Slide 1:

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CoLab – Learning how organisations work through a student-based enterprise at the University of Surrey

Fostering collaboration between students, university, business and community

CoLab

Norman Jackson and Clare Dowding

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The development of CoLab to date

2006 - 07   Three students
2 networkers   1 technologist
'proof of concept' for CoLab March 2007

2007 – 08   Twelve students
8 networkers   4 technologists (CoLab team)

2008 – 09   Fourteen students (CoLab team)
1 p/t placement   8 networkers   5 technologists

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What was the vision for CoLab?

The CoLab (short for collaboration) idea

is based on the belief that

students know more about emergent technology than we do

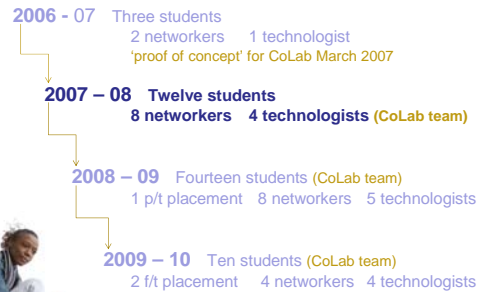so let them lead us to a better understanding.

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In March 2007 CoLab was established to:

- Establish CoLab as an entrepreneurial student-based organization and develop a brand.

- Pilot a range of workshops aimed at encouraging the transfer of knowledge and expertise in the use of technology contained within the student body.

- Build a new website/internet social networking space for students on placement.

- Build a website to present and support the activities of CoLab.

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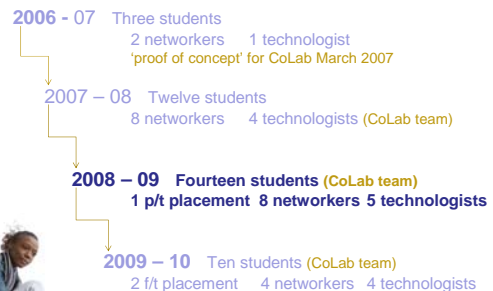www.surrey.ac.uk

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"This space would:
- enable business to link with students
- provide an area to represent partnership working between students, staff and business.

Run by students, it would be:
- unique to any other space on campus
- enable CoLab to build a stronger brand
- be a space to encourage enterprising, innovative working partnerships
- help to change the university culture to one of students as partners."

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What is CoLab 2008-09?

- An active agent with capacity for: Reaching out; networking; finding out things (market research); making things happen.

  - A value-based organisation providing services to students, staff (university), business and community.

  - A broker, able to foster: New connections; new ideas; new relationships; new forms of collaboration.

    Through these activities to enhance and add value to what already exists.

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Some of the CoLab team 2008-09

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Type of projects undertaken

- Technology Forum
- Employers' Breakfast
- In conjunction with Surrey Chambers
- new technology fair

- Discovery workshops
- Trying out equipment
- Design of CoLab website

- GU2 Radio
- "What do you think of our multi-cultural campus?"
- "What is it to be enterprising?"

- Level 2 survey
- Level 3 survey

- Evaluation

- Filming and editing

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How do we support learning?

For our CoLab team
- Group learning to support the projects, eg skills training for facilitating group interviews, confidentiality issues, filming and editing, etc.

- Individual learning through concept mapping, reflection and mentoring, culminating in the narrative report for the Experiential Learning Certificate.

For other students via invitations from the CoLab team
- Through completing surveys and reflecting on the questions posed.
- Technology discovery workshops.
- Attending and presenting or demonstrating at business networking events.

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What are students learning and experiencing?

- Practical learning
- Communication skills
- being valued as an equal member of the team
- Expanding initial concepts
- Broadening horizons
- Essential skills
- Being part of an organisation and helping to form it
- Learning work practices in a real-world work-based situation

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Slide 2

What are students learning and experiencing?

What some students say they have learnt –

Peer learning	Listening rather than talking
Commitment	Mutual respect
Designing questions	Influence of student experts
Confidence building	Learning to think more broadly
Learning what works	How different the team was
Building up a strategy	Using skills effectively

Make the most of what you have & go ahead

Seeing (understanding) other peoples' opinions

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Student enterprises as an approach to learning in universities?

Different Faculties (or a department) could use a student enterprise in a variety of ways:

- To build capacity
- Raise awareness
- Increase internal and external resources
- Develop staff and student expertise

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Lessons learnt

- Getting things done – finding the line between team autonomy and directive management.
- Students feel valued when they are asked to take responsibility for the project as a whole.
- Education cultures were acknowledged, explored, challenged and changed.
- Size of the teams have an impact on sense of ownership to the whole.
- Leadership within the team is key – which way is best?
- The best laid plans....
- Longer-term projects – the stop/start scenario.
- How members of staff can relate to student workers.

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