

Concurrent Session G
Tuesday 1 September
1.30pm – 2.20pm



Session 1

Is “The New Academic Workplace” an Oxymoron? Reviewing the Scholarly Evidence-Based Literature to Inform Transformative Planning and Design

Kenn Fisher, Georgia Singleton

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Associate Professor Kenn Fisher, Academic and Educational Planning Consultant. Dr Fisher practices both as a research academic and as a knowledgespace planner as he seeks to link the two areas through the concept of translational design modelled on the evidence based design of health environments which itself derives from clinical medical research practice.

He is Associate Professor in Learning Environments in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at The University of Melbourne (0.4) having been involved for the past five years in \$2million worth of ARC Linkage, Discovery and Office of Learning and Teaching Research projects in the planning, design and use of new generation learning environments. Kenn also co-supervises a number of doctoral candidates and teaches two subjects in the Master of Architecture Programme - Human Environment Relations and Architectural Briefing, Planning & Design specialising in education and health environments. His main research interests include the Evidence Based Design of New Generation Learning Environments and developing models of academic professional development for activating these through the concept of spatial literacy.

Kenn is also Director of Education at Woods Bagot acting as an educational space planner involved in masterplanning, learning environment planning, brief writing and change management strategies. He works globally in this context across Woods Bagot’s 14 studios in Australasia, China, the Middle East, the UK and the USA. As well as having held high level domestic University appointments in capital works management, Kenn has consulted on university campus planning and teaching and learning projects in the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Cambodia, Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand having been engaged by over 40 university institutions worldwide. His 40-year career has seen Kenn specialising in education and health planning in all sectors; schools, vocational, higher education, teaching hospitals and workplace academies.

Kenn’s academic qualifications include a PhD from Flinders University, a DSc (h.c.) from Deakin University, a Master of Project Management from UTS, a Grad Dip Ed from the University of Canberra and a Bachelor of Technology from the University of Adelaide.

Georgia Singleton. As a Director of Woods Bagot and an Education and Science specialist, Georgia has continued to provide a strong commitment to the sector’s ongoing development within Australia and across the world.

Having worked on a diverse range and scale of architectural and interiors focused projects, Georgia seeks to push traditional building and fitout typologies with dynamic, highly integrated and research-driven solutions.

Most recently Georgia has been involved with the University of Sydney Business School, Nan Tien’s Cultural and Education Centre, the University of Western Sydney’s Campus Redevelopment and the UNSW Australian School of Business & Bioscience Project.

Millions of dollars have been spent on so-called new generation learning environments (NGLE’s) and

new generation research environments in Australian Universities in the past decade. Yet little of this money has made its way into transforming the academic workplace, which remains largely as it has existed for centuries with the exception of some science-based workplaces.

Various attempts have been made to transform the academic workplace but little significant progress has been made? Why is this so?

This paper will argue that it is the culture of the academic workplace which needs to be unpacked – most likely discipline by discipline - to see what it is that academics have done in the past and what they are doing now with the advent of mobile computing and smart devices.

The extant scholarly literature – or what there is of it - to date is reviewed and some conclusions drawn.

More importantly, though, the sessions seeks to draw from the participants - through a 'quick and dirty' SWOT analysis – what the opportunities and barriers might be to a more transformative academic workplace.

In particular the culture of the academic workplace will form the core of this presentation and discussion, to see if a collaborative strategy for change can be framed.

Given that this will be carried out largely without academics present, an approach which might include academics in such a SWOT after the conference will be explored.