

Promotion of literacy and reading

The paper provided below is part of CoLRiC's collection of exemplar papers demonstrating practice in Library/Learning Resource Centres in the post-16 sector. The name of the organisation has been removed. It is hoped the examples in the collection will be of help to CoLRiC members and CoLRiC welcomes further contributions – please send to CoLRiC at the address below.

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Promotion of literacy and reading in the LRC

‘Because everything changes when we read’ – The Reading Agency

Young people entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of the future. In a complex and sometimes even dangerous world, their ability to read can be crucial.

Longitudinal research shows that people with good literacy skills are more likely to have higher self-esteem, better health, better jobs and higher wages than those with poor literacy skills. They are more able to take advantage of the opportunities that life may offer them.

Benefits of reading for pleasure

There is a growing body of evidence which illustrates the importance of reading for pleasure for both educational purposes as well as personal development. Studies have found that reading for pleasure is more important to a child's educational achievement than their family's wealth or social class. Also, there is powerful evidence to show that reading is good for you. Recent research from national charity, The Reading Agency proves it's an all-round antidote, connecting people socially, building skills and confidence alongside empathy and understanding, boosting relaxation and helping people to understand and manage common mental health conditions such as depression.

Other benefits to reading for pleasure include: text comprehension and grammar, positive reading attitudes, pleasure in reading in later life, increased general knowledge. Promoting reading can have a major impact on children and adults and their future. Upon reviewing the research literature, Clark and Rumbold (2006) identify several main areas of the benefits to reading for pleasure:

- Reading attainment and writing ability
- Text comprehension and grammar

- Breadth of vocabulary
- Positive reading attitudes
- Greater self-confidence as a reader
- Pleasure in reading in later life
- General knowledge
- A better understanding of other cultures
- Community participation
- A greater insight into human nature and decision-making.

How LRC promotes literacy and reading

The LRC contributes to the promotion of reading and supports literacy across the college by developing and integrating our work with the college literacy strategy. A member of The team has a specific responsibility for working with the college Literacy Coordinator to help promote and integrate services.

Bookstops

Mini bookcases, designed to look like bus stops located in a variety of areas across college, including Literacy Hub, Student Café & study areas; these contain a wide variety of donated books which both students and staff are encouraged to borrow. The books can be kept with no time limit, returned to any Bookstop, passed on to other people, or even kept. The aim is to break down barriers to reading and encourage people to read wherever they are. Hopefully if people pick up a book they like then they will come to The LRC and borrow more.

Fiction collection

Over the years the fiction collection has developed into a wide ranging stimulating collection, comprising of a variety of literature including Young Adult fiction, literary & popular fiction, bestsellers and classic works. There is a weekly theme that is promoted throughout the year via social media, tabletops, bulletins and the TV screens around college.

Word of the Week

Follows the annual display plan for the LRC, and covers major national events/days, topical themes and festivals. Displayed on a literacy board in varying locations around college. Recent examples include apocalypse, democracy, emancipation, socialism, peace. These are Tweeted and shared on Instagram.

Book of the Week

Follows the annual display plan for the LRC, and links in with major national events/days, topical themes and festivals. A lot of the books chosen are film/tv tie ins, where the book has been made into a film, or new/notable fiction releases. These are displayed on a literacy board in varying

locations around college and changed weekly. Recent examples include 'The Girl With All The Gifts, 'Go Set a Watchman', 'Miss Peregrines School For Peculiar Children'. These are Tweeted and shared on Instagram.

Website of the Week

Follows the annual display plan for the LRC, and covers major national events/days, topical themes and festivals. Displayed on a literacy board in varying locations around college and changed weekly. These are Tweeted and shared on Instagram.

Quote of the Week

Follows the annual display plan for the LRC, and covers major national events/days, topical themes and festivals. Displayed on a literacy board in varying locations around college and changed weekly. Recent examples include quotes from Albert Einstein, Jeremy Corbyn, & Confucius. These are Tweeted and shared on Instagram.

Magazine of the Week

Only introduced this year it has the aim of promoting the academic magazines located within the LRC. These are Tweeted and shared on Instagram.

Use of social media – Instagram and Twitter

We have Twitter and Instagram accounts and aim to tweet/share daily, to promote wider reading and literacy.

Literacy posters in main areas of college

There are 6 literacy posters in varying areas around college which contain things like WoftW, BoftW etc but also contain the College literacy themes which are changed every 2 weeks, with topics such as sentences, comma's etc.

Themed displays

We have an annual display plan which covers major national events, festivals, literary competitions but is also flexible enough to cover any important events that happen outside of the plan, e.g. death of Nelson Mandela.

Reading Ahead (formerly Six Book Challenge)

The reading challenge run by The Reading Agency with the aim of encouraging reluctant readers to read more. Very popular with students, we launch this with a charity event in the late autumn term. Numbers have increased steadily over the years.

Book Bingo

Runs in alternate years to Reading Ahead, but in a very similar way with the aim of encouraging reluctant readers to read more. Based on a bingo card, a line of 5 themes has to be completed but each section is a themed read/genre – again encouraging students to try different books. There are incentives at each stage to encourage students to finish and a prize draw at the end.

Quick Reads

We have a collection of short, easy reads that are updated annually, written by well-known authors. Again, the aim of these books is to encourage reluctant readers.

Manga and Graphic Novels

Our Manga and graphic novel collection has developed over the years and is very popular with students. We actively encourage students to recommend titles for purchase and aim to regularly update the collection. This year we plan to host our own mini ComicCon on World Book Day.

Popular magazines and newspapers

We stock a variety of academic magazines to support teaching and learning but also now stock popular magazines to encourage reading. These include fashion, music, football and car magazines.

Events

We regularly host charity events, staff social events, book signings, cake bakes and craft fairs. Again with the aim of encouraging people to visit us and in so doing hopefully get them back as a reader.

Visiting Authors

We have been lucky enough now to have the space to host visiting authors and in 14/15 had 3 very successful visits which brought a great deal of positive attention. This year we have the YA author Bali Rai coming in on Wed 19/10/16.

Member of staff with responsibility for literacy

A member of staff has been granted a bursary for a year to work with the college literacy coordinator in developing and integrating our work with the college literacy strategy

Annual Display plan

We have an annual display plan which covers major national events, festivals, literary competitions but is also flexible enough to cover any important events that happen outside of the plan, e.g. death of Nelson Mandela.

Major literary prizes

The LRC follows all the literary prizes including The Man Booker Prize, Baileys Prizes and Winton Prize, and promotes them in a varying number of ways including entries in the staff/student bulletins, displays and via social media.

Annual short story competition

Every year we run an annual short story competition which is judged by a local author and we have an event to celebrate the winning entry. The entrants have their work published in a volume which is added to stock. The winning entry is entered into a national competition.

Catalogue tags for genres

The vast majority of the fiction collection has a catalogue tag which shows its genre and enables people to find other books in the same genre. This enables people to explore a wide range of material across a genre. E.g. GOTHMOD & GOTH – these link modern gothic fiction such as Twilight, The Shining and The Wasp Factory with classics of the genre such as Dracula. These lists are also linked to via The LRC MyDay pages in Themed Reads.

Subject reading lists

This is ongoing throughout the year to create reading lists linked to curriculum topics. These are linked to via the subject dept. VLE pages on MyDay. Reading lists for University interviews are also covered.

The LRC MyDay pages

The LRC has a substantial presence on the college VLE, MyDay, with sections on reading for pleasure broken down into genres (themed reads), ideas for further reading, FAQ's and information for students.

Table tops

On most tables in the LRC there will be a table top which not only promotes varying services but also promotes WoftW, BoftW etc.

CSI

CSI is a murder-mystery induction for new students run in September. This year it ran with 120 level 2 students with the aim of introducing the students to the LRC and also some key information/study skills that they will find essential while here. It includes tasks such as question reading and comprehension, printing and using a pc and information & research skills. It encourages them to find books on the shelves and take them out.

World Book Day/World Book Night

These are worldwide events that the college takes part in and is promoted via the LRC in many different ways. The World Book Night books are put in the Bookstops and given away and on World Book Day there is normally a fancy dress competition and similar activities.