

The Learning Lab – Supporting Groups and Collaborative Learning for Large Classes

Peter Tregloan

The University of Melbourne

While the large lecture and conventional lab experience remain central aspects of the first year Chemistry programs at Melbourne, The Learning Lab has been designed to support and encourage active learning in small group settings.

- The Learning Lab is an open and flexible space for a class of around 40, built in 5 group work zones.
- Students have access to a range of hardware - PC and laptop points, document cameras and other presentation devices. Routine online access to electronic databases, e-journals and resources in class becomes part of students' undergraduate experience.
- The plan incorporates six projection screens around the space that can be coordinated in a teacher presentation, or used by groups in each user zone to display resources they are developing in class.
- The project enables us to safely bring 'live' chemical demonstrations back to our teaching, by exploiting modern macro-video and projection technology.
- The Learning Lab provides an evaluation test bed for new approaches to learning and teaching.

This talk will present background to the project and report on initial experiences in the implementation and use of this new teaching space at Melbourne.