18 February 2008.

Learning Landscapes: clearing pathways and enhancing organisational development - involving academics in leadership, governance and management of estates in Higher Education.

The rationale for this project is the necessity for academics to work with estates and finance professionals to develop and manage academic space effectively in Higher Education in the provision of modern and appropriate collaborative and individual learning needs of students. The emergence of new learning landscapes requires much closer collaboration between academics and estates so these new spaces can consolidate and drive further innovation without losing the strengths of the traditional academic environment.

Project partners: Universities of Lincoln, Loughborough, Newcastle, Oxford Brookes, Queen Mary London, Reading, York; DEGW; individuals – Fiona Duggan, Les Watson.

Working Paper 1
February 2008

LEARNING LANDSCAPES FOR UNIVERSITIES: MAPPING THE FIELD

(OR - BEYOND A SEAT IN THE LECTURE HALL: A PROLEGEMENON OF LEARNING LANDSCAPES IN UNIVERSITIES)

This is the first in a series of project working papers. Its aim is to commence the development of a shared vocabulary so that visioning learning landscapes can be realised in the appropriate development of academic estate. The paper explores first, how the terminology of learning landscapes has been employed elsewhere. Secondly, its connections with university conceptualisations past and present are explored as this project aims to retain the strengths of traditional academic environments together with new designs. The impetus to its emergence is next reviewed , its constituent elements and any evidence of estates-related literature. Finally a definition is essayed.

An extended version of this paper is for discussion amongst the project partners and will be further developed as part of the dissemination plan for this project as a chapter in Bell, L. (ed) (2008) *Issues in Higher Education Learning,* London: Continuum.. A literature survey (attached) has also been completed.

1

Learning Landscapes: mapping the field, literature. University of Lincoln Neary/Thody 2008

LEARNING LANDSCAPES FOR UNIVERSITIES: MAPPING THE FIELD.
OR...
BEYOND A SEAT IN THE LECTURE HALL: A PROLEGEMENON OF LEARNING
LANDSCAPES IN UNIVERSITIES

Angela Thody.

The longevity of university learning landscapes requires their planning to arise from foundational epistemologies rather than transient current events ((Hebert, 1992, cited in Hutchinson, 2004: 49). In seeking these fundamentals, Plato's way of relating art to truth seems apposite, studying usage, emergence and definition (605BC: 1941:324), with usage more recently subdivided into process and form (Serafin, 2006). Hence this brief review introduces the following topics:

Learning landscapes; terminological exactitude or confusion?
Learning landscapes: connections with university conceptualisations
Learning landscapes: impetus to emergence and implications for teaching and learning
Learning landscapes: constituent elements (structures and processes).
Learning landscapes: the estates dimensions
Conclusion: towards a working definition
References

LEARNING LANDSCAPES: TERMINOLOGICAL EXACTITUDE OR CONFUSION?

The very limited literature overtly using learning landscape terminology finds metaphorical representations in geographical terms (Noyes, 2004; Quinn, 2004; Serafin, 2006). These do emphasise the valuable concepts of space and place so much neglected in education (Hutchinson, 2004), but within boundaries too limited for the scope of whole university space (school maths; undergraduate geography; geographies of the possible). However, it is timely now to label spades as spades, not metaphorical excavators; learning landscapes can be defined in their own right.

Thus, outside of metaphor is a concept for project-based companies, which sound not unlike universities in being 'discontinuous...complex interdependencies...uncertainties...variations in knowledge activities, levels of formality, technologies, social relations and communicative interactions', (Brady *et al,* 2002:1 and 2). Here, learning landscapes are the mechanisms that enable project-to-project learning to take place (*ibid*:11-12).

Seeking guidance from spheres other than universities, the almost casual colonisations of the words 'learning landscapes' can cause confusion. Norfolk Children's Services *New Landscapes for Learning* 2006 seems little more that a way to link together the usual mix of local authority training workshops, discussion seminars and conferences. *The Learning* LANDSCAPE *for **Schools*** (sic) (LL4) is about safe blogging for schools (www.ll4schools.co.uk/) but this restricted use does pick up on emergent learning landscapes themes such as student-centred learning and e-architectures. Learning landscapes are used to sell ideas or products; BLM Learning Landscapes are 'America's big backyard'. Business board games somehow emerge from www.learninglandscapes.com. Webanywhere titles its catalogue 'Learning Landscapes', though its products seem unrelated to it. *Natural Learning Landscapes for Schools* advertises products for outdoor learning (www.naturallearning.co.uk) but at least this leads us to eco-interpretations of learning landscapes.

2

Learning Landscapes: mapping the field, literature. University of Lincoln Neary/Thody 2008

The literal landscape was central to green schemes for university grounds in the USA (Starik, Schaeffer, Berman and Hazelwood, 2002) and Lincoln University here plans a Learning Garden/Garden of Peace/Labyrinth. Denver public schools' *Landscapes for Learning* aims to improve school grounds but it is noteworthy that its processes involve much of what is now becoming central to our understanding of learning landscapes anywhere, community involvement, collaboration on designs and participatory learning (Brink and Yost, 2004). 'Northumberland Learning Landscapes themes on the landscape as teacher. The same idea, nationally promoted, is the DfES launched charity, **Learning through LANDSCAPES** (sic), championing the outdoor classroom that can be school grounds revisited.

From these interpretations of landscape, mapping semantically follows. Cambridge University's Learning Landscapes project maps the teaching and learning experiences of staff, students and alumni to find the best opportunities to learn. Scotland's *Local Lifelong Learning Landscapes* tracked provision and linkages of adult learning opportunities. Oxford Brookes's E-Learning Modes of Engagement cartographers followed basic course administration, blended learning arrangements and on-line architectures (Francis and Rafferty, 2005). Knowledge systems apparently need road-maps too (Lytras, Naeve and Pouloudi, 2005) not surprising if one takes the ETL project's definition of a *teaching-learning environment* as 'the whole set of teaching, learning support, assessment and administrative arrangements, as well as the facilities and resources' (project web site p.1) though they restricted their studies to individual degree courses.

Before learning landscapes entered the lexicon for universities as wholes, the words part surfaced for libraries as information landscapes (Russell, Criddle and Ormes, 1998) with the construction analogies of e-architectures and building systems for knowledge management (Quinn, 1992). Building blocks were found integral to personal learning landscapes (Kalz, 2005; Tosh and Werdmuller, 2004) and learning environments (Francis and Rafferty, 2005). One of the originators of the concept – DEGW – is an architectural practice. Their conception is of increasingly flexible work spaces, innovatively used to encompass physical and virtual learning spaces (DEGW, 2006:3-4). These are delineated as central hubs, learning spaces, lifestyle facilities, with particular awareness of the contributions to learning than can emerge from the informal physical environment (Chiddick, 2007).

LEARNING LANDSCAPES: CONNECTIONS WITH UNIVERSITY CONCEPTUALISATIONS

This language development needs to connect with our understandings of what universities are for. Mapping history appears to place twenty-first century universities' learning landscapes as new towns, established to home increasingly diverse, mass student populations in central hubs electronically linked for any-real-time learning to even more suburban/rural/isolated crowds. For some, these changes are cause for rejoicing and the joy of new conceptualisations (Kelly, 2002:106; Barnett, 2005; Glasgow University's Saltire Centre described in Neary 2008:5). Others report reasons for mourning (Cutright, 2001; Gilbert, 2000; Maskell and Robinson, 2001; Scruton, 2001). For both, the learning landscape concept provides an opportunity to reflect on the value and objectives we want for university education (Sarles, 2001).

Value-orientation leads us to investigate past universities' objectives for guidance, particularly apposite in this research project which intends to preserve 'the strengths of the traditional academic environment'. Linking to the past matters symbolically, since universities are societal

3

Learning Landscapes: mapping the field, literature. University of Lincoln Neary/Thody 2008

conservators with a work force often perceived as conservative (SPOT PLUS 2001-4: 97), or at least needing time to be re-educated (Gore and Gore, 1999). Whatever learning landscapes are devised are also subject to the perceptions of university education by external stakeholders (the tax-paying, fee-paying or donor funders of universities). Hence universities must be places of recognition as well as for destabilising our thinking and of just fitting in with current student stakeholder views.

Seeking continuities, therefore, universities past and present have always had the 'great object of…education' (Kerr, 1991:14) to prepare 'students for the future in an increasingly complex society' (Starik *et al,* 2002;339) whether that was a thirteenth/nineteenth or later century, of empires in confrontation, new weaponry, inventions and social changes. Then it was the Holy Roman Empire, long bows and feudalism; now it is democracy, satellites and LGTB.

With this similarlity in mind, one borrows from Newman, his view of universities diffusing and extending knowledge through the research institutes he planned for his Catholic University of Ireland in the nineteenth century, and by reconciling the apparently competing structures of collegial and professorial systems. Now e-architecture can vastly aid this diffusion across our landscapes which also permits us to ensure that Jowett's nineteenth century acclaimed personal tutorial style can continue despite the vast increase in student numbers since that time. Leap forward to an apparently anti-Newmanesque period of corporate Macdonald's, Disney's or L-Oreal's universities and discover even these aiming to 'stimulate co-creative thinking and develop instruments of integrative transition…[to] innovate…break out of traditional mind-sets…of knowledge transfer…into more proactive and broader learning landscapes' (Dealty, 2002:340 and 341). Contrasting romantic interpretations of universities (c 1770-1850) advocated cultivating 'in the young a heightened sense of aesthetic and cultural appreciation' (Hendley, 2002: 418). This resonates with that part of learning landscapes that is about the style of the architecture, the joy of interior design and the provision of gardens that delight the senses, the 'wow factor' of good architecture (Chiddick, 2006:22).

LEARNING LANDSCAPES: IMPETUS TO EMERGENCE.

Sociological and political imperatives. Universities have always both reproduced and created elites. The balance between these two for the twenty-first century is weighted towards extending elites, or even removal of elite conceptualisations. As W.S Gilbert noted, when everyone is somebody then nobody is anybody (Iolanthe…), which Scruton might see as a suitable requiem for our mass intake universities (Scruton, 2001). This mass enlargement is mandated by pressures from an ever-more educated and certificated school population, economic needs for highly trained workers, society's needs to attenuate childhood (if only to justify its own existence as carers and to delay unemployment) and governments' needs for efficient resource management, as expressed, for example, by Shirley Williams, 1969 Secretary of State for Education and Science, who included in her h.e. policies, proposals to make universities more efficient through more intensive use of buildings and equipment

But whatever the sources or rationales for this mass, it has to be accommodated, physically and virtually. Reconceptualising universities as learning landscapes then becomes a way of coping with the estate size and complexity of the current university while maintaining the human-scale relevance that learning theories (see below) indicate are necessary. The reconceptualisation will still result in social reproduction but from much wider bases. Students' identities and cultures in part arise from students' contact with staff and peers outside of formal educational settings (Brennan and Jary 2005). From this comes the significance of bringing the

4

Learning Landscapes: mapping the field, literature. University of Lincoln Neary/Thody 2008

entire learning landscape within formal purview; all learning opportunities are given equal status thus either enabling more elites or no elites depending on your personal perspectives. Sociological topography recognises place as 'partisan and ideologically charged' (Hutchinson, 2004: 14), As such, learning landscapes can cause total alienation (Illyich DATE) but at least they have responsibility for continually renewing (or perhaps transforming) the social fabric of society…[schools] are the institutional bridge that ensures our cultural continuance, that connects one adult generation to the next' (Hutchinson, 2004:9).

Staff, in these sociological reproduction scenarios, are usually assumed to be academic staff and the significance of administrators and service staff tends to have been overlooked. However, they appear in university organisational models arising from power constructs such as professional bureaucratic, collegial, political and anarchic (Baldridge, 1983; Cohen and March, 1991; Bourgeios and Frenay, 2001). In the greater holism of learning landscapes, as in this research project, administrators and other non-academic staff, like informal learning opportunities, gain status, a change already noted in school learning (Kerrys' work on support staff; O'Sullivan, Thody and Wood, 2000). Thus academic staff elites must open to admit other staff as well as students.

Learning theories and practice.
In this meta-learning age, the ideas of Froebel, Pestalozzi, Montessori – early twentieth century childhood educators - have gained credence for university teaching and learning. Examples include student active engagement in real world issues in a supportive relational social environment (Terenzini, 2005), 'flexible, distributed learning' (Francis and Rafferty, 2005: 1), 'constructive alignment' between course aims and their environments, to enable student active learning on 'authentic real tasks' (ETL project proposal, 2000/2001) and learning from the natural environment signalled in many learning landscapes projects. All this is to foster creativity and experiment as in the InQbate project at Brighton University, not so far away from Newman's desire to cultivate energetic mental action around new ideas (Kerr, 1999: 20, 22). This mental action must today, however, ideally be in- the-world (Barnett, 2005:795) though this can be virtual or physical.

Amongst the many debates about the desirability of these developments (Smith, 1999:163-6), there seems general agreement that learning is most effective when at least part self-initiated. Again this emerges from early-years educators who created 'a Landscape for Learning…from self-directed play', stimulating all the senses (Torelli and Durrett, 2006:2). This introduces the ideas of interconnectedness, integral to both learning landscapes and Newman who wanted students to have a connected view and grasp of things' (Kerr, 1999: 17).None of this precludes traditional formal lecturing, whether in person or on internet screens, but it does make helpful the wired lecture theatres that enable students to have concurrent access to sources other than the lecturer and seating that twirls to facilitate group work, sleep or attention to a podium-based lecturer – the type of innovations that reconsideration of learning landscapes might bring.

This reconsideration recognises connections between learning landscapes and student behaviour and achievements (ETL university learning landscapes project) which has been a major thrust in the British government's Building Schools of the Future policy (DEGW 2006 : 8-12). Changing the appearance of secondary school buildings and their settings, is to be innovative, collaborative and diverse, all concepts that appear in various university learning landscapes projects where similar connections are made with student learning outcomes (ETL, 2001: 2). These outcomes are extended as students add informally to a university's structured learning spaces, colonising corridors and cafes for example (Brennan and Osbourne, 2005),

5

Learning Landscapes: mapping the field, literature. University of Lincoln Neary/Thody 2008

neatly categorised as 'the bits in-between (DEGW, 2006:16). Learning landscapes recognise this but involving such spaces needs new forms of involvement with design, estates and facilities staff. Not only should such spaces be consciously designed to promote learning interactions but good architecture in itself should become a learning tool. It should 'teach people to analyse and be sceptical' (Sussex, 2002) whether that be about elites or aesthetics.

Technological learning. These learning theories and practices can fortunately be provided in greater bulk with the advent of technological tools, which are considered integral in the design of learning landscapes. This is being tested in the Cambridge University learning landscapes project by cutting off technology tools for a week for volunteer students and staff to find out where, and if, it were really vital (Riddle and Arnold, 2008). The general consensus though is that current learning theories would be much harder to operate without e-tools.

Major exemplars of this have been JISC (2001-7) showing ways in which e-learning tools can be integrated to create common learning environments, and the SPOT PLUS study (2001-4). The latter investigated ICT use for teaching and learning in twelve European universities. This included the extension of university opportunities to the masses through easy outreach to outlying geographical areas and social classes, an obvious reprise of sociological changes referred to above. Parallel developments are seen in businesses. These discovered the economies of using virtual classrooms for their corporate universities, thus re-engineering their learning landscapes (Aldrich, 2006). For children's learning, the University of Illinois at Chicago produced an 'immersive learning environment [a whole room virtual reality experience]…where children build virtual ecosystems' working together or at least in the same room enjoying a multi user experience (Roussos, Johnson, Leigh *et al*, 1997: 917).

Some sound caveats about this virtual world of detached learning experiences (Serafin, 2006). Hence comes the need to retain traditional learning modes too (Chiddick, 2006), but e-tooling permits ubiquitised, immersive, learning around the whole university learning landscape and connects it to its outside world of, for example, commerce (LSE's BOX project, 2006, DEGW:17).

Need for belonging (place)
All the preceding topics required recognition of the centrality to effective teaching and learning of space and place (Edwards and Usher, 2003; Hutchinson, 2004) and from that to interconnected placings in spacings. A lack of this place recognition/space bounding for the learning landscape may have contributed to the short life of the UK's e-university in the 2000s which might have been described as a de-schooling experiment in the post-compulsory sector. We are ready for an extension to the traditional idea of a university (as the success of the UK's Open University has shown) but perhaps not to its obliteration as a bounded space in our minds. This may arise from human need to be able to relate to what they see (Hutchinson, 2004: 13). In planning their learning landscapes, universities therefore need to enable that relationship by reducing the strangeness of teaching and learning opportunities while preserving expectations that a university is traditionally something special and different. An excellent example of a campus demonstrating that interconnectedness, speciality, difference and combination of tradition and innovation, visit the University of Texas at El Paso where all its learning landscapes have echoed Bhutanese architecture ever since its inception in 1914.

Into that special and different space, students enter as peripherals (as staff do in Students' Union buildings). Students are transient; administrators and academics are permanent with permanent offices, GOVERNORS TO INSERT and estates staff tend to come somewhere

6

Learning Landscapes: mapping the field, literature. University of Lincoln Neary/Thody 2008

between these two extremes with designated work bases, OR MEETING PLACES from which they emerge into their fairly mobile lives. Equalising these communities to meet the sociological perspectives which opened this section of the paper is a challenge.

LEARNING LANDSCAPES: CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS.

To meet this challenge, the structures and processes of learning landscapes are there to make learning landscape philosophies live. 'Be bold, experiment' urged delegates of their university leaders, at a conference at Lincoln University in 2007 (Neary, 2008:6). Completely reform the university intellectually and physically around the Study of the Present Age, urged Sarles at the University of Minnesota (2001). The assumption is that implementing a learning landscapes exercise is only about **innovation** but **traditions** matter too given society's and students' expectations of what a university place is.

Into these traditional landscapes, **e-tools**, knowledge architectures, virtual learning, delivery technologies, have to be integrated forming the common, immersive, environment envisaged in the predecessor JISC projects of 2003-7. Expectations of the replacement of human teachers may be 'naïve' (Smith, 1999:164), but there is no longer 'an unquestioning belief in the efficacy of classroom delivery… [Everything is moving to learners controlling] 'their own learning programme in terms of time and space' (DEGW, 2006:5 and 14). E-tools facilitate student control but academic and estates staff must also have the same rights to controlling their own work programmes so e-learning must take account of this.

This is all part of maximising learning connectivities in university landscapes. These need first to be made visible through **mapping techniques**. These are defined as the ways in which 'people navigate and make their way through a place. Individuals build their own cognitive maps linking boundaries, paths, embedded spaces, activity nodes and reference points through which they recognise where they are (Hutchinson 2004: 14). Once mapped, these are then amenable to being altered.

Mapping evidence has emerged from *INTER ALIA,* the SOMUL project WHICH developed their maps from interview data (Richardson and Edmunds, 2007); Cambridge University's Learning Landscapes Project developed The Day Experience Method (Riddle and Arnold, 2007) for recording staff and student activities. In this mapping, there are some insights from the USA 'college experience' literature especially in the significance of student residence patterns (a feature of the learning landscape in the UK that has been steadily moving out of university control since the 1990s) (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). However, the diversity of UK university institutions and of the social mix of UK students have been deemed too different from the USA experiences to make transferability sensible (Houston and Lebeau, 2006).

Transferability is, however, offered by a mapping example from a project-based industry which found learning landscapes a valuable reference frame for reflection on varieties of learning modes in their company (Brady *et al,* 20002). Their map included individual, group and community learning exactly as it might in a university. Each of these was subdivided into experience accumulation, knowledge articulation and knowledge codification. Such categories could well find a home in university analyses. Within these, learning mechanisms ranged from the very informal 'scribbling notes' to the most formal of meeting minutes. From this emerged three types of learning landscapes, socio-technical, advanced ICT development and socially driven (Brady *et al,* 2002: 13 and 14).

7

Learning Landscapes: mapping the field, literature. University of Lincoln Neary/Thody 2008

Social drive is integral to all learning landscape interpretations, often mediated around naturally occurring or formally encouraged, **collaboration with learners,** as in Oxford Brookes's thinking about a new learning landscape (Francis and Rafferty, 2005). This social learner collaboration does not preclude equal emphasis on solo learning (cf Warwick University's Learning Grid). Collaboration is, however, accorded prime place because of its impact on informal learning in knowledge management schemes (Arthur and Lindsay, 2006), its significance in the democratic extensions of twenty-first century university intakes, the value of decreasing learning isolation (Sarles, 2001: 408; Chiddick, 2006:23) and the sense of ownership (with) WHICH collaboration engenders .

The ETL project (2001-5) signalled both ALL OF THESE by asking for data from staff and students and organising evaluation and dissemination through collaborative workshops. Lincoln University's first staff conference in learning landscapes was run in collaborative 'café' style (Neary, 2008). Cambridge University's Learning Landscapes project developed tools to let students map their own learning experiences (Riddle and Arnold, 2007) as the 'Cambridge project is consultative by design' (www.caret.cam.ac.uk). Involving students in taking responsibility for their own learning and ownership of places within which it takes place, in settings that encourage collaborative learning, are the aims of the Learning Commons at Sheffield University and of the Reinvention centre and Learning Grid at Warwick University. Outcomes of a Learning Landscapes conference at Lincoln University in 2008 urged the university to 'involve the student body wholeheartedly, and tofind ways to promote greater engagement from…academic departments' (Neary, 2008:6)

Collaboration with learners to improve the design of learning spaces has been central in the Building Schools of the Future project. Research has shown, however, that including pupil voice has to be in the very early stages of a project and requires changes in our thinking about power in order to be effective. Nor do pupils offer more innovatory ideas than professional academics or designers (Mason, 2008). JISC also included learner reflection on e-learning but again did not consider their involvement at the drafting stages. Consultation with students was a major plank of the SPOT PLUS project on ICT use to teaching and learning. Students reported not being involved at the design or evaluation stages of ICT developments

Whether concerning design, use or learning from landscapes, research so far has focussed almost exclusively on collaboration with students as 'recognised stakeholders…essential components to the implementation of effective and practical systems' (SpotPLUS, 2001-4, undated download, p.1). Perhaps this is felt to be an antidote to years in which the views of academic staff stakeholders have dominated though some attention has been paid to involving academic staff in learning landscapes projects. This has been mainly in relation to student experiences and there are brief references to community involvement. Estates and other support staff or university governors do not feature.

LEARNING LANDSCAPES: THE ESTATES DIMENSIONS

The literature survey (see bibliography) indicates that there is no other work related to learning landscapes that relates to the involvement of estates *per se* or to collaborations between academic and administrative staff or students or managers with estates. When landscapes are interpreted only as the green land spaces around universities, estates do get a mention. USA universities' projects to improve their grounds 'depended heavily on a personal, co-operative approach between the school's environmental co-ordinator and…architects, construction development teams, plant operations department, and environmental studies students and faculty (Starik *et al,* 2002: 339).

8

Learning Landscapes: mapping the field, literature. University of Lincoln Neary/Thody 2008

This (is) virtually total exclusion is curious in the obvious implications of sites, buildings and facilitative technologies in all the processes and structures outlined above, in the philosophical issues of how people learn (from everything and everybody) and the elitist implications of their omission from studies.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A WORKING DEFINITION

Just as Newman felt that the then new learning landscapes of nineteenth century universities should "keep the whole human mind in view' (Kerr, 1999: 24), so are those of the twenty-first century expected to do so by producing an holistic, interconnected learning opportunity. Within this is enormous scope for flexibility with no prescriptions (Brennan and Osborne, 2005). This interconnection is to be physically engineered through estates, academically structured by faculty, organised and financed by managers and governors and socially mediated by everyone. It is in this last area that learning landscapes insert the new expectation that universities will consciously help formally create (or at least influence) the establishment, expansion and development of cultures, subcultures and spaces for informal collective learning.

VERSION 1 Collating all these, our definition could be:
University learning landscapes are conceptually holistic, loosely-coupled interconnections of all formal and informal, on- and off-campus, virtual and physical facilities, sites and services and how stakeholders use them. A LEARNING LANDSCAPES APPROACH IS DISTINGUISED FROM MERE SITE MANAGMEENT BY Academics' and governors' conscious decisions to manipulate all these traditional and innovative facilities as continually and ubiquitously available collaborative opportunities to enhance learning (distinguishes a learning leadership approach from mere site management). Preparations for this approach require understandings of why universities are still wanted, mapping of how they are now used and a belief that all elements of university environments have to justify their roles in learning.

VERSION 2 Collating all these, our definition could be:
Is it a café ? Is it a park? Is it a lecture hall, meeting, a computer, a corridor…?
No – it's a learning landscape. It's the unbounded space in which university teachers, researchers, caterers, estates managers, governors, administrators and students interact in multiple dimensions. Connected through e-techologies to their surrounding communities, providers and supporters, off-campus and on, collaboration both enhances learning and improves democracy AND ALTERS THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL POWER ELITES. So whether you're in a virtual or physical place, a traditional tutorial or a blogging chat, it's all enhancing your learning and we're building it with you.

Will learning landscape approaches change our university worlds or will academics 'continue to muddle along in a schizoid fashion, grumbling about the infrastructure and the administrative tasks it imposes, yet continuing to do what they did twenty years ago?' (Knowles, 2003:183). Will any new learning landscapes simply tie tomorrow's students into learning systems that are as outdated for subsequent generations as our lecture halls and dreaming spires may seem to current ones. Or will we recognise that:

> the changes our wars will make will never be the changes we intended
> them to make. We shall clamour for security like frightened children but in
> the Unexpected Isles there is no security. The future is to those who
> prefer surprise and wonder to security.

(Prola, conclusion to Act II, *Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles,*
G.B. Shaw, 1935)

An extended version of this prolegomenon is for project team discussion and for a chapter for
Bell, L. (ed) (2008) *Issues in Higher Education Learning,* London: Continuum. *.*
 Working Paper 2 will proceed to set this discussion into its varying institutional contexts with a
review and comparative study of existing management, governance and committee structures
in HE in relation to research and learning landscapes within the estates and learning
strategies.

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LEARNING LANDSCAPES: TERMINOLOGICAL EXACTITUDE OR CONFUSION?

Metaphor has been a common way to explain learning landscapes but in contexts too limited to compare with whole university environments (Noyes, 2004; Quinn, 2004; Serafin, 2006). An analogous study from business defined learning landscapes as 'mechanisms that enable project-to-project learning to take place' (Brady *et al,* 2002:11-12) which has some possible transferability in its notions of interconnectivities. Generally, however, the term has become confused by casual adoptions into, *inter alia,* disparate commercial use (selling schools safe blogging, national parks, software for schools and outdoor clothing) and outdoor education and sites landscaping (Norfolk, 2006; Northumberland DATE; DfES charity, Learning through LANDSCAPES (sic); Starik, Schaeffer, Berman and Hazelwood, 2002; Brink and Yost, 2004).

The latter context at least justifies the common incorporation of 'mapping' as a way of acquiring data about use of learning environments that is necessary before they can become learning landscapes (projects in universities - Cambridge, Oxford Brookes, ETL and SOMUL; Scottish adult education; Francis and Rafferty, 2005; Lytras, Naeve and Pouloudi, 2005). Contributory studies to the emergence of the concept have also focussed on e-tooling in university libraries, (Russell, Criddle and Ormes, 1998), knowledge management (Quinn, 1992) and teaching (JISC). From computer architecture, to physical architecture, the language has developed as building blocks in personal learning landscapes (Kalz, 2005; Tosh and Werdmuller, 2004) and learning environments (Francis and Rafferty, 2005) and onwards to whole university campus building (DEGW, 2006:3-4; Chiddick, 2007).

LEARNING LANDSCAPES: CONNECTIONS WITH UNIVERSITY CONCEPTUALISATIONS

This language development needs to connect with our understandings of what universities are for. Mapping history appears to place twenty-first century universities' learning landscapes as new towns, established to home increasingly diverse, mass student populations in central hubs electronically linked for any-real-time learning to even more suburban/rural/isolated crowds. For some, these changes are cause for rejoicing and the joy of new conceptualisations (Kelly, 2002:106; Barnett, 2005; Glasgow University's Saltire Centre described in Neary 2008:5). Others report reasons for mourning (Cutright, 2001; Gilbert, 2000; Maskell and Robinson, 2001; Scruton, 2001). For both, the learning landscape concept provides an opportunity to reflect on the value and objectives we want for university education (Sarles, 2001). Linking to the past matters symbolically, since universities have been societal conservators though

combined with futurology (Kerr, 1991:14; Starik *et al,* 2002;339). One can therefore borrow from Newman, his view of universities diffusing and extending knowledge and Jowett's personal tutorial system, both now vastly aided with our e-architectures. Today's corporate universities share this too, transferring their staff learners 'into more proactive and broader learning landscapes' (Dealty, 2002:340 and 341). The romantics (c. 1770-1850) added cultural aestheticism to university goals with the beauty of buildings and grounds as educators (Hendley, 2002: 418) just as learning landscapes intend now to achieve with the 'wow factor' of good architecture (Chiddick, 2006:22).

LEARNING LANDSCAPES: IMPETUS TO EMERGENCE.

Universities have always both reproduced and created elites. The balance between these two for the mass entrants of the twenty-first century is weighted towards extending elites, or even removal of elite conceptualisations. Reconceptualising universities as learning landscapes impacts on all this in the ways that are chosen to cope with mass intakes since place is 'partisan and ideologically charged' (Hutchinson, 2004: 14). With so many students and no increase in staff complements, learning interaction opportunities must be created through every possible means of contact, with staff, peers and with communities and businesses connected to the university (Brennan and Jary 2005). Connections of all types need political models to illuminate their motor forces though the current ones are limited for learning landscapes because they tend to centre on traditional power bases in academic staff and administrators (Baldridge, 1983; Cohen and March, 1991; Bourgeios and Frenay, 2001). Holism and power equity is needed to fit learning landscapes approaches.

Political models must change just as have university learning theories which developed to show the need for student active engagement since the 1960s (Terenzini, 2005), 'flexible, distributed learning' (Francis and Rafferty, 2005: 1) and 'constructive alignment' between course aims and their environments (ETL project proposal, 2000/2001) to enable students to be in- the-world (Barnett, 2005:795). Amongst the many debates about the desirability of these developments (Smith, 1999:163-6), there seems general agreement that learning is most effective when at least part self-initiated and interconnected. This latter is recognised in the realisation that students add informally to a university's structured learning spaces, colonising corridors and cafes for example (Brennan and Osbourne, 2005), neatly categorised as 'the bits in-between (DEGW, 2006:16). Learning landscapes recognise this but involving such spaces needs new forms of involvement with design, estates and facilities staff.

These learning theories and practices can fortunately be provided in greater bulk with the advent of technological tools, which are considered integral in the design of learning landscapes in universities, businesses and schools (Roussos, Johnson, Leigh *et al,* 1997; JISC, 2001-7; SPOT PLUS study, 2001-4; LSE's BOX project, 2006, DEGW:17; Aldrich, 2006; Riddle and Arnold, 2008). Some sound caveats about this virtual world of detached learning experiences (Serafin, 2006), hence the need to retain traditional learning modes (Chiddick, 2006), but e-tooling permits ubiquitised, immersive, learning around the whole university learning landscape and connects it to its outside world of, for example, commerce.

All the preceding topics required recognition of the centrality to effective teaching and learning of space and place (Edwards and Usher, 2003; Hutchinson, 2004) and from that to interconnected placings in spacings. In planning their learning landscapes, universities therefore need to enable that relationship by reducing the strangeness of teaching and learning

opportunities while preserving expectations that a university is traditionally something special and different.

LEARNING LANDSCAPES: CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS.

To meet these challenges, the structures and processes of learning landscapes are there to make learning landscape philosophies live. These are regarded as needing innovation and tradition (Neary, 2008:6; Sarles, 2001). Hence E-tools and learners controlling their own programmes (DEGW, 2006:14) must add to human teachers (Smith, 1999: 164) in traditional settings. The interconnections of these must first be mapped to establish what activitiy patterns have to be retained and which can be altered and this been common in learning landscapes projects (Brady *et al,* 20002; SOMUL - Richardson and Edmunds, 2007; Cambridge University - Riddle and Arnold, 2007). Existing patterns of collaborations are one feature to emerge on maps but collaboration is also an underpinning feature of designing, maintaining and evaluating learning landscapes (Oxford Brookes - Francis and Rafferty, 2005; SPOT PLUS) because of its impact on informal learning in knowledge management schemes (Arthur and Lindsay, 2006), its significance in the democratic extensions of twenty-first century university intakes, the value of decreasing learning isolation (Sarles, 2001: 408; Chiddick, 2006:23) and the sense of ownership with collaboration engenders . So far, most of this collaboration has been about student involvement. There appears to be scope for ensuring that it includes all staff, governors and communities too.

LEARNING LANDSCAPES: THE ESTATES DIMENSIONS

The literature survey (see bibliography) indicates that there is no other work related to learning landscapes that relates to the involvement of estates *per se* or to collaborations between academic and administrative staff or students or managers with estates. When landscapes are interpreted only as the green land spaces around universities, estates do get a mention. USA universities' projects to improve their grounds 'depended heavily on a personal, co-operative approach between the school's environmental co-ordinator and…architects, construction development teams, plant operations department, and environmental studies students and faculty (Starik *et al,* 2002: 339).

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A WORKING DEFINITION

VERSION 1 Collating all these, our definition could be:
University learning landscapes are conceptually holistic, loosely-coupled interconnections of all formal and informal, on- and off-campus, virtual and physical facilities, sites and services and how stakeholders use them. Academics' and governors' conscious decisions to manipulate all these traditional and innovative facilities as continually and ubiquitously available collaborative opportunities to enhance learning, distinguishes a learning leadership approach from mere site management. Preparations for this approach require understandings of why universities are still wanted, mapping of how they are now used and a belief that all elements of university environments have to justify their roles in learning.

VERSION 2 Collating all these, our definition could be:
Is it a café ? Is it a park? Is it a lecture hall, meeting, a computer, a corridor…?
No – it's a learning landscape. It's the unbounded space in which university teachers, researchers, caterers, estates managers, governors, administrators and students interact in multiple dimensions. Connected through e-techologies to their surrounding communities, providers and supporters, off-campus and on, collaboration both enhances learning and

improves democracy. So whether you're in a virtual or physical place, a traditional tutorial or a blogging chat, it's all enhancing your learning and we're building it with you.

An extended version of this prolegomenon is for project team discussion and for a chapter for Bell, L. (ed) (2008) *Issues in Higher Education Learning,* London: Continuum. *.*
 Working Paper 2 will proceed to set this discussion into its varying institutional contexts with a review and comparative study of existing management, governance and committee structures in HE in relation to research and learning landscapes within the estates and learning strategies.

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