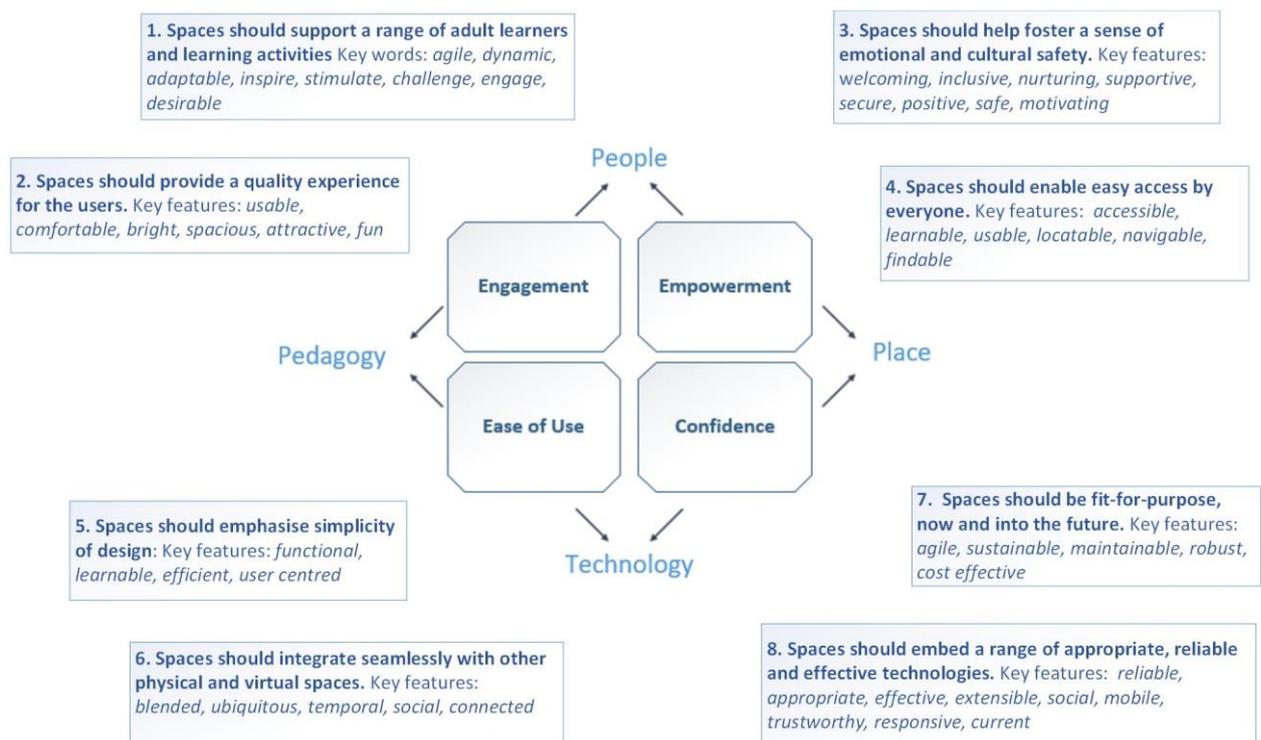# Learning Space Design: Principles for the design and use of CiTEL

CiTEL is a professional learning space where educators can collaborate, share practice and research towards advancing teaching excellence. In a school full of classrooms, Lourdes Hill College needed to think outside the square in order to provide teachers with a very different learning space – one designed for just for staff. The brief for the design drew on extensive research into contemporary learning spaces in the tertiary sector. It also included research into adult pedagogy requirements to ensure that the Centre would be fit-for-purpose.

The design of learning spaces and the selection of furniture, technology and fittings *afford* certain functionality. This functionality is referred to as the '*affordances*' of the space and determines and enhances what activities can take place in that particular space. A set of eight principles was developed to guide the design and use of the spaces to ensure the functionality and affordances of the Centre could meet the needs of the College into the future.

The *Space Design Principles* used for the design, fitting out and use of CiTEL are summarised in the figure below. The principles were adapted from the ALTC project "Retrofitting uni learning spaces: Agile adaptable learning" (Mitchell et al., 2010).
http://www.learnline.cdu.edu.au/retrofittingunispaces/).

1. **Spaces should support a range of adult learners and learning activities** Key words: *agile, dynamic, adaptable, inspire, stimulate, challenge, engage, desirable*

2. **Spaces should provide a quality experience for the users.** Key features: *usable, comfortable, bright, spacious, attractive, fun*

3. **Spaces should help foster a sense of emotional and cultural safety.** Key features: *welcoming, inclusive, nurturing, supportive, secure, positive, safe, motivating*

4. **Spaces should enable easy access by everyone.** Key features: *accessible, learnable, usable, locatable, navigable, findable*

5. **Spaces should emphasise simplicity of design:** Key features: *functional, learnable, efficient, user centred*

6. **Spaces should integrate seamlessly with other physical and virtual spaces.** Key features: *blended, ubiquitous, temporal, social, connected*

7. **Spaces should be fit-for-purpose, now and into the future.** Key features: *agile, sustainable, maintainable, robust, cost effective*

8. **Spaces should embed a range of appropriate, reliable and effective technologies.** Key features: *reliable, appropriate, effective, extensible, social, mobile, trustworthy, responsive, current*

People · Place · Pedagogy · Technology · Engagement · Empowerment · Ease of Use · Confidence

Adapted from "Retrofitting uni learning spaces: Agile adaptable learning" Available from http://www.learnline.cdu.edu.au/retrofittingunispaces/

Diagram summarising the Space Design Principles used in CiTEL

CiTEL Space Design Principles and Affordances

Spaces should support a range of adult learners and learning activities.

AFFORDANCES

Adult learning pedagogies and requirements are supported with large, open plan flexible rooms that are very different to traditional classrooms.

Multi-screen presentation facilities, extensive connectivity, interactive technology support technology-enhanced collaborative working; links physical & virtual spaces.

Flexible and mobile seating arrangements support collaborative learning; small group and self-directed activities replace 'teacher-led' PD activities.

Future-thinking space design enables and facilitates the development of pedagogies for the future.

Spaces should provide a quality experience for the users.

AFFORDANCES

Furnishings are comfortable and attractive and attract staff to spend time in the centre.

Furniture and upmarket décor is appropriate for teachers as the primary learners.

Open plan kitchen and coffee-making facilities are discretely accessible to provide sustenance for people meeting and socialising in CiTEL.

CiTEL offers a range of events, from formal professional learning to informal social gatherings, to encourage staff to relax and spend time with colleagues.

The views and aspects over the Brisbane River are maximised in all rooms.

Spaces should help foster a sense of emotional and cultural safety.

AFFORDANCES

The space is respectful of the land on which the Centre is built and acknowledges our indigenous people and heritage. The College engaged with their elder-in-residence and the indigenous community on key design aspects.

Design is respectful of the history of the College and its buildings with links to existing Duhig Hall (heritage building) and in-keeping with the College façade.

CiTEL provides a quiet, safe place for self-reflection and focused work.
Sharing of practice is supported through professional development programs, digital displays and an online Professional Learning Workspace portal.

Welcoming of visiting staff and pre-service teachers to the College. User friendly technology and the Staff Hub workspace help develop collegial partnerships.

Faculty-driven initiatives and the in-house PD program encourage sharing practice and help staff develop ownership of the Centre.

Spaces should enable easy access by everyone.

AFFORDANCES

CiTEL is accessible to staff during school hours and an external entrance to CiTEL makes it accessible to the LHC community, parents and friends out of hours.

Available out of hours for professional learning activities.

Rooms are open access, bookable online and available for staff drop-in.

Educational programs and activities will be developed that are relevant and available to LHC's broader community.

A lift and technology cater for disability access for people with accessibility requirements.

Spaces should emphasise simplicity of design.

AFFORDANCES

Open plan spaces maximise flexibility. Large Caritas room (96+ collaborative seating) has moveable walls and retractable technology.

Versatile furniture with robust and mobile tables and chairs

Smaller Veritas room can be seamlessly opened and extended to the corridor spaces

Podium technology is the same in each room, is intuitive to use with IT support and training provided.

Consistent furnishings and finishings link different spaces across the school.

Spaces should integrate seamlessly with other physical and virtual spaces.

AFFORDANCES

CiTEL's virtual presence is supported with a website www.citel.com.au.

Internal professional learning programs are supported with a virtual (online) professional learning environment - the "LHC Professional Learning Workspace" –that uses a Microsoft OneNote™ Staff Notebook as its platform.

CiTEL is physically connected to the staff common room (lunch room) and staff personal work spaces.

Co-location of CiTEL with meeting rooms (in Berchmans' under Duhig Hall) and the new Senior Academic and Careers Hub gives scope for multi-space conferences and events.

Consistency in design and furniture link different spaces across the school.

Spaces should be fit-for-purpose, now and into the future.

AFFORDANCES

Solar panels on CiTEL's roof off-set the extra power required by school expansion.

College has invested in high quality, fit-for-purpose furniture as used extensively in the tertiary sector.

Mobile podiums for technology control, flexible room design.

Investment in Wi-Fi access and collaboration software.

Spaces should embed a range of appropriate, reliable and effective technologies.

AFFORDANCES

Easy to use touch screen podium controls are supported by extensive backend networking and cabling.

A range of technology such as interactive LED screens, interactive projectors as used in classrooms and Solstice wifi enabled collaborative software encourages staff to experiment with technology.

In the CiTEL Studio staff have access to a high quality Surface Pro tablet set up with software for screen capture and creation of digital learning resources.

CiTEL Studio sis et up with video camera, lighting and green screen for recording interview-style videos.

Support provided for staff for the use of technology and development of elearning resources.

Further reading

Mitchell, G. et al., (2010) *Retrofitting Uni Learning Spaces: Space Principles*. Australian Learning & Teaching Council. Available from
http://www.learnline.cdu.edu.au/retrofittingunispaces/spaceprinciples/intro.html

Souter, K. et al (2011). *Spaces for Knowledge Generation*. ALTC Project Final Report. Available from
http://documents.skgproject.com/skg-final-report.pdf .