

ALISS Quarterly

Association of Librarians and Information professionals in the Social Sciences

Special issue:

Supporting staff and student development

Transitions

Oakham School, University of York,

University of Cumbria

Newcastle University, University of Surrey

Information literacy: innovative approaches

Information Literacy Journal Club

University of Sheffield.

Resources update

UK Data Service

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PROOF

Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of ALISS Quarterly. It has been published by ALISS (Association of Librarians and Information Professionals in the Social Sciences).

This issue focuses on development. The transitions to higher education section has perspectives from schools and universities on the types of support needed to enable new students and some innovative suggestions on how this can be provided. It includes practical examples of information literacy courses and curriculums.

The information literacy section highlights several effective methods for professional self-development: the information literacy journal club and teach meets. It also spotlights bite sized learning sessions which have been successfully used to support academic and research staff at the University of Sheffield.

We hope you enjoy the issue.

Keep up to date with our website at <http://www.alissnet.org.uk>

And twitter channel http://twitter.com/aliss_info and by subscribing to our free electronic mailing list LIS_SOCIAL SCIENCE at <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/LIS-SOCIALSCIENCE.html>.

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Information Literacy Journal Club

Michelle Dalton (College Liaison Librarian, University College Dublin, Ireland, michelle.dalton@ucd.ie) & Niamh Tumelty (Departmental Librarian (Engineering), University of Cambridge, UK, nt311@cam.ac.uk)

Journal clubs as a tool for professional development

Journal clubs have been used as a teaching and learning tool in medicine and health sciences for many years. More recently, as the concept of evidence-based practice has been transferred to library and information studies (Booth, 2000), journal clubs have also been adopted in libraries in “an attempt to keep up with developments in the field, share knowledge, and apply it to practice where possible” (Young & Vilelle, 2011, p. 130). Whilst the tradition of utilising journal clubs for professional development purposes is relatively well-established, the literature suggests that “there is little information on the most effective way of conducting a journal club to gain the most educational benefit from it” (Deenadayalan, 2008, p. 905).

Journal clubs most often take place as face-to-face meetings, typically during a lunchtime or coffee break, however with the emergence of social media and networking tools, new possibilities for interaction have opened up. Unlike some other professional development activities, journal clubs are often perceived as ““a safe place for open discussion” – where participants feel comfortable sharing views that they might not express in a departmental meeting or in the context of the library hierarchy” (Young & Vilelle, 2011, p.134). This kind of informal information exchange and knowledge sharing is often particularly congruent with the online world, where blogging can represent “conversational scholarship” (Gregg, 2006, p. 147) and the “3Cs of Twitter” facilitate “community, communication and casual (informal) learning” (Reed, 2013, p. 2).

The Information Literacy Journal Club

The Information Literacy Journal Club (<http://infolitjournalclub.blogspot.co.uk/>) is an online discussion group that focuses on information literacy and other aspects of user education. The journal club was originally set up on the Blogger platform in December 2012 by Niamh Tumelty (University of Cambridge) and Sheila Webber (University of Sheffield), and since then the community involved has grown to include a range of professionals interested in the area.

The blog follows the basic principles of a traditional face to face journal club, translating elements as necessary to complement and leverage the advantages afforded by the digital environment. Approximately once a month an article or paper is selected by a participant for discussion by the community. This member then writes an accompanying blog post summarising and reflecting on the key issues, and providing some initial questions for discussion. The discussion or ‘chat’ then takes place from 8-9pm in real-time on a specified date through the form of blog comments posted by other participants. However, those unable to attend during the meeting can still read and contribute to the discussion afterwards, as posts and comments remain accessible on the blog. Whilst the discussion primarily takes place via the blog, the #ILRead hashtag on Twitter provides an additional channel for connecting and sharing ideas. In this way, the online format of the journal club

offers more flexibility for participants than traditional face to face meetings, where travel, scheduling and time commitments can often be a significant barrier to attendance (Young & Vilelle, 2011, p. 133).

A reader's perspective

Perhaps one of the unique strengths of the Information Literacy Journal Club lies in its open and collaborative approach. Anyone interested in the area of information literacy can participate by selecting an article for discussion, and this format has generated a rich and varied range of topics that span sectoral, disciplinary and geographic boundaries including:

- SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy
- The value of reflective writing for information literacy development
- A New Curriculum for Information Literacy
- TeachMeets: Librarians, learning from each other
- A Healthcare Lens for the SCONUL Seven Pillars of Information Literacy Model
- The importance of information literacy in the Open landscape
- UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy resolution
- Research agendas for information literacy

One of the most popular discussions to date has been that of Barbara Fister's keynote paper at LOEX 2013, Decode academy, which outlined a number of "outrageous claims" for university libraries. 125 comments were posted during the discussion, including many from the author herself proving insight, context and a new perspective for readers. Those working as solo librarians or in smaller libraries may often find they have limited opportunities for this kind of discussion with colleagues. By transferring the conversation to an intuitive online platform such as a blog, it makes it accessible to a much wider audience and provides a place for like-minded people to connect and share ideas, and potentially to identify collaborators or co-authors for future research projects. Unlike other online resources for professional development such as MOOCs which often require significant time commitments, the fluid and flexible format allows participants to drop in and out of the Journal Club depending on their availability, research and professional interests.

An organiser's perspective

An evidence-based approach to librarianship is important to me, so when I completed my masters dissertation (Tumelty, 2012) I sought a way to continue to keep up to date with developments of research into information literacy. One journal article a month is an achievable goal, and the knowledge that a group of other information professionals are reading the same article and preparing to discuss it with you provides a great source of motivation.

The most enjoyable and valuable discussions so far from my point of view have been the ones where the author has joined the discussion, prompting me to pay even more attention to the arguments contained in their articles and providing an opportunity to seek clarification or extension of ideas in an informal and welcoming environment. All authors

I have approached so far have welcomed this opportunity to discuss their work, raise its profile and develop ideas for future research.

An author's perspective

A further interesting feature of the journal club is the involvement and participation of many of the authors of the papers that are selected for discussion. When one of my own papers was selected for discussion in August (Dalton, 2013), I found it an incredibly valuable experience as an author and researcher. Once the peer-review process is completed, scholarly publishing often becomes a one-way channel of communication. However, opening up the discussion in a forum such as the Information Literacy Journal Club, extends the conversation, provides a platform for interaction and allows the author to gain feedback, input and ideas from those who have read their work.

For those who would like to move towards a more evidence-based approach to their everyday practice and operations, journal clubs often represent a valuable "step in the right direction" (Pearce-Smith, 2006, p. 37). The format provides an informal introduction to the research literature in an accessible and interactive way, helping to foster communities and networks of like-minded people.

If you are interesting in participating in the next Information Literacy Journal Club, watch out for our next blog post at <http://infolitjournalclub.blogspot.co.uk/> or get in touch with us to suggest a topic for discussion.

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“Share and share alike – improving information literacy teaching through TeachMeets”

Helen Blanchett, Assistant Liaison Librarian, Newcastle University

Background

Library TeachMeets are now a regular feature of the continuing professional development calendar for librarians in the UK. For those librarians involved in teaching information literacy, it is always a challenge to come up with new and engaging ways to make teaching more interesting and effective. Many librarians have teaching qualifications, but maintaining standards and keeping up-to-date can be difficult, especially when training budgets are limited. TeachMeets are a method of continuing professional development which can help address these issues.

TeachMeets originated in the schools sector in Scotland back in 2006¹ in and are a type of ‘unconference’, driven by audience participation. The fundamental idea is for attendees to learn from each other, sharing examples of their own practice in short, sharp bites. Although informality is central, certain ‘rules’ have emerged to guide the structure of a meet. The events are free and the format is participative, involving attendees giving short presentations of between 2 and 7 minutes. ‘Rules’ may include the talks being selected at random or a ban on the use of PowerPoint.

Library TeachMeets

The first Library TeachMeet took place in 2010 in Cambridge². Since then there have been over 15 independent events as well as the TeachMeets which are now a regular part of the LILAC conference³. I’ve been involved in organising the Toon Library TeachMeets⁴ in Newcastle and recently set up the Library TeachMeet wik⁵, which is intended to be a central resource for Library TeachMeets. The site advertises forthcoming events as well as providing links to resources from past events and tips on running TeachMeets.



Lib TeachMeet

Librarians sharing teaching ideas.

Most Library TeachMeets tend to be general in scope, but there have been some themed events such as those at Staffordshire⁶ where themes have included ‘improving student experience’ and ‘getting the message across’. Eleanor Johnston was involved in organising these TeachMeets and she feels having a theme can help: “As you are asking for volunteers to speak and participate, you never know what you are going to get, but speakers appreciate a theme to hang their talks around and it gives a central perspective to the day. You can also have pre-arranged activities based around this theme and you will get a different crowd dependent on your topic”.

Eleanor also highlights the benefits of TeachMeets: “they provide a nice informal atmosphere to share ideas and good practice with a chance for everyone to have their say.

There are lots of talks during the event, so there is something for everyone. There is also a chance to meet again if the events become a fixture on your staff calendar”.

Organising a TeachMeet

TeachMeets rely on the goodwill of volunteers, so please do consider organising something in your area. If you can provide a venue, TeachMeets require few resources and you may be able to get help with providing catering (for example, CILIP’s Information Literacy group offers sponsorship⁷).

You may wish to set up a blog for your TeachMeet or you could simply add it to the LibTeachMeet wiki. Consider a twitter hashtag and decide whether you will record presentations or make slides available afterwards. There is also a general hashtag for Library TeachMeets (#libtm).

In terms of content, it’s worth preparing an ice-breaker activity and perhaps one or two group activities in between the presentations. But do remember to make sure there are plenty of opportunities for networking.

Eleanor adds: “I found running TeachMeets to be a really interesting venture. Preparation is the key! But of course that takes a while to realise and when you first start, you are not sure what you are preparing for. It is really good to get as many of your colleagues involved as possible, and to have a ‘before’ during’ and ‘after’ checklist”. I would echo Eleanor’s comments about a team approach – it’s essential to have a back-up and I can say from first-hand knowledge that it’s hard to tweet from an event you are facilitating! If you’re interested in running a TeachMeet, take a look at the LibTeachMeet wiki for tips - Eleanor has shared her checklists here too.

TeachMeets can also work within your organisation. Despite working together, teams often don’t observe each other’s teaching. TeachMeets can be a great way to disseminate ideas, but can also promote an atmosphere of sharing and collaboration, helping identify common problems and solutions. Here at Newcastle University, we held a staff TeachMeet focussed around games, following a colleague’s attendance on Andrew Walsh’s ‘Games for Libraries’ workshop⁸ It provided an opportunity for staff to share ideas they had picked up at an external event and disseminate these to others – much more interesting than a report!

The evolving TeachMeet

As TeachMeets have now been around for a number of years, it’s inevitable that the format would evolve. One example is TeachMeet Blakes⁹ (#tmblikes14) - an evening TeachMeet, with an even more informal approach. Held the evening in a cafe in Newcastle, there is food, music and no pre-set agenda at all (perhaps harking back to the original TeachMeet which was held in a pub!). If you want to get up and say something, you can, if not it’s an opportunity to relax and socialise with like-minded educationalists.

From attending TM Blakes, I found out about Pedagoo¹⁰ – an online network where teachers can share classroom practice. There are also face-to-face events, such as Pedagoo Sunshine which took place at a local school in summer 2013. This full day event was a cross between a TeachMeet and a conference – there was a programme and parallel

sessions, but all sessions were about sharing good teaching practice, with an opportunity to explore and think about adapting the methods shown. This idea of allowing time for discussion about the application of the ideas in different contexts is something I tried to include in the last Toon Library TeachMeet and it worked well. The event had a carnival atmosphere, with bunting, cupcakes, balloons, a barbeque, an ice cream van and popcorn machine (of course it rained all day!). It would be great to run a similar event for libraries.

Another idea I like about Pedagoo is their #pedagoofriday hashtag – every week, teachers share an example of something that has worked well in their teaching. It's a great way to share and inspire - #libtmfriday anyone?

Are Library TeachMeets different?

Librarians are highly collaborative professionals, so it's unsurprising that the TeachMeet format would prove to be popular. But is there anything that's different about Library TeachMeets?

During the introductions at the last Toon Library TeachMeet, I was struck by the diversity of the teaching contexts described – schools, public libraries, colleges, universities, businesses, charities, prisons etc. The learners are therefore equally diverse. The scope for transfer of ideas could potentially be more limited, but perhaps we just need to be more creative! For example, many university librarians at TeachMeets I've attended have loved the more fun, games-based ideas from the schools sector, but feel they would need careful tailoring. But it can be done – an idea I presented at a Library TeachMeet, taken from a school teacher at Pedagoo Sunshine (Lisa Jane Ashes' 'thought bombs'¹¹), has been adapted and used by librarians at Sunderland University Library.

As well as highlighting the very different contexts in which librarians face our teaching challenges, TeachMeets also highlight common factors – such as the importance of collaboration with 'core' teaching staff and the constant challenge of convincing others of the value of what we teach.

For many librarians, teaching is an additional role for which they may not feel fully qualified and TeachMeets can provide a place to build confidence and get feedback on ideas. However, I was reassured to find that even teachers find their first presentation at a TeachMeet daunting!

Conclusion

Nearly four years on from the first Library TeachMeet, I think it's safe to say these are now a staple of the CPD calendar for many librarians in the UK. I would also recommend trying to find similar events outside the library sector – you will probably find that if you have a passion for teaching and learning you will be welcome (find schools and museums events on the TeachMeets wiki¹²). Current themed events include assessment and progression, e-safety and 'developing 21st century skills' – all of which would be of interest to librarians.

By attending TeachMeets alongside teachers, I found I could benchmark my teaching and become aware of the methods and techniques that students coming into universities have

experienced. I also hope my attendance at these events, sharing examples of information literacy teaching, will help to raise awareness and understanding of the teaching librarians do and inspire teachers to consider how they approach teaching information literacy.

TeachMeets do rely on the commitment of volunteers, so I would urge anyone interested to get involved, whether attending or organising. You'll find they are addictive and hopefully you'll be soon be sharing your ideas as well as gaining inspiration from others.

1. History of the TeachMeet on Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TeachMeet>
2. "TeachMeet: Librarians learning from each other" by Niamh Tumelty, Isla Kuhn and Katie Birkwood <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/244069>
3. LILAC Conference <http://www.lilacconference.com/>
4. Toon Library TeachMeet <http://toonlibtm.wordpress.com/>
5. LibTeachMeet wiki <http://libteachmeet.pbworks.com/>
6. Staffordshire University Library TeachMeets <http://libguides.staffs.ac.uk/teachmeets>
7. Details of sponsorship for TeachMeets on the CILIP Information Literacy group blog <http://www.informationliteracy.org.uk/2014/02/funding-available-for-information-literacy-training-events/>
8. Games for Libraries blog <http://gamesforlibraries.blogspot.co.uk/>
9. Search for resources using the #tblakes hashtag or visit their event page on the TeachMeet wiki <http://bit.ly/1hkakYA>
10. Pedagoo.org <http://pedagoo.org/>
11. Lisa Jane Ashes Thought bombing blog post <http://thelearninggeek.com/2013/08/thought-bombing/>
12. TeachMeet wiki <http://teachmeet.pbworks.com/>

Learn Something New in 20 Minutes - Using a bite size approach to staff development.

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Introduction/Background

ScHARR Bite Size are lively, informal 20 minute taster sessions held in the department of the School of Health and Related Research (ScHARR), University of Sheffield, with a dual focus on research and teaching. Bite Size has been running since 2010 and there have been over 70 sessions on everything from social networks to how (not) to display data. The sessions all begin at 12.30pm on various days of the week and are open to any members of staff from the Medical Faculty and beyond. Bite Size cakes are provided and there is always time for a quick ten minute discussion and Q&A afterwards. The format of a 20-minute presentation uses technologies such as Prezi, webinars, videos and interactive demonstrations. Previous sessions have covered topics on teaching and research practice, emphasising emerging technologies, resources and innovations in teaching and learning pedagogy and practice. The sessions are promoted by colourful posters, posts on the ScHARR Library Blog, Google+ Events and Twitter in addition to email lists.

Impact and evaluation

An evaluation of Bite Size was carried out via a survey using Google Forms. A total of 54 people responded, the majority of whom (39/54) said that they had attended a session. Almost all respondents felt that short sessions such as Bite Size were an effective way of learning (49/54; 90.7%) and more than half of respondents felt that it was very important for them to learn about new developments and tools, with only a single member of staff responding that this was not important.

The great majority of Bite Size attendees felt it had helped them in their work (34/39; 87.2%) and they would recommend it to colleagues (37/39; 94.9%) (Table 1). Session duration was felt to be about right (35/39; 85.2%), and this was stated by most as being the most popular reason for liking Bite Size (30/39; 76.9%). Other reasons included was content (25/39; 64.1%), the cakes (with nearly a quarter citing this reason for liking Bite Size (9/39; 23.1%), the informal nature of the sessions (5/39; 12.8%) and their interactivity (5/39; 12.8%). Bite Size has been deliberately located in our department to make it easy for staff to attend but interestingly only 3 attendees cited this as a reason for liking Bite Size.

Table 1

Attended a Bite Size session:	Yes	39	(72.2%)
	No	15	(27.8%)
If yes, has Bite Size helped you in your work?	Yes	34	(87.2%)
	Not sure	4	(10.3%)
	No	1	(2.6%)
Would you recommend it to a colleague?	Yes	37	(94.9%)
	Not sure	2	(5.1%)

What do you think about the duration of the sessions?	Just right	35	(85.2%)
	Too short	4	(14.8%)
What do you like about Bite Size?	Time	30	(76.9%)
	Content	25	(64.1%)
	Cakes	9	(23.1%)
	Informal	5	(12.8%)
	Interactive	5	(12.8%)
	Location	3	(7.7%)
	Networking opportunity	2	(5.1%)
What do you dislike about Bite Size?	Not in depth enough	4	(10.3%)
	Too short	4	(10.3%)
	Not recorded	3	(7.1%)
	Not relevant	1	(2.6%)
	Overrunning	1	(2.6%)

Throughout its history Bite Size has been attended by a good mixture of staff and postgraduates, and many have made Bite Size a routine 'date' in their diaries. As exemplified by the comments below the combination of the short time-slot, cake, exciting tools and ideas, and examples of their grassroots application is what makes Bite Size such a successful format:

"They do not take much time out of the day, so I do not feel bad about going to ones on topics that may not be directly relevant to my own work. I always learn something and it gives me an insight into lots of aspects of work that people are doing"

"Gets to the point. Allows me to meet real researchers, as I'm from the Library. Useful model for training we might try to offer"

"They are a good, quick intro to a new tool. Because they're given in person you have the chance to ask questions. I like the social aspect of it - meeting other colleagues you might not know"

Several correspondents from various individuals and organisations have contacted SchARR wishing to start their own Bite Size series from the United Kingdom and as far as Australia to ask advice about the 20 minute model. The University of Leeds now support researchers called Mini Master Classes that last for 20 minutes. The Mini Master Classes were inspired by SchARR Bite Size. <http://minimasterclasses.wordpress.com/>

Problems encountered and lessons learnt

The only problems with running a short awareness session such as Bite Size is location and timing. Location is key for any event, but one that lasts for 20 to 30 minutes even more so. The further a colleague is away from the venue the less likely they will attend, especially if they think they could miss the first few key minutes. SchARR Bite Size worked well as the majority of its 250 or so staff were no further than 5 minutes away. When the model was trialled within a wider setting such as the Faculty of Medicine at a series of venues which were much less convenient for staff to get to there were much lower numbers of attendees. The majority of SchARR Bite Size sessions have had healthy attendances of over 10 attendees, sometimes as many as 30.

Timing is essential and 2.30pm seemed a natural mid-afternoon break for attendees, although more recently we trialled the idea of running them at lunch time, which has

increased numbers. Another timing issue is which days to run Bite Size as increasing numbers of staff are working part-time. Running Bite Size on the same day alienates any colleagues or students who are not in on that set day. To counteract this, sessions are run on alternate Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Future developments

Bite Size has always looked to evolve whilst keeping the key components of short duration and informality in place. These developments have included recording and screencasting the sessions, in addition to delivering them live over the Web and even attempting live video editing whilst a presentation was delivered. Nevertheless despite Bite Size's tendency towards embracing technologies, the real winning component is its simplicity and that it works best delivered face-to-face. Learning and development opportunities have grown thanks to the Web but there is still enormous value in being in a physical space with an expert. Where possible Bite Size sessions have been captured on video with some content uploaded to the ScHARRvids YouTube Channel and the ScHARR Bite Size iTunesU collection.

Transferability

It is quite apparent that the Bite Size model can be applied to all academic disciplines. Sessions that focus on health-related topics such as the health research database Medline will not transfer, but could easily be replaced by a subject-specific database relevant to each department. In addition, several sessions have been delivered by experts based centrally within the University. Given that many experts based centrally in any large organisation are always looking for opportunities for outreach, the request to deliver a Bite Size session has always been welcomed. For Bite Size to have a greater chance of success it needs champions who are well renowned within their organisation. Ideally to launch a new Bite Size series in a department it is better to have staff who are experienced in teaching, change management, and are open-minded towards to technology and ideas. The evidence that we have accumulated so far indicates that staff value these sessions and find them informative, engaging and effective.

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- Tattersall, A. Freeman, J, V. Beecroft, C, A. (2013) Learn something new in 20 minutes: Bite Size sessions to support research and teaching. *Health Libraries and Information Journal*, 30 (3), 253-258.

Links

- ScHARR Bite Size on iTunesU <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/itunes-u/scharr-bite-size/id771733656?mt=10>
- ScHARR Library YouTube Channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/scharrvids>
- ScHARR Bite Size website <https://sites.google.com/a/sheffield.ac.uk/bite-size/>

Not Waving but Drowning: Reconsidering Transitions at Oakham School

Darryl Toerien, *Head of Library and Information Services, Oakham School*

All appendices can be downloaded from the ALISS website at <http://alissnet.org.uk/aliss-quarterly/>

The old man was peering intently at the shelves. I'll have to admit that he's a very competent scholar.

Isn't he just a librarian? Garion asked, somebody who looks after books?

That's where all the rest of scholarship starts, Garion. All the books in the world won't help you if they're just piled up in a heap.

David Eddings, King of the Murgos (1989, pp. 89-90)

Peter Lyman and Hal Varian¹ estimated that about 5 exabytes of new information² [print, film, magnetic and optical storage media] were created in 2002 and that this had about doubled in the [previous] three years (2003). According to Lyman the purpose of the exercise was an attempt to “quantify people’s feelings of being overwhelmed by information”, so it isn’t surprising, then, that he reframed literacy in terms of knowing what to throw away (Joseph, 2013). This becomes even more pressing if, as David Culler³ continues, the last 50 years were not actually the Information Age, merely laying in its plumbing. It is this transition from what was a problem of quantity to what is now *in itself and also* a problem of quality that concerns us.

It is one thing to drown in information; it is another thing, I think, to drown in information that is toxic. Neil Postman, in *Bullshit and the Art of Crap-Detection*, said that “the best things schools can do for kids is to help them learn how to distinguish useful talk from bullshit (p. 1)...including their own (p. 3)”, and of the many varieties he listed pomposity, fanaticism (including bigotry and Eichmannism), inanity (ignorance cloaked in sincerity), superstition (ignorance cloaked in authority) and earthiness (the mirror image of pomposity). He said this in 1969, with particular reference to the emerging mass media that gave “a voice and an audience to many people whose opinions would otherwise not be solicited, and who, in fact, have little else but verbal excrement to contribute to public issues” (p. 2). Now that seemingly everyone has the means to publish to the masses, and seemingly does, it is not difficult to see how we get to mind-bogglingly large quantities of information and of questionable quality. As the Demos report *Truth, Lies and the Internet* highlights, the Internet is awash with “mistakes, half-truths, mistruths, propaganda, misinformation, disinformation and general nonsense”, and without high levels of crap detection “[young people] are vulnerable to the pitfalls and rabbit holes of ignorance, falsehoods, cons and scams” (Bartlett & Miller, 2011, p. 3). To this must be added the

¹ *School of Information Management and Systems, UC Berkeley (Peter Lyman passed away in 2007 and Hal Varian is now Chief Economist at Google).*

² *“If digitized, the nineteen million books and other print collections in the Library of Congress would contain about ten terabytes of information; five exabytes of information is equivalent in size to the information contained in half a million new libraries the size of the Library of Congress print collections” (Lyman & Varian, 2003).*

³ *Professor and Chair of Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences, College of Engineering, UC Berkeley.*

extent to which the masters of our internetworked technologies employ those very same technologies against us for their monetary gain. As Josh Klein puts it, when technologies that increasingly profile us online and offline in order to part us with the maximum amount of cash that it is possible to part us with combine with “insidious new advertising capabilities (such as combining the faces of your two best friends to make a face you’ll trust, but not recognise – and then using that face in an ad), [then] commerce becomes something sinister” (2014, p. 54).

If education has anything to do with enabling children to thrive as human beings, then I would argue that it is not good enough that schools can teach crap detection – they must, and as a matter of urgency. I would argue further that in this the librarian has an indispensable role to play because the librarian is, or at least ought to be, fundamentally concerned with scholarship, or the “intellectual content of any culture...its totality of verified or accepted body of knowledge and belief, which includes not only science but also attitudes, value systems, mores, ethical and moral codes, superstitions, folklore, ‘revealed’ knowledge, religious dogma, and the human understanding of the life of the spirit, or the ‘Good Life’” (Shera, 1972, p. 74).

We have adopted as our working definition of information literacy “mastery of the processes of becoming informed” (Farmer & Henri, 2008), with informed being understood as “having sufficient and sufficiently reliable information or knowledge to be able to understand a subject or situation and make appropriate judgements or decisions regarding it” (Encarta Dictionary, RIP). The reason why we have adopted this definition is because it is primarily and fundamentally concerned with what it takes to think well. But, how to manage this transition?

The *Empire State Information Fluency Continuum: Building understanding and creating new knowledge through inquiry* (New York City Department of Education: Office of Library Services, 2010) – being a “framework for the instructional aspects of a library program... based on [one of] three standards that form the basis for the skills and strategies that are essential for students to become independent readers and learners”⁴ – is a particularly helpful description of the systematic development of an inquiring mind from Kindergarten through Grade 12, which is based on Barbara Stripling’s model of inquiry (Library of Congress, 2009). While there is much that I do not yet fully understand about how this framework works in practice, and in the absence of something comparable in England, we have taken it as our starting point. Appendix A (which can be downloaded from the ALISS website at <http://alissnet.org.uk/aliss-quarterly/>) lists the skills that enable each stage in the enquiry process for the four exit years during a child’s education; i.e., those years that mark the transition from one phase of education to another. While this level of detail may seem quite daunting, particularly if all 13 years are taken together, as a description of a developing state of mind we find this level of clarity quite liberating.

⁴ Bernard A. Margolis, *State Librarian and Assistant Commissioner for New York State Libraries*, in officially endorsing the framework, said that it “has already become the standard which defines information literacy and helps to define the inquiry skills essential for student success” (2013).

Crucially, we have been working with Sequential Systems, developers of curriculum mapping software called Mondrian Wall (and didbook, software that facilitates formal reflection on emerging Education Identity) to integrate FOSIL with a dynamic map of our taught curriculum. The value of being able to map – and so plan – the taught curriculum is immense, with greater curricular coherence allowing us to build meaningful [cross] curricular connections resulting in true curricular synergy (Appendix B); the added value of then being able to establish dynamic links from this map to an underlying framework of information literacy skills is that immense again (Appendix C). A key collaborator in this pioneering work is Computer Science, and Appendix D represents our first stab at an assessment tool for projects aimed at *building understanding and creating new knowledge through inquiry*.

Embedding FOSIL into the curriculum is not without its challenges, foremost of which is the general lack of conviction that inquiry is a powerful way to learn content; consequently, the ‘need’ to teach content, particularly for GCSE and A-levels, tends to outweigh the ‘luxury’ of enabling students to master the processes of becoming informed. Linked to this is the difficulty of thinking, planning and working collaboratively within and between departments. The IB Diploma has always been a powerful counterargument to both, with its 4,000 word research essay providing the means, particularly if done properly, to raise the level of student research to something closely approximating what they will do at university, and its extended reflection on the nature of knowledge and the state of knowing in different disciplines (Theory of Knowledge). A recent development of great promise is an uncompromising commitment by the School to greater independence of learning, which, at heart, is what FOSIL is all about. This transition to greater independence of learning in school, within a framework that describes and supports it while at school, should lead to a seamless transition to university.

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PROOF

Going back to school: supporting and engaging with tomorrow's H.E. students

Alison Kaye, Teaching and Learning Advisor, Information Directorate, University of York

Introduction

In today's universities the student population is diverse with a wider range of backgrounds, educational experiences and expectations of what academic life involves. This places new demands on those supporting first years through their entry to academic life.

There is an array of literature discussing the transition from school education to academic study. Students' initial introduction to Higher Education has a big impact on their understanding of academic life and on how they approach it (Biggs 2003¹; Harrison 2006²) and even, some argue, influences their future approaches to learning (Hultberg et al, 2008³). Supporting students through this time is an increasingly high priority for many institutions.

There are many transitions involved in the first weeks and months - cultural, social, and academic. From the academic viewpoint, there is the business of understanding what is expected within the H.E. context and then developing skills to fulfil these expectations. Transitioning students need to adapt to a shift away from teacher-led learning and towards self-directed study, and a new emphasis on critical thinking. Dias et al (2012⁴) discuss the "recycling" of students' previous study competences and the transformation from "pupil's craft" to "student's craft". Each student brings with them their past experiences and understandings and new knowledge is synthesised with past. When designing learning activities we need to encourage students to reflect on current knowledge, understandings, and practices, and then build upon these. The more diverse the backgrounds and experiences brought, the bigger a challenge for those supporting students.

One of the ways in which the University of York supports those progressing to H.E. is through a programme of Widening Participation activities for school and college pupils from groups under-represented in academia. The aim is to raise the aspirations of those who have the potential to study further and to give them some preparation for academic life, to help them with the transition should they choose to apply. They take part in various events and activities including skills development workshops. This article outlines how the Library has been involved in outreach work, both as part of these programmes, and also in response to direct requests from schools and colleges. It also covers current developments, and the focus of our workshop design on active learning and encouraging reflective and critical thinking on past and current practice.

1 Biggs, J. (2003) *Teaching for quality learning at university*. Open University Press.

2 Harrison, N. (2006) *The impact of negative experiences, dissatisfaction and attachment on first year undergraduate withdrawal*. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 30(4): 377-91.

3 Hultberg, J. et al. (2008) *Scaffolding students' transition to Higher Education: parallel introductory courses for students and teachers*. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 32 (1): 47-57.

4 Dias, D. & José Sá, M. (2012) *From high school to university: students' competences recycled*. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 17 (3): 277-91.

The Library's involvement in skills development activities for school and college pupils

Since our first involvement in 2009 in a 'Developing Independent Learning Day' alongside colleagues from the University's Widening Participation, Learning Enhancement and Centre for Lifelong Learning Teams, Academic Liaison Librarians have delivered a range of information skills and Library workshops aimed at school pupils, and have developed particularly strong links with the University's Learning Enhancement Team, often designing and delivering content together, and the Widening Participation team who coordinate events. Success has led to increasing demand, including direct messages to the Library asking for our support, particularly from local schools whose A-level students undertake the EPQ (Extended Project Qualification). The EPQ "teaches new skills, such as, independent research, project management, reflection and self-directed learning" (AQA, 2014⁵) and much of the demand for outreach work comes from sixth form tutors who value the support we can offer in this context. Last calendar year a team of four Academic Librarians delivered 16 information skills sessions for schools and college students.

Current developments

Within the Information Directorate (Library, IT and Archives) we now have a dedicated Teaching and Learning Team who have taken on responsibility for outreach activities including designing content, although Liaison Librarians will still be involved in delivery. We are currently looking at how to manage the growing demand. We hope to widen the pool of staff who can deliver the classes, which involves reviewing our materials and activities, reflecting on what works and what should be tweaked, putting together some standardised sessions, and training staff who have never delivered these.

We are currently designing a session as part of the University's new Next Step York programme. Like the other University W.P. programmes, the aim is to widen aspirations, broaden horizons and enhance the attainment levels of participating pupils. Aimed at talented year 12 and 13 students who are considering applying to York, students take part in various activities and events including a summer residential where they participate in workshops designed to prepare them for an academic assignment that they will submit just 17 days later. This is where the Library and Learning Enhancement Teams become involved. Completing an academic assignment is excellent experience that can help them to grow in confidence ahead of their arrival as year one undergraduates here. The research they undertake is a crucial part and one that Librarians can provide valuable support for. Hopefully we can break down some of the fears that students may have around research, equip them with some knowledge of what is expected in research in higher education, and encourage them to refine their own research practices.

Active learning and student engagement

In all our outreach workshops we try to make students think and reflect, particularly on the following:

⁵ AQA (2014) Available online at: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/programmes/aqa-baccalaureate/extended-project> (Accessed 25th March 2014).

- The information landscape and the range of information types open to them, particularly in the academic context;
- How they evaluate information sources in order to select those most appropriate for the context;
- That search results should be skim-read and filtered, and searches refined, rather than progressing straight onto full reading of the information from the first set of results.

We want them to reflect on how they currently proceed with researching a topic, the way they select sources, and how they might want to refine their techniques. The overall objective is to enable them to begin researching at academic level with more confidence.

The sessions we deliver always incorporate group activities. Activities require the students to think, discuss and feedback. Sessions are delivered in seminar rooms rather than PC labs, removing the temptation for us to focus on the process of searching and instead concentrating on important concepts we'd like students to consider. Students are easier to engage in this environment. Often in PC rooms they expect to simply follow a process on screen, and in a seminar room, physically they are not in rows but seated in groups to facilitate discussion.

We usually have fairly large groups, and a high level of activity, which it means we have needed more than one member of staff to facilitate. The University employs Student Ambassadors to serve as role models, tutors and mentors for visiting school and college pupils, and we are extremely lucky to have them in our classes. They sit amongst the students, one per small group, which encourages students to participate and minimises the feeling of 'them' and 'us'. During activities they work with their group, clarifying what they need to do, and assisting where necessary.

Changes in content focus

We are reviewing the sessions delivered as part of the Widening Participation programme, canvassing the views of staff who have delivered the sessions, and considering feedback from academic staff who have assessed previous W.P. assignments. Unsurprisingly perhaps, staff assessing the work would like to see a bigger improvement in students' abilities to select appropriate high-quality sources. As information professionals working with students we are already aware of the need to address the gaps in many students' filtering, refining and evaluation skills so that they can improve their information selection and, ultimately, their bibliographies. We are looking at how we can focus even more time on these areas, and what we can remove to make room. We would like to allow the pupils' Postgraduate mentors to pick up some of the removed content, giving guidance during their mentoring sessions. We have asked if we can feed into the training of the mentors this year so that they are confident in the areas we need them to cover and so we can flag up the typical problems that new students have. We can also arm the pupils with activities to take away to cover processes like searching the library catalogue, and suggest places to go for more help for queries that the PGs can't help with. And of course there are others involved - academic staff and other support staff - whose input hopefully dovetails

with ours. We librarians have a very short time with the students so we should make that face-to-face time count, getting across the content that professional librarians can deliver best. Getting them thinking critically about information and their current practices, discussing search and filtering techniques, and reflecting on which techniques they intend to experiment with in future.

Conclusion

These workshops are just as relevant in content and style for first year undergraduates, and we will be looking at using materials and activities with other cohorts.

Within the limited contact time we have with our own new students we should design our information literacy sessions with similar outcomes in mind. To clarify expectations for research within academia whilst also dispersing any fears by demystifying information skills and research, and to encourage students to reflect on their current research practices and how these could be refined so that they can confidently begin their independent study.

PROOF

Head Start: bridging the gap into Higher Education

James Stephens and Nadine Sunderland – Library and Students services, University of Cumbria

Introduction

The university's student population comprises a large intake of non-traditional students with 65% from a widening participation background and many joining vocational programmes where the focus is on the development of professional standards such as in teaching and nursing. In each case, students are more likely to display a lack of confidence, awareness and engagement in academic practice (Leathwood and O'Connell, 2003); and therefore, it became a crucial element of the university's recruitment and retention strategy to devise a programme that supports students pre-entry through the early development of their academic skills to better prepare them for university study.

Since April 2013, Head Start is delivered entirely online via the university's virtual learning environment and offered to all undergraduate (UG) applicants. This paper reports on the culmination of 2 years of collaboration across the institution and strong partnerships between Library and Student Services (LiSS), other professional services and academic departments, and the impact on students' levels of preparedness for academic study including effective learning approaches, academic writing and information literacy.

Background and context to the project

The merger of Library and Students Services into one converged professional service in 2009 led to the creation of the Academic Engagement, Skills and Retention (AESR) Team that brings together subject librarian and learning and skills development expertise. Increasingly the team has seen its role expand into leading on a number of transition and retention projects including Head Start.

At the time, Head Start was a credit-bearing module and had only been delivered face to face to level 3 students in partner Further Education Colleges. Discussions between the School of Business (where the module belonged), e-learning technologists and LiSS took place to explore how the module content could be delivered online thus providing an opportunity to offer the programme to a large number of UG applicants. The AESR Team took on the task of converting elements of the module into online interactive learning objects using Articulate, the e-learning authoring software, while assessment of the module, through online submission of a written piece, remained with academic tutors. Between June and August 2012, the programme was delivered online for the first time, receiving excellent feedback from participants. As a result, the project gained strong support from Senior Management through endorsement of the Recruitment and Retention management Group; however, the staff intensive assessment prevented further expansion of the scheme.

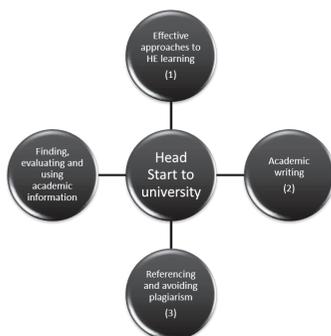
Determined to make this valuable programme a sustainable model accessible to all pre-entry students, the AESR Team in LiSS led a project group in October 2012, working with academic colleagues and professional services across the institution to establish the aims of the 2013 iteration.

Head Start would:

- be offered free to all UG applicants across all modes of study including clearing applicants
- help students bridge the gap into Higher Education (HE) by providing an early insight into academic study
- support the transition and retention of widening participation students
- celebrate students' early commitment to their study through the recognition of Head Start completion as evidence for Career Ahead - the University's Employability Award
- be delivered and assessed entirely online using the VLE's test functionality to automate assessment

Head Start: early development of academic literacies including information literacy

Head Start comprises 4 units of study: becoming an independent learner; writing at university level; referencing and avoiding plagiarism; and finding, evaluating and using appropriate academic information. In addition, students get an early opportunity to use the university's Virtual Learning Environment.



In terms of the information literacy content it was felt that an early engagement with concepts of evaluation and discernment would provide a starting point for developing the critical thinking and independent learning skills required for HE study. The two information literacy activities encourage participants to question the authority, reliability and integrity of various types of information and information sources within a clearly framed structure.

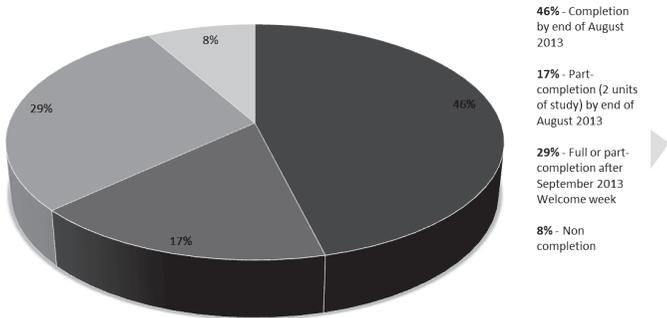
The first activity introduces the concept and terminology of information literacy and employs an evaluation tool created in-house called TICKLIST (Trustworthy, Intention, Currency, Knowledgebase, Level, Information, Support & Thoughts). This tool is used to evaluate two websites from a specially selected list of sites ranging in academic quality and focussed on the theory of learning styles.

The second activity asks participants to think about the various qualities of a selected list of information types (e.g. primary and secondary). The task involves thinking about which information sources (e.g. journals, books, websites) would be most effective for finding that specific information type. In all cases there is more than one appropriate answer and this is done purposefully to encourage a more sophisticated understanding of information beyond binary judgements such as true/false or right/wrong and is based on Walton's (2010) 'New tool for assessing information discernment'.

Head Start 2013 - scheme outcomes

Between April and August 2013, 670 UG applicants enrolled on Head Start. Overall students' engagement with Head Start is high with 92% of students either completing the module in full (46%), part-completing (17%), or engaging with it following the initial Welcome Week induction period in September (29%).

Head Start participants completion and engagement rates



Feedback from participants

Of the 670 enrolled students, 231 or 35% completed the module evaluation survey. The response showed a strong endorsement of Head Start with 96% indicating that the module had helped them feel more confident about studying at university and that they would recommend it to future students. Of the four sections of the module, respondents to the survey found 'Referencing explained' the most useful (38%), followed by 'Writing in HE' (22%), 'Information literacy' (20%) and 'Learning styles' (17%). 59% of respondents found all sections equally useful. The survey asked for qualitative feedback and the comments provided by participants were predominantly positive:

"I would recommend this course to other new students as it gives a basic early insight into learning how to write professionally, formally and correctly at an academic standard, using the correct sources of research in Higher Education. During my time at Sixth Form I had merely only touched on the use of referencing when writing essays and so I found the section called, "Referencing Explained", extremely useful; ... 'Head Start' not only gives advice on how to: write critically; reflect; research and reference, it also implies the common errors made when doing such tasks. Therefore, I would sincerely recommend this course to other new students for it has helped to slightly, 'bridge the gap' between leaving college and entering university."

One of the most encouraging observations about the impact of Head Start came from Learning Enhancement Advisers during post-induction information literacy sessions:

"We feel that student engagement with Head Start changed the nature of library and information teaching sessions when compared to library and information teaching sessions delivered in previous years. In particular we found Head Start students to be notably more confident and appropriately vocal. They volunteered answers to question relating

to academic journals, evaluating websites and the importance of correct citation and referencing.”

Conclusion

Head Start is now a key element of the pre-induction support package offered to prospective students by the University of Cumbria and it has been the strong collaboration and coordination between Library and Student Service, Faculties and other professional services teams that have been crucial in ensuring the smooth running of the project. A new development for summer 2014 is the delivery of a subject specific Head Start iteration in Applied Psychology. Outcomes of this pilot will inform the developments of other subject specific Head Start versions in future. In addition, work is under way in developing Head Start Plus for students coming in directly at level 5 and level 6 study.

As well as supporting students, this project has contributed to raising the profile of Library and Student Services across the institution, in particular, the academic literacies expertise on offer and its contribution to preparing students through their early transition into Higher Education. It has resulted in strengthened partnerships between LiSS and academic departments, in turn leading to increased engagement with other LiSS initiatives.

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Bridging the Transition Information Literacy Transition Project

Ann-Marie Laws, School Librarian, Ponteland High School

Jackie Dunn Liaison Assistant, Robinson Library, Newcastle University

In recent years, the digital divide and Information Literacy research has been profound and current, and as a result widely researched. Bridging the divide, did not set out to look upon this particular phenomenon but at something which, often overlooked, requires addressing – that of the **transitioning** student and Information Literacy evolution.

Bridging the Divide was an empirical investigation into the processes in which, Library staff from the higher and secondary education sector teach information literacy; with particular emphasis on the experience of transitioning students.

Background

Our project - Bridging the Divide - was a small-scale investigation of transitioning students and their experience of information literacy and general research skills as they progress through School to Undergraduate level; it was quickly realised that the idea would provide a unique collaborative opportunity, two partners representing different sectors within educational librarianship (School and Higher Education), conducting an independent research project to investigate the transitioning student. The ethos behind the project was to introduce the notion that good Information Literacy skills can become a way of life, bridging the divide between School and University and beyond.

Information literacy spans our bridge

Information Literacy is an important and valuable commodity owing to the vast amount of information that is now available; too much or too little can cause barriers to research.

With this explosion of information and data, students face increasing difficulties to locate, evaluate and use information correctly and ethically. We believe there is a lifelong need for a good understanding of the concept Information Literacy and acquiring sound Information skills, and that these skills are nurtured within the school environment. Students do not automatically gain these skills; direction from teachers, library staff and parents is required.

The aim of Bridging the Divide was to promote this importance and help cultivate in School the skills needed for university.

Transition

So when does transition begin? We believe the Information Literacy skills required to aid transition should be implemented throughout the school experience and not solely in Year 12 as some practitioners advocate. Each transition phase in our lives requires increased knowledge and access to information to adapt to the changes ahead. Our job is to prepare students for their journey ahead; to design, deliver and promote study skills workshops for students that are responsive to their developmental needs and provide support at significant points of transition.

“If we teach students the right information and literacy skills, they should have the power to actually improve the depth and quality and originality of their thinking because of the richness of the resources they will be able to mine.” (McKenzie 1999)

Causatum

Through various mediums we ascertained the following:

- The majority of library staff are now required to take on some form of teaching/ instruction role (See Figure 1 below)
- No official teaching qualification for library staff; staff tend to learn on the job
- Various mixed views on information literacy levels (both self-appraisals and that of the students)

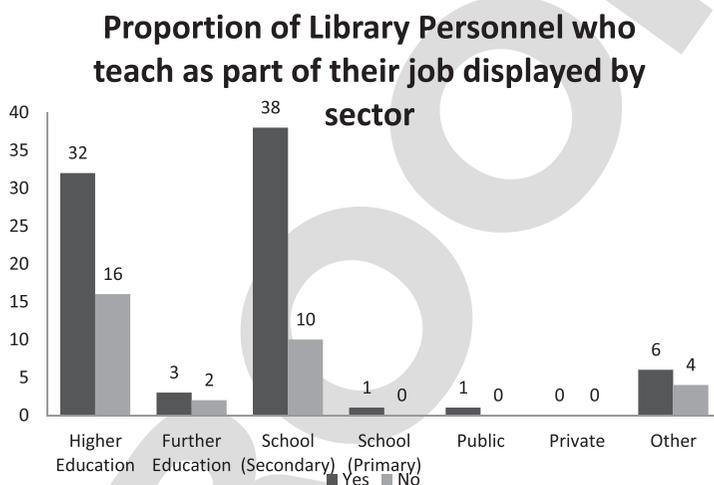


Figure 1 – Graphical representation from surveyed Library Personnel 2011

Collaboration

The thread that ran through the project was that of collaboration; the combination of two minds from two very different sectors that are linked through a common cause. This was in essence our USP (Unique Selling Point); the very thing that made us so very different from any other research at that time. Whilst our original plan was to develop an online toolkit of resources, with help from library staff around the world; this proved to be a time consuming undertaking and we chose to venture down alternate routes.

How information literate are the patrons of your service against sector

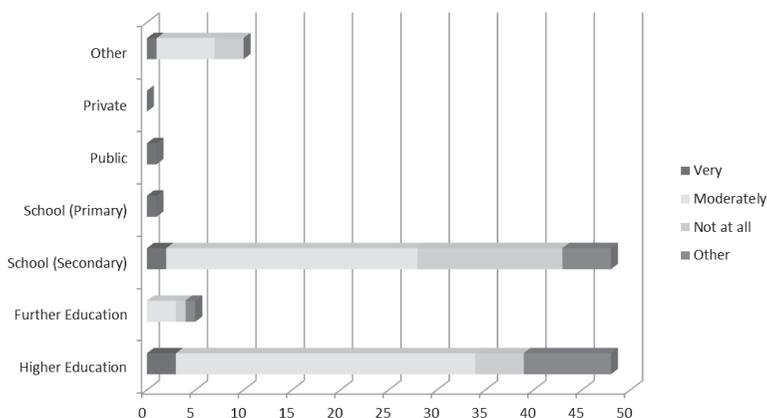


Figure 2 – Graphical representation from surveyed Library Personnel 2011

Strategies Employed

One route which has been successful is a shadowing programme coupled with an annual CPD (Continuous Professional Development) Day. Library staff from an academic library have shadowed a School Librarian for a day, one example of this was analysed in a blog. Christina Taylor (2012) noted her visit to a high school in Northumberland and gave a fascinating insight into cross sector experiences. Further opportunities for collaboration between school and Higher Education institutions are being fulfilled through a regional annual CPD day. Our CPD day is attended mainly by local library staff, from the School and Higher Education sector, although all sectors are welcome. One of the most rewarding outcomes of our 2012 CPD day was, as a direct result of attendance, one School Librarian secured a mentor from within the group resulting in successfully gaining ACLIP the following year. The ethos behind such days is to foster links and to enable the sharing of information, ideas and concerns. By combining the experience of library staff from different sectors, we aim to improve the learning experience of new post-secondary students and also, more importantly, provide an understanding of the library services offered in these institutions.

Further Reading:

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Teacher Toolkits: Bridging the Gap with Open Educational Resources

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Introduction

Universities have been using technology to enhance teaching for over twenty years; from before the Internet was established¹. Over the years technology has changed beyond recognition, communication and teaching tools have been developed, enhanced and then discarded as better technologies evolved. Most universities introduced virtual learning environments (VLEs), embedded them in teaching and then migrated to another, better, VLE some years later. We have learnt a great deal during this evolution. In contrast the school sector has been relatively late enhancing teaching with technology.

Although the use of technology in the school sector was included in early consultations (The Department of Education and Skills consultation document (2003)); interest has developed more slowly than in Higher Education (HE). Rather than leaving schools to recapitulate the mistakes universities made introducing technology, “Bridging the Gap” was an opportunity to share HE experience. None of the schools involved in this project were aware of Open Educational Resources (OERs) or the Open Education² movement at the start of this project.

Skills Portal

The development of Skills Portal³(SP) was initially a quick fix to provide e-learning materials for self-directed study and distance learning doctoral students. It rapidly became clear that these materials were useful to wider groups as undergraduates and taught master’s students began using them. Resources have been added to SP continuously both as new resources appear and, increasingly, colleagues recommend items for inclusion; there are currently over 100 items on SP.

Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap (BtG) was funded by Widening Participation and Outreach, University of Surrey. The aim was to identify ways of collaborating with local schools and colleges using OERs to develop information literacy and study skills and ease the transition from school to university (Crabtree, Roberts and Taylor, 2007). The intention was to identify topics where we could develop on-line learning materials to support pupil transition to HE, initially using Skills Portal materials.

The initial project (2011-2012) involved a local school (11-16 years) and sixth form college (16-19 years). We used on-line surveys and focus groups to explore attitude and

¹ <http://home.web.cern.ch/topics/birth-web>

² <https://openeducationalresources.pbworks.com/w/page/24836860/What%20are%20Open%20Educational%20Resources>

³ <http://libweb.surrey.ac.uk/library/skills/learningskills.html>

aspiration to HE and to identify topics for development. Pupils identified a range of topics that would be helpful including: time management, exams and revision, and presentations. Teachers identified the new Extended Project Qualification⁴ (EPQ) as an opportunity for intervention. The EPQ was introduced to give pupils the opportunity to identify a topic, research it and to write a dissertation. As pupils have no experience of extended writing, finding and evaluating information the EPQ is an ideal point to introduce information literacy to them.

As we worked with schools, it became clear that teachers were unfamiliar with technology either in their own practice or to enhance their teaching and valued practical suggestions of how the OERs might be used in class leading to the idea of creating learning sequences. Sequences include: suggestions for use, objectives, learning outcomes and handouts accompanying resources covering a range of relevant activities for each topic. The intention was that teachers would be able to use and modify the materials to suit local needs.

Bridging the Gap II

Further funding was obtained (2012-2013) to develop, pilot and evaluate learning sequences. Groups of about 25 pupils (14-16) from participating schools came to campus for a half day. Student ambassadors organized tours of the library and campus. Using an IT room, pupils were first given a traditional librarian-led information literacy session introducing: Effective use of Google Scholar, Advanced Search options to find online information sources and then evaluating these sources using the evaluation matrix released by De Montfort University⁵ before being asked to use the information literacy learning sequence⁶. In contrast to the face-to-face session; working independently with PCs pupils engaged with the learning sequence with enthusiasm. Feedback was collected via focus groups and on-line questionnaires. Further sequences covering Time Management, Exams and Revision and Presentation were piloted in a similar way. There was considerable variation in the extent that teachers accompanying pupils engaged with the session. Some teachers were unaware of Google Scholar whilst others asked for the evaluation sheet⁵ for use in their school. The “Teacher Toolkits” evolved alongside the learning sequences to give context, examples of possible ways of using individual resources along with learning objectives and outcomes.

Toolkits are available covering:

- Exams and Revision
- Information Literacy
- Time Management
- Writing Skills
- Presentations

⁴ <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/project/level3/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵ <http://find.jorum.ac.uk/resources/15665>

⁶ Information Literacy learning sequence <http://tinyurl.com/oneqao3>

The intention was to provide teachers with possible objectives, learning outcomes and activities associated with individual resources. Resources are described in “worksheets” that teachers can use intact or modify to form a teaching session, along with suggested ways these resources can be used as individual or class activities. We were keen to introduce activities that prompted pupils to relate personally with resources. For example, pupils were encouraged to develop revision timetables using “Get Revising”⁷, assorted blank timetables were also provided as Word files for pupils wishing to create printed revision timetables. Essentially we provided contextualized OER’s, supporting materials and alternative suggestions for use either in class or for self-directed learning.

Feedback on learning sequences was collected during school visits using Smart Survey⁸ and focus groups. Following the Information Literacy sequence free-text responses to “What did you find useful? What works well?” were positive, free-text comments highlighted: interaction, multimedia, step-by-step approach, along with searching and Boolean terms. Videos were consistently popular, especially those of undergraduates explaining how they managed their time⁹.

“I thought that it was useful to consider the different ways of finding information and learning how to search and use reliable sources.”

Conclusions

Pupils participating were between 11 – 17 years old. They, and some of their teachers, had limited information literacy skills in that they did not know about Google Scholar or Boolean searching. Many schools block “You Tube” which may limit access to some materials. Pupils actively engaged with the learning sequences during workshops, however, younger pupils appear reluctant to use the web for study from home.

The toolkits are intended to give teachers ideas for using materials as class activities, to simplify the process, and give an opportunity for to gain confidence in introducing technology in their teaching. Skills Portal had 14,400 visits (February – March 2014) from the UK and internationally. Users spent the longest time on: Applying for Jobs, Time Management, Emotional Intelligence, Harvard Referencing and Public Understanding of Science.

References

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⁷ <http://getrevising.co.uk/>

⁸ <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/>

⁹ London Metropolitan University http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=HARfk_fl438

What is the UK Data Service?

Margherita Ceraolo, Outreach Officer

The ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) established the UK Data Service in October 2012 as a comprehensive online resource designed to support researchers, teachers and policymakers who depend on high-quality social and economic data.

UK Data Service launched its website in March 2013, providing a single point of access to more than 6,000 data collections including UK Census data, government-funded surveys, longitudinal studies, international macrodata, qualitative data and business microdata.

The Service is built on the shoulders of several long-standing data collections and services, integrating and replacing the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS), ESRC Census Programme, Secure Data Service and Survey Question Bank.

It is staffed by social data experts based at host organisations across the UK including: the UK Data Archive, University of Essex; Mimas and Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research both at the University of Manchester; School of Geography at University of Leeds; Geography and Environment at University of Southampton; EDINA, University of Edinburgh; Department of Information Studies and Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis both at University College London.

The UK Data Service strives for continuous improvement. For example, the Service is exploring how to raise awareness through academic libraries.

How are the data used?

Advancing research - The data held at the UK Data Service can benefit academic researchers and students. Every day, researchers from all sectors browse our data collections and download data to support their projects. Their work covers research from all areas of society, providing findings that further our understanding of key social issues. Usage data from 2007 to 2010 indicated that the highest users of the Service are social scientists conducting research in the following disciplines: economics, business, politics and sociology (provide a link to <http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/about-us/reports.aspx>).

Informing policy – UK Data Service data is informing policy-relevant research. Evidence-based research published in academic journals provides a valuable resource to further social science thinking in all sectors. Such research findings are actively consulted by policymakers and often publicised in the media, where they can have even greater impact.

Improving teaching – The use of real-life data in coursework adds interest and relevance. It also gives the next generations of social scientists the appetite for data and the data analysis skills necessary to contribute to future research and society.

Case studies - UK Data Service offers a collection of case studies showing the impact of data-led research. Examples include:

- Comparing unemployment rates (<http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/data-in-use/case-study/?id=141>)
- What predicts our level of well-being? (<http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/data-in-use/case-study/?id=146>)

What resources do we offer?

Data have a critical role in social science research and they play an important role in helping us understand the society we live in. The UK Data Service supports data and statistical literacy by offering support and training resources.

Data – The Service provides access to over 6,000 computer-readable datasets suitable for research and teaching purposes covering a range of different disciplines. More detailed information can be found below.

Teaching resources – The UK Data Service believes that the use of data in teaching is an invaluable way for learners to confront real-life research. It offers datasets specifically designed for teachers and learners, workbooks and other resources. It also provides case studies describing how other teachers have incorporated our resources into their teaching, as a source of ideas and inspiration for teaching with data.

Guides - The UK Data Service offers a number of guides, including dataset guides, specifically written for particular datasets, topic guides, which provide information on the sorts of data available for specific subject topics or themes, and methods and software guides, describing how to use our collection in standard software, manipulating data and key concepts in reusing data. Finally, it also offers guides to exploring online, to find out more about exploring data online with our tools and services.

Online Tutorials – We have a growing range of training videos covering a variety of topics. Our online tutorial videos provide an engaging, self-paced and easily accessible alternative to our traditional written guides.

Training - We run face-to-face and online training events on a range of topics that include introductions to using the UK Data Service, workshops and information sessions on data and data use and training on data management. Information about events run by the UK Data Service are listed on our events page. Our staff also deliver training hosted by other institutions and organisations.

We provide guidance and training on all aspects of Research Data Management and sharing, through web-based and printed advice, and workshops. We have worked closely with various institutions including The University Southampton, The University of Leeds, The University of Exeter, London School of Hygiene, The University of Sussex, The University of Warwick, The University of Newcastle and The University of Edinburgh. The book: *Managing and Sharing Research Data: a Guide to Good Practice* by Louise Corti, Veerle Van den Eynden, Libby Bishop and Matthew Woollard, provides post-graduate students, researchers and research support staff the data management skills required in today's changing research environment.

What kind of data do we offer?

Major UK surveys - Government-provided surveys are often used to inform policy. All of these can be used to describe a population at one point in time and most can be used to compare populations across time.

Cross-national surveys – Cross national surveys are studies where the same survey

instrument and, where practical, methods and fieldwork protocols are used across many nations.

Longitudinal studies – Longitudinal studies have data from repeated observations of the same subjects, allowing researchers to analyse change at the individual level.

UK Census data – UK Census data includes aggregate, boundary, flow and microdata from the last five UK censuses (1971 to 2011).

International macrodata – International macrodata are socio-economic time series data aggregated to a country or regional level for a range of countries over a substantial time period.

Business microdata – Business microdata are detailed data provided by the Office for National Statistics which can only be accessed in a secure setting to ensure confidentiality.

Qualitative and mixed methods – Qualitative and mixed methods data include in-depth interview transcripts, diaries, anthropological field notes, answer to open-ended survey questions, audio-visual recordings and images.

Who owns the data we hold?

- **National statistical authorities** - Office for National Statistics (ONS), National Records of Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
- **UK government departments** - including the Home Office, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- **Intergovernmental organisations** - including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Office for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the World Bank
- **Research institutes** - including NatCen, Institute for Social and Economic Research and Centre for Longitudinal Studies
- **Individual researchers**

How to find and access data

Data can be accessed in a number of ways, as described below. Most of the information we provide can be used without registration with the UK Data Service. Registration is required if you wish to download, order or analyse data online, where this is possible. Information about who can access our data and the registration process is available from Registration: <http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/how-to-access/registration.aspx> and Download and order: <http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/get-data/how-to-access/downloadorder.aspx>

Discover – Discover: <http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/> is our search and browse application providing access to data and related resources such as case studies, support guides and publications. There you will find full descriptions of each dataset along with related resources such as survey questionnaires, support guides and case studies of how the data were used.

Key Data – On our Key Data webpage, it is possible to browse our most popular datasets, by data type.

Data by Theme – The UK Data Service has web pages to aid researchers looking specifically for data on particular themes. Currently we have data regarding Ageing, Crime, Health, Housing and Labour market.

Explore Online – In this section of the website, a selection of data are available to explore via our online tools. Examples include Nesstar, UKDS.Stat, IMF eLibrary and Census.

References

UK Data Service: ukdataservice.ac.uk

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