

Blackpool & The Fylde College
Loop Evaluation

Introduction

In 2006, Blackpool & The Fylde College commissioned Curious Oranj, a Glasgow-based design company, to carry out a field research project that examined the use of library and learning resource centre spaces. The research project was carried out over a course of 3 months and resulted in a detailed report, which made spatial recommendations based on the research findings. This report then became the basis for a design brief for the library and resulted in The Loop, a central social learning space and library.

Then in 2008, Blackpool & The Fylde College commissioned Nomad RDC, specialists in learning environment design and research, to consult students in order to evaluate the success of the space. A social networking site and a questionnaire were selected as methods of consultation. The project took place from the 11th of May 2009 until the 16th of June 2009. Slightly over 300 students participated in both methods of evaluation.

The purpose of this evaluation is to ensure that, a) students are satisfied with the space, b) recommendations have been followed, and c) to learn more about student opinion to allow the college to continue to implement effective and popular spaces.

Research Methodology

In the assessment of The Loop, the following methodology was used. 1) Focus of the research 2) Developing the research questions 3) Choosing the research strategy 4) Selecting the methods 5) Collecting the data 6) Analysis of the data and 7) Reporting the findings.

The main research questions are: -

- 1) Have the recommendations made by Curious Oranj been implemented in the design of the Loop?
- 2) How successful were the implementations?
- 3) What improvements can be made?

Universal findings and recommendations by Curious Oranj

In order to give us a context of what questions to ask, it was necessary to go through the research findings of the space before The Loop was built.

Curious Oranj Navigation findings

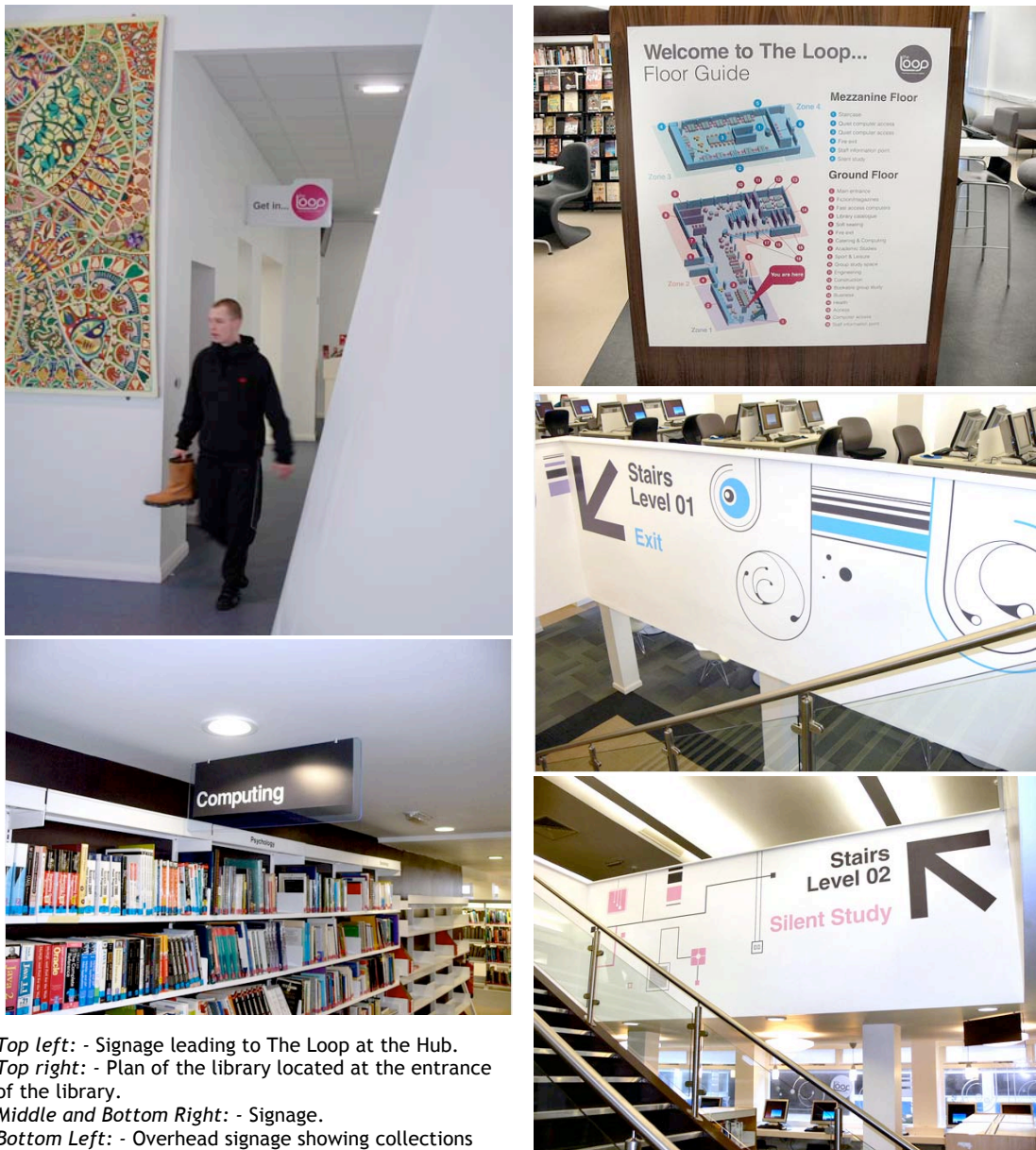
The research report concluded that navigation within the college is problematic due to the lack of signs and as a consequence, the library and Learning Resource Centres (LRC), of which there were 4 of them, were very difficult to find.

There were many handwritten text-based notices on the walls of all the LRCs and the library. A majority of the notices were negative in its conveyance and were usually about rules enforcement. Furthermore many of the notices were outdated and this meant that it was hard to distinguish recent notices from the outdated ones.

Curious Oranj Navigation recommendations

The college needs a comprehensive signage package both indoors and outdoors. The creation of strong identities for buildings would help with students and visitors' navigation and sense of belonging.

Navigation Implementation



Top left: - Signage leading to The Loop at the Hub.
 Top right: - Plan of the library located at the entrance of the library.
 Middle and Bottom Right: - Signage.
 Bottom Left: - Overhead signage showing collections

Curious Oranj Working methods findings

The research report highlighted that there was not enough space and equipment in the LRCs and the library. Equipment such as printing and copying in the LRCs and library were often out-of-service with broken equipment scattered about due to a lack of storage space.

The report also indicated that the library had insufficient computers and book stock.

Students were observed causing trouble in the LRC and library because of the lack of downtime space on campus. Students requested an area in which they could chat, have coffee and do their homework. The staff repeatedly suggested having a cyber café.

There was also a lack of different working space available, in particular group working and silent space.

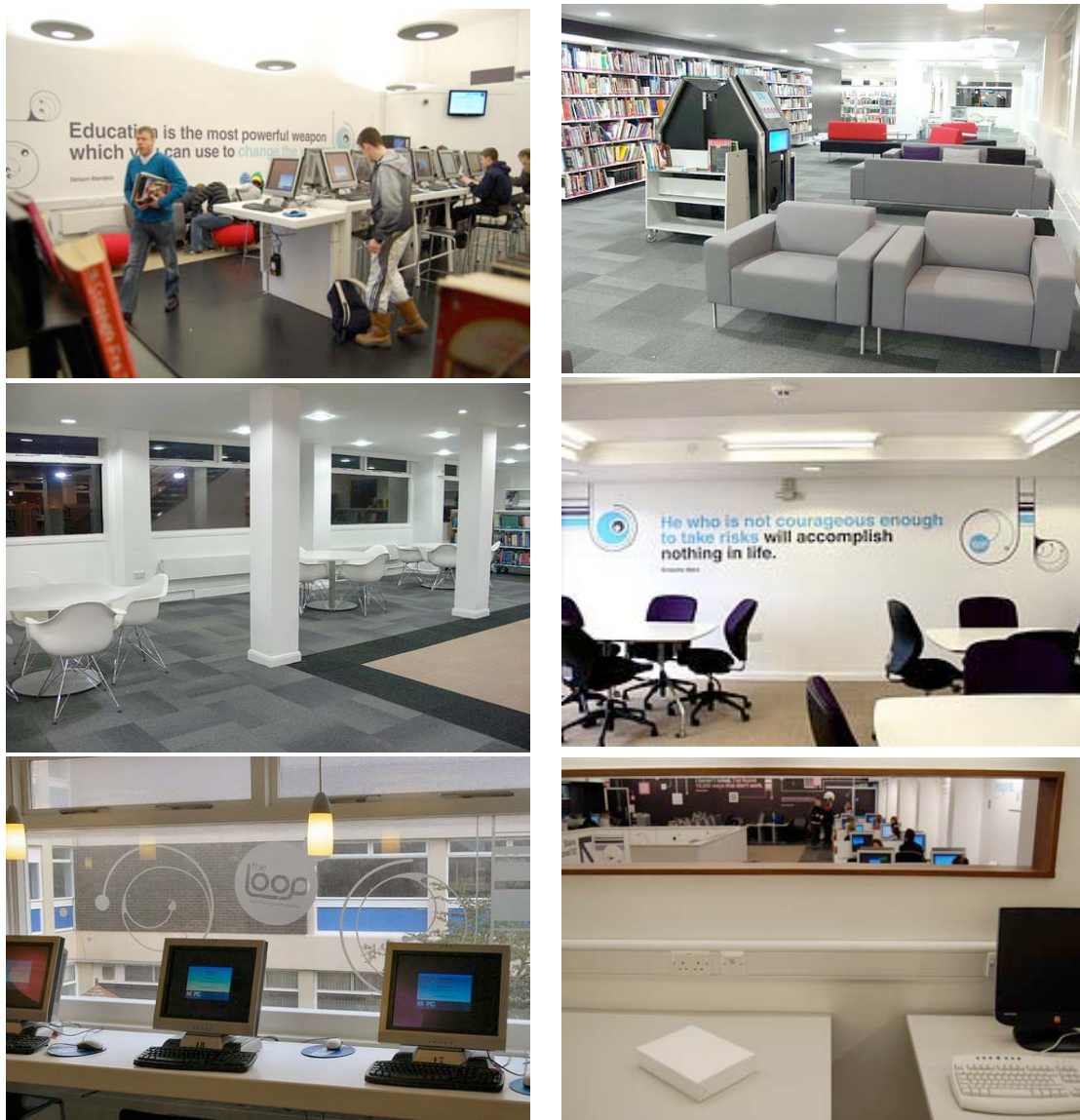
Curious Oranj Working methods recommendations

It was recommended that all of the LRCs, the library and associated services should be consolidated into one central location. To accommodate this, the current library should be extended and the mezzanine area of the library should be floored over. This would provide a number of spaces that would allow staff to zone services. The floored over mezzanine area should be used as a silent floor and combined staff area.

The book stock in the library should be arranged by schools, each with its own hardware and identity. The edges of each section should have areas where students can work in groups and practice presentations. The balcony in the Hub should be transformed into a cyber café style space that would present a creative and busy atmosphere to visitors.

A number of different staff points should be created to enable staff to be more accessible to students.

Working methods Implementation



Top Left: - Social area and Fast Access computer area located near the entrance. *Top Right:* - Soft furnishing area consisting of different seating arrangements for flexible use. This area is located after the social and Fast Access computer area. *Middle Left:* - Study table area that could be used individually or in groups. This is located to the rear of the library. *Middle Right:* - Group Study classroom with conference facility. This is located to the rear of the library. *Bottom Left:* - Window PC area; located between soft furnishing and study table area. *Bottom Right:* - View of the main computer suite from the silent study area.

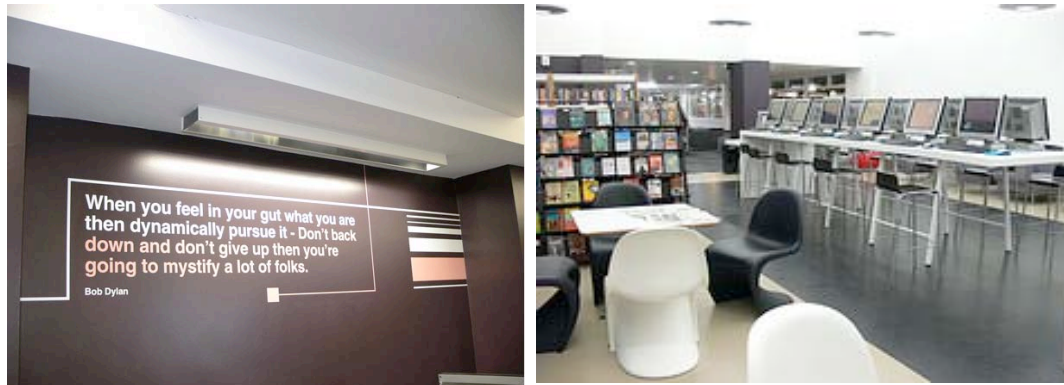
Curious Oranj Image and Identity findings

Students and staff felt that the library and LRCs were out of date and generally run down. The furniture used in the library and LRCs were institutional and not suited for group or individual study. Both staff and students were observed unsuccessfully customising space that would allow them to work more effectively.

Curious Oranj Image and Identity recommendations

It was recommended that clean aesthetics similar to the Hub should be used in the new central service core, as this was what most respondents liked. It was also mentioned that a strong identity is important for the students and staff, as this will create a sense of belonging. Investment into furnishings with strong design aesthetics and durability should be considered. Alternatively, inexpensive 'disposable furniture' with clean aesthetics should be considered as they could be replaced easily. The report strongly suggested that furniture that conforms to the learner's activity should be used, for example, small talk points for quick e-mail checking, larger benches for individual study etc.

Image and Identity Implementation



Top:- One of many positive or inspirational quotes on the walls in The Loop. Furniture consists of design classics, which gives strong design aesthetics and durability.

Due to various reasons, not all recommendations were implemented. By looking at the present navigation, working methods and image and identity issues and implementations to solve those issues, it enables us to have a context of what questions to ask.

Student Evaluation of the Loop

The purpose of the evaluation is to ensure that a) students are satisfied with the space, b) recommendations have been followed, and c) to learn more about student opinion to allow the college to continue to implement effective and popular spaces.

Methods

Two methods were used in the Loop Evaluation. The first method was using a social networking site for collecting information regarding the Loop. The second method was through using the traditional paper questionnaire survey. Both methods will be described and evaluated in this section.

Bebo Social Networking Method

A social networking site, Bebo, was selected as one of the methods to evaluate the Loop. The idea was that Bebo would be a one-stop interactive site where students could take part in the questionnaire through using the “Poll” function in the site as well as use other functions such as “Blog” to enable the upload of photos or leave comments about their experience of using the Loop.

Designing the questionnaire for the “Poll”

The questions were designed to evaluate the effectiveness and satisfaction of the changes made to the Loop. Questions were formed under the three headings of Navigation, Working Methods and Image and Identity. The questions went through 4 revisions, with the final two revisions trialed by students and staff from Blackpool & The Fylde College to check for inconsistency and understanding. See Appendix A for the final version of the questions.

Contents in Bebo Site

The sections below illustrate what was on the Bebo site (See Figure 1).

Profile in Bebo

“Hi, Nomad are a design team who specialise in the research and design of learning spaces and we are interested to find out how students across the UK feel about their new learning spaces. The college have commissioned Nomad to find out how you feel about the Loop. Do you love it? do you hate it?, maybe you have strong views on how to make it better? Let us know your views & tell your friends about this page, your ideas will help Nomad and the College to make even better projects in the future. We have loaded up a number of polls for you to take and would really be interested in your thoughts and photographs of The Loop.”

Blog

“Q1. Which is your preferred studying area in The Loop?

- 1) Main computer suite
- 2) Window bar PC area
- 3) Fast Access PC area
- 4) Social Space areas (next to Fast Access PC)
- 5) Soft Seating Area
- 6) Study Tables Area
- 7) Triple Bench (sofa with laptop table)
- 8) Silent Study Area

9) Group Study Room

Q2. What do you love about your library?

Why not take some pictures with your phone of your favorite or least favorite places in the library and load them up here. We would love to see them.

Q3. Do you love your library?

Please take part in the polls below to tell us how you feel about the Library, leave comments where you want to give us more information about what you think.”

The screenshot shows the Bebo profile page for 'Lovethelibrary'. The top navigation bar includes Home, Profile, Friends, Mail, Explore, Settings, Help, Log Out, and a search bar. The profile header features a red heart logo with 'the loop' text and a 'Say something!' quote. The 'My Lifestory' section displays a photo of 'The Loop Space' and a poll titled 'How to enter the Prize Draw?'. The 'About Me' section includes a tagline 'Making your spaces better', a bio for 'Me, Myself, and I', and a prize draw announcement for a £50 Amazon voucher. The 'Friends' section shows four friends: Katie, Scott Mason, Carla Walsh, and Ashley. The page also features an advertisement for a '15in Laptop Envelope' and two polls regarding library signage.

Figure 1. Screen shots illustrating the Bebo site for the Loop evaluation.

Poll

Bebo allow users to participate in a questionnaire by offering an in-built poll function available on its site. The setup is very easy and user interface is very simple and offers the simplest way of getting information from students. The results from the poll are also displayed immediately after the questionnaire is completed.

Bebo Poll, however, has some disadvantages. They are: - 1) the same participant can repeatedly take part in the polls without being detected. The poll function only counts the number of votes but does not register the person who participated in the poll. 2) Only 5 choices are possible for a question. Questions that require more selection choices are therefore not possible and 3) a function for open answers or responses is not available.

To mitigate the above issues, the following was implemented

- 1) Participants who take part in the Poll are required to leave a comment. This would log their profile and thus allow the researcher to keep track and tally between the vote counts and the number of participants (done by leaving a comment).
- 2) Instructions stated that the poll should only be taken once and a comment should be given to qualify for the prize draw. This is to prevent students taking part in the polls thinking that repeated polling would result in a higher chance to win the prize.
- 3) Direct the students to the Blog or Whiteboard function for open answers.

Questions from the questionnaire (see section 1.2) were used in the “Poll”.

Participants and Setting

To create awareness of the Bebo site, posters (See Appendix B) were put up around the campus and a digital version was placed on the student portal website. A £25 voucher prize draw was advertised in the posters to encourage students to participate in the evaluation.

The site was activated on the 8th May 2009 and was advertised to students in the college on the 11th May 2009. This was to enable the Bebo site to be ready when the students logged into the site.

Outcome from the Bebo site


The Bebo site ran from 11th May 2009 to 19th June 2009. In total, the site was visited 42 times. Participation in the Polls varies from 4 to 19 depending on the questions. In addition, 6 comments were registered on the Blog section.

At the end of week 2, the responses to the Bebo site were still very low. The issues encountered were uneven participation in the Polls as well as issues with the Poll function. Issues with the Poll function were 1) if a mistake was made after the question was answered (i.e. vote was made) there was no way of correcting the mistake. 2) The researcher had no access to the results unless he participates in the Poll. Only after he votes will the results be shown and this will therefore skew the results.

It was decided that a paper version of the questions should be made available to allow for wider participation (e.g. students who are not registered with Bebo or are uncomfortable using social networks). The Bebo site was kept ‘live’ to allow for further contributions.

Figure 2 illustrates some of the comments made in the Bebo site. The comments were generally positive about The Loop. There were minor issues in regards to The Loop being crowded in the main computer suite, in particular. The Loop is considered to be a more relaxing space when it is not crowded.

As the participation in the polls was low, the results are not shown here, as they will not be representative of the opinions of the students in the campus.



Computers by the window area or "Window Bar" 1.jpg

[Add Tags](#) | [Send-It](#) | [Edit](#) | [Move](#) | [Copy](#) | [Delete](#) | [Set Album Cover](#) | [Set Profile Photo](#)

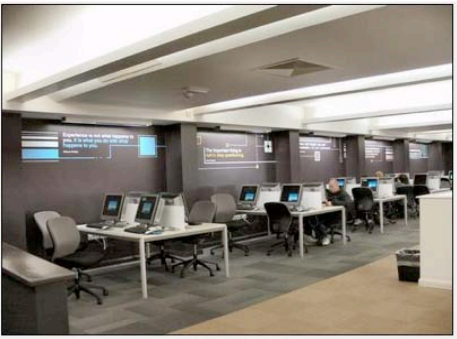
2 Comments:

▶ **Carla Walsh said...** 41 days ago
These are the best to study on

[Delete](#)

▶ **DazzJhnikid said...** 22 days ago
KZAM

[Delete](#)




Main computer suite.jpg

[Add Tags](#) | [See Larger](#) | [Send-It](#) | [Edit](#) | [Move](#) | [Copy](#) | [Delete](#) | [Set Album Cover](#) | [Set Profile Photo](#)

Comment:

▶ **Carla Walsh said...** 41 days ago
I prefer downstairs as its always packed up stairs

[Delete](#)



Soft seating area or Reading Area.jpg

[Add Tags](#) | [Send-It](#) | [Edit](#) | [Move](#) | [Copy](#) | [Delete](#) | [Set Album Cover](#) | [Set Profile Photo](#)

1 Comment:

▶ **Carla Walsh said...** 41 days ago
I think these seats are company and you can chill out

[Delete](#)

Do you love your library? 127 days ago

Please take part in the polls on this page to tell us how you feel about the Library, leave comments where you want to give us more information.

posted by [Lovethelibrary](#) [Edit](#) | [Delete](#)

2 Comments:

▶ **Carla Walsh said...** 41 days ago
Yes i think the loop really nice and relazing. Its much better when theres few people in

[Report Spam](#) | [Delete](#)

▶ **Kevin Wenman said...** 36 days ago
Yes i think the loop really nice and relazing. Its much better when theres few people in

[Report Spam](#) | [Delete](#)

[Post a Comment](#)

Figure 2. Images of comments from the Bebo Site

The Loop Student Survey

The advantages of using closed-question surveys is that they are 1) low in cost and time to facilitate 2) easy to get information from a lot of people 3) able to prevent interviewer biases and 4) allow for the standardisation of questions. Disadvantages of using closed-questions surveys include the possibility of a low response rate and the inability to allow other opinions, beside the questions on the survey. Steps taken to resolve the disadvantages included encouraging students to participate in the survey by ensuring the prize draw that was opened for participants in the Bebo site was extended to the survey. Staff members were also asked to encourage students to take part in the survey. Furthermore, a section for suggestions or comments to allow for open answers was added to the survey.

Between 18th May 2009 to 16th June 2009, 301 surveys were gathered from a student population of 4012 (7.5% response rate). The results were tabulated in Microsoft Excel and percentages calculated for each question. For questions that consist of Likert scales (Agree Strongly, Agree Slightly, Neither, Disagree Slightly, Disagree Strongly), each scale is summed up to create a score (count and corresponding percentage) and the scores are collated into bar charts. Analysis and interpretation is done based on the mode (i.e. value that occurs the most frequently in a data set) of the bar chart. In support of the interpretation, the response was also coded (i.e. 1= Agree Strongly, 2 = Agree Slightly, 3 = Neither, 4 = Disagree Slightly, 5 = Disagree Strongly) where the Mean was calculated to give us a feel which direction the average answer is orientated (See Figure 3). Cross-analysis was not done because subject descriptors were not included in the survey. The results are shown in the section “Findings and Recommendations From the Likert Scale Questions in The Loop Student Survey”.

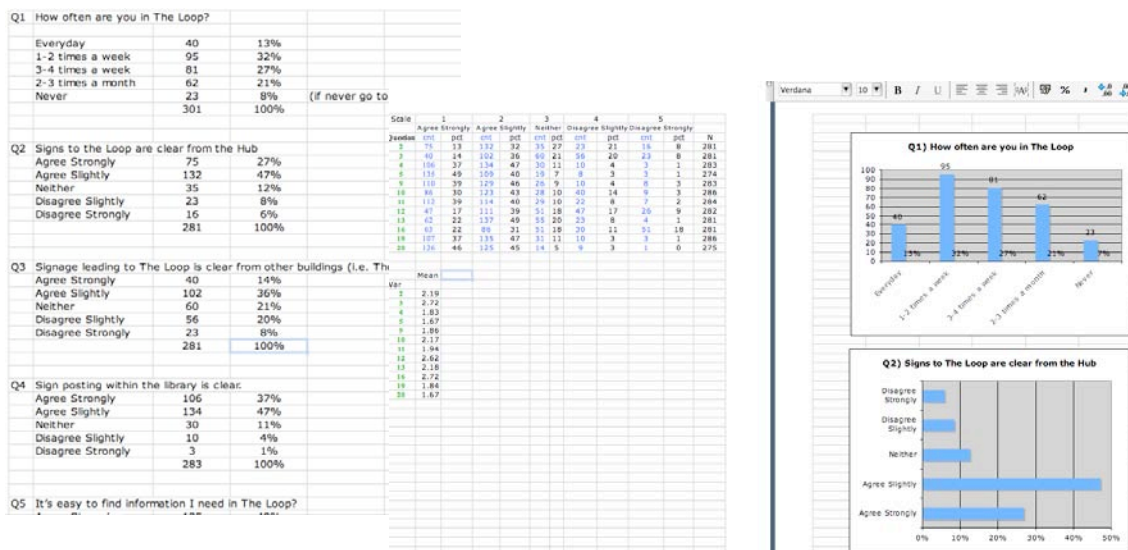
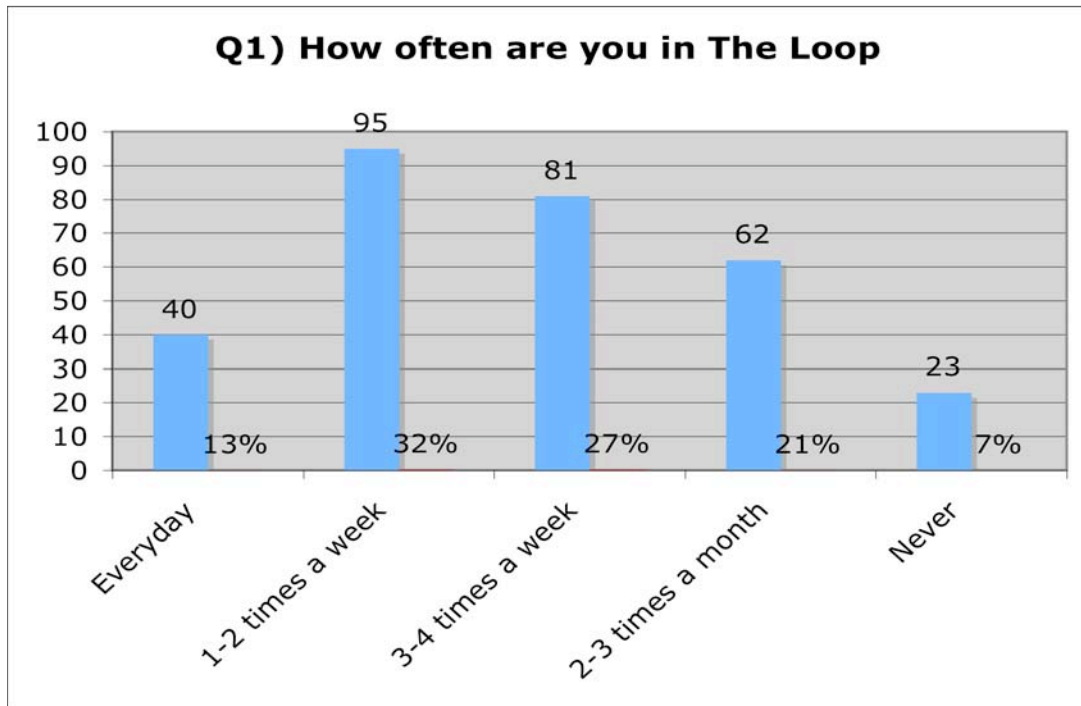


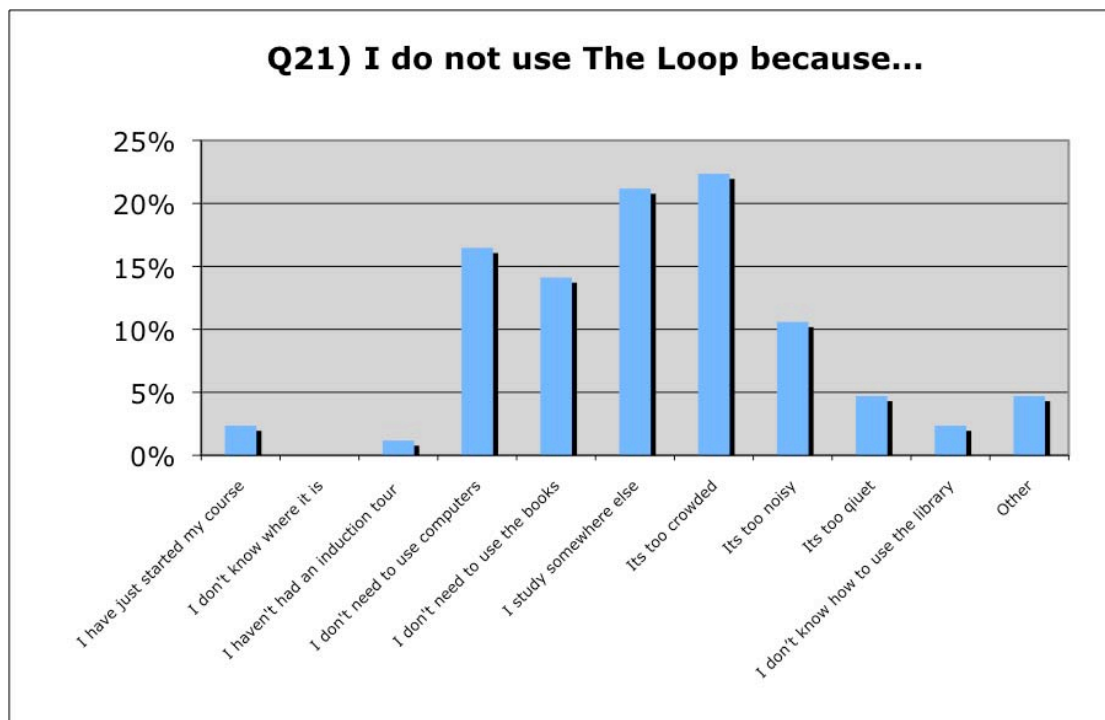
Figure 3. Image showing data and calculation done in Excel.

Comments and suggestions from the survey are coded, categorised under similar themes and the frequency calculated. Important issues are highlighted with analysis and recommendations made. Results are shown in “Additional Comments and Recommendations From The Loop Student Survey”

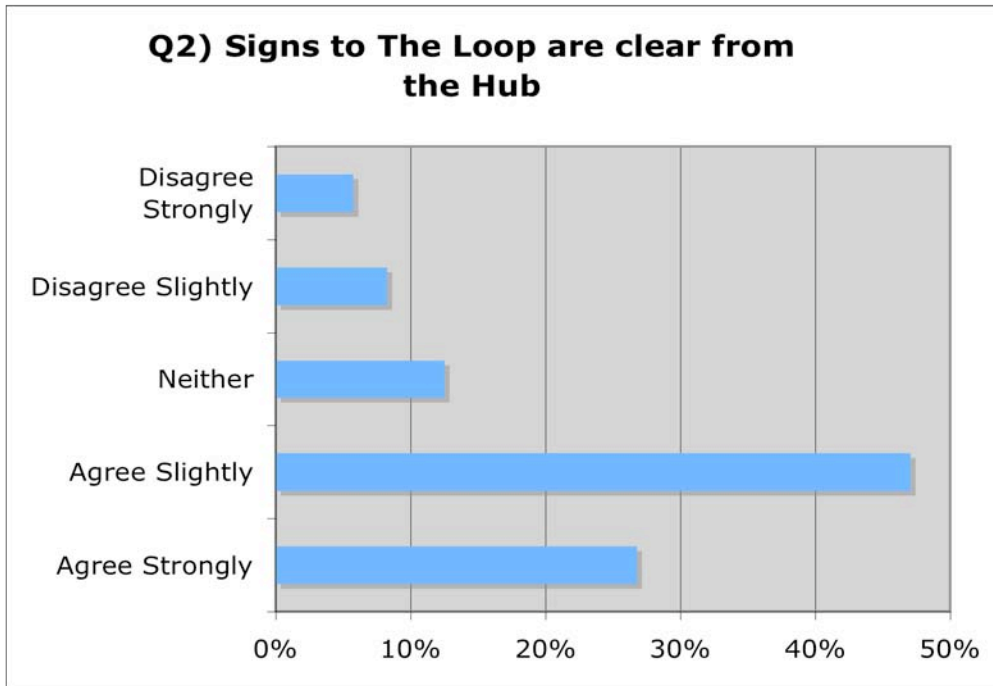
Findings and Recommendations From the Likert Scale Questions in The Loop Student Survey



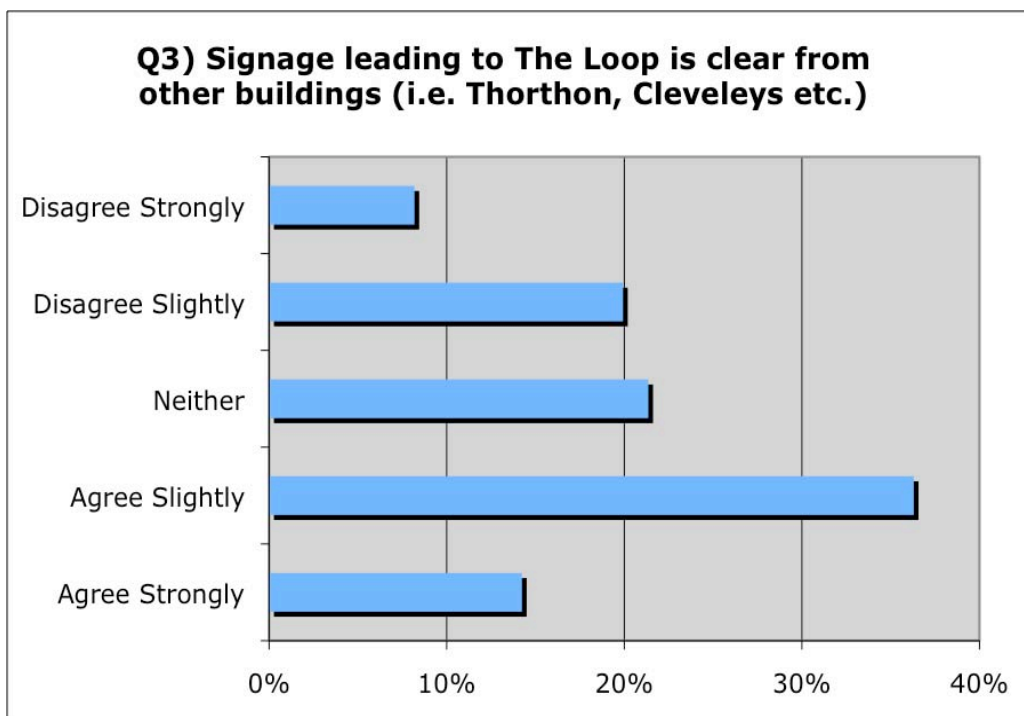
The vast majority of the students (59%, n=301) surveyed visit the library at least 4 times a week (32%; 1-2 times a week and 27%; 3-4 times a week). 13 % (n=301) visits the library everyday while 21% (n=301) 2 - 3 times a month. 7% (n=301) never visited the library and the top 5 reasons are i) its too crowded (22%, n=85), ii) I study somewhere else (21%, n=85), iii) I don't need to use computers (16%, n=85), iv) I don't need to use the books (14%, n=85) and v) It is too noisy (11%, n=85).



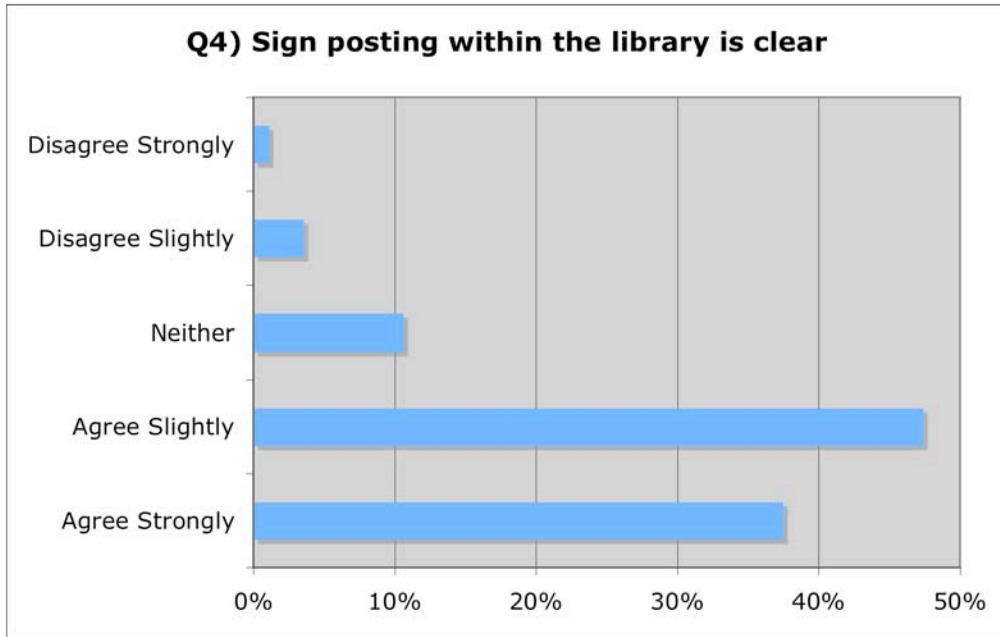
10 out of the 23 students who have not visited the Loop were from the ESOL course.



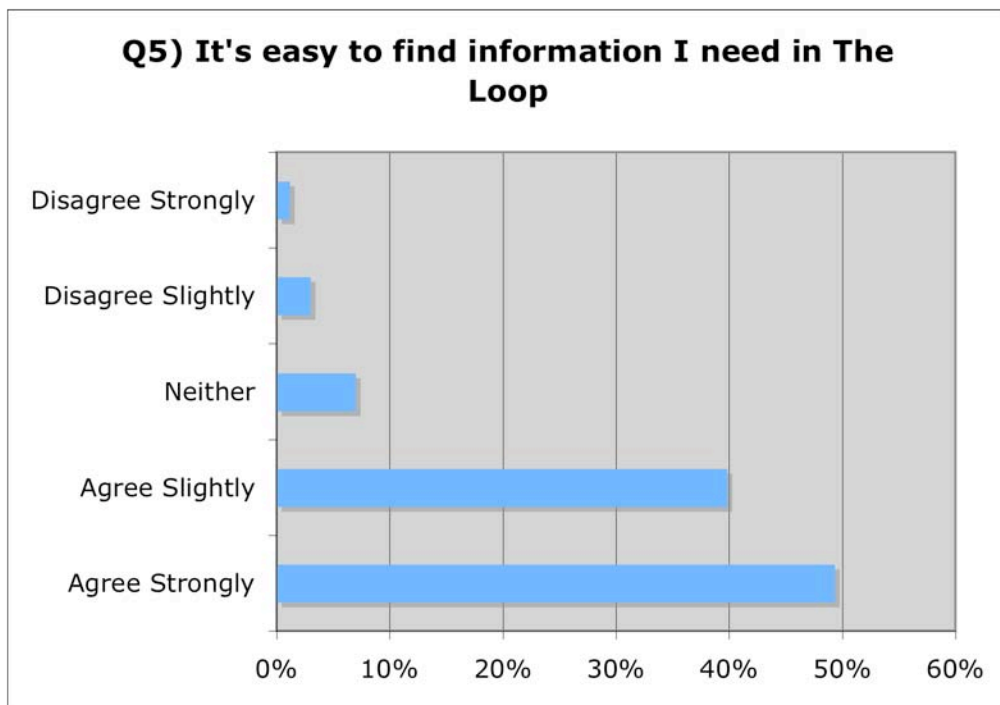
The majority of students Agree Slightly that the signs to The Loop are clear from the Hub (n= 281, Mean = 2.1).



36% (n= 281) of the students Agree Slightly that the signage leading to The Loop is clear from other buildings. The Mean (2.73) suggest that the overall average response lies between “Neither” and “Agree Slightly”. In the initial research findings by Curious Oranj, it was stated that the learning resource centres (LRCs) and library were very difficult to find due to the lack of signage. With the consolidation of the LRCs and library, now called The Loop, the results seem to suggest that signage improved slightly but also indicates more could be done to improve navigation to The Loop from other buildings.

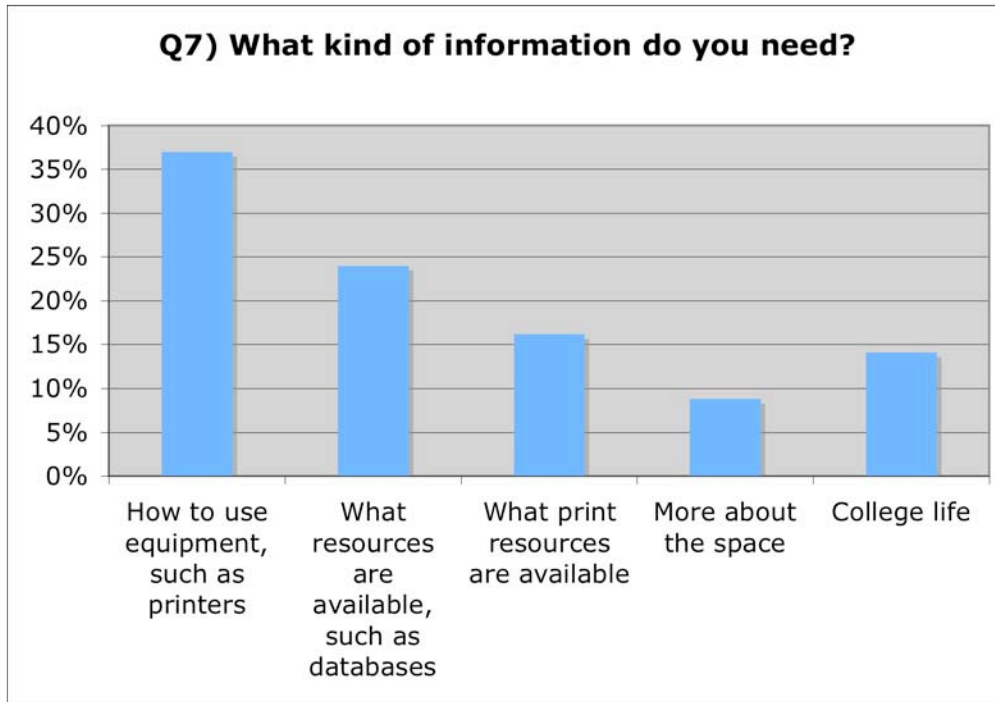


47% (n=283) of the students Agree Slightly while 37% (n=283) Agree Strongly that the sign posting within the library is clear. The calculated Mean is 1.83 suggesting that the overall average response tends towards Agree slightly.

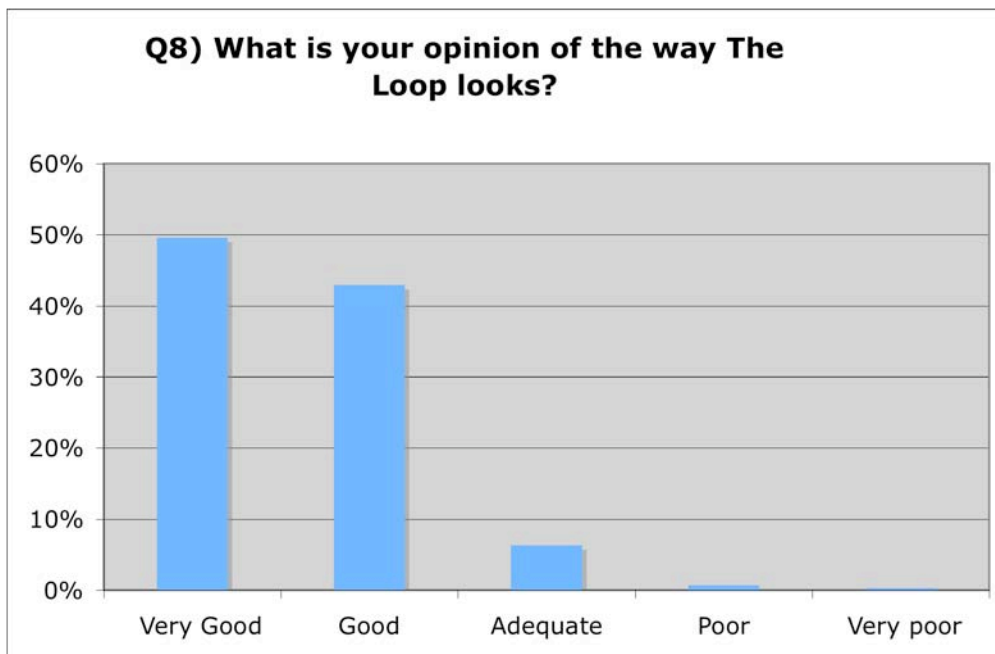


49% (n=274) of the students Agree Strongly while 40% (n=274) Agree Slightly that information is easy to find in The Loop. The calculated Mean is 1.67 suggesting that the overall average response tends towards Agree Slightly.

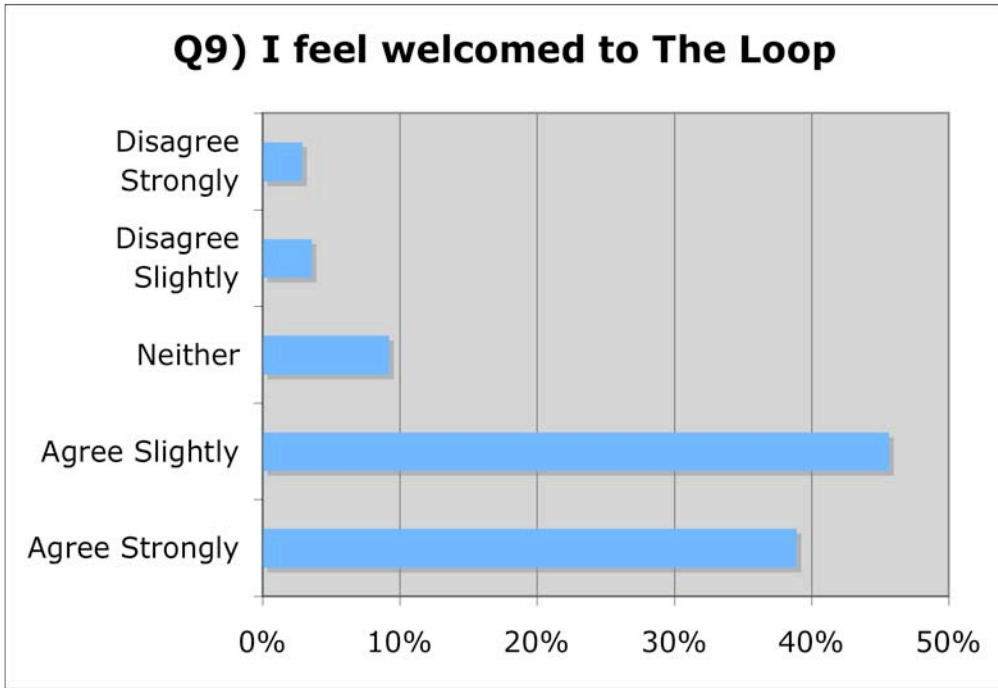
When asked, "Have you had an induction tour of The Loop?" 71% (202 students) responded "Yes" while 29% (84 students) said "No". Although close to 30% of the students did not attend the induction tour, a majority finds it easy to find information that they need in the Loop. This implies that current zoning of services and signage in The Loop helps with the process of finding information.



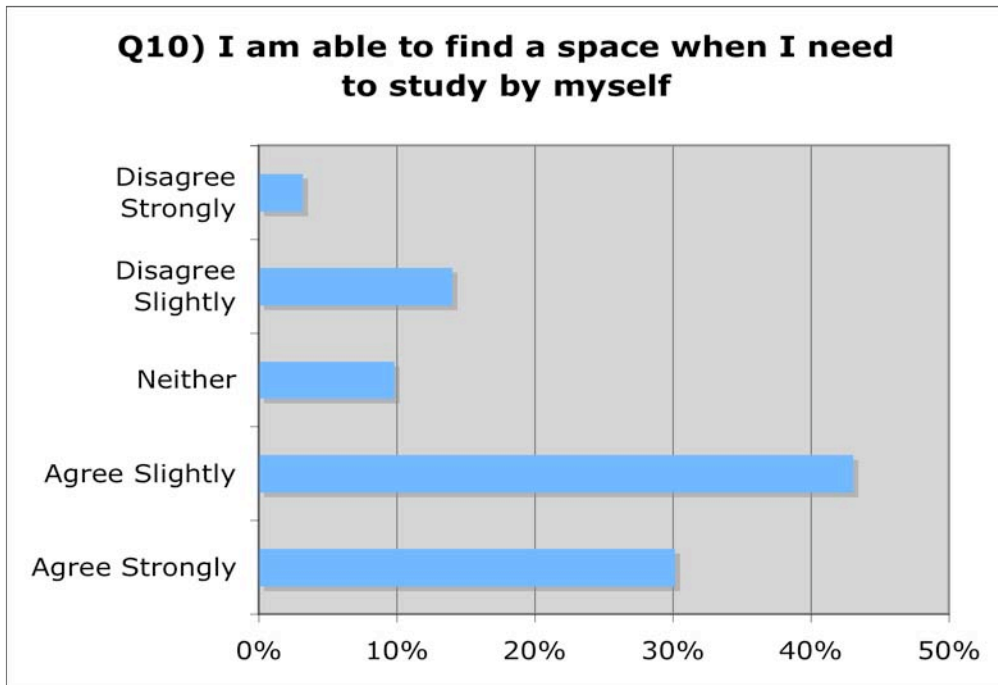
For students who think that there is not enough information available in The Loop, most of them (37%, n=192) want more information on how to use equipment such as printers, copiers etc. The next information that the students (24%, n=192) need is what database resources are available in The Loop. This is followed by more information on what print resources (16%, n=192) are available, college life (14%, n=192) and types of space (9%, n=192).



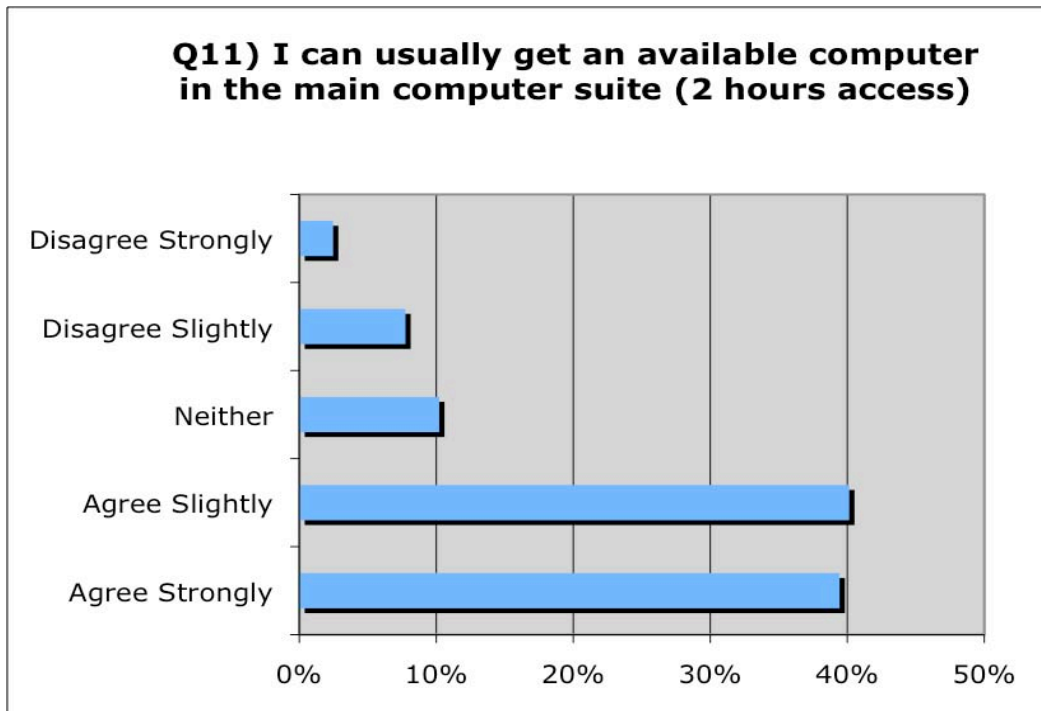
The statistics from the survey shows that the investment into furnishings with strong design aesthetics has resulted in the majority of students (50% Very Good, 43% Good, n=286) stating that they like the aesthetics of The Loop.



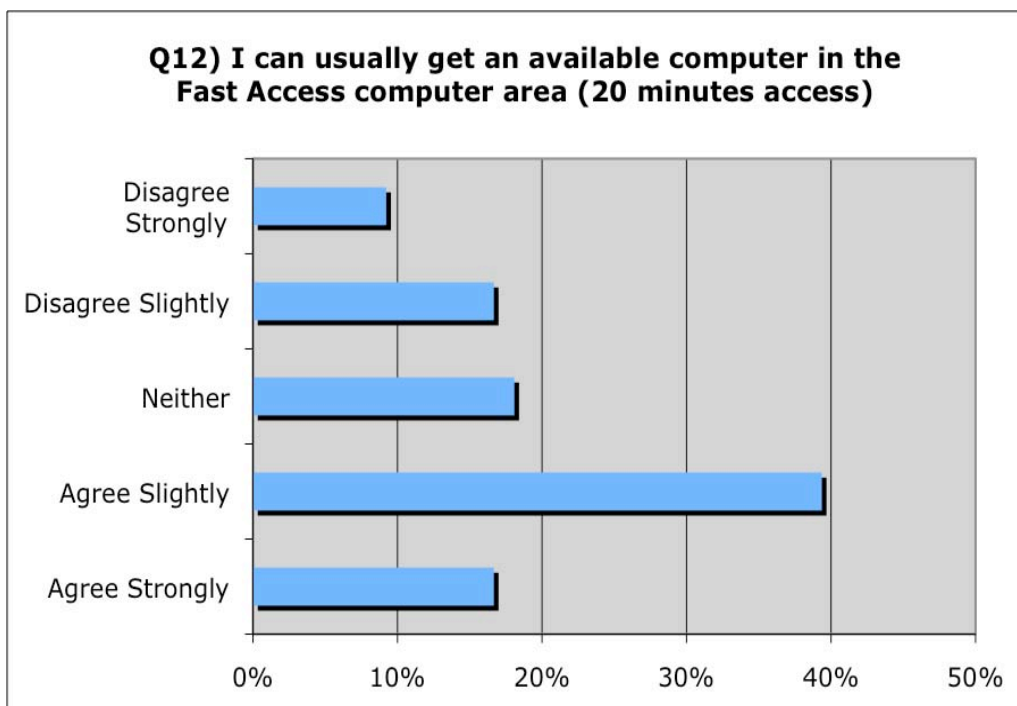
From the initial research report, it was mentioned that creating a sense of belonging is important in the space. When asked in the survey whether they feel welcomed to The Loop, 39% (n=283) and 46% (n=283) Agree Strongly and Agree Slightly respectively that they feel welcomed to The Loop. The calculated Mean is 1.86 that indicates the overall response tends towards “Agree Slightly”. Being welcomed is part of belonging and the result shows that the objective of creating a sense of belonging was met.



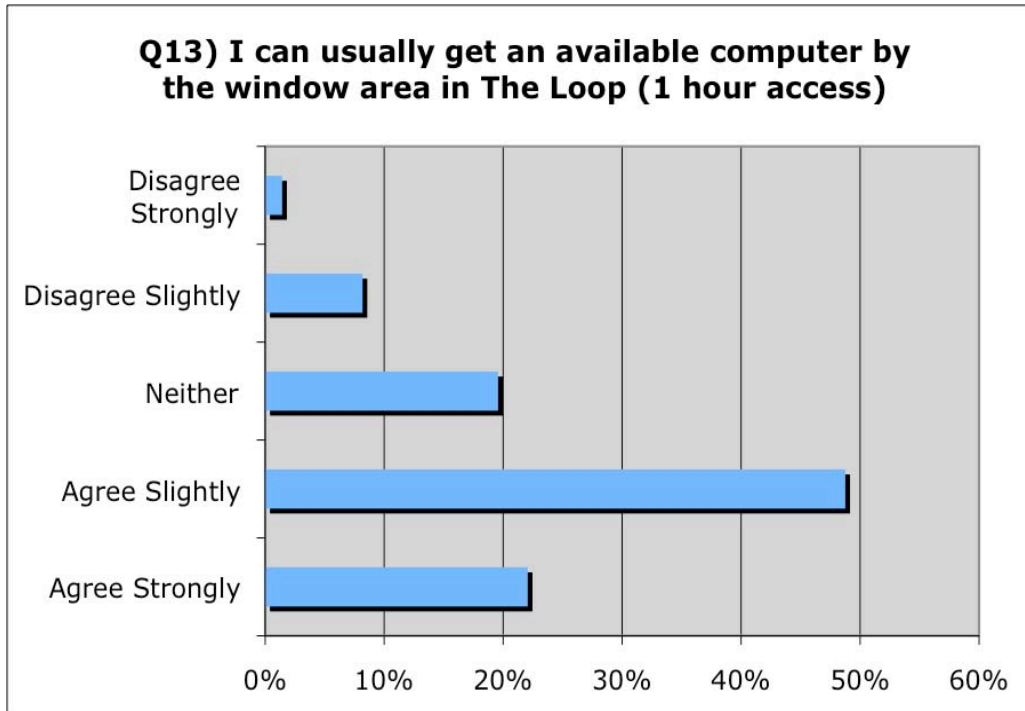
When asked whether they were able to find an individual space when they need to study, 43% (n=286) Agree Slightly and 30% (n=286) Agree Strongly. The calculated Mean is 2.17. Although not significant, 14% (n=286) Disagree Slightly.



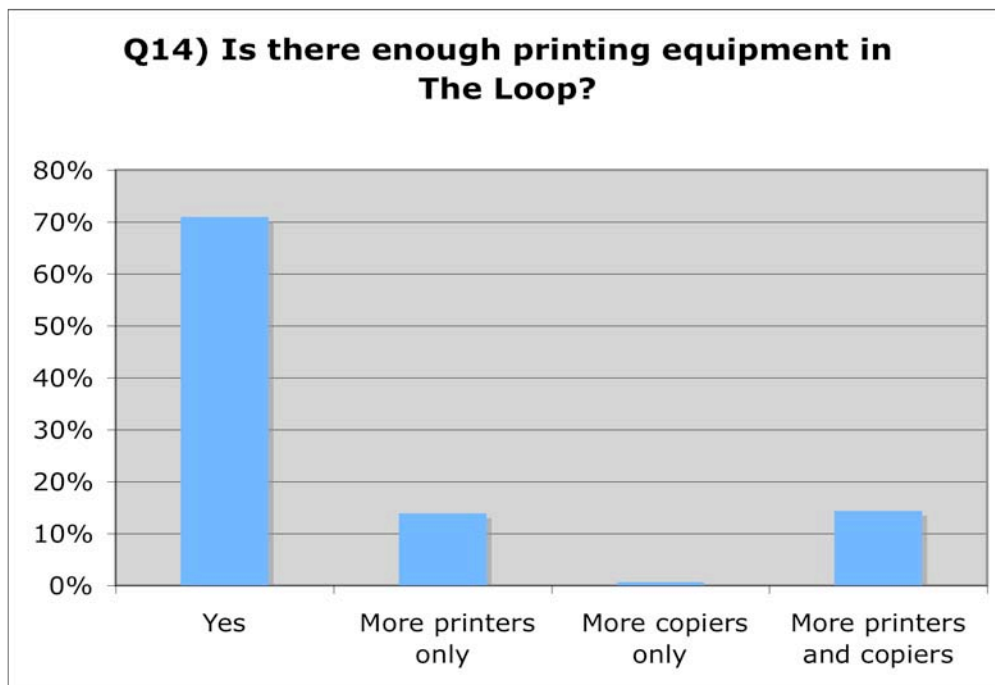
The majority of students (39% Agree Strongly and 40% Agree Slightly, n=286, Mean=1.94) agree that they can usually get an available computer in main computer suite.



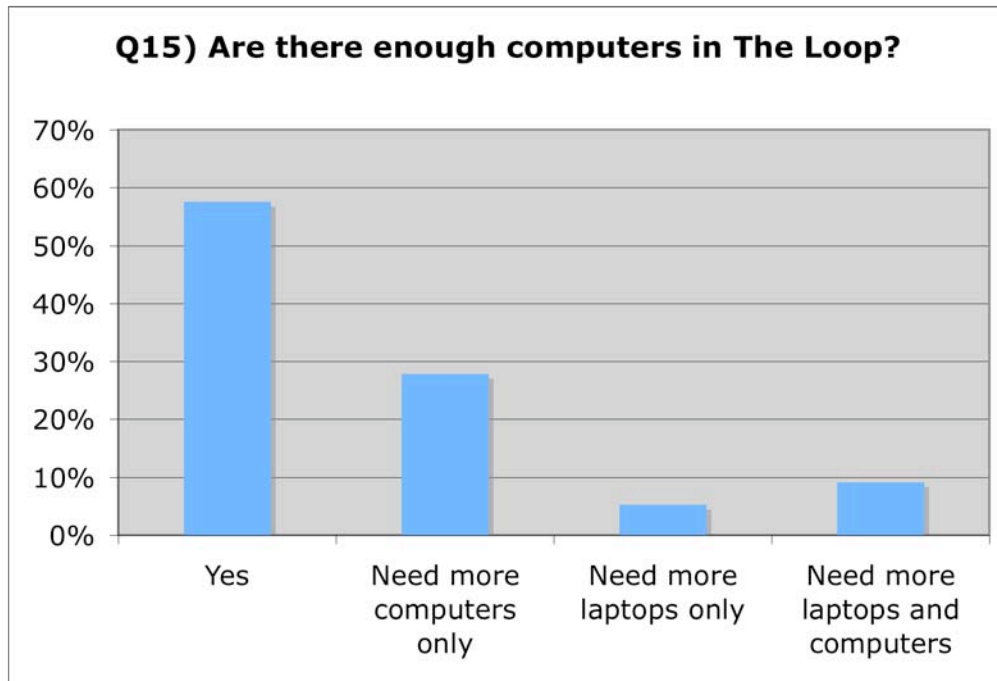
39% (n=282) Agree Slightly while 22% (n=282) Agree Strongly that they can usually get an available computer in the Fast Access computer area. 18% (n=282) neither agree nor disagree, 17% (n=282) Disagree Slightly and 9% (n=282) Disagree Strongly that they can usually get a computer in the Fast Access computer area. This area is where students can use the computers to check emails, surf the web or access social networks and thus is heavily used. The calculated Mean is 2.62 which indicates that the response tend towards "Neither". The number of students using this facility could increase if there is an increase in student intake. To increase availability, solutions could include decreasing access time or increasing the number of computers in the fast access area.



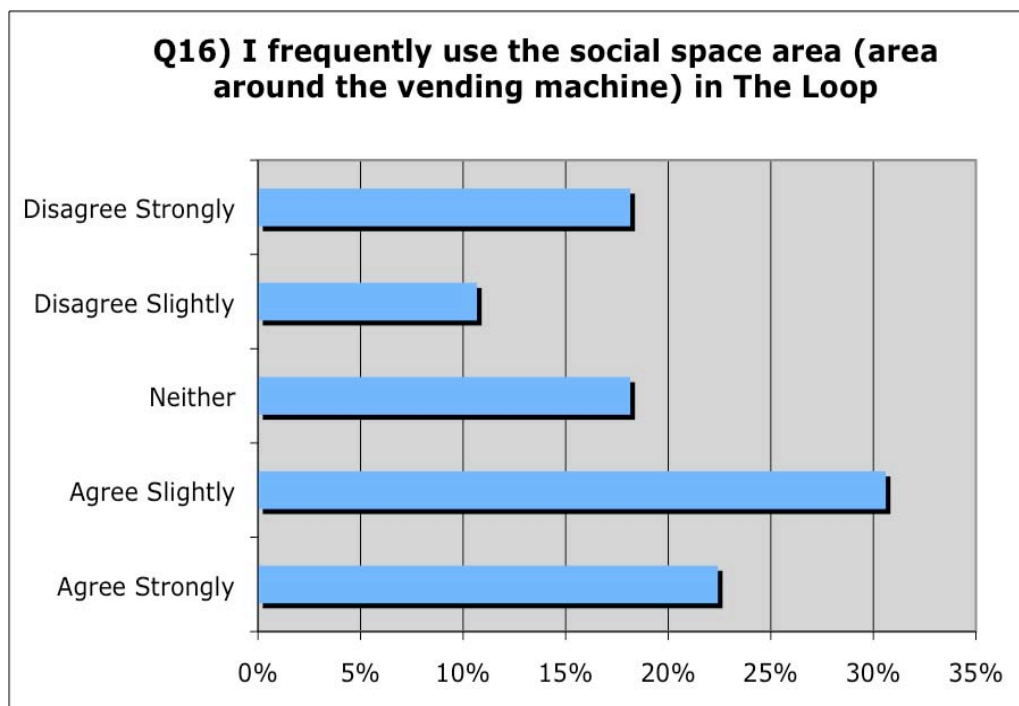
49% (n=281) of the students surveyed Agree Slightly that they can usually get an available computer by the window area in The Loop. The calculated Mean response is 2.18.



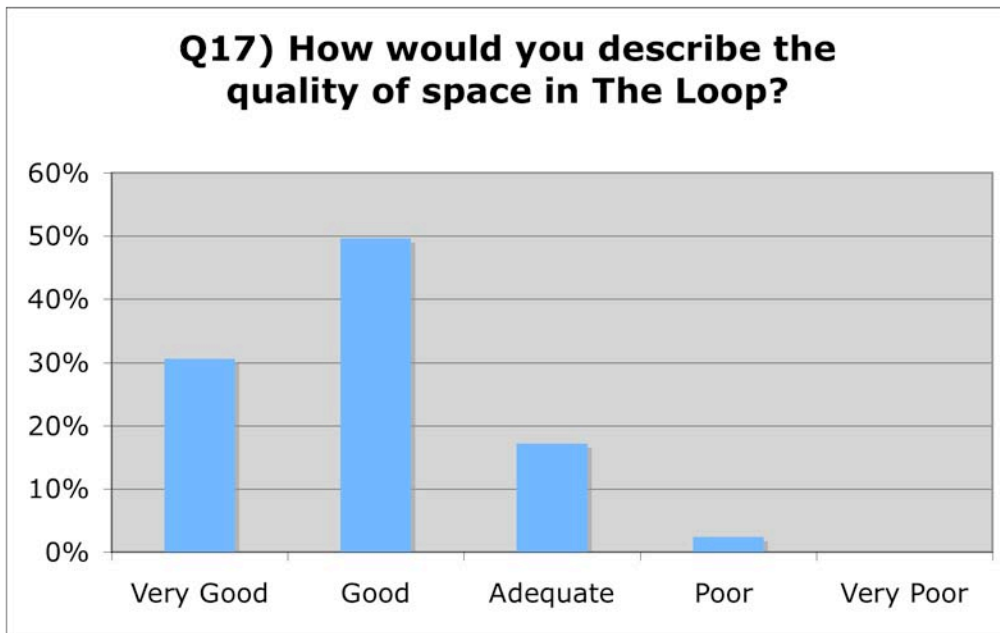
71% (n= 279) of the students say that there is enough printing equipment in The Loop. 14% (n= 279) say that more printers should be added to The Loop while another 14% (n=279) say that more printers and copiers should be made available.



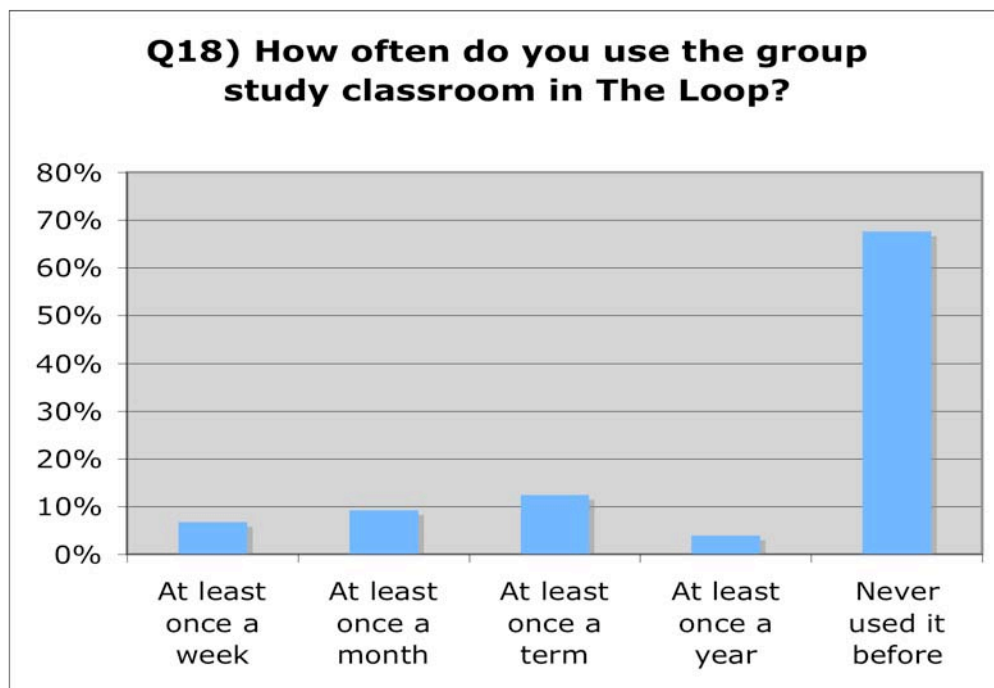
58% (n= 283) of the students agree that there are enough computers in The Loop while 28% (n= 283) say that The Loop needs more computers.



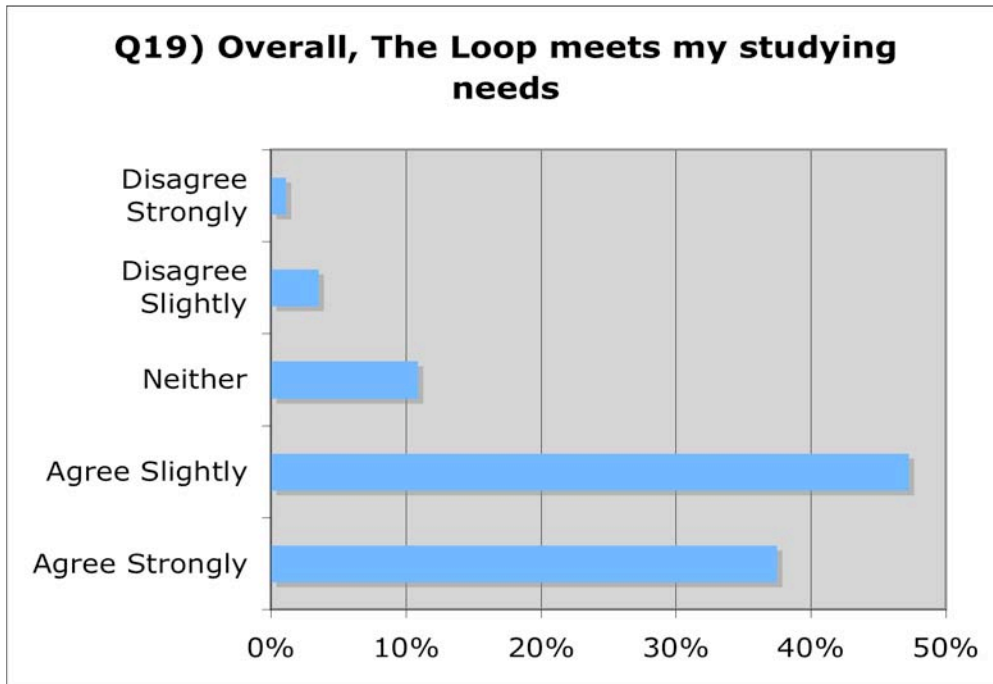
31% (n= 281) Agree Slightly with 22% (n= 281) Agree Strongly that they frequently use the social space area in The Loop. 18% (n= 281) responded with Neither. 18% (n= 281) and 11% (n= 281) Disagree Strongly and Disagree Slightly respectively. The calculated Mean is 2.72 which meant that the overall response tend towards Neither. The social space area was created as a downtime area where students could chat, have food and do their homework. Observations also suggest that this is a popular space with students. The result suggests that although popular with some students, the social area is not the only area that students frequently use.



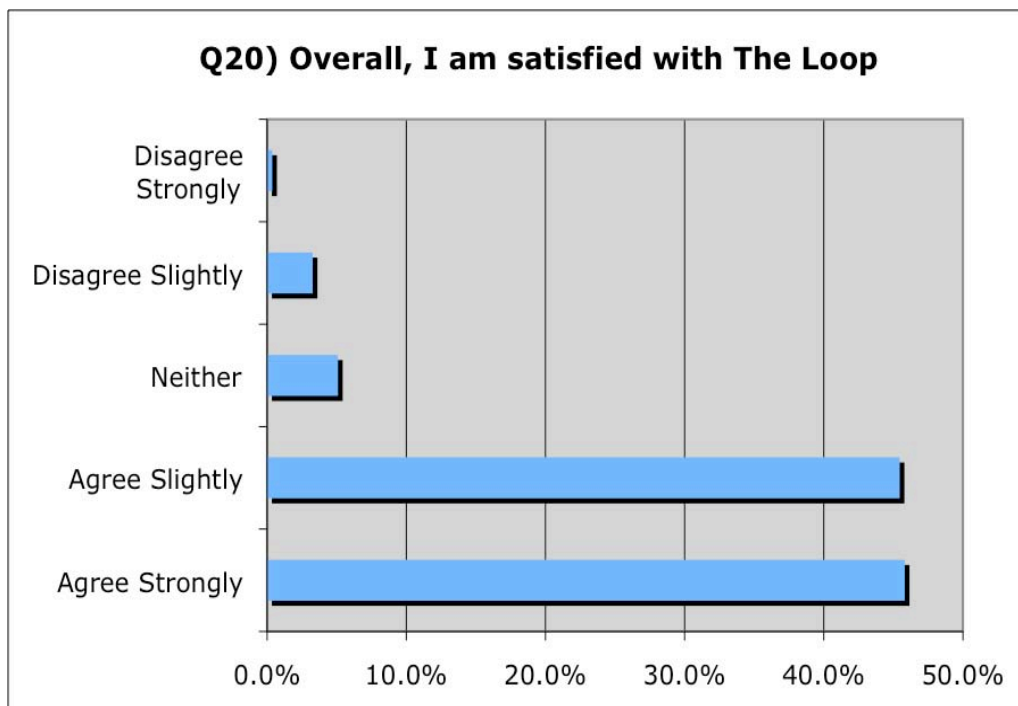
50% (n=290) of the students would describe the quality of space in The Loop as “Good”. 31% (n=290) say that the quality of space is “Very Good” while 17% (n=290) stated that it’s “Adequate”. 2% (n=290) says that it’s poor.



A majority of students (68%, n=282) have never use the group study classroom before. 12% (n=282) say they use it at least once a term. 9% (n=282) say they use it at least once a month. 7% (n=282) say they use it at least once a week and 4% (n=282) at least once a year.



The majority of students Agree Slightly (47%, n=286, Mean=1.84) that The Loop meets their studying needs.



46 % (n=286) of the students Agree Strongly and 45% (n=286) Agree Slightly that they are satisfied with The Loop. The calculated Mean response was 1.67.

Additional Comments and Recommendations From The Loop Student Survey

No.	Category	Frequency	Quote
1.	Positive comments on the Loop	21	<p>“The Loop has improved a lot and made it easier to study effectively.”</p> <p>“I have really enjoyed working in the Loop because everything that is needed is here. Also when you walk in, there are PCs for social networking and there are comfy chairs where you can sit and talk.”</p> <p>“I have found the Loop an excellent resource which has helped me to attain good results in my exams”</p> <p>“..very nice ambience to the environment. This along with excellent motivational phrases on the wall, when quiet, makes the Loop a nice place to work in which provides learning etc.”</p> <p>“I love the Loop’s look but it is also functional and students come in to socialise (face-to-face or online), do their homework, check the latest video on Youtube etc. The Loop looks friendly and not intimidating like the old library...”</p>
2.	More computers needed	12	<p>“Sometimes its very busy so if possible there could be more computers”</p> <p>“More computers and tables so that you can use laptop”</p>
<p>Analysis & Recommendations: Of interest are comments of having tables to put laptops on. Laptop tables could be made available. This allows students who sit on the sofas to be able to use the laptops. This might ease the pressure off fix-point computers (such as those on main computer suite).</p>			
3.	More computers and/or access to social networks	9	<p>“Less nagging on Facebook”</p> <p>“Be allowed to go on Facebook, Bebo etc. on all computers”</p> <p>“Should be able to use Facebook whilst you’re working”</p> <p>“More 20 minutes fast access computers for Facebook etc.”</p> <p>“Should be allowed to use social networking sites upstairs as if you have finished work, you should be able to check Facebook etc.”</p> <p>“Should be allowed to social network upstairs because it gives you a bit of a break from your work.”</p> <p>“More computers in social area.”</p> <p>“More computers for socialising”</p>
4.	Ban social networking	1	<p>“Block Facebook”</p>

	sites		
<p>Analysis & Recommendations: Students commented that if possible: 1) all computers be available to access social networking sites, or 2) have more fast access computers available for social networking or 3) increase access time to fast access computers 4) be allowed to use social networking sites whilst working on assignments with computers in the main suite or at the window bar. One student wanted Facebook to be banned. No reasons were given why. See also “Q12) I can usually get an available computer in the Fast Access Area (20 minutes)” bar chart.</p>			
5.	Friendly and helpful staff	8	<p>“Helpful, always willing to help you. Our staff are very good. Most helpful in the college”</p> <p>“Friendly, helpful staff “</p> <p>“Staff at the Loop has always been a bonus resource whenever I needed them.”</p> <p>“Fantastic approachable staff who always do their very best to provide a service to the students and staff...”</p>
6.	Resource issues	7	<p>“...more up to date and relevant computer-based books will be useful”</p> <p>“Resources mainly on laptops e.g. Adobe software”</p>
<p>Analysis & Recommendations: Resources issues. To have more books in the Loop was the main request. Subjects in particular mentioned were cookery, steam trains, story and computer books. Issue of having Adobe software on only laptops and not on desk PCs was mentioned</p>			
7.	Update music selection	5	“Change music”
8.	Space issues	4	<p>“I want more space for self study”</p> <p>“Bigger social area”</p>
9.	Quiet study area gets noisy	4	<p>“ ...the quiet area is occasionally noisy from the main area and occasionally within it.”</p> <p>“More enforcement for students to be quiet upstairs.”</p> <p>“The mezzanine area could be quieter for people trying to quiet study.”</p> <p>“Even though the atmosphere is great, sometimes it gets a bit too loud. Maybe just a bit quieter upstairs”</p>
<p>Analysis & Recommendations: Factors causing quiet study area to become noisy: -</p> <p>1) The quiet study area is not fully partitioned (or “sealed”) from the main computer suite that could become noisy with the noise of typing or students talking.</p> <p>2) Although there is a staff desk on the mezzanine level, it is facing the computer suite and does not have visual contact with the quiet study area. The partition wall although has cut-out holes to allow views of the computer suite from the quiet study area, it also offers partial privacy and thus might give the students the impression that they are not being monitored and thus could talk. This is likely to happen if friends are together studying individually in the quiet area.</p>			
10.	Noisy in the Loop	4	<p>“The Loop is good however there is often too much noise around the social space area.”</p> <p>“Often quite noisy in the Loop but it isn’t staff’s fault”</p>

			<p>“Installed Broadband at home. Less distractions at home.”</p> <p>“If the noise levels get too loud, then it becomes increasingly hard to concentrate.”</p>
11.	Area to talk.	3.	<p>“Need a space where we can actually talk without getting told off.”</p> <p>“More areas to talk.”</p> <p>“An area where you can sit and actually talk without getting told to leave.”</p>
<p>Analysis & Recommendations: Social space area was mentioned specifically as a noisy area. This would be expected in a space meant for social use, however it does affect the rest of the space if it gets very crowded and becomes noisy. The Loop in general gets noisy due to the following reasons: -</p> <p>1) In theory students are allowed to talk in The Loop except in the quiet study area, so students would talk, as there are no explicit policy or signage saying they cannot talk.</p> <p>2) The Loop is also not a large space so when social area gets noisy, noise gets transmitted to other area and this in turn cause other students to talk even louder above the din in order to make themselves heard.</p> <p>3) Furniture used within the Loop is geared towards group orientation (for example the round tables and Eames chairs) and this encourages interaction.</p> <p>According to staff, they try to keep the noise level down as you progress further into the Loop. This is difficult because of the above reasons as well as the size of the Loop makes the gradual transition from noisy to quiet space difficult. It also explains why, in the category “Area to talk”, students complain that they need a space to talk without being told off. To avoid confusion among students as to whether talking is allowed within the Loop, it is recommended well-defined talking zones and noise polices be implemented. For example, social space could be a talking area while the rest of the space (besides the quiet study area) could be a “whisper zone”. Trials would need to be done to see if this type of zoning could work</p>			
12.	Policing the Loop	3	<p>“Be more laid back. Don’t tell people off as much.”</p> <p>“More anti-bullying people.”</p> <p>“Staff spend too much time sorting out anti-social behaviour of students...staff have to spend so much time chasing students on social networks and inappropriate sites instead of what they do best, help those that need it.”</p>
<p>Analysis & Recommendations: There are 2 comments which notes that staff spend too much time sorting out anti-social behaviour and “telling people off”. Gathered from other comments, part of the policing seem to involve preventing students from using social networking sites on computers meant for course work only. However, one comment was for more “anti-bullying” people to be around. No information was supplied whether the commentator suffered bullying in the Loop or how he/she is bullied.</p>			
13.	More vending machines and/or more choice of vending machine products	3	<p>“More vending machine.” (sic)</p> <p>“More choice of drinks in vending machine.”</p>

14.	Increase seating quantity	3	<p>“More sofa.” (sic)</p> <p>“Get better chairs.”</p> <p>“More seats.”</p>
15.	More bins	2	<p>“More bins.”</p> <p>“Bins that aren’t as loud as Big Ben when litter is dropped into them.”</p>
16.	Resource Help	2	<p>“Textbook help (beside Gwen when she is busy).” (sic)</p> <p>“More help with using textbooks to find information for assignments.”</p>
17.	Accessibility issues	2	<p>“Disability friendly, mainly visibility.”</p> <p>“I think the Loop could be a lot bigger for people in wheelchairs.”</p>
18.	Food Issues	2	<p>“ Should be able to bring own food.”</p> <p>“Maybe more signs telling students to throw their litter away or not even bring food into the Loop because I have put my hand onto a mouse twice and its been sticky.”</p>
19.	Adequate Computer network down warning	1	<p>“More warning given when the computer network is down.”</p>
20.	Longer opening times	1	<p>“Earlier opening times on a Friday would be helpful as would later opening.”</p>
21.	Stationeries sale provision	1	<p>“Be able to buy magazines, pads, files, pens and paper.”</p>
22.	Lighting Issues	1	<p>“More natural light, better artificial lights in the upper level of the Loop.”</p>
23.	Water dispenser	1	<p>“Water dispenser”</p>
24.	Signage issues	1	<p>“Some signs are only seen on the way in and not out.”</p>
<p>Analysis & Recommendations: An observation from a student that should be further investigated.</p>			
25.	Air conditioning	1	<p>“Air conditioning”</p>
26.	Group study classroom issues	1	<p>“The restrictions applied to the group study area on the ground floor of the Loop could be loosened when no one is using it or booked to use it. (I say this because I needed a quiet area to revise and wasn’t allowed to use it for an hour prior to my exams even though it wasn’t used during this time and I was forced to revise in my car because the rest of the Loop including the silent study was too noisy to concentrate.”</p>
<p>Analysis & Recommendations: Analysis on responses from Q18 “How often do you use the Group Study Classroom in The Loop” show that majority of students (68%, n=282) have never use the group study classroom before. Although this is the only comment on the Group Study Classroom, it warrants further investigation as to how the use of classroom could be more accessible. Loop (including silent study area) was again commented on as being too noisy (See point no. 9 and 10).</p>			

Conclusion

Findings from the survey indicate that the facilities in The Loop are able to meet the studying needs of the students and the majority of students (91%, n=286) agreeing that they are satisfied with The Loop, compared with 4% (n=286) who disagreed. Both results are statistically significant. This suggests that the implementations in response to the research findings have been successful. However issues that might affect student satisfaction in the future are

- Signage issues (i.e. lack of) within the Loop as well as to The Loop from other adjoining outlying buildings should be reviewed and addressed.
- Reasons that students do not use The Loop as indicated in the survey were i) too crowded ii) I study somewhere else, iii) I don't need to use computers, iv) I don't need to use the books and v) Its too noisy. 10 out of 23 students who said they do not use the library were from the ESOL course. It would be worth further investigation as to how their needs could be possibly met.
- Both the quiet and social area in The Loop received complaints of being too noisy. This is due to a combination of student numbers, layout, space utilisation and materials used. Also the implicit policy regarding talking in the Loop (theoretically talking is permissible except for quiet area) causes confusion among students when staff tries to enforce a quieter environment. This resulted in students saying that they need an area or areas where they can talk.
- With the rise of popularity in social networking, the number of students who would want to use the Fast Access computers to social network would increase. Students have commented on the lack of computers that cater to this activity and this issue would have overlapped with the comments on the perceived general lack of computers.
- A majority of students (68%, n=282) have never used the group study classroom before. One comment made was that students should be able to use the Group Study Classroom if it is not booked or no one is using it. It warrants further investigation as to how the use of the classroom could be more accessible.

Appendix A

The Loop Student Survey - June 2009	
1	How often are you in The Loop? <input type="checkbox"/> Every day <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 times a week <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 times a week <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> Never (if 'Never' please go to Question 21)
2	Signs to The Loop are clear from the Hub. <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Strongly <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Strongly
3	Signs leading to The Loop are clear from other buildings (i.e. Thornton, Cleveleys etc.). <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Strongly <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Strongly
4	Sign posting within the library is clear. <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Strongly <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Strongly
5	It is easy to find information I need in The Loop. <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Strongly <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Strongly
6	Have you had an induction tour of The Loop? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7	What kind of information do you need? (Only answer this question if you think there is NOT

	enough information available in The Loop)
	<input type="checkbox"/> How to use equipment, such as printers <input type="checkbox"/> What resources are available, such as databases <input type="checkbox"/> What print resources are available <input type="checkbox"/> More about the space <input type="checkbox"/> College life
8	What is your opinion of the way The Loop looks?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor
9	I feel welcomed to The Loop
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree Strongly <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Strongly
10	I am able to find a space when I need to study by myself.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree Strongly <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Strongly
11	I can usually get an available computer in the main computer suite (2 hour access).
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree Strongly <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Strongly
12	I can usually get an available computer in the Fast Access computer area (20 minutes access).
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree Strongly <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Strongly

13	I can usually get an available computer by the window area in The Loop (1 hour access).
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree Strongly <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Strongly
14	Is there enough printing equipment in The Loop?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> More printers only <input type="checkbox"/> More copiers only <input type="checkbox"/> More printers and copiers
15	Are there enough computers in The Loop?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Need more computers only <input type="checkbox"/> Need more laptops only <input type="checkbox"/> Need more laptops and computers
16	I frequently use the social space area (area around the vending machine) in The Loop.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree Strongly <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Strongly
17	How would you describe the quality of space in The Loop?
	<input type="checkbox"/> Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Very Poor
18	How often do you use the group study room in The Loop?
	<input type="checkbox"/> At least once a week <input type="checkbox"/> At least once a month <input type="checkbox"/> At least once a term <input type="checkbox"/> At least once a year <input type="checkbox"/> Never used it before
19	Overall, The Loop meets my studying needs.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree Strongly <input type="checkbox"/> Agree Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Neither <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree Slightly

Disagree Strongly

20 Overall, I am satisfied with The Loop.

- Agree Strongly
- Agree Slightly
- Neither
- Disagree Slightly
- Disagree Strongly

21 I do not use The Loop because... (tick as many boxes as you like)

- I have just started my course
- I don't know where it is
- I haven't had an induction tour
- I don't need to use computers
- I don't need to use the books
- I study somewhere else
- It's too crowded
- It's too noisy
- It's too quiet
- I don't know how to use the library
- Other

22 If you ticked other - please state

23 Any other suggestions/comments?

Appendix B



**JOIN THIS GROUP AND MAKE YOUR
LEARNING SPACES EVEN BETTER**

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You could win a £25 Amazon voucher
if you take part in the poll