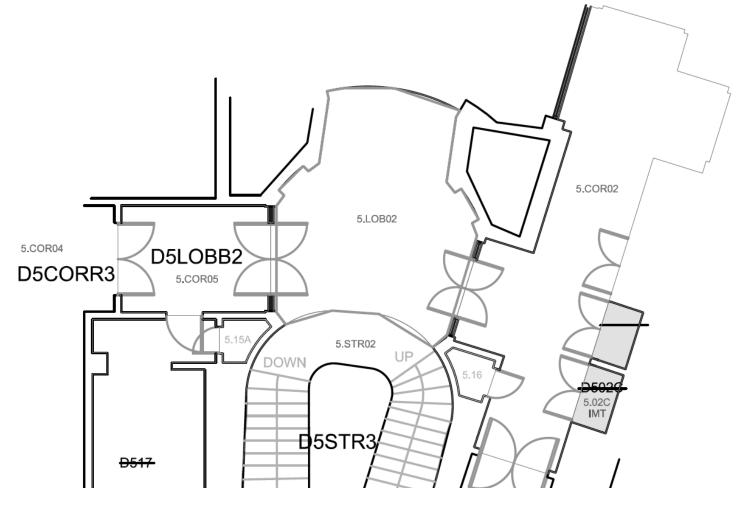
Clement House rotunda project

An Evaluation of Clement House Informal Learning Spaces



Learning Technology and Innovation





Clement House Floor Plan

executive summary	4	
introduction	7	
literature review	10	
methodology	12	
Context	13	
Data Collection and Analysis – Tools and Techniques	13	
Communication Strategy	15	
design of learning spaces	16	
findings	18	
Overall Findings	19	
Observations	20	
Comment Cards and Interviews	21	
Social Media	23	
Workshop	24	
discussion	25	
Observations	26	
Qualitative Feedback	27	
Evaluating Methods of Engagement	29	
Limitations of Study	29	
conclusions	30	
bibliography	32	
appendix	35	



executive summary

The Clement House rotunda project: an evaluation of six informal learning spaces at LSE

Overview

Last academic year several "forgotten" interstitial spaces in Clement House were identified and repurposed into informal learning spaces. The intention behind this project was to address the issue of a lack of such spaces around campus for students and to experiment with form and function in this type of space. LSE's Learning Technology and Innovation team, Estates and IMT worked together to develop six new spaces; one on each landing of Clement House's back stairwell. Each floor represents a world city (International Relations being the home department in the building) and is aimed at enabling a different type of learning activity. However, all six spaces have also been designed with common intentions, detailed below. This report is an evaluation of the effective use of these spaces by LSE students, whether they reflect the original intentions and most importantly whether they address students' needs in terms of informal learning spaces. It also provided the opportunity to identify other potential such spaces around campus and understand the factors influencing students' choice.

Method

The two overarching objectives of this evaluation were:

- To find out whether the six experimental spaces were "fit for purpose", i.e. their use by students matched our design intentions; and more generally how they are used by students at the LSE
- To understand how these spaces fit into the overall informal learning experience of LSE students

The evaluation of the Clement House informal learning spaces drew on grounded theory based on data collected using an ethnographic and user experience approach. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected from observations, surveys, structured interviews and a focus group. The data collected was divided into categories around the use of space: activities, environments, interactions, objects and users.

Design Intentions

The Clement House informal learning spaces have been designed with the following objectives in mind:

- Offer more informal spaces around the LSE campus for students to use for independent study, collaborative work, to power their devices or to simply sit between classes. While such spaces exist in other parts of the campus or close by, students will often have to either pay for food or drink to stay or share with the public.
- 2) Fulfil a variety of functions. While each floor was furnished and configured differently in order to create an atmosphere that would enable a specific type of activity, they also allowed students to own and shape them. Together they would also represent an opportunity to bring the world and society into the building and define what the LSE signifies as a learning space.
- Enhance such spaces and experiment with new configurations and technology to pilot a variety of 'modular' spaces for the new Centre Buildings and the Paul Marshall Building.

Findings, Analysis and Conclusions

Use by students matches the design intentions in some respects but does not in others. Although students were positive about the new technology in the spaces, observed use was relatively low; while use of students' own technology was high, along with an appreciation for adequate provision of power and charging facilities. Students feel that the spaces provide a relaxed, comfortable well-designed environment allowing them to pursue a range of activities, although some students felt that noise from other floors could be a problem when the spaces are busy. Students use multiple devices and resources during a single visit and nearly half of those observed consumed food or drink while in the spaces. Generally, occupancy is fairly high with at least one floor being occupied during 93% of observations and during 63% of observations at least one person was on each floor. Nearly all respondents to the survey and interviews were students who have lectures or classes in the building, but 33% of respondents were using the spaces for study even though they were not waiting or between classes. While a large proportion (57%) use the space for 30 minutes or more. The majority of students use the spaces for individual rather than group study while appreciating the potential of the spaces for group work. Interestingly, the spaces designed with individual work in mind were observed being used for conversation while some of the group spaces were not so much. The Clement House spaces are one of many locations used for informal learning and study by LSE students, with a total of 40 both on and off-campus being documented. A range of factors influence student choice of location ranging from being able to consume food & drink while studying, environmental factors and the availability of technology.

In Summary

While a much forgotten stairwell has been transformed into a set of experimental learning spaces that are flexible enough to allow for individual and group use; current use is a reflection of the individually focused work and assessment that LSE students are presently expected to engage in. There is likely to be a period of adjustment until the spaces become increasingly used for group work and assessment as these become more common features of the LSE curriculum.

This flexibility compared to other learning spaces at LSE is reflected in the generally positive response from students, with a number of comments asking that these spaces be replicated around campus. This positive response is partially a reflection of the importance of environmental factors such as comfort, light and noise which were significant considerations during the design phase of the project.

One slightly contradictory finding was that students suggested seating capacity could be further optimised. This though would possibly have an adverse effect on the environmental factors previously mentioned. This desire is most likely a reflection of the extreme pressure on space on a city centre campus such as LSE as there will always be a demand for more study spaces. However, the space is proving to be popular as an alternative to the library providing a less busy or hectic environment due to the smaller dimensions of each individual area. Some students were apprehensive about using new technologies in the spaces, perhaps due to their novelty and also perhaps due to a relatively small requirement for group focused technologies at the present time. As previously mentioned these technologies are very much looking to future demand and larger provision of such spaces as part of the major campus redevelopment project currently underway.

The report makes a number of recommendations including improved communication of the purpose and function of new and innovative learning spaces. This could partially be achieved by providing greater visibility of information and instructions, both on-site and online. To address noise from adjacent areas it is suggested that further measures be employed to mitigate against this. For example, building sufficient distance between group work areas and individual study areas; and including sound baffles and acoustic dampening tiles where possible. Unfortunately, these solutions were not possible in Clement House due to the listed status of the building and budget constraints. Finally, it was suggested that the School should provide improved communication and guidance on informal learning spaces around campus.



introduction

Introduction

As part of an ongoing programme to improve teaching and learning, LTI, the LSE Estates division, the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) and the AV team have engaged on a project to transform some disused spaces over 6 floors in Clement House. This redevelopment provided a unique opportunity to experiment with making several configurations to some smaller, more challenging spaces.

The six floors that comprise the Clement House rotunda are examples of informal learning spaces – namely, those spaces that exist outside of the traditional classroom environment and are used by students for their own selfdirected study. Each floor was developed against a set of design intentions, with the purpose of facilitating different types of learning through the provision of different layouts and different pieces of technology (see Additional Document i). These learning spaces are largely experimental in nature; previously disused areas have seen the introduction of new pieces of technology and furniture design. By piloting these new designs, it is hoped that findings can be used to influence the development of future learning spaces.

Students have made it clear that they do not have enough space around the campus for independent study, for collaborative work, to power their devices or to simply sit between classes. (LSE: Learning Technology & Innovation, 2016) Our aim was to design spaces in Clement House that are flexible and fulfil a variety of functions; from encouraging social interactions and engagement, to offering personal spaces with no distractions. To facilitate these activities, consideration was given to the most appropriate resources that could be installed into these areas. We want these spaces to represent what it means to study at the LSE, and to bring society and London into the School environment. It is hoped that these spaces will inspire students to approach their learning with curiosity and creativity, as well as provide students with the space to develop the trans-disciplinary skills of collaboration and communication.

uction

Overall Findings

- The refurbished spaces at Clement House are welcomed by students and staff.
- Based on qualitative feedback, students like: the convenience to lectures and seminars; times when there are fewer people and lower noise levels; access to plug sockets; the innovative and modern design; the informal, comfortable and cosy ambience; the variety of furniture; the raised café-style bar of floor 3.
- Based on qualitative feedback, students disliked: the noise levels between floors; the lack of tables and chairs and/or those which are too small or low down for laptop use; times when the lights would flicker intermittently.
- Constructive feedback included: having water fountains in the spaces; more tables and chairs; a booking system for groups wishing to use the SMART Kapp board (floor 2) or monitor (floor 6); signs to say whether spaces are intended for silent study or group study.
- Use of technology provided by LSE the SMART Kapp board, large screen/monitor, whiteboards and Mac computer – was only noted in 6-16% of observations.
- Personal devices were frequently observed, with at least one student using a laptop in 75% of observations. Food and drink was visible on many observations.

- There were few instances of large group discussions and in the majority of cases, quiet individual study was observed.
- The rotunda spaces are part of a wider network of locations in the LSE student journey. Such locations go beyond the traditional notion of a student spending most of their time studying in the university library, and include: libraries of other institutions, cafés, academic common rooms, the Student Union – even museums!
- The spaces are frequently used by individuals, and sometimes by small groups.
- Students were usually seated, using personal devices and textbooks rather than standing to use the whiteboards and other pieces of technology.

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Set against the original design intentions, observed use of the learning spaces suggests that students are primarily using these spaces for individual study. In line with the university's commitment to assessment diversification, it is predicted that, over time, actual use of these spaces will begin to match the original design intentions; such as collaborative and interactive group work, whereby students can benefit from the provision of technology on each of the different floors.
Engaging with staff and students alike is an essential component of this journey.



literature review

Literature Review

This project has seen the redevelopment of six small, disused areas on campus that are not intended for teaching purposes. Being outside the context of a library or classroom setting, the nature of the Clement House rotunda project is quite unusual in its evaluation. Finding literature on similar projects is naturally more challenging, but some general principles can be applied to the work undertaken at Clement House.

It has been widely agreed that social relations and practices are shaped by the natural and built environments in which we live. (Lefebvre, 1991, Massey, 1994) Within the context of higher education, learning spaces – formal and informal - have the potential to produce conditions and mediate relationships for positive student outcomes. (Blackmore, 2011, Brooks, 2011)

Issues of temporality can make it difficult to fully define what makes a good learning space, and what it is that students want, largely because students "don't know what they don't know". (Liote and Axe, 2016) How students respond to learning spaces over time is a fundamental concept of temporality, (Bruckner, 1997) but this does not mean that educational institutions cannot start conversations with students on what they think a future learning space should aim to achieve. Rather than assuming to know what students want, capturing the user experience is an essential element that should be incorporated throughout the design process. (Gibbons, 2007)

For example, one study found that important aspects of a learning space go beyond access to Wi-Fi and charging docks to include: good lighting, large desks, coffee facilities and an atmosphere conductive to study (including a comfortable room temperature). (Priestner)

Furthermore, results from an experimental project on learning spaces at the University of Leeds have suggested that flexible learning spaces provide greatest impact when co-produced with members of the university community. A focus on pedagogy is another crucial factor when ensuring these spaces provide the greatest utility. (Wood et al., 2012) The evaluation tools used in studies that look at the impact of educational facilities on teaching and learning tend to follow a quantitative and/or qualitative approach. (Fisher, 2005)

Quantitative research is largely deductive in its approach, whereby theory directs data collection. A greater emphasis is placed upon quantifiable data that is collected and processed in a systematic way. In this sense, research is less flexible and follows a positivist orientation to understanding the social world. When looking at learners' behaviours and attitudes to informal learning spaces, it can be a helpful way of establishing the answers to "who, what, where and when". (Turpin, 2016) The use of 'five-bar gate' tallies might be used in questionnaires, whereby respondents provide a response to a given question on a scale between 1 to 5 rather than providing a more detailed answer. (Silverman, 2013)

Qualitative research strategies provide the added value of understanding *how* and *why* students hold certain beliefs about their learning environment. (Blackmore, 2011) Qualitative research is important for understanding how "learning spaces affect the students' perception of their learning experience". (Brooks, 2011) Previous projects have therefore used focus groups, workshops and cognitive mapping exercises as methods of elucidating why learners exhibit and hold certain attitudes and behaviours within informal learning spaces. (Turpin, 2016, Foster and Gibbons, 2007, Lanclos, 2013)

Photographic mapping is another method which showed promising results for the University of Rochester's evaluation of libraries and is defined as: "a visual type of sociology aiming to enable participants 'to move from the concrete (represented by the literal objects in the image) to the socially abstract (what the objects in the photo mean to the individual being interviewed)'". (Harper, 1984, Briden, 2007) Students within this study were found to be active participants due to the engaging nature of the activity.



methodology

Context

At the forefront of this evaluation were two overarching questions:

- 1) How are students using the new Clement House spaces, what do they think about these informal learning spaces, and why do they hold these beliefs?
- 2) How does Clement House fit into the overall individual student learning experience at LSE?

Assumptions based on past practice about what students want from their learning experience can become engrained into the design of new services. (Westbury, 2016) Such preconceptions may, in fact, be far removed from the reality of student expectations and the diversity of the student experience. As such, ethnographic methods and a User Experience (or 'UX') mind-set was used to disentangle the different experiences and views of individuals using the spaces at Clement House. Harnessing technology was also a fundamental part of the project's success – from creating posters using Canva, to publicising the online survey via Twitter and recruiting students for the workshop via email.

Data Collection and Analysis – Tools and Techniques

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was adopted for data collection. The use of triangulation – using different methods to collect data on the same topic – aimed to increase confidence in the findings; namely, if the nature of feedback is consistent across methods, it reduces the likelihood that results were impacted by the chosen method of data collection. (Silverman, 2013)

Principles of ethnography were incorporated throughout the evaluation. By definition, ethnography is the use of multiple methods of data gathering, so observations and audio-visual material provided useful tools for data collection. (Eberle, 2011)

Data analysis was approached using grounded theory. Such a theory enabled the research to be directed by the collection and analysis of data rather than starting the research with a particular hypothesis in mind. (Glaser, 1968) As such, theories about student use of Clement House were formed as data was collected. These theories also influenced the direction of later research methods, such as the content of the evaluation workshop. The research process can therefore be described as an iterative process that evolved throughout the evaluation period. Once collected, Microsoft Excel was used to analyse data. To process the qualitative information, data was divided into themes based on a "codes, categories and concepts" approach. (Jessop, 2012) The AEIOU Framework – or "categorising heuristic" - was used to interpret the observational work and categorise qualitative data. Coding was based on the following elements: (Chang, Ethnohub.)

- Activities includes actions with specific goals in mind, and the processes performed to achieve them
- Environments details the context and characteristics of the space where activities are being observed
- Interactions includes both interpersonal and person-artefact interactions.
- **Objects** catalogues the items within the environment and how they are used.
- **Users** includes the people within the environment that are being observed: their values, behaviours, needs, relationships.

Data was collected using the research methods listed below:

Non-participant observation

To gain an understanding of how the spaces were being used, observations of each floor took place at regular intervals throughout the working week. The time of observations aimed to coincide with different aspects of the academic day: moments prior to, or after lectures; lunchtime; the start and end of the day. Conducting these observations were four members of staff and four former students who had previously undertaken work with LTI. Each observation took approximately 20 minutes and was recorded on a Google Form based on a pre-defined set of questions. Observers were 'in the field' but remained detached from any form of participation with individuals in their surroundings. (Ramsden, 2016)

Online and paper survey

There is often a risk of low student uptake of online and paper surveys. As such, much thought was put into how best to encourage student participation. By making available a short survey via an online Google Form, as well as a paper version, students could choose to partake using a means they would find most convenient. Microsoft Word was used to design a double-sided comment card which was then printed onto card using A5 dimensions (see Appendix 10.1).

Structured interviews

Subsequent to making notes during the observations, observers were asked to interview students using the rotunda spaces. A pre-defined list of questions was made available to all interviewers, although additional comments could be made at the end of the form. Such interviews were not compulsory but at the discretion of observers who deemed it appropriate to interrupt a student to ask some questions about the learning spaces. To avoid influencing the answers of students, it was important to build a rapport with the interviewee and be receptive to their answers without steering them in a particular direction. (Ramsden, 2016)



Group workshop

An interactive one-hour group workshop of ten students was conducted to ascertain student opinion of Clement House. The workshop also aimed to understand where Clement House fits into the overall student journey at LSE. Students were recruited via email, Twitter or departmental newsletter. Alongside a 10-minute group discussion at the end of the session were two activities: cognitive mapping and photographic mapping. These activities were modified from previous projects (Lanclos, 2013) and adapted to suit the nature of this project. By using creative ways of attaining feedback, the group workshop would provide more visual – and a unique type of - insight than a focus group. The agenda for the workshop can be found in Additional Document ii.

a. Cognitive mapping

Adapted from the work undertaken in the ERIAL project (Asher and Miller, 2011) and developed by Donna Lanclos at UNC Charlotte, cognitive mapping is an explanatory exercise used to understand how the spaces at Clement House fit into the overall learning journey at LSE. (Lanclos, 2013) Each student was provided a blank sheet of A3 paper and four different coloured pens. The first part of the activity required students to list all the places in which they go to study from the library, to a local café, to halls of residence. This part of the exercise took 6 minutes in total. Every 2 minutes, students were asked to switch the colour of their pens in this order: blue, red, black. After 6 minutes, students were asked to annotate their maps using a green pen, to say why they choose these spaces and what they do in these spaces - individual reading; group work? By using different coloured pens, it was possible to see which locations came to the forefront of students' minds when asked to think about places they go to study. Students were then asked to discuss their maps with the group.

- b. Photographic mapping
- i. Building on the work at the University of Rochester, (Briden, 2007) the activity in photographic mapping asked students to take photographs of their preferred spaces at Clement House based on a list of questions:
- ii. Something you would like to see replicated on other parts of campus.
- iii. Something you think could be improved.
- iv. Your favourite piece of technology.
- v. Your favourite piece of furniture.

Students worked in pairs and were asked to write down reasons for their photos. Following the exercise in photographic mapping, students were asked about the design intentions of each floor. This was a useful opportunity to compare student opinion with original design intentions.

Communication Strategy

Integral to the success of the data collection methods was effective engagement with students. For this to occur, it was important to convey to students the importance of this work and the benefits of getting involved.

Student involvement aimed to be engaging, innovative and interactive. Given the many commitments a student has to balance in their university life, it was essential to publicise this project in a way that most effectively secured student engagement. As such, a diverse set of strategies were utilised and found a wide degree of success. These tools can be seen below:

Making use of online tools

a. Canva

Two eye-catching posters were designed (see Appendix 10.2 and 10.3) and disseminated across campus:

- The new rotunda areas at Clement House, as well as by the lifts due to the student footfall throughout the day.
- Across the floors of Saw Swee Hock and around the Student Union.
- On the interactive noticeboards within the International Relations department, as well as the interactive screens across campus.

b. QR Reader

To encourage a larger number of students to complete the online survey, a QR code was attached to paper copies of the posters. The Google Form URL was also present on the poster for students who wanted to input the web link manually.

c. Eventbrite

Eventbrite was used to advertise the group workshop, allowing students to secure their place through an integrated web link. This approach had the benefit of being able to send reminder emails to all participants in a timesaving manner. It also formalised the event, thus making it more likely that students would attend.

d. Flickr

A Flickr account was created that could act as a repository for photographs taken by staff and students during the project.

Harnessing social media

Social media has become an integral part of a student's personal, academic and professional life. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram were used to publicise the new learning spaces and receive feedback. To collect visual data, a social media campaign was launched. Students were instructed to take a photo of their favourite Clement House learning space, upload it onto social media using a designated hashtag (#LSECLM) and provide a short written explanation behind their choice of photo. This novel approach to data collection - a visual method of elucidating feedback - also provided a sense of integration with the student community through a less formal route such as email or on-campus conversation. Fostering a greater sense of community across LSE was a theme drawn out of the NSS Survey, as well as an action point within the 2020 Education Strategy.

Cross-departmental partnerships

To maximise reach in raising awareness of the evaluation at Clement House, it was necessary to liaise with communications teams across departments, and in the wider LSE community. The International Relations department – based in Clement House - provided great assistance in publicising the work: posters were displayed on the plasma TV screens; paper copies of posters were displayed in the student common room; web links to the surveys and social media competition were attached to departmental newsletters for staff and students; Tweets and Facebook posts were uploaded and shared.

Furthermore, the Student Union was approached for support due to the project's emphasis on student engagement. The survey was advertised on the Union's newsletter, and approximately 20 posters were distributed across Saw Swee Hock.

Incentivising participation

To incentivise students to give up their time to provide feedback, Amazon vouchers were provided for all participants of the evaluation workshop. A draw for one of two $\pounds10$ Amazon vouchers was carried out for submitted surveys, and a second draw of two $\pounds50$ Amazon vouchers was carried out for students who participated in the social media competition.



design of learning spaces



Design of Learning Spaces

Each floor has been assigned a particular city as well as a theme around which the interiors have been built.

Considerations were also made around the intended purpose that each space aimed to facilitate.

Each of the floors can be described to encourage the following types of learning activities:

Floor 2 (Rio)	Creativity, with a whiteboard and SMART Kapp board
Floor 3 (New York)	Community, with a café-style break space
Floor 4 (Sydney)	Conversation , with an informal meeting layout
Floor 5 (London)	Collaboration , with use of a whiteboard
Floor 6 (Tokyo)	Connectivity, with technology to facilitate sharing





findings

Overall Findings

Table 6.1 Responses per method of data collection

Method of data collection	Details	Number of responses	Time of data collection	
Non-participant observation	4 students and 4 members of LTI staff observed how learning spaces were used on each floor of the rotunda, making notes based on standardised form.	67	Weeks 5-8	
Structured interviews	1 minute interviews with students during the observations.	54	Weeks 4-8	
Structured interviews	3 minute interviews with students during the observations.	20	Weeks 5-8	
Online survey	An online survey to capture student views on Clement House.	45	Weeks 4-9	
Paper survey	An A5 feedback form located on each floor of Clement House.	55	Weeks 5-10	
Social media competition	A method of visual data collection	12	Weeks 6-9	
Group workshop a. Cognitive mapping b. Photographic mapping	A one-hour workshop with two activities that aimed to capture student opinion on the rotunda spaces as well as gaining an understanding of how this fits into an LSE student's typical week.	10 participants	Week 9	
Total data		263		

There were 174 combined responses as collected by paper survey, online survey and structured 1- or 3-minute interviews. 67 observations of the learning spaces were undertaken, one group workshop was delivered, and 12 students entered the social media competition. Table 6.1 presents the number of responses per method of data collection.

Full details of results found in Appendix 10.4 and Additional Documents iii, iv, v, vi and vii.

Key findings are as follows:

- Students commented most positively on: the feeling of comfort, good lighting and modern interior design, access to plug sockets, times when the space is quiet, the range of technology (including the whiteboards and Mac), the convenience and location when classes are taking place in Clement House.
- Aspects that students disliked: the noise levels between floors, the lack of chairs/desk space and the usability of certain pieces of furniture.
- Whilst students have reacted positively to the technological devices, uptake was low based on observations.
- As anticipated, many students bring their own devices – especially laptops - into the rotunda area.

Observations

Over the course of 4 weeks, 67 observations were carried out at regular intervals during the working day (primarily 9am-5pm). Observations were made for each of the six floors and comments made by one of the 8 observers involved in this part of the project. Findings are presented in a spreadsheet (Additional Document iii) and photographs taken during the observations can be found on Flickr. (Wilson, 2017)

Key findings from the observations are explained using the taxonomies presented in the heuristic AEIOU (see Methodology). (Ethnohub.)

Activities

The use of technology supplied by LSE, such as the SMART Kapp board (floor 2), Mac (floor 3) and Monitor (floor 6) was low. The Kapp board was not used during 94% of observations and the Mac or Monitor was not being used in 85% of observations. Active or evidenced use of the whiteboards on floors 2, 3 and 5 was observed on 16% of observations. The use of personal devices was frequently noted, particularly laptops and mobile phones. Other observed activities included: conversations over Skype, playing music out loud and charging electronic devices. Full details can be found in Appendix 10.5.

Environments

The atmosphere within the learning spaces felt relaxed, whereby students were comfortable to pursue a range of activities: reading, talking, eating, listening to their devices, writing. Prior to 10am, and during week 6 (reading week), noise levels were lower and the spaces were less likely to be in use. During observations where students were interacting with one another, the sound could be heard on floors

above or below.

Table 6.2 Conservations observed

Conversations taking place?			
Floor	Yes	No	
2	16%	84%	
3	10%	90%	
4	12%	88%	
5	13%	87%	
6	12%	82%	
7	21%	79%	



Interactions

There was a high level of multiobject interactions. Laptops were being used on 75% of observations and on only a minority of occasions were students observed reading a textbook and/or writing notes on a notebook without the addition of technology. At least one of the following headphones, mobile phones and laptops - were seen in most observations.

Conversations were taking place during 15% of total observations: floor 7 saw the most conversations taking place at 21%; at 10%, floor 3 saw the fewest conversations taking place during each observation. Further details are listed in Table 6.2.

Objects

At least one laptop was noted on 75% of observations. On many occasions, several objects were in view - from mobile phones to tablets. On floor 7, there was only one occasion where an individual was reading a book and/or newspaper without an electronic device on display.

Food and/or drink was on display in just under 50% of observations. On a couple of observations, extra chairs were found to have been placed in floors 6 and 7. The areas were generally tidy, although students were sometimes observed taking up two or three spaces by spreading their belongings across the workspace.

Unfortunately, one of the cushions on floor 7 went missing before reading week and whiteboard pens seem to disappear quite regularly.

Users

At least one out of six floors were occupied on 93% of observations, with an average number of 6 persons across all floors during a single observation. On only 7% of observations were no students using any of the 6 floors. On 63% of observations, at least one person was situated on each floor. A more detailed breakdown of average user occupancy levels per floor can be found in Table 6.3.

Floor 5 was occupied by at least one person on 70% of observations; floors 2, 4 and 7 on 60% of observations. When looking at how many occupants are in the room per observation, floor 5 saw the greatest number of individuals sat by themselves (45%) compared to floors 3 and 6 (27%).

Two persons occupied floor 2 on 12% of observations, compared to 31% on floor 3. Floor 5 was occupied by more than two individuals on only 2% of observations compared with 10% of observations for floors 2 and 3.

Table 6.3 Occupancy levels

Occupancy levels					
Floor	Vacant	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4+ Persons
2	40%	36%	12%	7%	3%
3	31%	27 %	31%	10%	0%
4	40%	37%	15%	4%	3%
5	30%	45%	22%	1 %	1%
6	39%	27 %	25%	6%	3%
7	40%	34%	19%	3%	3%

The observation which saw the most occupants (16 persons) occurred on Tuesday 15th November. Week 6 (reading week) had the lowest level of occupancy and Fridays did not see high levels of occupants. 9 out of the 10 busiest observations (range 11-16 occupants) took place between 10.45am and 1.30pm, and 6 of these 10 observations took place at half past the hour.

In the majority of cases, occupants were seated.

Comment Cards and Interviews

There were 45 responses to the online survey between weeks 4-9 and 55 responses to the paper survey between weeks 5-10 of Michaelmas Term. 74 interviews took place based on similar questions to the comment cards. Questions that called for openended comments were coded based on the AEIOU framework (see above). Findings can be found in Additional Document iv, v and are summarised in Appendix 10.6.

Details of respondents

77 out of 174 respondents were postgraduate students. 22 students were undergraduates in their first year, 29 in their second and 29 in their third year at LSE. 45% of comments concerned floors 2 or 3. Only 8% of comments were made about floor 5 and approximately two-thirds of comments were made between the hours of 11am and 4pm. There were 45 responses to the online survey between weeks 4-9 and 55 responses to the paper survey between weeks 5-10 of Michaelmas Term. 74 interviews took place based on similar questions to the comment cards. Questions that called for openended comments were coded based on the AEIOU framework (see above). Findings can be found in Additional Document iv, v and are summarised in Appendix 10.6.

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Figure 6.1 – Most commonly used adjectives to describe the Clement House rotunda area



Purpose of visit

Only two out of 50 respondents stated they do not have lectures or seminars in Clement House. When asked of the reason for their visit (in which multiple answers could be given): 40% were waiting for a class at Clement House, 33% for individual study, 15% to relax or rest and 9% for group study. It is possible that students chose to study at Clement House even when they did not have lectures or classes in the building.

Length of stay

Interviewed students were asked how long they would be using the rotunda areas: under 15 minutes (9%), 15-30 minutes (34%), 30-60 minutes (31%), over one hour (26%).

Describe this space in three adjectives

The survey and interviews posed the question: how would you describe this space in three adjectives? In order to better understand the findings, word frequency analyses were conducted using NVivo. The most commonly used top five adjectives were, on a whole, similar for each floor. Commonly used terms include "quiet", "comfortable", "convenient", "bright" and "relaxing". Figure 6.1 presents the most commonly used descriptors of the Clement House spaces as a word cloud.

Top 10 Adjec	tives
Descriptor	Count (%)
Quiet	106 (11)
Comfortable	89 (9)
Convenient	61 (6)
Bright	58 (6)
Calm	28 (3)
Cosy	28 (3)
Modern	26 (3)
Spacious	26 (3)
Nice	25 (3)
Clean	20 (2)



Students were generally very positive about the Clement House learning spaces. Most comments related to the overall environment, including the ambience, facilities and spatial design.

What students liked about the spaces

Positive features can be summarised as follows:

- A convenient location to rest or study prior to lectures or classes at Clement House.
- The times in which the study space is quiet (fewer people and a lack of loud noises).
- The bright lighting and feeling of comfort.
- The range of equipment available for students (namely the plug sockets and Mac computer).
- The calm and relaxed feel to the spaces; a nice place to rest during a busy day on campus.
- Students also commented on the benefit of having an alternative study space to the library.

What students disliked about the spaces

Negative comments can be summarised as follows:

- Noise levels. Students did not like that sound resonated across floors.
- Lack of chairs/space/tables or that the current furniture is not optimal for individual study. For example, students commented on the size and height of tables as not being suitable if wanting to use a laptop (such as floors 2 and 7).
 - Other comments included: issues with the usability of technology (such as the Kapp board on floor 2 and monitor on floor 6), the need for more plug sockets, the flickering lights, the temperature (some students felt it needed to be warmer).

Other comments

Respondents also included suggestions and general comments. The latter was largely comprised of positive messages that these spaces should be replicated around campus. Suggestions included: having additional water fountains within the rotunda spaces and clearer instructions on how to use the pieces of technology. A notice displaying the building's opening times was also requested. A more general comment was made about having better communication on the learning spaces available for students across LSE – for example, a map or webpage that lists the common rooms, silent zones or general study areas.

What students disliked about the spaces

Negative comments can be summarised as follows:

- Noise levels. Students did not like that sound resonated across floors.
- Lack of chairs/space/tables or that the current furniture is not optimal for individual study. For example, students commented on the size and height of tables as not being suitable if wanting to use a laptop (such as floors 2 and 7).

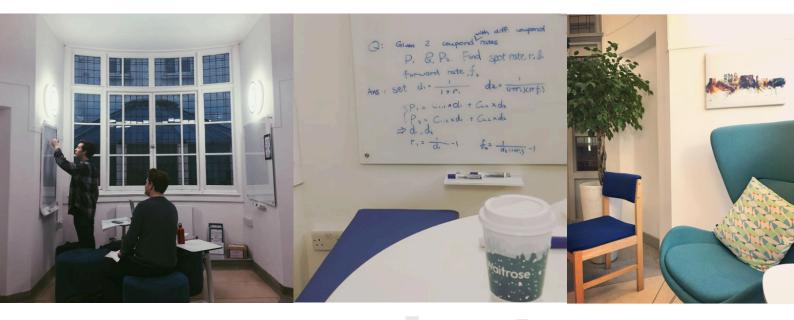
Other comments included: issues with the usability of technology (such as the Kapp board on floor 2 and monitor on floor 6), the need for more plug sockets, the flickering lights, the temperature (some students felt it needed to be warmer).

76 likes

1d 17 likes

1d 10 likes

When a study space allows you to let out your inner creativity and become a teacher in a course you've only been studying for 7 weeks. #lsecIm Just making some notes from the lecture. I like this white board so much! Feels like I'm teaching #lseclm I love the new study place on the 7th floor of #LSECLM! The design of the chair and the cushion provide great support for my aching back.



Social Media

Results from the social media data collection can be viewed using the hashtag #LSECLM. Images and captions from the social media campaign can also be found on Flickr using the following hyperlinks:

- <u>Twitter</u>
- Instagram

The images taken by students supplement the findings from the qualitative research.

instagram

#LSECLM



When LSE listens to its students, beautiful spaces are created. A visit to Cape Town #LSECLM without the animals! Such a wonderful collab space!

Love this space – just laid back enough for chats, but convenient enough (with plugs!) for study. Plus warm = bonus! #LSECLM Floor 5, a "hidden gem". Perfect for working on group presentations. Plenty of space, extremely quiet, and features a white board! #LSECLM

Workshop

The interactive workshop produced some very interesting results, using some creative methods of data collection that could be replicated in future projects. Some photographs from the workshop can be found <u>here</u>.

Cognitive Mapping (Additional Document vi) Students were asked to list their learning spaces, switching coloured pens every two minutes (blue, red, black) before annotating their responses (green).

Students listed a range of locations they considered part of their learning journey – a total of over 40 different areas both on- and off-campus.

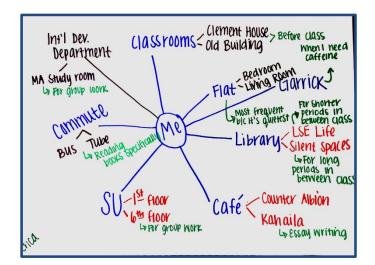
A small selection of locations on LSE's campus include:

- Student common rooms (both within a student's department and those situated in academic departments)
- NAB the computer room on the 8th floor, foyer, open spaces
- Clement House the new rotunda spaces, computer room and the 7th floor common room
- The library and LSE Life
- Shaw library
- 32LIF break-out spaces and café
- OLD building 4th floor
- Kingsway Mac lab
- Saw Swee Hock Faith centre, 6th floor, 1st floor, computers
- Sidney Webb House

Non-LSE locations include:

- Maughan Library (King's College London)
- Senate House Library
- Cafes
- Friends' houses
- Student's own flat
- Public libraries
- Transportation (bus, underground, train).

Figure 6.2 - Example of cognitive mapping exercise



Photographic Mapping (Additional Document vii)

The exercise in photographic mapping uncovered some interesting insights with some consensus in responses.

3 out of 5 pairs thought that the use of space could be improved; for example, by introducing more tables to match capacity, or by introducing furniture that optimises student numbers - such as a bench.

The large monitor on floor 6 was the favourite piece of technology for 3 out of 5 pairs. The other 2 pairs chose the Kapp board of floor 2 as their favourite piece of technology. Each pair gave a different answer to the question about something students would like to see replicated across campus, and 3 out of 5 pairs chose the chairs of floor 7 as their favourite piece of furniture.





discussion

The Clement House rotunda project has seen the transformation of six disused informal learning spaces. The experimental nature of the redesign aims to inform future projects, and it was expected from the outset that there may be a period of adjustment before students use the new learning spaces in accordance with the design intentions. This is most likely to occur in areas with design features aimed at facilitating interactive group learning. Until group projects and assessment become a more active part of the teaching and learning experience at LSE, current use of these spaces may resemble traditional modes of learning (such as quiet self-study and individual working).

Nonetheless, the Clement House evaluation has uncovered some interesting findings. Results from the observational work and engagement with the LSE community shall be discussed below.

Observations

Patterns of occupancy and matching design intentions

The rotunda area saw high levels of occupancy. On the five occasions that no occupants were observed, it was either prior to 9.30am and/or during week 6 (reading week). Occupancy levels tended to peak between 10.45am to 11.45am and 1.15pm to 2.15pm. Given that the majority of classes commence at the top of the hour, it is possible that these times are busiest because some students are using these spaces as a waiting area before class; or conversely, as a resting point after class.

Observed occupancy levels on each floor suggest that floor 5 is most popular for individual study and least popular for hosting more than two individuals. This could be due to the layout, whereby students did not feel comfortable sitting at the table or bench with another student. Observed use of floor 5 suggests that its layout may not be best suited for the intended use as a collaborative space. A similar finding was found in floor 4; although its design provides capacity for 6-8 people, it was more commonly used by individuals or pairs of students, where conversation wasn't always observed. It is possible that, given the preference by many students of having sufficient table space for individual study, students chose to work on floors other than floor 4. In contrast, floor 7 - intended to be a quiet, contemplative space - observed the most conversations taking place. Students liked the informal, homely feel of this floor, using it both for personal study and group discussions.

On floor 3, three out of three tables were often in use. Maximum occupancy levels of seats on other floors (such as floors 4, 5 and 6) was not always matched. This suggests that students may be more comfortable sitting with a fellow (unknown) student for individual study if they are not facing each other and are instead provided with some personal space.

On the whole, students were using the finished spaces for individual study. Given that some of the design intentions sought to facilitate interactive group discussion, actual usage did not always match the original purpose of the space. However, this perhaps reflects the type of work and assessment types expected of students. Whilst the spaces are designed to cater for an expected increase in groupwork being set by teachers, we are not expecting immediate change. It would be interesting to reassess how spaces are being used in the next academic year.





Student feedback on use of technology

Feedback from the comment cards, workshop and short interviews show that the introduction of different forms of learning technology are favourable to students. What the observations show, however, is that despite the positive comments, students are yet to fully take advantage of the equipment. On floors 2, 3 and 5, the whiteboards had been used in 15% of observations and the Smart KAPP board on floor 2 just 6% of observations. 16% of observations saw usage of the Mac computer (floor 3) and/or Monitor (floor 6); of this figure, 81% was usage of the Mac computer. This suggests that whilst students are keen to expand their learning journey through the use of technology, there may be some uncertainty or apprehension about getting started particularly with less commonly known pieces of technology. Possible solutions moving forward could include a promotion of the technology available in the new spaces by individual departments or lecturers who conduct classes in Clement House. This would supplement the laminated A4 information sheets currently in the learning spaces.

BYOD - Bring Your Own Devices

The non-participant observations uncovered two notable findings: firstly, students are using the spaces to use their own laptops; secondly, that there is a greater usage of personal devices than use of the equipment provided by LSE (see above). In 75% of observations where one or more students were present in the room, laptops were being used. In the majority of these cases, students were using their phones or relaxing with friends; only a minority of observations saw students using notebooks and/or reading without a device to support their learning. Over time, it is possible that use of the Mac computer may increase once students are aware of its existence. The same may occur for the other pieces of technology.

Qualitative Feedback

How Clement House fits into the overall student learning experience

The 3-minute interviews and cognitive mapping exercise for the group workshop improved our understanding of the places a student goes to study.

During the cognitive mapping exercise, answers marked in blue were written in the first 2 minutes, followed by red and black pens in the final two minutes. Students explained *what* and *why* they go to these locations by using a green pen. Given that over 40 different locations were listed, it is clear that places traditionally associated with student learning has vastly expanded. Students cite the LSE library as a good location for longer period of study, with a preference for silent study areas and those near the water fountains and/or restrooms. Popular locations for group study include 32LIF (the Bean Counter café and break-out spaces), academic common rooms, floors 1 and 6 of Saw Swee Hock. The LSE library was not listed by students as a location to visit for group study.

For individual study on campus, students explained that choice of location was influenced by the following factors:

- Food is permitted.
- It is quiet, without too many people using the space.
- There is a peaceful and relaxed ambience.
- It is a convenient location in between classes.
- Availability of computers.
- Use of iMacs.
 - There is good lighting and the windows are big (New Academic Building).
- The room temperature is warm (Shaw library).
- Accessibility to restrooms and drinking fountains.

The cognitive maps also highlighted that learning often takes place on the move. Some students study whilst commuting, and most visit cafés, either on- or off-campus. During the subsequent discussions with students, many would use their laptops at these different locations. When computers were required, students cited NAB, Clement House and Towers 1 and 2 as good locations due to a greater likelihood of availability and a quieter atmosphere.

Learning spaces and student preferences

Students value a multi-purpose, comfortable working environment that is conducive to study. Comfort is a key theme; from tables that provide enough space to work, to good quality lighting. Students also value connectivity, and the opportunity to charge their own devices. Student comments provided an overall impression that a less formal, less hectic alternative to the library is one of the key attractions of Clement House. This may explain why a large proportion of negative comments concerned the noise levels at certain peak times of the working day.

Interestingly, when provided an opportunity to comment on the likes and dislikes of the learning spaces, the majority of comments referred to the ambience and built environment (such as the use of space, noise levels or furniture choices) rather than the technology situated on each floor. This highlights the value students place on carefully considered ergonomics. It also suggests that an absence of opinion on the technology used in each learning space might stem from not understanding its purpose of being in the rotunda spaces.

Matching design intentions to student usage

The qualitative data provides a general understanding of how students perceive the spaces at Clement House. Firstly, the online and paper surveys asked students to describe the new learning spaces in 3 adjectives. The word frequency analysis (Figure 6.1) uncovered some key preferences such as being a quiet and calm environment that is also comfortable and cosy. This may suggest that students appreciate an informal environment but one which doesn't get too chaotic or loud. This, however, can be a difficult balance, given that 4 of the 6 new learning spaces are intended to encourage group conversation.

During the 3-minute interviews and the group workshop, direct reference was made to whether students feel the original design intentions matched their personal opinion.

During the interviews, 20 students were asked about the design intentions. Over two-thirds felt each floor could have multiple purposes: group study and/or individual study. Some students mentioned that whilst floors 2 and 6 provide a good space to undertake group study, they would feel uncomfortable to ask students currently using the space if they could move. Some students suggested a booking system for the Kapp board (floor 2) and monitor (floor 6).



Décor and interior design

Students responded well to the décor and interior designed within the new learning spaces. The chairs on floor 7 were the most complimented pieces of furniture as they gave the space a 'homely' feel. The use of bright lighting as well as a window-view was also favoured by students.

Evaluating methods of engagement

Evaluating methods of engagement

Student participation was quite high for a short-term project, particularly the online and paper surveys. Handmade boxes used to collect paper surveys proved to be a success; given that 55% of surveys were not completed online, it is important that future projects do not simply rely upon using online surveys sent via email – these are far more likely to be deleted!

Uptake for the social media campaign was lower than expected. This may partly be due to the difficulty in raising awareness with students. It was not possible to leave posters on the walls of Clement House, something which, for future projects, would be a helpful conversation to have with parties involved in managing the building's upkeep. Despite advertising the campaign over Twitter and email, it was quite a challenge to reach students without some form of active engagement in the learning spaces themselves.

Limitations of study

Whilst this evaluation has provided several pieces of rich information, there are some limitations that shall briefly be addressed.

Firstly, trying to unravel how the original design intentions matched student perception was a challenging exercise. This is largely due to the fact students have not previously come across learning spaces such as this, thus making it difficult to ascertain their opinion.

Secondly, it is important to remember that only a subsection of the LSE community was consulted during this evaluation. Respondents were largely postgraduate students. Whilst conclusions have been made based on the data collected, it should be noted that these may not reflect the views of all students. There is also the possibility that students who liked these spaces were more inclined to provide input into the evaluation.

More generally, the student preferences of an ideal learning space will also depend on individual background; namely, standard practice in previous institutions.





conclusions

The evaluation of the Clement House learning spaces has provided interesting insight into how these spaces are being used, and how this fits into the overall student journey at LSE.

Students greatly welcomed the introduction of the refurbished Clement House learning spaces and were keen to see them replicated across campus. An overriding theme was the importance of having learning spaces that are both comfortable, relaxed, and conducive to study. Alternatives to the library are seen as popular choices for students in search of quieter areas to undertake their work.

Despite certain floors being intended to facilitate group work, students were keen that these spaces could be better tailored to individual study – such as more chairs and desks at appropriate heights. Due to the reported lack of study space on campus, students wanted future projects to make greater use of space by designing spaces that optimised seated capacity. However, an increase in capacity may increase traffic, and therefore noise levels. As such, it is important to balance competing preferences and make intended use very clear to students.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that these six learning spaces facilitate a different style of learning. There are pieces of technology that students will not have previously come across. Increasing assessment diversification at LSE suggests that student acceptance of these innovative learning spaces is likely to increase in time. For this to occur, it is important for students to be made aware of how these spaces can be used. As part of this, it is important to engage with those tutors and academics who are diversifying the way their courses are assessed.

It was evident that students were apprehensive about using the new forms of technology located across the floors at Clement House. Despite reporting an interest in using the whiteboards and/or interactive screens, students may lack confidence in testing these pieces of technology without an initial introduction. To increase uptake, it is important to consider opening conversations with students about the resources available. Ultimately, students can be said to value functional yet informal learning spaces. In response to the first objective - *how and why students are using Clement House* - students value the convenience of studying in a quieter, less hectic part of campus that is a good alternative to the library. Whilst the original design intentions are not fully matched by student use, this may change as time progresses, and students become aware of – and understand the purpose of – the resources that are available on each floor.

Recommendations for current or future projects

- For spaces that encourage interactive group debate, publicise the purpose of these spaces more widely, so that students understand how and why the facilities are arranged in a manner that is different to a traditional layout in an informal learning space.
- Consider a system of reserving/booking areas where technology is aimed for use in group work (such as floors 2 or 6).
- To encourage usage of the newer pieces of technology, provide greater visibility of information and instructions; by uploading a video on the LSE website, or making lecturers aware that these spaces are available for group work.
- To address student concerns about noise levels, consider placing notices on the wall that make expected use more explicit, such as: "this space is intended for group use" or "quiet study please".
- In spaces where sound travels between floors, consider placing areas for dynamic group study further away from spaces for quiet study.
- Consider how best to communicate the existence of informal learning spaces – perhaps adding a symbol to campus maps, both online and offline.
- Continue to provide facilities that enable students to bring their own devices, such as power sockets and access to Wi-Fi.
- Consider using the methodological approach from this evaluation in future projects on learning spaces at LSE.





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appendix

10.1 Survey (paper format)

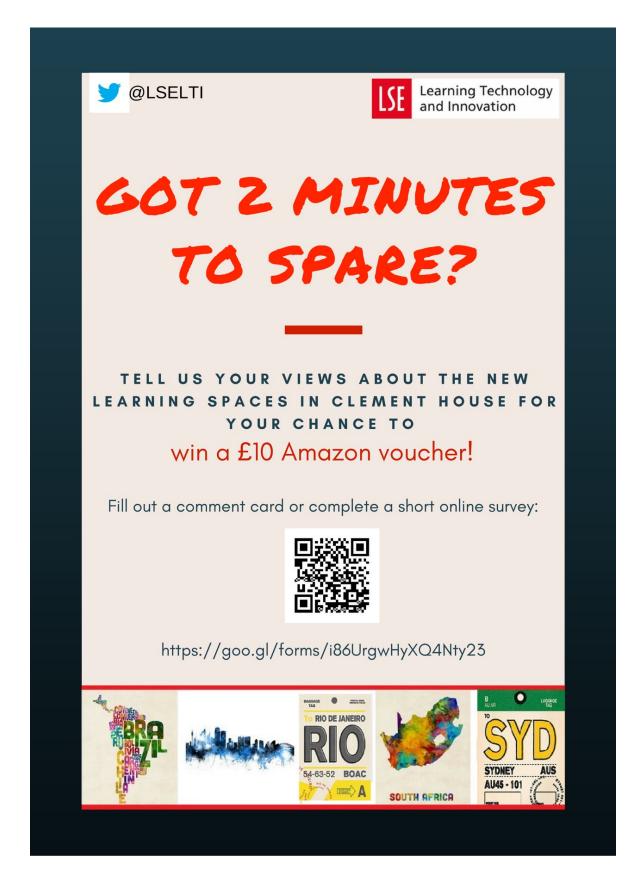
			Learning Technology and Innovation
keen to get your	feedback on how you us		e of which you are likely to be currently located! We are I future design projects around LSE. For a chance to Is!
Name (optional) Department and Date:		Email address: UG/PG/PhD/Staff: Time:	Year of Study:
Do you have lect	tures and/or seminars in <u>e</u>	Clement House? Yes/No	_
Location:	Floor 2 (Rio)	Floor 3 (New York)	Floor 4 (London) Floor 7 (Cape Town)
Reason for Visit:	Waiting for Se Group Study	minar/Lecture	Individual Study Relax/Rest
			(please turn over)

What three adjectives would you use to describe this space?	Learning Technology and Innovation
What do you like about the space?	
What do you dislike about the space?	
Thank you for your feed	dback!

10.2 Survey (online format)

		No.
1999 M. C.	Tell us your views on Clement House	100
9.97	for the chance to win one of two £10	
	Amazon Vouchers!	
	Dear students, staff and everyone at LSE!	
	I hope the start of term is going well for you all. Those who were at LSE last year might have noticed that there has been some refurbishment work at Clement House. We are keen to get your feedback on what you think of these new spaces so we can inform future design projects around LSE.	
	The new spaces can be found on floors 2 to 7 of the Clement House rotunda - the areas around the spiral staircase in the centre of the building. Each area has a slightly different theme and is named after a different city. Creativity, self-study and group discussion are just some of the ideas behind each floor. You'll find whiteboards, lots of plug sockets, furniture of all designs, artwork and a Mac for your use.	
	It would be great if you could let us know your thoughts by completing this short survey.	
	For a chance to win one of two £10 Amazon vouchers, don't forget to tell us your email address! Names will be drawn out of the hat at the end of Michaelmas Term for all responses completed in full.	
	Thank you in advance!	
	Name	
	Your answer	
	Email Address	
	Your answer	
	First Year Undergraduate	
	Second Year Undergraduate	
	O Final Year Undergraduate	
	O Postgraduate	
	O PhD Student	
	⊖ Staff	
	○ Other:	
	Andersia Decembrant	
	Academic Department	
	DD MM YYYY	
	/ / 2016	
	Time	
	:	
	NEXT Page 1 of 2	
	NEXT Page 1 of 2 Never submit passwords through Google Forms.	

10.3 Poster for feedback survey



10.4 Poster for social media competition



10.5 Summary of technology usage from observations

(If applicable - Floors 2, 3, 5) Has the whiteboard been used	?	
Yes - academic writing (e.g. equations)	6	3%
Yes - general comment or message	25	13%
No	169	85%
Total	200	100%

N/A (no whiteboard) 122

(If applicable - Floors 3, 6) Is the Mac/Monitor being used?		
Yes *	21	16%
No	109	84%
Total	130	100%

* Of 21 "Yes", 17 responses cite using the Mac computer on Floor 3

N/A (not floor 3 or 6)	272
------------------------	-----

(If applicable - Floor 2) Is the Smart KAPP board being used?		
Yes	4	6%
No	62	94%
Total	66	100%

N/A (not floor 2) 391	N/A (not floor 2)	391

Laptop usage		
Yes	193	75%
No	65	25%
Total	258	100%

N/A (no-one using the space)	144	
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10.6 Summary of findings from comment cards and interviews

Academic Department	Count
Accounting	8
Anthropology	4
Economic History	2
Economics	17
European Institute	1
Finance	1
Gender Institute	1
Geography and Environment	16
Government	11
Institute of Global Affairs (IGA)	2
International Development	11
International History	7
International Relations	22
Law	13
Management	16
Mathematics	2
Media and Communications	3
Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method	1
Psychological and Behavioural	
Science	1
Social Policy	8
Sociology	5
Statistics	8
Other	14
Totals	174

Lecture/Seminar in Clement House?	Count
Yes	48
No	2
N/A	124
	174

Location	Count
Floor 2 (Rio)	37
Floor 3 (New York)	41
Floor 4 (London)	24
Floor 5 (Sydney)	14
Floor 6 (Tokyo)	26
Floor 7 (Cape Town)	29
Unspecified	3
	174

Week	Count
	10
4	10
5	49
6	24
_	
7	38
8	36
9	10
10	7
	174

Academic Status	Count
First Year Undergraduate	22
Second Year Undergraduate	29
Final Year Undergraduate	29
PhD Student	4
Postgraduate	77
General Course	0
Staff	5
Other	8
	174

Reason for Visit	Count
Group Study	20
Individual Study	71
Relax/Rest	32
Waiting for Seminar/Lecture	87
Other	6
Unspecified	2
	218

Method of Data Collection	Count
Hard copies - Ballot Box in CLM	55
Online Survey	45
1 Min Interviews	54
3 Min Interviews	20
	174

Time	Count
8-9am	2
9-10am	8
10-11am	11
11-12pm	26
12pm-1pm	10
1-2pm	39
2-3pm	12
3-4pm	21
4-5pm	16
5-6pm	6
6-7pm	6
7-8pm	1
8-9pm	4
N/A	9
Other	3
	174

How did you find about this	
survey? *	Count
Poster in SU	2
Departmental email or	
newsletter	19
Twitter	4
Moodle	2
Facebook	5
Poster in Clement House	6
Colleague/word of mouth	1
N/A	135
	174

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Learning Technology and Innovation