



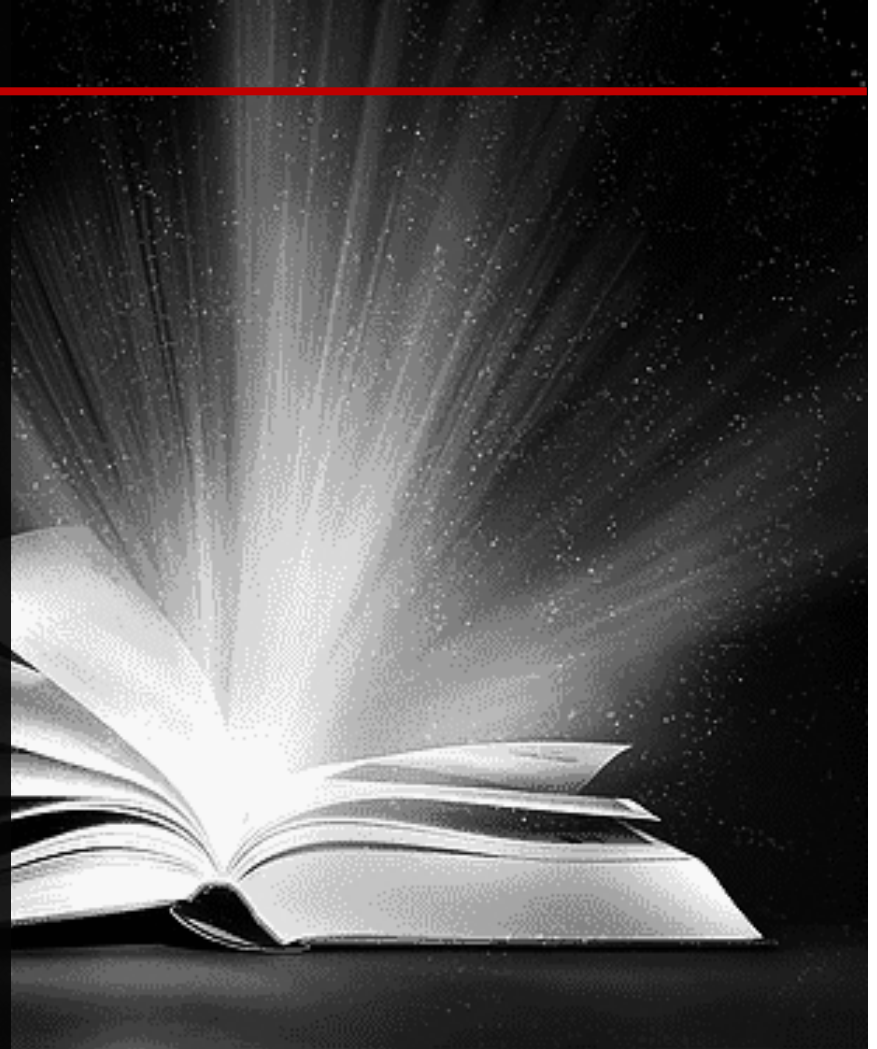
Council for Learning
Resources in Colleges

IMPACT

Issue 1 January 2023

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The voice of
Further Education
and Sixth Form
College Libraries
and Learning
Resource
Services

EDITORIAL

Welcome to 2023. Let's hope that it's a peaceful, successful, healthy and less stressful new year for us all.

Throughout 2022 the UK media speculated on the lingering effects of the Covid pandemic and subsequent lockdowns on students and education. The Guardian newspaper quoted one teacher lamenting that the lack of in-person lessons had led to underperformance. 'I did my best, but the content I delivered isn't comparable to what you can do face-to-face.' A similar theme arose during delegate discussions at a CoLRiC online seminar in May 2022. The outcomes - 'Reflecting on the legacy of two years of pandemic trauma on students. Implications for library and learning resource services' - are published in this issue. Do you think that online learning has impacted negatively on the 'Covid generation?' Do the problems raised ring true with you, and do you have any suggestions that might mitigate them?

In October, the CoLRiC Executive Committee was delighted to announce two worthy winners and two highly commended submissions for its prestigious 2022 awards. We are proud to share the news here and acknowledge such creative, enthusiastic and engaging contributions to teaching, learning and the student experience. Collaboration and dialogue with teaching and professional services staff are essential to develop and deliver relevant, flexible and dynamic student services, and we encourage you to nominate your teams and work colleagues in 2023.

With celebratory hats on we shine a 'Spotlight On...' Vanessa Munro, Learning Resource Assistant, New City College, and winner of the CoLRiC Jeff Cooper Inspirational Information Professional of the Year Award 2022. She tells us about herself and the work she is doing at New City.

The Learning Resources Service at Bridgwater and Taunton College/University Centre Somerset won the CoLRiC Innovative Practice Award, 2022, for its 'Embedded Librarian or Taking the Library to the Classroom' initiative. It effectively utilised digital curriculum platforms to contextualise learning resources within the wider learning environment, embracing everything from print and electronic sources of information, information retrieval and research skills to equality, diversity, health and wellbeing awareness. You can read how they achieved this in this issue.

***'Enjoy this
issue as we
look forward
to the next
12 months'***

Itab El-Ghariani and James Golab, Library Learning Facilitators at Bradford College, introduce you to their new TikTok account. 'Social media has been an excellent tool to reach and engage with people. Our library has been following this trend for several years by being active on many social media platforms, including Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and a blog.' TikTok is relatively new to the social media landscape, but with 1000 million users and its popularity with 16-24-year-olds, getting to grips with it as an informative and entertaining engagement tool is a wise move in the FE sector. Look out for James elsewhere in this issue as he is Highly Commended for the Jeff Cooper Inspirational Information Professional of the Year Award 2022.

We also have plenty of CoLRiC news and updates, most notably our new unlisted YouTube channel featuring recordings of our online seminars. Access to the recordings, alongside copies of handouts, presentations and supplementary material, is via the members-only [Document Repository](#) on the CoLRiC website. Please let us know if you need to set up a password to access this content.

Exciting opportunities have also arisen for you or your colleagues to contribute to the future of CoLRiC as our resource and service portfolio develops to embrace an increasingly diverse and challenging Further Education/ Sixth Form College environment. We are looking for new committee colleagues and volunteers keen to contribute strategically and operationally and to lead or support projects on a task finish basis. Everything you need to know about the benefits of supporting us is included in this issue.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

COLRIC NEWS

CoLRiC Executive Committee is recruiting new members and volunteers.

Exciting opportunities have arisen for you or your colleagues to contribute to the future of CoLRiC.

CoLRiC is keen to expand its Executive Committee (EC) as its resource and service portfolio develops to embrace an increasingly diverse and challenging Further Education/ Sixth Form College environment. We are looking for **committee colleagues** and **volunteers** keen to contribute strategically and operationally in specific EC roles or to lead or support projects on a task finish basis

CoLRiC members from **any background** - from **senior staff** to **new to the career** or **early career professionals** keen for the development opportunities that committee working can offer - are encouraged to apply.

The EC works collaboratively, agreeing responsibilities, roles and tasks, working in teams to deliver agreed targets and outcomes. It is supported by an administration team and meets **via Zoom** approximately three/four times a year.

Benefits of CoLRiC EC membership and volunteering:

- ❖ Major professional development opportunity to support CoLRiC's senior committee officers, shadowing and learning from our Chair and Treasurer, for example
- ❖ Contribute to the strategic and operational planning of FE and SFC library and learning resource services
- ❖ Boost your CV
- ❖ Network with and learn from colleagues from a diverse range of backgrounds and organisations
- ❖ Manage or contribute to projects
- ❖ Raise your professional profile and that of your organisation across the national library and learning resource community
- ❖ Work collaboratively with colleagues committed to the development of quality assurance standards, championing value, impact, exemplary practice and innovation.

If you don't want to commit to a formal committee role, we would be delighted to co-opt information professionals who might want to contribute to some of our current projects without necessarily attending formal EC meetings.

These include:

- ❖ Creative input into our CPD/online seminar programme, commissioning speakers and topics of interest to the membership
- ❖ Digital service development, including web content creation and management using the WordPress platform. The CoLRiC website is our key public facing resource for publicity and member recruitment

- ❖ Writing, proof reading and editing publications including our e-newsletter CoLRiC Impact, press releases and reports
- ❖ Repository management and development, helping shape a key member resource and collection of exemplar documents and resources shared by the community
- ❖ Peer Accreditation Scheme: PAS is CoLRiC's flagship service, helping evidence value and impact through rigorous self-assessment and quality assurance. This role would be ideal for a senior manager with a strategic focus
- ❖ Social media: contribute content and ideas to support the expansion and development of our social media portfolio.

Interested? Here's what to do next. Please contact us with an expression of interest. **Email:** colric@colric.org.uk **Tel:** 07879667347. A member of the CoLRiC Executive Committee will contact you to discuss further.

Trending topics on CoLRiC's discussion forum

Our members continue to be active on CoLRiC's [discussion forum](#). It's a great place to ask a question, elicit feedback, share ideas or concerns or simply to reach out to your peers.

Recent topics provide a snapshot of your everyday priorities, considerations and concerns.

- ❖ Electronic resources: subscription based versus free, open access content. Is 'free stuff' worth it in terms of quality and depth of coverage?
- ❖ Organisational approaches to copyright/IP breaches
- ❖ Suggestions for content and good practice in study skills training
- ❖ Library and information courses, accreditation and apprenticeship opportunities for staff seeking formal training and qualifications
- ❖ Networking and development opportunities for library assistants
- ❖ Library shelving and furniture
- ❖ CoLRiC sponsor updates.

Don't forget that you can use the CoLRiC discussion forum to **publish job vacancies**. It can be an invaluable tool to support your **HR and recruitment** activities.

The forum is hosted by JiscMail. To access it you must register for an account with them. Registration is free and employees at any member College can join using their work email address

CoLRiC's free online seminars programme

CoLRiC's free online lunchtime seminar programme continues to be a great success. Themes including 'Digital Accessibility: Removing Barriers to Learning' and 'Creating a Departmental Digital Strategy' have proved popular with members. The outcomes of a forum discussing the ongoing impact of the Covid pandemic on students and education is published in this issue.

In October 2022 'Free Assistive Technology for Students' addressed the challenges faced by students with Specific Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (SpLDD). It covered freely available software and apps that can assist with studying more effectively, and helped participants to:

- ❖ Recognise the main challenges students with SpLDD face when learning
- ❖ Develop an understanding of the software that can be used by students with SpLDD
- ❖ Identify apps and strategies that make it possible for students with SpLDD to engage with learning
- ❖ Recommend appropriate Assistive Technologies to students with SpLDD.

CoLRiC would like to thank Andy Eachus for his contribution to the seminar programme. He has worked in FE for over twenty years supporting staff with embedding digital and web technologies into their teaching practice. Now working in the HE sector, he focuses on digital skills training for staff and students and specialises in Assistive Technology and Digital Accessibility.



CoLRiC seminars YouTube channel - All CoLRiC's seminars are recorded and are available to members on our unlisted YouTube channel. Access to the recordings, along with copies of handouts, presentations and additional material, is via our Document Repository on the CoLRiC website. Please let us know if you need to set up a password to access this members-only material on the website.

Suggest a topic - We'd love to have your suggestions for future seminar topics please. We want to ensure that the CoLRiC seminar programme is relevant to your needs, so please email us with any ideas, or perhaps you have something you'd like to present on a project or theme yourself? We look forward to hearing from you.

Do we have all your recommended local email contacts?

We're keen to ensure that we engage with members on a regular basis and are continually updating our contact database. Are there additional colleagues that you'd like us to add to our records? A deputy head of service, or a campus manager? Please let us know.

Access to member only content on the CoLRiC website

Everybody in your team will require a personal CoLRiC password to access content, most notably current and previous issues of our e-newsletter CoLRiC Impact and the document repository. If you have not received an email from us inviting you to create your own password, then please email us for further advice and information. We will create an account for you and email you with further instructions.

CELEBRATING COLRIC'S 2022 AWARDS

CoLRiC is delighted to announce two worthy winners and two highly commended entries for our prestigious 2022 awards.

CoLRiC Innovative Practice Award 2022

CIPA is presented in celebration of highly innovative and enthusiastic contributions to team working including:

- ❖ A demonstrable impact on the teaching and learning experience; primarily through assessments, surveys and feedback
- ❖ Active engagement with academic staff, curriculum colleagues and students.

... and the winner is

The Learning Resources Service at Bridgwater and Taunton College/University Centre Somerset for its 'Embedded Librarian or Taking the Library to the Classroom' initiative. The team impressed the judging panel for several reasons:



- ❖ The collaboration and dialogue with teaching staff to create an engaging bespoke service for students
 - ❖ The effective utilisation of digital curriculum platforms to contextualise learning resources within the wider learning environment, embracing everything from print and electronic sources of information, information retrieval and research skills to equality, diversity, health and wellbeing awareness
 - ❖ The use of universally understood social media communication techniques to engage with the student community
 - ❖ The introduction of complementary 'pop in' classroom visits at specific and relevant times of the academic year to offer guidance, hints and tips on common queries like referencing, most notably 'speed databasing'
- ❖ Sensitivity to the needs of a diverse student community
 - ❖ Overwhelmingly positive feedback that evidences a major impact on student learning, including the accuracy of bibliographies, improved writing skills, the wider exploration of information resources and overall academic confidence.

'The Learning Resources Service, the entire College, is honoured to receive this award. We would like to thank the judging panel for recognising the value of the initiative and the impact it has had on the learning experience. Students are at the heart of everything we do. We continuously seek to adapt to the changing learning needs of a diverse student community and support digital transformation.' - **Jolanta Peters, Research & Library Services Manager**

'I am proud that our Learning Resources Service is the winner of the prestigious 2022 CoLRiC Innovative Practice Award. As we celebrate, we reflect on our efforts to innovate and support learning in the digital age. This is an exciting project - a linking bridge with the curriculum that has created a service engaging students with library and learning resources in support of their academic development. We are immensely grateful to CoLRiC for recognising this achievement.' - **Adam Sturt, Deputy Director of Quality**

Highly commended

The Chichester College Group Library Service initiative 'Creating an Actively Anti-Racist Library Service'. The team impressed the judging panel for several reasons:



- ❖ Its commitment to creating an anti-racist library service that will help 'change lives through learning' and address the underperformance of non-white students in FE
- ❖ Significant research, discussion and collaboration around racial literacy and 'decolonising the curriculum'
- ❖ Motivating the teaching community to reflect on curriculum content
- ❖ Empowering the student community to engage in conversations on an emotive, sensitive topic
- ❖ Positive academic feedback that evidences the impact decolonisation could have on the learning experience.

'This is a fantastic honour for our amazing library teams across the whole group. We are proud to have a passionate team of people committed to creating an anti-racist library service that really does help to change young people's lives through learning. They have led by example, working with colleagues in other departments to ensure they feel motivated and supported in the work they do and helping them to reflect on their curriculum content. From providing training to initiating important discussions on an emotive, sensitive topic - they have been shining examples of the inclusive environment that we are striving to create at our colleges. To see this important work be highly commended by CoLRiC is something our library team richly deserve, and I know I speak for the entire group when I say how proud we are.'

- Andrew Green, Chief Executive of the Chichester College Group

'I am delighted with this recognition and hope that it will further inspire our team to contribute to the creation of an authentically anti-racist college community in a predominantly white environment.' - **Stella Hine, Site Librarian, Brinsbury Library**

'The library team is thrilled to receive this recognition and would like to thank the judging panel for their positive comments. We will continue on our journey to make the Chichester College Group Library Service truly representative in terms of our collections and the students we serve.' - **Frances Fryer, College Librarian, Chichester College Group**

Special thanks go to Emma Duffield for being the external judge for this award, and to CoLRiC's valued sponsor IS Oxford Ltd. Emma is Sales Manager at IS Oxford and a Library and Information Management Consultant.

Jeff Cooper Inspirational Information Professional of the Year Award 2022

The Award is presented in celebration of proactive, creative and enthusiastic individual contributions to team working that demonstrate:

- ❖ A positive and demonstrable impact on service delivery
- ❖ Active engagement with academic staff, curriculum colleagues and students.

...and the winner is

New City College's Vanessa Munro.

Vanessa's contribution as Learning Resources Assistant impressed the panel for several reasons. Her:

- ❖ Creative and engaging transformation of the library and learning spaces through art
- ❖ Excellent partnership and collaboration with teachers and students, evidenced by overwhelmingly positive feedback
- ❖ Commitment to literacy and the joy of reading
- ❖ Dedication to service excellence through her continuing professional development, most notably by learning the unique language programme Makaton.



Vanessa is elated to receive the award. *'I am so grateful to CoLRiC. It's fantastic to receive recognition for the work I do with the students. I would like to thank my managers - Elaine Brown and Audrey Stranders - and all my colleagues for supporting me in the development of this focused learning resource service. Our aim is to provide a welcoming and inclusive space for our amazing students. Developing their capabilities and supporting their needs have always been our priority. I feel proud of what we have achieved.'*

Audrey Stranders, Group Director of Learning Resources Centres, is *'delighted to share and celebrate Vanessa's achievements.'*

Highly commended

Bradford College's James Golab.

James' contribution as Library Learning Facilitator impressed the panel for several reasons. His:

- ❖ Commitment and dedication to his job
- ❖ Regularly acknowledged respect, affection and feedback from students
- ❖ Collaboration with academic staff
- ❖ Proactive and engaging role in reading groups to support English for speakers of other languages
- ❖ Sensitivity to the needs of a diverse student group, including those with special educational needs and disabilities
- ❖ Personal investment in professional development based on his work experiences, (most notably his recent graduation as Young Persons Mental Health First Aider).



'This is wonderful news! James is such a friendly, resourceful and creative colleague.' - **Lakshmi Banner, Library Team Leader**

'I'm delighted with the award: It's a wonderful feeling and a privilege to be recognised by my peers, something that I greatly appreciate. I have loved the new challenges that we've embraced. I'd like to thank both Lakshmi and Emma Luby for their support of my ideas and personal development.' - **James Golab**

'Library staff are the greatest asset of our service, and I am delighted that James' commitment, enthusiasm and empathy have been recognised. Having recently taken on management of the Library Service at Bradford College, I am looking forward to leading this award-winning team to continue meeting our aim of working together to improve lives.' - **Tim Lupton, Head of Learning, Teaching & Assessment and Library Services**

Special thanks go to Liz McGettigan, Director of Digital Library Experiences at SOLUS UK, for being the external judge for this award.

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**COLRIC INNOVATIVE PRACTICE AWARD - Bridgwater and Taunton
College/University Centre Somerset**

Bridgwater and Taunton College was announced as the winner of the CoLRiC Innovative Practice Award in October 2022.

The Embedded Librarian or Taking the Library
to the Classroom (TLC) by Jolanta Peters,
Research and Library Services Manager,
Learning Resources Service, Bridgwater and
Taunton College/University Centre Somerset



University
Centre
Somerset

Part of Bridgwater & Taunton College

An innovative project

The aim of the Embedded Librarian or Taking the Library to the Classroom (TLC) initiative is to work more closely with curriculum by offering a more bespoke library service. It has a two-fold focus: digital librarian intervention which involves the creation of Embedded Librarian channels on FE and HE programmes' MS Teams sites or Google Classroom; and Librarian Pop-ins to classrooms to promote subject-specific library resources and services.

By being “embedded” within curriculum digital platforms, librarians can follow current topics, assignment briefs and tutor announcements, and contextualise the learning resources' information they post within these channels to support students with their assignments, units, or modules.

Disseminating information and resources

The types of information and resources that are disseminated across the channels include:

- ❖ Regular study skills tips and videos on time management, exam revision, research, avoiding plagiarism, referencing, etc.
- ❖ Links to new books, e-books, journal packages and databases relevant to the modules and topics; searching techniques
- ❖ Promotion of printed journals specially chosen for the topic area
- ❖ Promotion of library resources with a focus on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)
- ❖ Study skills presentations / asynchronous resources
- ❖ Students' digital skills enhancement opportunities
- ❖ Inter-library loans service information
- ❖ Gathering student feedback via surveys / questionnaires
- ❖ LRC News of the week
- ❖ Library initiatives, e.g., Pet Therapy in the LRC; the Reading Ahead challenge; the Digital Book Club; Health and wellbeing information; charity fundraising



Bridgwater Campus Team

Student engagement

Students engage with the “Embedded Librarian” channels by ‘liking’ the posts (thumbs up or heart symbols) or sharing their ‘feeling’ for each post. Students engage with “Embedded Librarians” by responding to posts in writing and asking follow-up questions. This digital “embeddedness” enables students to connect with their subject librarians throughout the year at the campus or remotely. Curriculum staff support this activity by using reaction symbols and comments and make recommendations to librarians about future topics and posts. This approach creates closer collaboration between librarians and curriculum staff.

Teams channels

The Embedded Librarian channels provide a platform for students and curriculum staff to pose questions to librarians, for example, locating and searching specific resources; requests for additional resources or bookings for 1:1 study skills support. Having at least two embedded librarians within each channel helps to ensure that queries are followed up in a timely manner and not missed if one librarian is out of office. This initiative harnesses digital operational effectiveness by having channels, rather than additional MS Teams sites, which work more efficiently.

Curriculum support

Librarian Pop-Ins to curriculum classes throughout the year is another "Embedded Librarian" or "Taking the Library to the Classroom" intervention. The 15/20-minute bespoke "Librarian Pop-ins" involve "Speed Databasing" (promoting programme-specific research databases), hints and tips on tricky referencing and research queries. These "Pop-Ins" are offered to students throughout the academic year at key stages of their study.

Measuring impact

The Learning Resources Service gathered written data as evidence to showcase the impact of these interventions on students' academic achievement. It was gathered from students and course leaders using Microsoft Forms surveys, as well as minutes from the meeting of Programme Committees.

The Media Make-up course leader said, *"It was great for the students to have announcements when new books arrived that may be useful to their courses so that they know that the resources are constantly being updated."*

There was praise from the Health and Social Care and Early Childhood Studies course leader for the wider support, *"The individual study skills support and productivity techniques have been good for the students, as well as the book recommendations and information on inter-library loans"*

The Trainee Nursing Associate course leader went even further when she said, *"The library services have undoubtedly been a key factor in our students' success on the programme."*



The Counselling and Psychotherapy course leader praised the channel by reflecting that it “[...] helps students to be more autonomous when searching for resources. Students like to be spoon-fed, but the embedded librarian shows them where the ‘menu’ is instead, and they can then ‘cook their own meals’ [...]”.

Students, including a higher education Computing student said, “Learning what new books and journals relevant to my course have become available” was an important aspect of the Teams channel.

A further education Art and Design student pointed out that, “Having access to referencing resources was really helpful”.

The Embedded Librarian project has developed further in the 2022-23 academic year. This year even more curriculum areas have signed up to have dedicated Teams channels for librarians, students, and curriculum staff to interact about library resources, services and facilities. The College’s evidence shows that such a close alliance between the library staff and curriculum has helped students become more effective learners, improve their assignments and gain higher grades.



Taunton Campus Team

SPOTLIGHT ON.....Vanessa Munro, Learning Resource Assistant, New City College, winner of the CoLRiC Jeff Cooper Award 2022

Vanessa impressed the awards panel with her:

- ❖ Creative and engaging transformation of the library and learning spaces through art
- ❖ Excellent partnership and collaboration with teachers and students, evidenced by overwhelmingly positive feedback
- ❖ Commitment to literacy and the joy of reading
- ❖ Dedication to service excellence through her continuing professional development, most notably by learning the unique language programme Makaton.

Here she tells us a bit more about herself and the work she is doing at New City College

How did you become a Learning Resource Assistant?

For many years I worked in the City, and after having children I had the opportunity to change careers and as I've always had a love for literature, and wanted to work with young people, a Library/Learning Resource position was perfect for me.

Tell us a bit about the space you have created for students at NCC

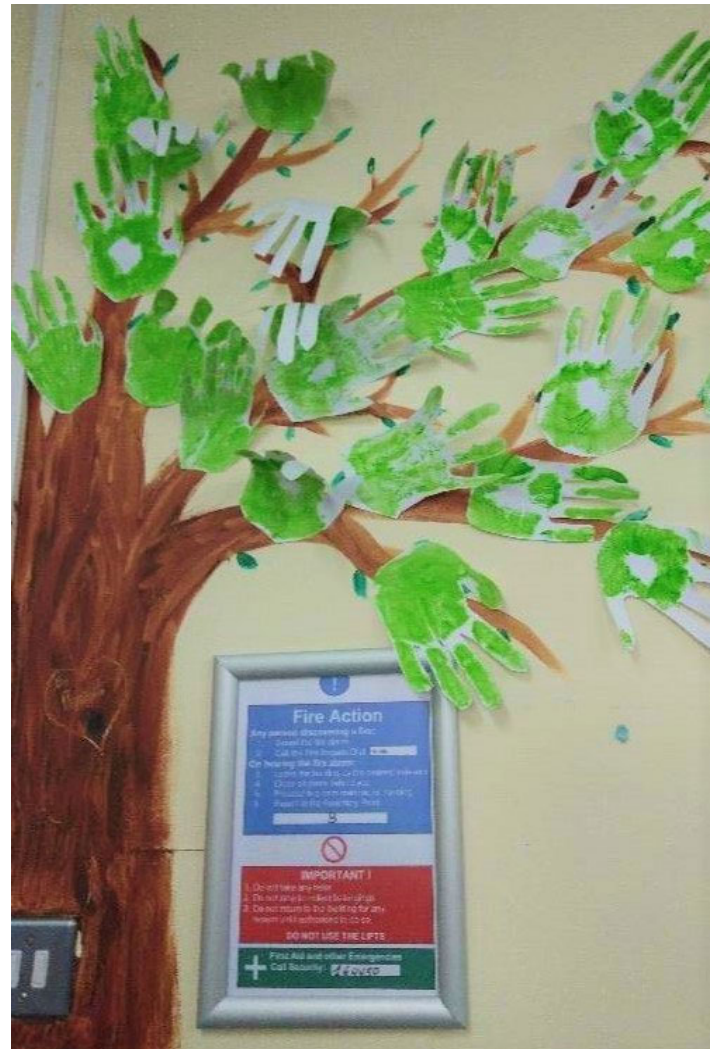
Ideas that may work in a "traditional" setting may not necessarily work here, we need to especially think of wheelchair users, and access issues but more importantly that the area is bright, welcoming and engaging - you can't help but look in and want to explore our room with its displays and artwork. The artwork was created by a previous student, who was a fabulous artist. Each year we plan to add more art and displays created by the students so that each year's intake have made a contribution to the space, be it their handprints on our "tree" or including art projects they've created throughout the year. Recently we produced the "Tunnel" display outside of the library as we were inspired by the book of the same name by Anthony Brown. On hearing of New Court's project, the author very kindly sent in a signed piece of his artwork to show his appreciation, which was wonderful. As well as the space, the stock is also very student-led, we aim to provide anything the students request (within reason) with cookbooks, Marvel and buses being perennial favourites!



NCC New Court Library

What is your favourite part of the job?

Seeing the students developing in front of my very eyes - and this is often over several years. The thought that I may have helped in some way towards that development is so rewarding. For example one of our students with severe autism does not like anything on our giant scrabble board, and for the past couple of years he will remove any letters from it if we put up any words. Last week he began to place words on there himself, one after-another. He had to take them down at the end of the lunchtime session but it's progress. Also, a bitter-sweet part of the job, as all those who work in education will know, seeing students leave the college and go into employment and out into the real world is very satisfying. That is a bigger hurdle for the students of New Court, something that most of us take for granted.



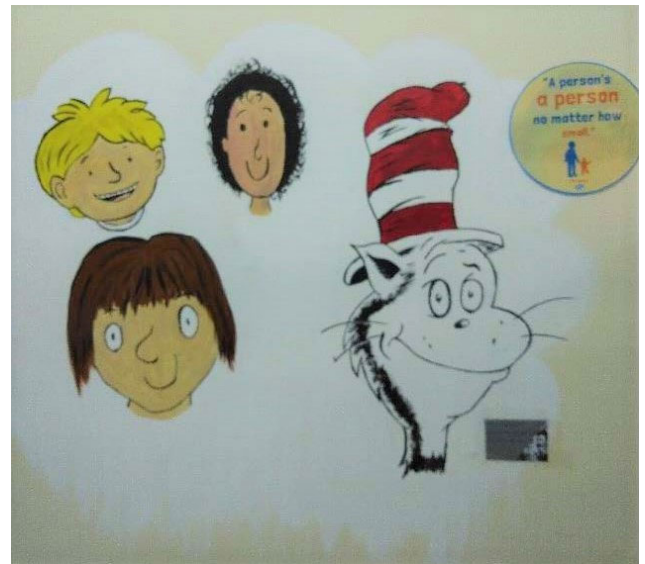
NCC New Court Art Work

What has been the biggest challenge with running the story time and activity sessions?

One week things may “work”, but the very same thing may not “work” the following week due to the nature of the student’s needs. Such outcomes are beyond your control. And that needs to be accepted. On the other hand a last minute session is often arranged or extended to include a last minute craft as everything is going so well. Adaptability and thinking on your feet is key.

Do you have anything else planned for the new academic year?

To reintroduce work experience within the library for the students, unfortunately this was put on hold during Covid. Also, we run a 6 book challenge across the college libraries, I will be promoting and relaunching the challenge at New Court in the new year. Finally, I hope to get to know the new intake of students a bit better, go into the classrooms and find out what they would like to make the Library appeal to them.



And finally.....sum yourself up in three words

Imaginative, Adaptive, Jovial

NCC New Court Student Painting

INTRODUCING... OUR NEW TIKTOK ACCOUNT! - Itab El-Ghariani and James Golab, Library Learning Facilitators, Bradford College

Having a social media presence

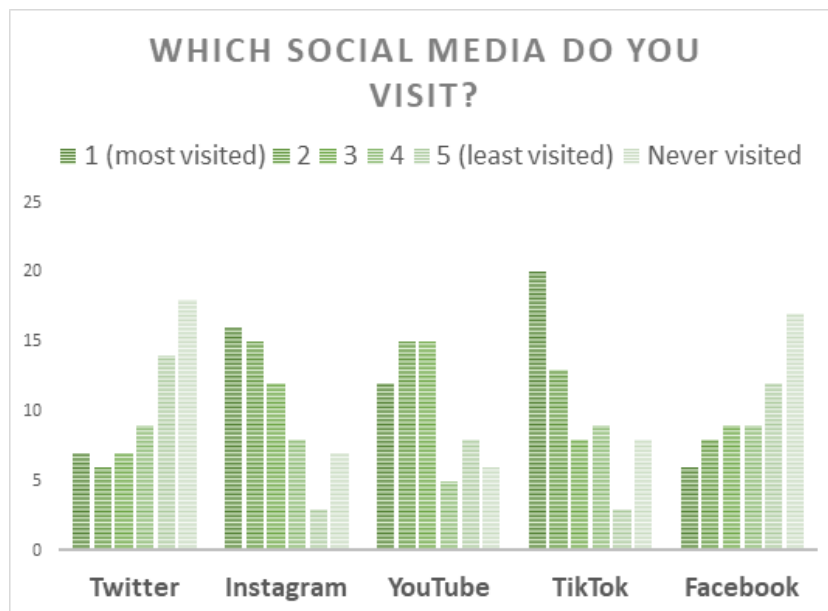
For almost two decades, social media has been an excellent tool to reach and engage with people. Our library has been following this trend for several years by being active on many social media platforms, including Twitter ([@BradfordCollLib](#)), Instagram ([@bradfordcollegelibrary](#)), YouTube ([@BradfordCollegeLRC](#)) and a blog.

We reached out to students at the end of the last academic year to hear what our learners have to say about our social media. We listened to students and staff from across the College, and as a result we have launched a TikTok account [@bradcollib](#)

Why TikTok?

We designed a social media survey, to give us an up-to-date understanding of which social media our learners are most invested in, and what they're looking for from the Library's social media.

Our survey was shared with students – we completed paper surveys with our learners face-to-face, and we made an online version which we shared via all social media channels, our LibraryOnline website blog, and via QR codes spread across the libraries. We received a good number of responses – 61 students and staff in just less than a month. [See the full results of our social media survey.](#)



One of the clearest results we received was how popular TikTok is amongst our learners; around a third stated that TikTok was their most visited social media platform. Compared to other social media of similar popularity, TikTok is the most recent (released in 2012) and was the most unfamiliar to us. Previously, the possibility of TikTok being a fad has discouraged us from integrating it into our marketing strategy. Given the persistent growth of TikTok's user base across the world, and the results from our survey, we decided to launch our own TikTok account.

TikTok content

When TikTok first launched, it quickly spawned a new social media subculture, which made the platform ground-breaking in the overcrowded social media market. To make the most of the platform, we wanted to create content that followed TikTok's unique style – flashy, friendly and often funny videos in a minute or less.

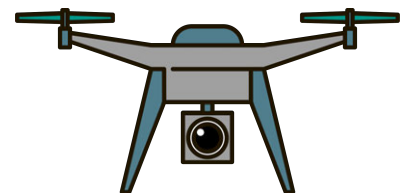
Over the summer of 2022, we looked at what content we wanted on our TikTok account, considering two questions: what information do we want to share, and how should it be stylised?

We decided on the essentials – key how-to information, for example, how to borrow and return items, how to reserve a book, and how to search the Library Catalogue, needed to be live by September for new students. Following this, we could then focus on key events, according to both the internal College (e.g., Freshers' Fair) and wider national and cultural (e.g. Black History Month) calendars.

Experimenting in a heatwave

We saw launching a new social media account as an opportunity to experiment. We used a drone for the first time, aiming to create impressive aerial shots of our Library which could be used for helpful TikToks about how to navigate the Library and as an eye-catching introduction. The summer break was ideal for capturing the look of the Library in a quiet environment, but there were other considerations which made drone-filming a challenge – health and safety issues connected with flying an object; the quality of the drone camera being lower than most smartphones, and therefore lower than many of our learners' expectations of social media videos; and the summer heatwave's adverse effects on the drone's battery life. However, we believe the drone experiment was successful enough to be featured in future TikToks.

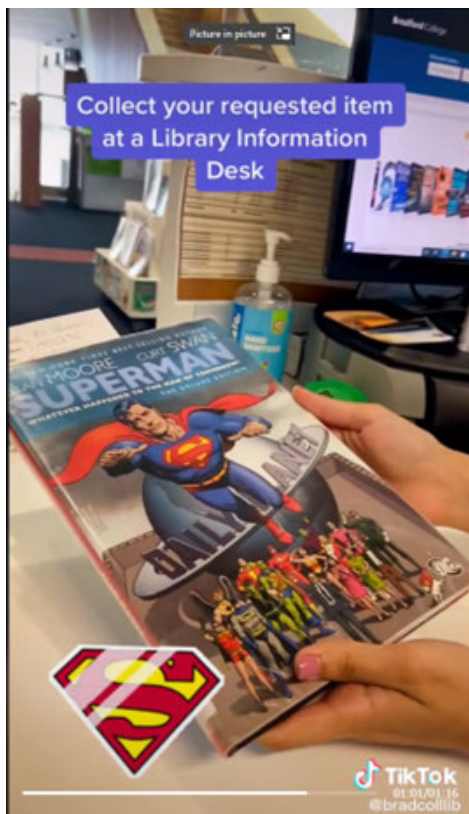
An example of our early drone footage



Finding a style

While filming and editing our TikToks, we wanted to ensure our style matched what has made TikTok so popular, by making our content relaxed with some elements of fun and comedy but remaining professional. Concerning sound, we've chosen limited narration in preference for on-screen text in a variety of colours.

This both increases colour in and attraction to our videos, whilst decreasing time and effort to make TikToks, which is necessary to follow our tight schedule of posting at least once a week. For music, we plan to match our choice of music to the topic of the video, and where possible choosing popular and recognisable music. For example, we chose the Superman theme tune for our TikTok demonstrating how to borrow a book in which a Superman comic was used.



Our TikTok illustrating items we have at the Library



Left: our Superman-themed TikTok demonstrating how to reserve a book.

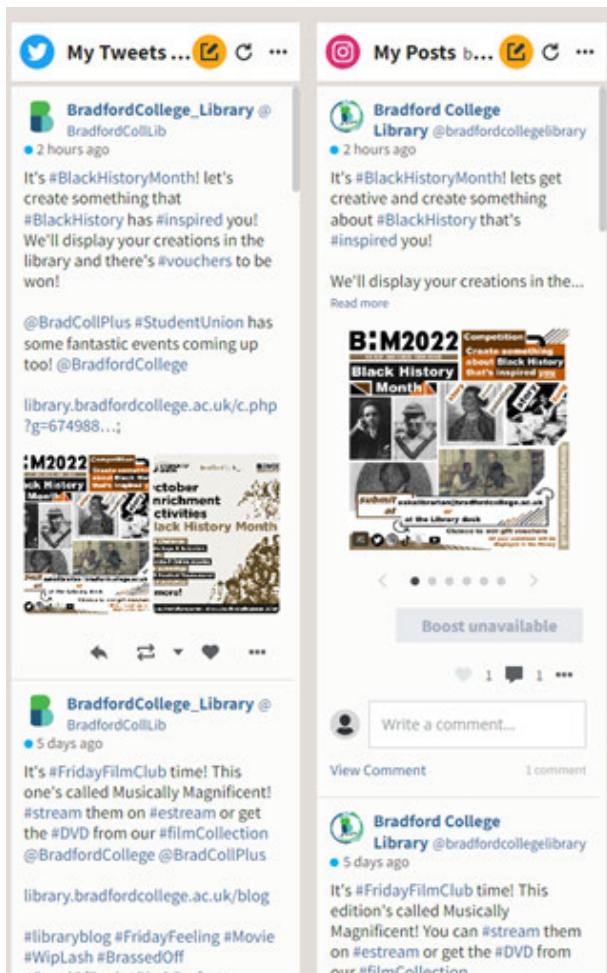
Right: Our Tikok showing our stall at this year's Freshers Fair



For our TikTok showing our stall at Freshers' Fair, we chose the song Cool Kids to appeal to our mainly younger audience.

Social media strategy

However, we also know that to keep our TikTok sustainable, it should be as integrated as possible to our wider social media marketing strategy, which means making sure our TikTok content is transferable to our other social media as well. This works in conjunction with our current methods of mass editing content, for example the multi-social media content scheduler Hootsuite, which counteracts the not-so user-friendly in-built TikTok editor, which we have found so far to be time-consuming compared to other social media.



Our Hootsuite scheduling stream

Alongside our introduction of TikTok, we are expanding our social media advertising. As well as advertising the icons on our website LibraryOnline and on all of our promotional posters, we will introduce cross-platform advertising (promoting all our social media on each platform) and physical advertising via posters and leaflets on walls and Library tables.

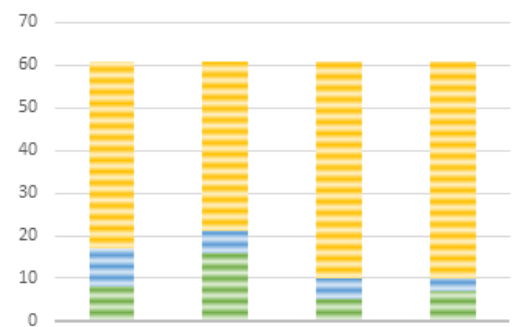
So, although creating and sharing TikTok content has been more time-consuming than expected, a big positive is that all TikTok videos will be shared to our other social media platforms, reducing the time we spend on other platforms. We've noticed that our new TikTok initiative has encouraged more visually stimulating and video-orientated social media content across all platforms, demonstrating how our current investment in TikTok culture has potentially strengthened our social media marketing across all platforms for the foreseeable future.

How are we advertising our TikTok?

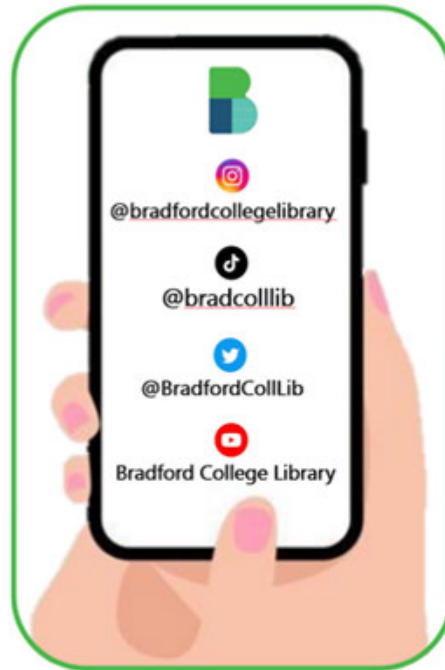
The social media survey showed relatively low recognition of our social media channels.

DO YOU RECOGNISE ANY OF THESE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS?

Yes Maybe No



Twitter (@BradfordCollLib)
Instagram (@bradfordcollelibrary)
Blog (LibraryOnline)
YouTube (@BradfordCollegeLRC)

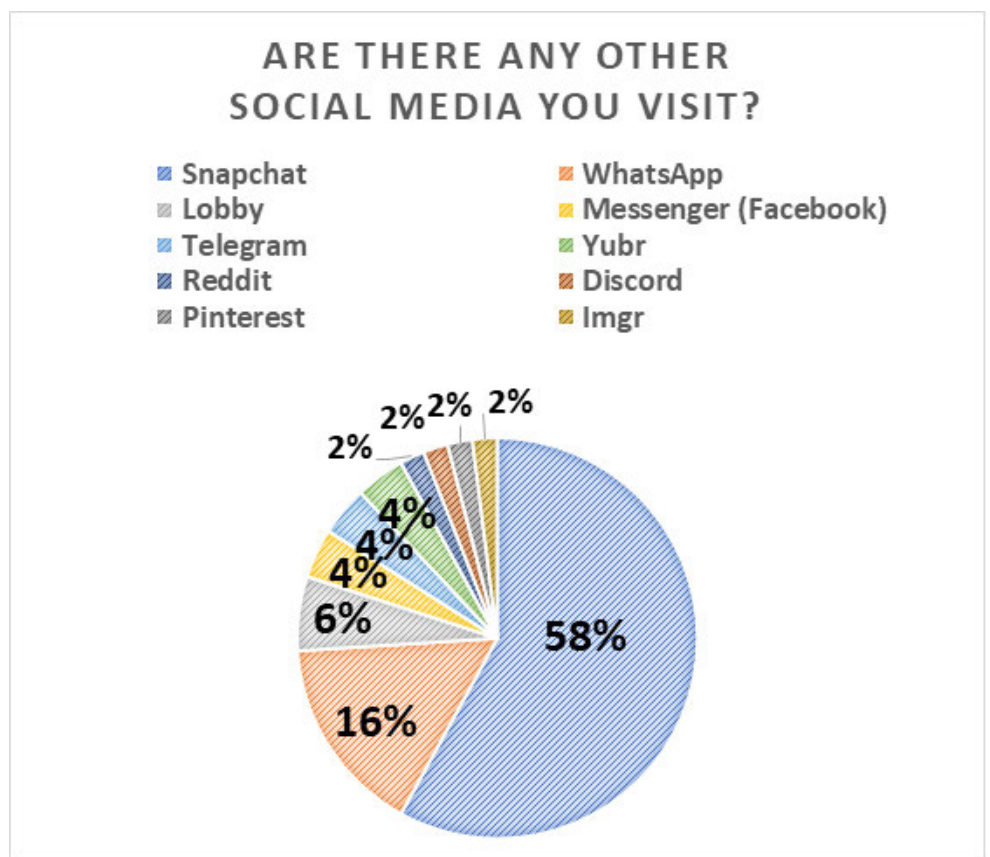


Left: Our poster promoting our Black History Month competition, featuring our social media at the bottom.

Right: One of our new posters promoting our social media platforms

Looking ahead

We plan to monitor TikTok's global and local popularity to determine if it will keep growing or if it will start to decline. Although currently it's the biggest social media platform, there have been some concerns about its future, especially due to the platform originating from China which has caused both UK-based and international concerns over data protection. We recognise that we should understand TikTok's future as best as we can to determine our ongoing social media strategy. Similarly, we will monitor the growth of TikTok's competitors, such as Snapchat, which was also recommended by students in the survey.



Wider considerations

A key factor impacting our social media marketing strategy overall, which includes whether we continue to have opportunities like pursuing new platforms, is Library staff availability. It's worth noting that the entirety of the Library's marketing policies and action, of which social media is only one section, is carried out by our enthusiastic Library team alongside their core duties. We're always keen to expand our role, which is also demonstrated by our inclusion in ESOL and Preparation for Life and Work curriculums via reading sessions with learners, and while we're optimistic about our ability to add TikTok to our strategy, staff availability may be a factor in continuing the amount of social media activities that we're pursuing, and therefore our engagement with our learners.

However, we're optimistic about continuing TikTok and our other social media platforms. The popularity of social media now more than ever is something that you really don't want to ignore.

COVID - REFLECTING ON THE LEGACY OF TWO YEARS OF PANDEMIC TRAUMA ON STUDENTS. IMPLICATIONS FOR LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCE SERVICES - Gary Horrocks

Introduction

Early last year the alarming rise in Covid infections across the UK indicated that this debilitating pandemic was far from over and it continues to [adversely impact the education sector](#). The Department for Education's announcement of changes to Covid safety measures in April 2022 left staff struggling to deliver teaching, learning and a high quality student experience. The end to universal free symptomatic and asymptomatic rapid flow testing and constantly changing guidance on Covid etiquette – testing, mask wearing, self-isolation, even recognising extensive new symptoms – did not help the situation.

The School Leaders' Union (NAHT) General Secretary Paul Whiteman commented at the time:

'We have repeatedly warned the government that education is at breaking point. We hear sympathetic words and acknowledgement of the great work our members do but see little actual action to bring relief to the chaos. We need a proper plan for how to live with Covid long-term that is focused on keeping levels low and reducing disruption, rather than just ignoring it.'

CoLRiC's chair Sam Goldsmith raised concerns about the implications for library and learning resource services and invited members to share their thoughts and experiences.

'With the national Covid absence rate at 1 in 10 teaching staff, student groups are often signposted to our centres at short notice when classes are postponed. Colleges are keen to ensure an element of continuity in student education and the library is a student's second home after the classroom, but this disruption can have a detrimental effect on capacity, workload and stress in our library teams.'

In July 2022 [Ofsted published its third briefing](#) in a series assessing the impact of the pandemic on education providers; resilient in the face of continuing challenges. 'Most are adapting to life with Covid and focusing on the effectiveness of their recovery strategies. But the legacy of the pandemic and repeated lockdowns continues to affect some children and learners' education and development.'

In April Ofsted published its [Education Recovery spring 2022 update](#), citing evidence gathered from routine inspections. Key themes arising from the research indicated that the pandemic continued to hinder students' learning and personal development.

- ❖ Many FE students have lower levels of knowledge and skills
- ❖ Disruption has adversely affected student behaviour, social skills and attitudes
- ❖ Recruitment and retention of staff is a challenge
- ❖ Mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns remain high
- ❖ Staff Covid-related absence is a key concern.

To explore the role that library and learning resource services staff are playing in supporting the wider Covid agenda, CoLRiC issued a call for feedback on the discussion forum and invited delegates to an online seminar in May 2022.

We asked four questions.

- ❖ Have you experienced any rise in student mental health and wellbeing issues?
- ❖ Do you have examples of lower levels of knowledge and skills that have impacted on student induction, reading, numeracy or information literacy?
- ❖ Have you experienced a deterioration in student behaviour and attitudes that have impacted on the ability to manage library and learning resources services? (Ambivalence to learning and non-attendance in the classroom has been cited as one adverse effect of the lockdown.)
- ❖ How are you managing with staff recruitment and retention? Do you think that the pandemic and lockdown have encouraged some staff to reappraise their life and careers, or seek opportunities outside of the FE sector?

All the Colleges that participated in the seminar or provided feedback in any capacity have been anonymised in this article.

Have you experienced any rise in student mental health and wellbeing issues?

This question initiated the most extensive feedback and discussion. The legacy of two years of pandemic trauma has seen a lack of motivation amongst the student body.

Exam stress and coursework submission was a key issue. There have been 'meltdowns and panics over deadlines,' and intense anxiety about exams after two years of isolation. For some students this was the first time they had sat a two-hour exam, and even the prospect of hand-writing a paper was daunting to a cohort brought up in a digital keyboard environment. Obviously, this issue is not necessarily Covid related, but exacerbated by lockdown. There has been an increasing pressure on library and learning resource teams to support students with study skills through the stressful exam period. Support for 'vulnerable learners' with problematic home lives and no access to IT was a particular issue.

Motivation: There has been an increase in students not turning up to classes, and in some cases a reduction in visits to the library, having been confined to the classroom for so long to adhere to social distancing.

Library support: Some libraries have transitioned to offering more mental health and wellbeing support, beyond their traditional remit. The library is increasingly seen as a 'safe place'; a 'safe environment.' One participant noted the wellbeing team was situated in the library, and that there had been a notable increase in student visits to the service; an 'explosion of mental health issues.' Other Colleges noted increased collaboration with professional services teams including careers and welfare and noted that they were exploring more creative ways of using 'sheltered' library spaces to support the wellbeing agenda. One College had developed 'Wellbeing corners', and there had been a notable increase in 1:1 student consultations.

Covid sickness and mental health issues amongst academic and professional staff had also impacted on library workload, with examples of students being signposted to the library as a port of call during times of staff absence. This had led to overcrowding and disruption. Students have become more willing to share their support needs with staff, articulating their concerns and anxieties over study issues. Some Colleges have evidenced that during lockdown some students reflected on their courses and returned wanting to change subjects. Covid sickness and lockdown stress amongst staff and students had a major impact on library staff also struggling with their own health and mental wellbeing issues. A vicious cycle of impact, in many respects.

Comment

'We have put in place additional support in case learners are anxious - including using the libraries as a quiet place before exams and having learner services staff on hand to provide support.'

Do you have examples of lower levels of knowledge and skills that have impacted on student induction, reading, numeracy or information literacy?

Some participants noted a decline in critical thinking, independent learning, research skills and print and electronic information resource awareness at a time when many courses and qualifications, T levels for example, require a high level of information retrieval skills. As a result, libraries have been compelled to increase emphasis on induction and information literacy to encourage awareness and utilisation of resources and services. Some libraries were also promoting the benefits of reading to improve mental health and wellbeing.

The key impact of Covid in this area was the requirement to transition to digital resources and services and remote access and to help support students to develop a new set of digital literacy skills. The lockdown had also compelled libraries to develop creative ways of induction and skills training, but also to review collection management and development with the transition from print to electronic. There is increasing evidence that the lack of face-to-face induction and training and the reliance on pre-recorded videos and online delivery were impacting negatively on skills.

Some participants noted that new students were increasingly reliant on tutor support, putting more stress on teaching staff which in turn impacted on library workloads.

Comments

'We've found that students that did not have a face-to-face library induction have lower digital and information literacy skills than those that did.'

'Are you asking if general learner skills are less than pre-Covid? That's not my experience.'

Have you experienced a deterioration in student behaviour and attitudes that have impacted on the ability to manage library and learning resource services?

There has been a notable deterioration in student behaviour; a lack of social skills and maturity and an eagerness to congregate and socialise in large groups after two years of lockdown. Examples include students vaping in libraries, 'juvenile squabbling', swearing and showing disrespect to library staff struggling to encourage adherence to social distancing and mask wearing rules. One participant compared the issues with the stress supermarket staff had to endure during this period. The library staff were 'policing' the library space, with another layer of stress on their traditional roles. Some Colleges were publishing codes of conduct to counter this decline, but it was difficult to manage this in learning resources centres that had cafes co-located in the learning space, for example. The decline in face-to-face College-wide inductions communicating expectations around behaviour and attendance and the reliance on pre-recorded videos and online presentations was lessening the impact of sessions on students. Asking key messages on conduct to be delivered through tutor groups also had less impact. One College noted: 'Students need to be addressed face to face by senior College management to make any difference.'

Comments

'We are experiencing a significant increase in unproductive behaviours (and some aggression) within our student groups this year.'

'We're finding that our lower 6th students (less so our upper 6th) have a very immature approach to college and the library and study centres. Problems with litter, bad language and even issues with them on public transport.'

'We have a couple of challenging groups that we are having to ask to leave on a regular basis and have had to get our Security to come and remove them regularly.'

'There may have been some issues although I think this is a reaction to the strictness of controls experienced in schools.'

'This year's intake has not had a "normal" school year since they were in year nine. They have lost out on eighteen months of classroom expectations and interactions. No wonder they have forgotten how to behave and interact with other students, and teachers!'

How are you managing with staff recruitment and retention? Do you think that the pandemic and lockdown have encouraged some staff to reappraise their life and careers, or seek opportunities outside of the FE sector?

Major understaffing, staff stress and sickness were key themes during this discussion. Stress and sickness amongst the academic and professional services staff had impacted massively on the workload of library teams, who in turn were stressed and on sick leave. Very often the library was seen as the natural port of call to send large cohorts of students when teaching staff were absent. This in turn placed major stresses on the library, impacting on all the areas articulated in the previous discussions. Colleges, reluctant to send students home when lectures were cancelled, naturally signposted them to the library. The resulting overcrowding and lack of social distancing was placing immense pressure on library staff who were increasing 'policing' the learning spaces and 'babysitting' the students. It also placed major demands on access to IT services and PC clusters in the library. There was an inherent tension between wanting to support teaching staff, but also educate them to understand the implications of their actions on the library service.

Staff retention and recruitment have been impacted badly in some library and learning resource services. One participant noted that 'We are getting far fewer applicants;' another that, after furlough, a third of staff did not return to work. Many colleagues used the lockdown to reflect on their work life balance and future careers. There is a trend of colleagues leaving FE library services for alternative sectors, like HE, for example. Renumeration was a key motivation, but it would be helpful to explore this in more detail with the wider membership.

One respondent indicated that, while the library didn't have a retention issue, staff attrition elsewhere in the College was impacting on their services delivery.

A request for feedback, and question number five

CoLRiC invites colleagues to feedback on this article and share your thoughts on the [discussion forum](#).

In view of the above four questions, we have a fifth we'd like to ask you all.

Has your library, learning resources service or College put in place any mitigating measures or initiatives to manage these problems? Codes of conduct, enhanced digital literacy support, help for students transitioning from school to college, for example.

We look forward to hearing from you.

SHARE YOUR STORY WITH THE COLRIC COMMUNITY: NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

CoLRiC encourages and welcomes the submission of articles by its members.

We invite you to share your experiences, challenges, successes, lessons learned, new ways of working, ideas, news, projects, product reviews and initiatives with the wider CoLRiC Community.

To share ideas for articles please send the Admin team an e-mail with a short outline of your proposed content. We'd be delighted to hear from you.

The next issue of Impact will be published in March 2023.

To help you structure your submission, we recommend that you include:

- ❖ The background – what (or who) instigated the project?
- ❖ How did you bring the project to fruition?
- ❖ What was the outcome/impact?

When you are ready to submit your article, please include a brief one paragraph profile of your Library/Learning Resource Service to provide our readers with some context and to enable them to benchmark your college with their own organisation. Student numbers, student types, campus information, Library/LRS staffing levels, for example.

To submit an article please email the following to colric@colric.org.uk:

- ❖ Unformatted Word document
- ❖ Associated data, statistics, files or high-quality screen shots and images
- ❖ Recommended further reading
- ❖ Links to any external content which we will embed into the final e-newsletter.

There are no word count limits on submissions. If you have any queries about content, please contact the Admin who will be able to advise.

The CoLRiC Impact editorial team will be responsible for formatting, editing and proof-reading all contributions prior to publication, and will contact you if any substantial edits have to be made.

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