LISTENING TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS: AUDIO-VISUAL CASE STUDIES

GOVERNING BOARD

To be held at the Juárez Theater, Guanajuato, Mexico
from Monday 10 November at 9.30 a.m. to
Tuesday 11 November 2008 at 6.00 p.m.

The Governing Board is invited to DISCUSS this proposal for a new approach to obtaining evidence for the activities on "Evaluating Quality of and Investments in Educational Facilities and Equipment" and on "Exemplary Educational Facilities".

JT03254047
LISTENING TO STUDENTS AND TEACHERS: AUDIO-VISUAL CASE STUDIES

1. As part of the activity on Evaluating Quality of and Investments in Educational Facilities and Equipment and the activity on Exemplary Educational Facilities, it is proposed to record interviews with students and teachers at schools about the facilities they use for learning and teaching. Schools from OECD member countries would help assemble a set of video recordings to provide case study examples of student-teacher attitudes to their educational facilities, and the usability of the learning environment.

Background

2. When developing the brief for a building two key questions arise: How do students and teachers use their school buildings? And, what do they need to facilitate their learning and teaching? Much of our understanding of whether a building ‘works’ and its usability comes from user perceptions. These tend to be recorded in written reports supplemented with photographs and diagrams. The use of audio-visual media is infrequently called upon to record and disseminate user views on the spaces they use. One advantage of these media over the written report is that they can convey a better sense of individual perceptions by bringing together the auditory and visual information which can communicate subtleties of context that a written report is unable to do. This can also be a powerful and memorable way of communicating a message.

3. Moreover, the information on user needs and perceptions is generally collected by people who do not use the particular environment in question because often it is in the context of a new building project where the architects need to understand how the current building is used. In the case of schools, it is not often that students collect and present the information, yet a student perspective on the learning environment would offer valuable insights. Some very useful insights can be gleaned from involving students in stakeholder reviews and getting them to describe their learning environment verbally or visually. However, there is an opportunity to use audio-visual media to gather information on this, and to get students to present it from their perspective.

4. Students are comfortable and familiar with audio visual media. It is very much part of life for many children and students are familiar with it as a means of conveying information. They use the media in a variety of ways prompted by, for example: the availability and growth of video technologies in cameras and mobile phones; the development of social networking sites onto which video files can be downloaded; and, the development of Internet sites such as YouTube which, because it is a large repository of video, has become a search engine.

Objectives

5. The objectives are two-fold:
   - To explore the use of video for both obtaining and communicating information and perceptions on the learning environment.
   - To provide case study examples on the needs that a quality learning environment must meet.
Approach

6. The objectives would be met by producing video recordings of interviews with students and teachers in schools on the types of space and facilities that enable them to learn and teach. These would be a student view - recorded and presented by students.

7. Countries would be asked to nominate schools to participate and schools could be invited to organise it as a student project.

8. Initially, the approach would be to identify about six schools to participate in testing the feasibility of the project. The schools taking part in the pilot studies for the quality educational facilities project could also be approached.

9. Whilst access to high-quality video production equipment and facilities may vary across schools and countries, the intention is to make this as straightforward as possible, while looking for good quality, using readily available equipment.

10. The Group of National Experts on Educational Facilities Evaluation would be responsible for the project, and would work with the Secretariat to identify the budget, programme and practical issues, including legal issues such as copyright.

Output

11. The following outputs are envisaged:

- A collection of individual school video case studies which can be disseminated.
- Themed videos addressing particular issues.
- Report on analysis of the feedback issues raised by the videos.

Audience

12. The target audience would be policy makers, school facility managers and architects involved in policy decisions affecting school environments, design and management of the school environment.

Timeframe

13. Publish the video case studies in Q2 2010.