Back ground for the Not a waste of space project:
Australian universities have spent millions of dollars transforming teaching spaces into new generation learning environments. This trend in funding appears set to continue into the future. While a number of ALTC/OLT funded projects have focussed on the design and evaluation of spaces, little work has been done on supporting activities, post design, for the staff required to teach in them.

The Not a waste of space project:
The Not a waste of space: Professional development for staff teaching in New Generation Learning Spaces project aims to design, trial and evaluate a flexible, ‘bite-sized’, ‘just-in-time’ and ‘just-for-me’ professional development (PD) approach. It includes an accompanying online step-by-step institutional implementation “eGuide”.

The Not a waste of space staff survey:
A voluntary online survey was conducted in Semester 1, 2012 at RMIT University and The University of Melbourne to scope:

- academic staff needs for profession development,
- methods and preferences of delivery for professional development, and
- incentives for undertaking professional development in new generation learning spaces.

The survey comprised of 25 items; 20 multiple choice questions and 5 opened-ended questions. Two hundred and eighteen academic staff members participated in the survey.

Take home messages from the Not a waste of space staff survey:
Preliminary analysis of the survey data (n=183 5.4% RMIT) tells us the following about providing professional development for academic staff teaching in new generation learning spaces:

- 70% of respondents want PD to help them teach in new generation learning spaces
- Staff want PD to be active and student-centred rather than through lectures and disciplinary backgrounds do not influence this preference
- Engaging in hands-on sessions, observing peers teaching, having conversations with colleagues, engaging in PD with colleagues from other disciplines, getting advice from external experts and practising in NGLS are the highest rated strategies for PD
- Blended approaches (online and face-to-face) for delivering PD are preferred, though this is age dependent, with younger academics preferring online and older academics preferring face-to-face contact
- How to teach and how to use technology are the areas that academics wanted professional development to focus on
Intrinsic motivation is the driver for academics to undertake professional development, rather than gaining recognition by the institution, time release or money. Satisfying professional work ethic, personal interest in teaching in NGLSs, interest in PD, staying up to date with current teaching practice, responding to positive feedback from students and personal belief about PD encourage staff to undertake PD. How to teach well, use technology, engage and manage students, use the space effectively are the most challenging areas mentioned by staff. Staff are more willing than they are confident to teach in NGLSs.

These ‘take home messages’ have informed the Not a Waste of Space project and are essential to developing the Not a Waste of Space professional development approach and activities in order to enrich learning and teaching in New Generation Learning Spaces (NGLSs) and to enhance the student learning experience.

About us:
The Not a waste of space project is funded by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. It is led by RMIT University and partnered by The University of Melbourne.

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