don't know very much outside that . . . I'm the same from my perspective within construction, knowing about my own area of expertise but nothing about theirs . . . the interface between academics and estates is not so great and the two groups have different sets of expectations . . . academics speak the language of activity and we speak the language of space. (University in-house Project Manager)

The same problem of miscommunication and misunderstanding was made from the academics' perspective:

Academics may know what they want to do but might not know what is possible . . . it needs someone to show us what innovative teaching spaces might look like. Estates are best placed to show academics what to do. We want spaces to work well for learning but we do not always know how to achieve this. (Senior Academic, Head of Department, Law)

The research showed that in some universities relationships of trust are being built between academics and estates professionals to develop more effective working relationships. This is being done by emphasising the social aspects of working among different professional groups: 'knowing each other as a way of working with each other', as one academic put it. Work on developing these more progressive professional relationships is important in counteracting the certain amount of negative stereotyping that exists between academics and estates staff, which can undermine project development.

One university found a way of increasing sociability among different professional groups was by utilising the social learning spaces created to facilitate student learning as meeting spaces for staff to generate a greater sense of social engagement, informality and collegiality. In other universities these professional relationships are further facilitated by 'walk-arounds', where groups of academics, information technology and estates professionals meet on site to share ideas about the design of teaching and learning spaces. These 'on site' discussions provide the opportunity for colleagues from different subject areas and professional cultures to challenge each other's perceptions about what types of spaces make for effective teaching and learning. This process can 'get engagement from academics and encourages them to really start to think about the issues' (Senior Academic).

The promotion of less formal discussion and debate has enabled academics and estates staff to gain insight into each other's professional preoccupations. Nevertheless, not all the tensions are resolved. **One recurring complaint by designers is the lack of creativity or willingness by**

academics to experiment. This tendency towards conservatism by academics is attributed to a lack of research on effective teaching spaces and an unwillingness by academics to research their own teaching practice with space in mind:

There is a tendency among academics in higher education to be a bit conservative when it comes to thinking about teaching and learning spaces. Or maybe it's because they have not given it much thought. Often any suggestions are based on them having seen a teaching and learning space in another university that they quite liked. And the students are even more conservative. I think it goes back to a lack of research, because the people who are briefing me don't know the documents. The same principle is that I don't think many staff know what is out there, so they don't know the possibilities. They are simply not research informed. (Architect)

Structural

While the research shows the importance of personal and social forms of leadership, the research highlighted the significance of sound structural processes and procedures for decision making. Respondents reported that where the process did perform well this was a result of sound structural leadership and the alignment of teaching and learning objectives with other departmental and institutional strategies. Central to this form of leadership is a continual dialogue between departments and senior management to ensure staff are working effectively towards pursuing the strategic aims of the institution. This is usually achieved through the universities' committee structure and a sound university communication strategy.

There is a considerable convergence between the different types of committee structure and policy-making processes established by different universities. As these structures are established within a rapidly changing external environment driven by government policy, as well as by other external factors, this is a fluid and dynamic process under constant review.

While committees might not be seen as dynamic or capable of innovative thinking there is a view that they are still very important:

It's about learning isn't it? It's about being open to change, open to development and that's where I think committees can be really quite exciting places if you go with the view that you want to try and influence what happens next. (Senior Educational Developer)

The case studies revealed that progressive design development for teaching and learning spaces is facilitated by flat management structures, providing decision-making processes that empower academic staff to

experiment and innovate. Professional autonomy is being developed in a context where there is clarity of leadership, within a clear set of guidelines as to responsibilities relating to specific roles. In one institution, with a reputation for innovative design, much of the decision making is taken at departmental level. Members of staff feel that this process is democratic and that their voices are listened to at all levels of the university administration: 'If you are heard at the departmental level that is as good as being heard at the university level. You are never more than two steps from the vice-chancellor' (Academic).

To support this democratic management structure the corporate strategy of the university is designed to be empowering. This is done by providing broad institutional aims, which are interpreted by the individual departments, providing them with considerable autonomy in the academic business of teaching, learning, research, knowledge exchange and community activities. The other side of this issue is that '... if you give departments a lot of power and responsibility then it is much more difficult to have coherence because departments go off and do their own thing' (Senior Academic). This may inhibit a central organisational direction but does mean that teaching and learning are driven and developed by academics from within their own departments.

A key finding of the research was that academics are increasingly included in the formal decision-making process of space planning, management and design, as members of committees and of project working groups. The data revealed that the opportunity for engagement with these processes as academics, based on their own subject knowledge or their research expertise, is rare. Where academics do have an input in relation to academic matters it occurs around issues of pedagogical practice. The research found that academics, in so far as the development of teaching and learning spaces are concerned, can become the clients and customers of the project management process. In some cases this is a question of the time in which projects are started and completed: 'the speed of the project meant it was difficult to fully consider the impact of any changes as well as to fully communicate them to all members of staff' (Senior Learning Advisor). There is a tendency for academics to become overwhelmed by the pragmatics and practicalities of project management. As one Senior Learning Advisor put it:

Estates did not habitually think about the activity that was going on in the teaching rooms and did not have the vocabulary or experience of describing what was happening in those rooms. (Senior Academic)

There is a feeling from academics that estates staff should be having a greater impact by promoting creativity and experimentation with regard to the development of the physical estate, rather than focus on the protocols and processes of project management:

I would like to have an estates team who are badgering me with ideas about what we could do with the physical space. They should be bringing things onto my agenda but they absolutely never do. (Senior Academic)

In addition, as the data have already revealed, it appears that academics and estates staff have different priorities and use a different language:

Driving the efficiency agenda has some benefits to it, but I honestly do not think I could say that they dominate the academic conversations. (Senior Academic)

The lack of an academic debate is compounded by the absence of credible research findings in how teaching spaces are used. This lack of an academic sensibility is exacerbated, as the research revealed, by the absence of any intellectual discussion about the meaning and purpose of higher education and how this relates to the design of the new learning landscapes. This is evident by the way in which teaching and learning spaces were evaluated by using the criteria of efficiency rather than effectiveness:

The problem is that 21st century dreams are being evaluated by 20th century mindsets which are not able to map the appropriate matrix to measure the activity and to evaluate its contribution. (Senior Manager)

Although at one university, where the priority is to promote stronger links between research and undergraduate teaching, efforts are being made to deal with this issue:

We are trying to encourage academics to make their case through research and data analysis so as to make a compelling argument. Rumour and half truths reported at committees do not tell you what the real problem is, you have to bring evidence to the table, just standing there moaning doesn't help. (Senior Manager)

Often this intellectual discussion is devoid of any meaningful student involvement despite the fact that students are increasingly represented within the committee structures and decision-making processes of universities. Students feel uncertain of their abilities to fully contribute to these debates and discussions, leading to a sense of frustration among academics about the level of student engagement on this matter:

Students seem to find it difficult to articulate what they want, they know what they do not like, but they find creative thinking about space very difficult. (Senior Academic)

For many of the students pedagogic space was not really an issue:

All students want are good basic conditions in their teaching rooms, if we start talking about the relationship between space and pedagogy only a minority would be interested. (Student Representative)

However, despite this lack of student engagement, the research did find that one of the most compelling new teaching and learning spaces was a social learning space where students had some supervisory and limited managerial responsibilities, as well as producing evaluations as to how the space was being used.

Contextual

There is a clear recognition emerging from the research that the context of higher education is increasingly commercialised and driven by quasi-market principles. Debates about design and development are grounded in the requirement to respond to this external driver and the limited amount of funding available to complete a project. While funding is a key issue, the research found that iconic building projects do not always start with a fixed budget. As one project manager put it:

It is limiting to start a project by saying that you have a certain amount of money to finish the building, as this will lead to the end user cutting things out at the start of the project. The process here is for the project working group to develop the brief, which is then costed and, if the funding is agreed, a project manager is appointed. (Project Manager)

There is a very clear recognition within universities about the ways in which a university's mission and vision can be articulated by its built estate through the construction of iconic and iconoclastic buildings for teaching and learning. What is not so well articulated is the way in which specific design projects connect with the overall mission and vision of a university, or how this is conveyed through a sense of coherent campus master planning:

When you go into project mode all of a sudden the walls go up in peoples' minds, and they fail to see the big picture. Colleagues tend to worry about their own particular project and forget that if something is value engineered out of their project it'll have to be picked up by another project. (Senior Academic)

The research found that most convincing and compelling spaces are contextualised within the most progressive pedagogical theory on teach-

ing and learning, with academic leaders seeking to articulate their academic values through the design of pedagogic spaces. As one senior learning developer put it: 'this wasn't just a pretty building given to us by architects, we had to think about alignment with the curriculum, student motivation and student safety' (Senior Learning Developer).

Development

The case study research revealed that the most progressive institutions have developed 'go-between' leadership roles for colleagues to act as mediators between academics and estates professionals so as to derive the maximum benefits from the design and development process:

. . . this meant using very simple language, translating into lay terms what the architects were telling me, feeding back to the academics and saying look, we've got completely a new plan, let's rethink the research activities we've been talking about. The stakeholders would have turned this place into an extremely humdrum state of traditional teaching and research spaces . . . they just didn't want to bother thinking through the complexities that were absolutely essential for this thing coming about. (Senior Academic)

In some institutions these 'go-between' development roles are rewarded and recognised as formal leadership positions: in one university as the director of change projects. However, this same university recognises the strengths and shortcomings of relying on a model of individual leadership to act as the interface between teaching and learning and estates: 'A one person governance structure is not a good thing so we are trying to formalise how we get people together to look at what the priorities for teaching and learning should be' (Senior Manager). Consequently, the university intends to set up a strategic group that will oversee the management and development of teaching and learning spaces and will formalise the link that has been created between academics and estates professionals.

The research shows the importance of developing service models to support teaching and learning spaces. These service models demonstrate how academics can use new teaching and learning spaces effectively, including how to make use of teaching technologies. The most progressive service models support high levels of responsibility among students for the management of teaching and learning spaces:

. . . as well as developing the space you also need to develop the service model . . . we did not just open the doors and hope for the best . . . the support element is increasingly important because there are a variety of different technologies and approaches to teaching and learning out there. The

support mechanisms enable staff to feel comfortable with these new technologies and, therefore, more prepared to give them a try. (Teaching and Learning Support Staff)

The research highlights that there is a growing awareness among the most progressive estates practitioners of the need to develop the estates role in a form that brings it nearer to the academic model of research-based practice. While much of the existing guidance on project management for the design and development of pedagogic spaces aims to constrain academic involvement within estates processes and protocols, some institutions are promoting a more academic attitude to estates' practices. As one space manager put it:

The most progressive estates practitioners are aiming to subvert these processes by embedding within them an academic sensibility which reflects the nature of their host organisation and increases the scope for genuine engagement among academics. To facilitate this process we encourage our estates professionals to view their institutions as research subjects, taking a responsibility for a rigorous understanding of the academic and other activities taking place in university spaces and how they are best facilitated. This knowledge can be derived through a combination of primary research methods. Estates professionals are encouraged to enrol as students on the employing institution's academic programmes to gain first hand experience of teaching and learning within the spaces and places they manage.

The most progressive estates departments are adopting a common vocabulary for communicating between academics and estates professionals and are calling for a greater emphasis on the social construction and shared meaning and narratives grounded in the myriad sources of data available to space users and space managers, including timetable data, utilisation surveys, student satisfaction data and transparent approaches to costing (Neary *et al.*, 2010).

Critical reflexivity: conflict and contradictions

A key issue for the research was the extent to which decision-making processes enable academics to engage in the kind of critical discussions that characterise the academic enterprise. Overall, the research found that universities in the study have developed sophisticated systems for decision making at all levels of the design and development process but that there is rarely space created at an institutional level for a reflexive dialogue or critical evaluation. As a result of this, the conflicts and contradictions that lie at the heart of designing teaching and learning spaces remain unresolved and academics remain constrained by the pragmatics of the project management process.

This is particularly the case when there is a lack of collective ownership for a particular space, or lack of research into what constitutes effective practice. It is simply not possible to discuss new designs for teaching spaces in a scientific manner if there is a lack of academically credible measures for evaluation of experimental spaces. In the absence of any rigorous research data there is a tendency by academics towards conservatism in design. The kind of intellectual space required for 'public debate and mutual critique', as advocated by Bourdieu, is made difficult in the atmosphere of negative stereotyping among different professional groups that still characterises the relationship between academics and university staff responsible for estates. While progress on student engagement is being made in higher education, universities are still developing ways to connect with students' views and opinions beyond surveys and questionnaires (Trowler and Trowler, 2010).

A conclusion from the data is that academics are engaged in the design and development of new teaching spaces but that they can be captured by project-management processes with little opportunity to provide input based on their own academic expertise nor the space for critical reflection. The research suggests that where designs allow for critical reflexivity among and between academics, and where designs are embedded with academic values, and when estates professionals adopt a more research-based perspective, all of this is likely to have a beneficial effect on the development of new teaching and learning spaces.

From client and customer to collective intellectual

Although Bourdieu is one of the most important theorists of the modern university (1988), his hyper-critical sensibility does not extend to the university at the institutional level, nor does his work contain a systemic analysis of how higher education might be developed. However, there is much in his theory of reflexivity that can generate debates about the role and the nature of higher education (Delanty, 2001). By using Bourdieu's critical framework it might be possible to create a 'collective intellectual' project (Wacquant, 2007, p. 57) that looks at the design and development of teaching and learning spaces and to do this within an already ongoing critical and intellectual discussion concerning the future of higher education, encapsulated by the concept of 'the idea of the university'.

What distinguishes the university as a public institution is precisely the extent to which idealism underpins its real nature. The idea that the university is based on an ideal was a common assumption in the development of thinking about universities (Delanty, 2001). As Mclean put it

'I believe that "ideas" about the purposes of universities have accumulated and are available to us as resources which may or may not be taken up' (Mclean, 2008, p. 30), even if 'it is not possible to claim one big idea for the university' (Mclean, 2008, p. 38). The responsibility for reformulating the idea of the university lies with the academics themselves (Smith and Webster, 1997; Mclean, 2008).

Writing on this subject often sets out 'the idea of the university' as a series of historical ideal-types. These ideal-types trace the development of the European university from its original medieval formulation (Kant, 1979; Bender, 1988; Minogue, 2006) through to its emergence as a liberal humanist institution (Newman, 1852; Humboldt, 1979), before being overwhelmed by the industrial university (Weinberg, 1961; Price, 1963; Scott, 1984) and deconstructed by its post-modern variant (Lyotard, 1979; Delanty, 2001; Kerr, 2001). In the recent period the 'idea of the university' was recovered in the form in which it is currently constituted: the entrepreneurial university (Bok, 2003; Shattock, 2003, 2009; Clark, 2010).

Each ideal-university-type is seen to be transformed through a process of historical evolution to become the type of higher educational institution that is appropriate to the moment in which it exists. The key issue for any design and development of the contemporary university is the extent to which its form resonates with its own historical context and the extent to which the current ideal-type requires renewing or revolutionising (Scott, 1984).

The research recommends that a reappraisal of the 'idea of the university' lies at the core of any project to redesign the learning landscape in higher education. The research suggests that this reappraisal can be set up as a collective intellectual event, of the type suggested by Bourdieu, involving all members of the university, academics, professional and support staff and students. Working together the members of the university community can examine 'the idea of the university' that lies behind their current institution and consider how these ideas may be remade to create a contemporary and progressive form of higher education. This event could involve preparative reading of some of the literature on the 'idea of the university' classified and arranged as historical ideal-types. Academics, estates professionals and other staff and students can discuss in an 'open space setting' the characteristics of their own institution in relation to these ideal-types. This discussion can include identifying which ideal-type their own university corresponds to and what characteristics from the other ideal-type of universities they would like to include in the design of their new teaching and learning space. The result will be a

conversation that is academically literate and with more critical and intellectual substance than is usually contained in project briefing sessions that seek to generate ideas about the design of teaching and learning spaces in a more constrained and managed circumstance (Neary *et al.*, 2010).

Where it is possible, these discussions and debates can be further 'intellectualised' (McLean, 2008) by reference to existing research on the design of pedagogic spaces. While research is at the core of the academic enterprise the design and development of academic space tends not to be research-based (Jamieson, 2003). Indeed, despite the enthusiasm for the development of new teaching and learning spaces in higher education, the relationship between effective undergraduate teaching and learning and innovative new spaces is not well understood (Temple, 2007). The lack of research may be one reason why there is resistance to change among academics (Temple, 2007). This lack of academic research is compounded by the lack of effective post-occupancy evaluations by estates staff, or surveys that cover anything other than rates of usage (Neary *et al.*, 2010). Indeed, core texts on effective university teaching (Laurillard, 2001; Biggs, 2003) say almost nothing about space and spatiality, although new research is beginning to emerge (Boys, 2010).

Moreover, academic writing on space and spatiality has not been used to inform the design of pedagogic spaces. While the design of teaching and learning spaces might appear unconnected to academics' everyday practice, interest and enquiry into space and spatiality is a mainstream activity within universities. The issue of space and spatiality is a core issue in geography departments and writing and thinking about space can be found throughout the social sciences, the humanities, the arts and in the natural sciences, in particular physics, where thinking about space and its relationship to time has fundamentally transformed the spatial consciousness of humanity (Neary and Thody, 2009). The issue for the design and development of new teaching spaces becomes how to contextualise this intellectual practice to include the spaces and places within which these academic activities take place. This is not to say space experts have a privileged position but ways can be found so that they inform and add substance to the decision-making process.

These intellectual collective events could be further informed by the more critical literature relating to the current condition of higher education. The dominance of the entrepreneurial university has attracted a critical response from writers working with the idea of the 'idea of the university'. Barnett (2003) argued in favour of new 'ideologies' to

replace what he refers to as ‘pernicious ideologies’, for example neo-liberal ideals that distort debate within universities. Delanty (2001), inspired by student protests of 1968, called for rethinking the idea of the university around the ‘knowledge society’ based on new forms of democratic knowledge and new ways of knowing. McLean (2008) argued for ‘critical university pedagogy’ where the function of higher education is to educate citizens to confront injustices and to address the problems of a globalised society. The ongoing cuts in public funding for universities around the world has seen the emergence of student protest, a section of which is concerned with the progressive reinvention of curricula within higher education and, indeed, the kind of spaces within which teaching and learning takes place (Communiqués From Occupied California, 2009; The Edu-Factory Collective, 2009). It is important to find ways to include this progressive activity on the part of students into rethinking the learning landscape, rather than dismissing students for their lack of sophistication or commitment to these issues.

Taken together, and focussing on the concept of ‘the idea of the university’, all of these areas of critical enquiry: engagement with the historic literature on the development of higher education; awareness of the research literature on teaching and learning spaces; the promotion of academic theories on space and spatiality; as well as making connections between more critical thinking and practice to suggest real alternative learning landscapes, can generate a rich and rewarding space for reconstructing the kind of teaching and learning spaces within which progressive and effective pedagogical activities can flourish.

Conclusion

It is clear that academics have a great deal to offer the design and development of teaching and learning spaces. The research shows that academics are engaged with this process but they are often constrained by the project management protocols. The paper suggests that, in order to add more value to the process, ways need to be found to engage academics in debates and discussions that are critically reflexive and intellectually informed. The paper argues that the process of the design and development of teaching spaces needs to be about much more than the shape of classroom and laboratories and the kinds of furniture and technology that are put into them. The paper maintains that the debate needs to be concerned with the meaning and purpose of higher education: the ‘idea of the university’. At a very significant moment in the history of the development of higher education in the UK and around

the world, it is possible to have this debate in relation to a very concrete issue, the design of a new teaching and learning landscape, that is informed by the history of higher education as well as the very real possibilities for its progressive transformation.

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