ALISS *Quarterly*

Association of Librarians and Information professionals in the Social Sciences

Special issue: Engaging with our users through innovative communication.

AGM Papers 2017

You Choose campaign Coventry University; Audience Engagement at RCN Libraries.

Supporting Researchers

Institute of Advanced Legal Studies; City, University of London.

Blogging

The Royal Voluntary Service Heritage Bulletin Blog; Connecting collections.

Information Literacy

23 Things for Digital Knowledge.

Disability

Disability higher education, libraries, teaching and learning bibliography.

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Heather Dawson

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 contains a number of articles exploring the theme of communication, focussing on ways in which library and information services can innovate to both meet and anticipate the changing needs of their user communities. Attention is given to services supporting a range of sectors, including the higher education, museum and NGO communities.

The ideas originally arose from the ALISS 2017 AGM which was held at Senate House on 22nd June 2017. It comprised presentations from Sharon Davison, Coventry University and Frances Reed, Royal College of Nursing, who introduced some case studies of campaigns from their own institutions . These varied from the development of social media to a drop in day with owls to promote a book recommendation scheme!

The full papers can be accessed from the ALISS website at : https://alissnet.com/aliss-agm-2017-engaging-with-our-users-through-innovative-communication/

And both authors have contributed written versions to this edition.

The second section of articles in the issue consider how libraries can best communicate with researchers. Diane Bell from City, University of London offers insight from her own research experience and Lisa Davies from the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies introduces their work in creating online training resources. The information literacy theme is taken up by the article 23 things for digital knowledge from the University of Edinburgh which describes their work in providing online training in social media skills for students.

A third section focuses on effective blogging with experiences shared from the Connecting collections initiative commissioned by the National Archives and the staff involved in the Royal Voluntary Service Heritage Bulletin Blog

Finally the issue concludes with our disability bibliography of recent articles and reports which is now being posted monthly on the ALISS website. http://librarychampionsfordisabilityaccess.blogspot.co.uk,

We hope you enjoy the issue.

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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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Lanchester Library 'You Choose' campaign Turns Out to Be a Real Hoot

Sharon Davison, Senior Information Assistant (Academic Liaison), Lanchester Library, Coventry University

During January, the Academic Liaison Team were advised, at a team meeting, that a substantial amount of extra money had been allocated to the library to spend on books. The Senior Management Team (SMT) wanted all students and staff to be given the opportunity to recommend books that the library should acquire. SMT stipulated that any titles suggested by staff and students could be purchased as long as they related to a course offered by the university. The promotion could continue until the end of March or end sooner if the funds ran out before this date. Any budget not spent by the end of March could be used to purchase PDA'S, DBA's, DDA or EBA's. The money could not be used for journal subscriptions or any ongoing commitments and electronic books should be purchased where possible. (The Library operates a "digital first" policy of book provision).

Over the next few months the university would be encouraging students to complete the NSS survey. This was seen as an excellent time to promote this offer as it could result in a positive impact on the libraries NSS score. The team felt this offer would be particularly attractive to 3rd year students, staff and researchers requiring resources specific to their individual dissertations / research topics. However, the offer needed to be made known to all students.

A campaign to advertise this offer needed to start immediately and it was agreed that creative ways of communicating this to staff and students should be considered. The team discussed various ideas and it was decided that all channels of communication should be used, to ensure as many people as possible would know about the initiative. These channels included; social media, information posted on the student portal, library catalogue, VLE, electronic notice boards across campus, emails to course leaders and using student helpers and library staff to help spread the word.

The team believed the campaign needed a title and a theme. Ideas discussed were eye-catching posters/ banners / straplines and animals. In the past 'Pets as Therapy dogs' had proved very popular with the students and had caused quite a stir when they visited the library. The team all agreed that animals should form part of the campaign. Titles such as 'Your Choice' and 'Your Suggestions Matter' were also debated. 'You Choose' was the title that most of the team preferred. One of the team had been to a CILIP Marketing Event and had heard about a Harry Potter themed Induction week that included owls. As there was a desire to include animals, a decision was made to go with an 'Owl Theme'. A plan was developed and presented to management that included owl marketing material, live owls in the library and owl freebies. SMT agreed to the plan and approved a marketing budget. Posters and postcards that had a distinct vintage look were designed by a member of staff in our in house Print Graphic Services and Resource Shop.

The posters were displayed around campus and all along the library arcade that visitors passed through to access the library. Every email that was sent by library staff included a 'You Choose' strapline and a picture of an owl. Social media was used extensively to promote the campaign. Students were encouraged to email their suggested book titles, complete an electronic suggestion form or fill out a post card request. All library staff were asked to mention the offer to everyone they spoke to.

Requests for books started to arrive and the workload of the Subject Librarians (who were ordering the books) and the Information Resources Team (who were involved in processing the orders) increased. The increased workload proved challenging at times.

The owl visit was due to take place in February. Six suppliers had been contacted and quotes, risk assessments and insurance policies checked and compared. A local company (a husband and wife team) were chosen who had many years of experience of taking their owls into care homes, schools, show and tell sessions in village halls and other events. The couple arranged to bring into the library a Great Grey Owl, Barn Owl, Tawny Owl, Boo Book Owl, Scopus Owl and a Pigmy Falcon for students to hold. There were a number of obstacles to overcome to ensure the owl visit went ahead but when the day arrived, the owls drew large numbers of students into the library. Staff, from other departments around the campus, also came to see the owls. Many photos of students holding owls were posted on social media and the owl visit was talked about for a number of weeks after the event.

The owl visit gave library staff a chance to talk to many more people about the 'You Choose' campaign and to promote the offer to a wider audience. The book requests continued to stream in and just before the end of March the funds ran out and the promotion came to an end.

Was the 'You Choose' campaign a success? I believe it was. Library staff ordered and processed over 4,800 books between January and the middle of March on top of the usual number processed at this time of the year. Library staff worked hard to ensure the campaign was promoted widely and all students and staff were given the chance to provide their suggestions on what books to add to stock. It was a great team effort and a fun campaign. We are fortunate at Coventry to have been given the extra funds to add additional resources to our collections and we are lucky to have a management team who encourage innovative ways to engage with our user community.

Audience Engagement at RCN Libraries

Frances Reed, Events & Exhibitions Coordinator, Royal College of Nursing Library and Heritage Centre

It's hard to imagine that the Royal College of Nursing Library was once a small room tucked away on the second floor of our 1700s house, here in the heart of the West End. That was the 1920s. Now, the RCN Library and Heritage Centre is a dynamic space open to the public, with a café, versatile study spaces, contemporary and historical collections, a vast online catalogue and an archive, as well as a busy events and exhibitions programme.

A new space for members and public

The events and exhibitions programme is relatively new here. The library was founded to serve RCN members, and then in 2013 we opened to the public. With this came the creation of a programme to engage both these audiences with nursing past, present and future. We needed a library space for a range of people and purposes, from nursing study to exhibitions. The team here began to think about how we can create a space that is functional and comfortable, but also one which delivers a really positive visitor experience.

I recently attended a museums conference in Riga, Latvia, and there was a big focus on the impact of museum spaces on visitor experience. Most of my colleagues there were from museums and galleries, so our events and exhibitions programme in a library felt quite unique. Yet we all had the common ambition of creating inviting spaces that people want to be in and can learn from.

For me, within a library, and a nursing specific library at that, audience engagement is thinking creatively about the space you have, and recognising how your collections and services can excite and interest people. And it was with this in mind that we embarked upon the audience engagement programme, creating bright and thought-provoking exhibitions and a UK wide series of diverse events.

Audiences and expertise

In the heritage sector, something else that we are beginning to understand more and more is that audiences are the experts. And that is very true of what we do here at RCN Libraries. We work with our members to generate content for exhibitions and shape the themes in our events programme, we invite staff and members to speak at and chair events, and we use their nursing networks to reach out to external partners and contributors. As the events and exhibitions team, we can bring together this expertise and shape it into a public programme, contributing our own knowledge in exhibition display and interpretation, marketing, as well as our own networks with researchers, historians and other library collections.

In the 3 years since its foundation, the events and exhibitions programme has quickly grown. We now host two exhibitions and around 50 events each year, ranging from evening seminars and workshops to high-profile public lectures, drop-in afternoon tea sessions and one-off events like Open House. The programme spans the RCN's libraries in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We also partner with RCN regional

offices to host events in other UK locations, from Manchester to Plymouth.

Seminars and lectures

As our core programme of nursing seminars and public lectures has grown, so has our audience. When the programme began, nurse members made up the vast majority of our audience. Now attendees at any one event are roughly half public, showing that nursing and the history of healthcare is interesting to a wide range of people. We all have experience of being nursed, of caring for others or indeed caring for ourselves. This message was particularly true of our history of public health nursing exhibition, launched in 2016. The themes and content of this programme resonated with many who remember the nit nurse, or the district nurse, and recall the striking health campaigns of the 60s. The message of the events series was that public health is everyone's business and was a strong example of how our nursing-specific collections are important for RCN members and public alike.

Promoting library and archive collections

One of the strengths of coordinating an audience engagement programme in a library is the wealth of resources available. The RCN Library is Europe's largest nursing specific collection, and ranges from the very first Nursing Times published in 1905, to the latest journals in clinical practice. We can use our collections to shape events and create content for exhibitions, and at the same time highlight these resources to audiences, through simple but impactful activities.

In 2015, we launched an exhibition on the history of mental health nursing, for which we displayed a range of books, from novels including nurse Nathan Filer's Shock of the Fall, self-help books and research into the treatment of mental health during the world wars. We have since continued to select books for display throughout the run of each exhibition, signposting to different themes in the collection each time.

At events, the library team select books and articles to put on display based on the subjects explored in that event. At our recent lecture on the role of animals in healthcare, we showcased books on pet therapy and signposted towards our new library subject guide. Now at each public lecture, we set up a display of resources so attendees have the chance to explore the topic further. In another upcoming event, speakers will be reading historical letters sent from defence nurses during the First World War. Many of these letters have been sourced from our archives, showcasing the wealth of historical records we have.

Something a bit different

We're always looking to try something a bit different to reflect the breadth of our services and collections. In 2016, we won a competition to partner with artist Peter Liversidge, as part of Culture24's Museums at Night celebrations. We held painting workshops, decked our hall with artworks from floor to ceiling, and hosted a dinner of homemade sausages with a choir performance. It really was something very unusual for the RCN and was a perfect way to celebrate nursing and art. Hundreds of members of the public came through the doors of our historical building for tours on Open House weekend. And

earlier this year to celebrate Mothers' Day, we ran tours that finished with tea and scones.

Whilst our nursing specific library is a vital and extensive resource for RCN members, our collections may not immediately seem relevant to the wider public. However by branching out into different event formats, exploring subjects that mean something to us all as human beings, and generating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere as a library, we begin to engage even more people with nursing, its history and the work of the RCN.

Creating online training resources to support national researchers

Lisa Davies, Access Librarian, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London

The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS), though attached to the University of London and based in central London, is in fact a national academic institution whose function is to promote and facilitate legal research at an advanced legal across the country. The IALS Library is considered to be the national library for legal research and our central remit is to provide a service for all postgraduate researchers in the UK, at PhD level and above.

Most librarians will recognize the challenges inherent in providing a library service to distance users, not least how to make available to them as many resources as possible. Over the years we have devised new ways to open up our collections to those who are unable to come to the library in person. For example, we have digitized rare materials and made them available on our website, we have negotiated remote access to e-resources for our members, and we have created free online research tools and guides.

Another challenge we face is in ensuring that researchers from across the country can benefit from the expertise of our law librarians in London. The librarians at IALS run information skills training throughout the year on several topics ranging from demonstrations of key databases to advanced search techniques and referencing. Though any researcher may participate in the training, the practicalities and expense involved in travelling to London can make attendance prohibitive for many. One way we have addressed this problem is through our annual series of road shows, during which we visit several law schools across the country to provide training on e-resources. Though it is hugely beneficial to meet researchers in this way, the reality is that we are training a very small proportion of our potential user group. Creating online training was the obvious next step for us to take to reach a wider audience and so we embarked on a project, funded by the School of Advanced Study, to do so. The resources that we produced are hosted on the School of Advanced Study's platform for Postgraduate Online Research Training (PORT) and are collectively known as Law PORT[1] .

The first task of the project was to establish the essential characteristics of the training resources we were about to create. We wanted them to improve the legal information literacy skills of researchers, be pitched at a level suitable for PhD research, open-access, online, interactive (with quizzes) and sufficiently intuitive for researchers to use without tuition. We also needed them to be designed in such a way that would allow researchers to dip in and out according to their own interests rather than being forced to complete the entire course. Next we tackled the key question of content; which skills should be the focus of our training and what would be the most useful topic? After a survey of PhD students in the UK and much discussion amongst ourselves we decided to create tutorials based on two broad topics; the effective use of the Oxford University Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA) and public international law (PIL) research.

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1   *Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, 'Law PORT' (IALS website, 2017) <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/lawport> accessed 8 June 2017.*

OSCOLA was an obvious choice for us. This citation standard is widely used in law schools in the UK and we receive a large number of requests for assistance. Our in-house training sessions are incredibly popular and researchers seem to have an insatiable appetite for help with OSCOLA. We thought that the creation of an online tutorial would go some way towards addressing this need.

We chose PIL research for a number of reasons. Firstly, the collections in IALS Library are very rich in public international law and the library team has the necessary expertise to provide training in this relatively niche field. Secondly, though PIL has a bewildering array of associated paper and online resources for researchers to get to grips with, few libraries have created open-access training resources to support research in this area. Thirdly, the start of the project coincided with the publication of the International Association of Law Libraries' Guidelines for Public International Law Research Instruction[1] and we thought this would provide our project with a firm focus. We decided to produce three tutorials on different aspects of PIL research; customary international law, treaties and international conventions, and judicial decisions.

I was responsible for creating the tutorial on researching treaties and international conventions. Though I train on this topic fairly regularly it soon became apparent that I had a lot to learn in order to successfully address all of the learning objectives. It was a steep learning curve and I spent a lot of time reading research guides and exploring the key print and online resources in this area. Once the content of each tutorial was written the creation process began. We used Articulate Storyline, a powerful software that allows you to produce professional-looking, interactive training resources. Though the basic functions of Storyline were easy to learn we relied heavily on the project's Learning Technologist and an IT colleague who had the required technical skills to make our resources engaging, interactive, and visually appealing.

Our tutorials went through a thorough testing process before their launch. We ran several of rounds of internal assessment to review each other's work, checking for errors and providing suggestions for improvements. When we were satisfied that the tutorials were ready, we sought feedback from external stakeholders including postgraduate researchers, academics and law librarians from other institutions. After making some final adjustments, in May 2017 the first three tutorials were published in Law PORT. In the coming months we will launch the course on judicial decisions. Summaries of the completed resources are provided below.

An introduction to citing references using OSCOLA

This tutorial offers an introduction to the rules for the citation of legal and other authorities according to OSCOLA. It covers primary sources of law for the UK and EU, as well as secondary sources including books, journals and websites.

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[1] International Association of Law Libraries, 'Guidelines for Public International Law Research Instruction' (IALL Blog, 2004) <http://iall.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/PIL-guidelines-Nov-2014.pdf> accessed 8 June 2017.

Researching customary international law

This tutorial gives an overview of the key sources for researching customary international law. It covers finding evidence of state practice in the records of states' foreign relations and diplomatic practice, and in legislation concerning international obligations. It also looks at researching the practice of the UN Security Council, UN General Assembly and UN human rights committees.

Treaties and international conventions

This tutorial covers the fundamentals of treaty research; finding treaties, checking status and party information, understanding treaty citations and tracing travaux préparatoires. It focuses on authoritative sources of treaties in print and online.

The Law PORT project has been both challenging and rewarding. I had never previously used e-learning technology and my knowledge of creative commons copyright was somewhat lacking, so the project provided the opportunity for me to develop my skills in these important areas. I would advise anyone embarking on a similar endeavour to be realistic about what can be achieved in the allocated time. Our project overran because we were far too ambitious in our choice of subjects. For instance, it would have been more sensible to have chosen smaller, self-contained information literacy skills instead of tackling the whole sphere of public international law. However now that the project is complete – and we have received some wonderful feedback – we are very happy with the end result. We hope that by maintaining and regularly updating the tutorials they will remain a useful national resource for years to come.

To access Law PORT visit http://ials.sas.ac.uk/lawport.

Communicating through research

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"We conclude that PhD candidates' use of online tools is not so much a question of skill proficiency as it is about the tools' immediate utility in relation to candidates' time-pressured and habitual ways of researching" (Dowling and Wilson, 2015, p. 1).

Secker (2012) identified the rewarding and challenging nature of working with a diverse range of research students with specific and individual requirements and advocates for personalised library services for them. I work as a Research Librarian at City, University of London providing services, resources and training to research students and staff in a multi-disciplinary context.

Being conscious that doctoral students are very busy and may have teaching, employment and other responsibilities, I have utilised different methods of communication with these students. In particular, I would like to outline how undertaking a piece of research connected with my role enabled me to communicate directly with doctoral students.

I have recently completed an MA in Academic Practice (a teaching qualification) in the Department of Learning Enhancement and Development (LEaD) at City, University of London.

My reasons for undertaking the Masters were:

- The opportunity to undertake a small-scale, research project relevant to my work.
- To ensure my research skills and awareness of literature were updated.
- To experience being a researcher.
- To have the opportunity to communicate directly with and gain insight from doctoral students.

A great benefit of undertaking the project was the opportunity to conduct some research-based practice and put myself in the position of being a researcher (Pickton, 2013). My dissertation topic was: "Which factors may contribute to differences in the digital literacy skills of research students?"

As part of my research, I conducted a literature review where I considered definitions of digital literacy. These ranged from accessing information via computers (Gilster, 1997) to the skills and tools required to retrieve, manage, curate and share information in different formats (Martin, 2006) to being a digitally capable citizen (Jisc, 2015). The literature review was helpful to place digital literacy in context but I was aware it would not fully answer my research question. I therefore adopted additional research methods and surveyed 27 doctoral students at City using an anonymised online survey and interviewed 8 of those students. This approach was very rewarding as it allowed me both to experience being a researcher and to communicate my research in writing, through the survey and in the interviews.

The most enjoyable and useful part of my research project was the opportunity to communicate with doctoral students. This took the form of semi-structured interviews with a sample of 8 students who were studying across different disciplines and were at different stages of their doctorate. I found that the students were generous with their time in answering the questions, interested in the project and that they regarded me as a researcher. This helped to build relationships in some cases which continued after the end of the project and it allowed me to obtain feedback on our Library Services for researchers. It also gave me a greater understanding of the challenges they face for example with the choice of research methods, data analysis, time pressures and how to keep up to date with new research being published. I also feel I can advocate more strongly for the students' needs for example with regard to their training requirements.

"By becoming research active the practitioner researcher gains first hand experience of the research process, increases their familiarity with research tools, builds empathy and credibility with researchers, and can foster profitable collaborative relationships" (Pickton, 2013, p. 11).

In March 2017, we were refreshing our Library Research Guides and transferring them to a new template. We decided to try and broadly map our Library Services for Research Guide (City, University of London Library Services, 2016a) to basic stages of the research process such as finding information, literature searching, managing information etc. We decided to link our general research guide with our subject based guides so that subject specific resources could be explored as part of the research process. I then worked with colleagues to produce the content.

During my research project, I found that there were differences in the way that students wished to communicate online and create a research presence for themselves, particularly using social media. Half of the students interviewed used social media tools such as LinkedIn for employability, Twitter to network with other researchers online and for conferences and current awareness and Facebook for more social and emotional support and advice. The other half of the interviewees did not wish to use social media tools in their research or to have an online research presence themselves (with the exception of having a professional page on the university website for example). They felt that the information provided in a social media context was of lower academic quality and the tools themselves could be distracting and time consuming (Acord and Harley, 2013).

Pickton (2013) found that having experience of the research process assists librarians to develop bespoke support to researchers at appropriate times. With this in mind, I decided to create a new Research Impact Guide (City, University of London Library Services, 2016b) which was based on a guide from another university. This is partly written from the point of view of identifying highly cited research articles and high impact journals in particular fields. It also covers individual researcher impact and developing an online research profile (eg. using ORCID and Researcher ID) and academic networking and sharing websites such as ResearchGate and Academia.edu. I felt that in some way, this guide was a continuation of my research project in respect of enabling students or staff to consider their potential research impact and decide whether to develop an online research presence or not.

Conclusion

Overall, I found that trying to understand students' needs and challenges though conducting research to be a highly rewarding and insightful process. Being a part time researcher myself, and having to choose research methods, conduct a literature review in a current and changing area and design, produce and analyse the survey and interview outcomes helped me to identify more with the students. I have a greater awareness of the doctoral research lifecycle as I spoke to students at different stages of their research careers (Spezi, 2016). I am more conscious of the challenges and time pressures faced by research students (Dowling and Wilson, 2015) and believe I can more strongly advocate for them and create resources and training to support them. An added benefit has been that I have updated my research skills and knowledge of qualitative methods in particular which is an advantage when working with research students and staff.

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Engaging with your audience: The Royal Voluntary Service Heritage Bulletin Blog

Jennifer Anne Hunt, Deputy Archivist, Royal Voluntary Service Archive & Heritage Collection

The Royal Voluntary Service Archive & Heritage Collection produced its first Heritage Bulletin Blog in July 2012. The blog is a regular and informal way for the Archive to engage with fellow professionals and those interested in Royal Voluntary Service with information about archive projects, archival material and the history of Royal Voluntary Service. Over the years the blog has developed from monthly to weekly posts written by the different members of the archives team; this also includes the introduction of Vlogs in 2017 to try and reach new audiences on social media sites. It is a vibrant and varied blog which is continually contributed to.

The Heritage Bulletin Blog is usually complied by the Deputy Archivist and occasionally the Archivist or a volunteer. Each week the author spends two hours researching, writing, finding or creating relevant images using archive material and posting. The style depends on the author however it is usually chatty and informal, to relate to a verity of people. It is good to try new ideas including video blogs (Vlogs) which help attract new audiences via social media. The Vlog is created in a different way to the blog. The presenter (author) spends time writing a script which is also published as a written blog. The Archive team then spends a morning filming before uploading the video to YouTube and Facebook. Although they are compiled in the same way their content is influenced by the same issues. One of the factors, perhaps the most significant, determining blog content is the audience.

It has been established that blogs which focus on archival practice are more popular than stories about the history of Royal Voluntary Service's voluntary work. In some cases the weeks where posts talk about topics such as outreach or digitisation have been 50% more popular than historical blogs about subjects like the development of hospital canteens or children's holidays. However there are always exceptions and blogs with intriguing titles are always popular. A regular post between 2014 and 2016 was Spinach and Beet the diary of a centre organiser consistently published in the WVS Bulletin in the 1950s. This proved to be very popular with over 80 readers each month. Current events and trends in national days/weeks/months for example world book day, national pie week and world refugee day are also taken into account. Therefore the content of each blog is determined by what the author thinks the audience will want to read about. Blogs generally tend to focus on more technical issues and archival practice with some historical content to help maintain a varied audience. Growing and widening the reach of the blog is also important.

Posting a weekly blog has increased awareness of the Royal Voluntary Service Archive & Heritage Collection. The Archive began to collect statistics in April 2015 when readership averaged 74 views per week. This has increased over two years to 104 views per week, probably due to advertising through professional mailing lists, private mailing lists and social media. The ability to post videos on Facebook and YouTube gives each Heritage Bulletin Blog an extra 200 views in the months they are posted. However without further

research or comparison to other blogs in the sector the true impact on audience cannot be measured, though for the charity this shows an increase in the number of people aware of its heritage. Audience preferences and numbers are not the only determining factor for blog content though it is probably the most significant; aims to educate the public also have to be fulfilled.

Blogging is widely believed to have an impact on education, politics and society; though it is most likely that the Heritage Bulletin Blog has an educational influence, providing information about archives and modern British history. The Royal Voluntary Service Archive & Heritage Collection in its current form cannot provide onsite access to its collections. While there is an extensive range of material in the form of an interactive timeline and online catalogue, as one of the largest charity archives in the country there is still a lot of material which is not available online. Blogging about the history of Royal Voluntary Service using material which isn't easily available to the public is one way of addressing the problem. It shows the wide variety of services which the charity has provided over the years in a short and easily readable format. Blogs include information about WVS's work with Refugees, Civil Defence and older people as well as blogs publishing diary entries and letters from Service Welfare members. It provides researchers with a stepping stone into the subject of voluntary service in modern and postmodern British Society. The Blog is a form of outreach which provides people with access to unique documents which are evidence of a hidden aspect of British social history. It also allows for the archive to raise awareness about pioneering projects to develop the archive.

The Archive's latest project is Hidden Histories of a Million Wartime Women which involves the digitisation of wartime diaries written by members of WVS during World War II. Over the past twelve months the Heritage Bulletin Blog has been used to promote funding the project through crowd funding and then maintaining awareness as the digitisation and online launch has taken place. Other projects such as cataloguing over 1000 publications kept in the collection, creating fact sheets and volunteer work on local office and photograph series have also featured in the blog. These are educational posts often written as a point of view of the individual working on the project about the experiences In the case of cataloguing the publications and Hidden Histories of a Million Wartime Women the blog was also used to highlight new information which was discovered by the person working on the material. Therefore new material about gender and social history is made available through this medium and educating the reader. This also allows Royal Voluntary Service and the Archives to be proactive in the information and heritage sectors.

In summary the Heritage Bulletin Blog is an informal weekly post which covers a verity of topics from the History of Royal Voluntary Service to modern Archival practice. It is produced as a way to communicate, provide outreach for a service that can currently only provide remote access to its collections and to inform the sector of new, unique and exciting projects being carried out by the Archive. For these reasons its main focus when being complied is its audience for instance what they are interested in hearing about and are they being engaged. There are other factors as well which influence the blogs content

such as current events but it is always linked back to how to increase and maintain its audience. Though it was launched in 2012 as a monthly blog since it became weekly in 2015 it has grown from strength to strength in developing an audience of information professionals, Royal Voluntary Service volunteers and staff and those with an interest in History. Though impact is hard to measure the growth in audience suggests the blog has an impact on education by spreading the word about the archives, history of Royal Voluntary Service and its current work. Writing a blog can be a challenge particularly when the Archive has produced over 150 in the last five years. This is an Archive which enjoys a challenge and trying something which is pioneering. It is evident that there are many impacts and influences which have formed this blog into the platform it is today.

The Heritage Bulletin Blog is available on the Royal Voluntary Service Website www. royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/hbblog. If you would like to receive regular updates about the Blog please contact the archive archive@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk.

Connecting Collections

Eleanor Brown, Online Editor, National Archives.
Francis Gotto, Archivist, Durham University Library

Last year, a group of staff from The National Archives and Durham University got together to work out how we could explore connections (http://blog.nationalarchives. gov.uk/blog/tag/connecting-collections/) between archives across the UK and around the world. After some discussion we decided to ask the people making those connections: academic researchers zipping between public and private archives, tracing paths between them in their work.

New technologies and greater implementation of cataloguing standards in archival and other knowledge sectors are enabling increasingly powerful and sophisticated searches, and more insightful research. Archivists learn from what visitors to their archives are researching, and how their research journeys lead where they do. We enhance our own practice by knowing more about the research community and the breadth and richness of our shared collections environment across the sector.

This is the concern of big data and of each of us every day as well. Better research advances knowledge and expands the world and its potentialities for us all.

And contextualize

However, the increasing number of virtual collections and all the other the felicities of researching in a shrinking digital world should not diminish the significance of the materiality of archives, nor obscure the relevance of how certain collections came to be and remain where they are today.

Where bureaucracies have chosen to accumulate related records series can illuminate assumptions behind administrative processes and policies. Rare ephemeral survivals in local repositories can provide essential and arresting context to the narrative momentum of central records series. Bookplates and marginalia log the speed and direction of travel of ideas.

Intentional acts of displacement and dislocation tell their own tale – from state-level policies of 'migration' of sensitive records from former colonies to the private enterprise of magpie antiquarians with sharp pocket knives.

An informal research forum

The Connecting Collections blog series (http://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/blog/tag/ connecting-collections/) was commissioned by The National Archives to provide a forum for how people research. It gave a space for a personal account of researching, rather than needing to focus on research findings.

As The National Archives' 2017 Digital Strategy outlines, we hope to create a digital environment that promotes exploration and experimentation, and so we were interested in both the dead ends and the 'Eureka!' moments and the strategies that underpinned them – some of them perhaps innovative.

These articles, we hoped, would speak to other researchers, and also engage with archivists, curators and other information professionals, the one group habitually migratory, the other more often immured with their collections, and each looking at each other with a certain wistful – and sometimes frustrated - incomprehension.

We also wanted to open up our collection to people in new ways, to find new points of entry into what can be an intimidating collection – especially for people who aren't professional researchers.

The series was from the start a collaborative one and will remain so. Initiated with regional partner Durham University, a new such partner will be selected for future series.

Implementation

We posted an open call for submissions on our blog, promoting it through social media, newsletters and mailing lists.

While submissions came in, we planned exactly how we'd assess them. A small editorial panel, composed of two staff members from The National Archives and one member of staff from Durham University, developed the criteria by which we'd judge entries. As well as the obvious primary concern – that blog posts connect at least two archives – we felt that academic strength and the ability to inspire curiosity and innovation were also important.

All three panel members marked the entries separately; we then had a meeting to add up and discuss scores.

Impact

Four of the six blogs published as part of Connecting Collections feature in the top 50 blogs read this year (this figure includes blogs published in 2017 and those published before). 'Stateless history: connecting Palestinian archives' was the most read of the series – and has been one of our most popular blogs of the year so far. For The National Archives, this demonstrates the importance of telling stories of research challenges, as well as focusing on under-told histories.

Other blogs looked at a 19th century cache of textile pigment samples,(http://blog. nationalarchives.gov.uk/blog/purple-pursuit/) Sunday trading controversies, (http://blog. nationalarchives.gov.uk/blog/sunday-trading-controversies-private-enterprise-meets-public-oversight/) the international diplomatic dimension of Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, (http://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/blog/trail-henry-viii-italy/) the private papers of a British commander of the Arab Legion, and political culture and surveillance in Cairo's coffeehouses.

Anne Irfan, author of 'Stateless history: connecting Palestinian archives',(http://blog. nationalarchives.gov.uk/blog/stateless-history-connecting-palestinian-archives/) told us:

'I was also interested in the chance to connect to other researchers and hear about their experiences of unexpected archival findings. I was not disappointed; after my blog was posted in March 2017, it prompted a discussion with several other academic researchers about the various uses and language of petitions throughout history.'

Alon Tam, author of 'Tracing the political history of Cairo's coffeehouses' (http://blog. nationalarchives.gov.uk/blog/tracing-political-history-cairos-coffeehouses/) said:

'I enjoyed writing for this series very much. It helped me think through some of my ideas for my dissertation, as well as with a couple of conference presentations. What appealed to me the most was the core premise of connecting research in different archives and of telling a wider, not necessarily academic, audience about what it is that a researcher does in the archives. I know through my social networks that people, both scholars and non-scholars, have read it, so it was certainly a good opportunity for someone like me, a very junior scholar, to showcase my research.'

Graham Jevon, author of 'The Glubb Pasha papers: a precarious existence', (http://blog. nationalarchives.gov.uk/blog/glubb-pasha-papers-precarious-existence/) told us:

'I liked the idea of 'connecting collections'. In some respects I perhaps took for granted the fact that my book was the product of knitting together related documents held in different places. But as soon as I saw the series proposal I thought about how significant those connections had been to my research… The most notable result of the blog was receiving a comment from the daughter of the person whose collection of private papers I was writing about.'

Conclusions

We hope the blog series will have widened understanding among non-academic as well as academic researchers of how gregarious and exciting archival research can be.

Emerging from the articles has been a real sense of the power of simple persistence, of talking to people, and of the utility of thinking through the detailed context of events, and the agencies and individuals involved, in order to find clues to the current location of relevant records.

There's been a value too for us in observing examples of skilled researchers bringing together different records collections in new and unexpected ways. The experience of having one's understanding of a record encountered in one repository illuminated by something found in another collection - half way round the world or just round the corner - was a common experience too.

Another pleasing outcome of the series has been that several contributors have documented how different collections of personal papers have entered the archive, and also some of the work that is then necessary before such collections can be made fully accessible for research.

Archivists all over the world labour to preserve, describe and make collections accessible. Different national discovery tools will increasingly become interlinked, and will thus better reflect the fact that the impact of our lives and the traces we leave in the historical record reach across all such boundaries. Realising collections' full significance is a joint endeavour between researchers and archivists, and one that we believe demands the research net is cast widely.

You can read all the blogs here: www.blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/blog/tag/connecting-collections/

23 Things for Digital Knowledge

Stephanie (Charlie) Farley, Education Design and Engagement, University of Edinburgh
The University of Edinburgh (UoE) is a citywide institution spread across multiple campuses, with a devolved structure that encompasses 3 Colleges and 20 schools. Our Digital Skills team received feedback from staff and students that although they would like to learn more about using social media, web 2.0 tools, and digital literacy, they didn't feel it was important enough or that there was time available to attend training.

To address the gap our Educational Design and Engagement team decided to build on the 23 Things model – originally run by the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County in the USA in 2006[1] – by providing a course focused on digital wisdom and literacy skills. This aligns with the University's Digital Transformation Strategy[2] to create a digital educational experience to provide staff and students with the tools to succeed in a digital future. 23 Things for Digital Knowledge's[3] openly licensed content and broad appeal to users both internal and external also aligns with the University's Open Educational Resources Policy[4] and mission to "make a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK and the world, promoting health and economic and cultural wellbeing".

Launched in September 2016 to enhance digital literacy for primarily the UoE community but also a broad external audience. the course is open and self-paced, aimed at students and staff at the UoE and open to anyone across the globe interested in taking part. The only requirements are that participants have access to a digital device and an internet connection.

We anticipated and designed towards three levels of participation:

•   Those who wished to sign-up in order to see how the course was constructed (e.g. other educators), or to access the information for use at a later time.

•   Those who wished to pick and choose from the course content according to their own development goals and interests.

•   Those who wished to work through the content from beginning to end with recognition of their achievement.

Course Design

Using the established structure of twenty-three Things – being either a topic or web 2.0 tool – the Things are presented in bite sized portions with an introduction to each tool or

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1   *Original 23 Things course https://plcmcl2-about.blogspot.co.uk/*
2   *University of Edinburgh Digital Transformation Strategy, http://www.ed.ac.uk/digital-transformation*
3   *23 Things for Digital Knowledge http://www.23things.ed.ac.uk/*
4   *University of Edinburgh Open Education Resources policy http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/openeducationalresourcespolicy.pdf*

literacy, followed by a task, additional suggested readings, and resources.

The course scaffolds digital literacy learning by introducing concepts, and then encouraging practice to develop literacy and wisdom. To do this we first address key concepts of diversity, accessibility, security, and footprints in digital environments. This is then embedded through the playful exploration of digital tools, with guided blogging activities encouraging reflection and the examination of tools both familiar and unfamiliar, through the lens of these concepts. Playfulness and active engagement are embedded in the culture and practices of our Information Services Group at the University, making this an important aspect of the course design. So the course is designed to provide multiple levels of interaction with a flexible self-paced delivery, and a deliberate playfulness in its approach.

How it works

Participants are initially invited to set up a blog and to register this with the course team. They are then guided through the process of tagging posts relevant to the course with the tag '23ThingsEdUni' so that posts can then be aggregated onto the Community Blog[5]. It's made clear that anyone can work through the course without the use of a blog, simply trying out and exploring each of the Things. However, reflective blogging is encouraged in order to deepen and embed the learning. Blogging is also used to create a community of participants, to share different perspectives, uses, and understandings of the Things being explored.

On completion of blogging about each Thing on the course, participants submit their blog to the team and are awarded an Open Badge. The badge can be displayed on their blog, in email signatures, on LinkedIn or social media profiles, and can also be used as evidence for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) either for work appraisals or towards external accreditation, such as Certified Membership of the Association for Learning Technology (CMALT)[6].

Throughout the first iteration of the course, face-to-face training opportunities at the University were promoted and provided for participants. Webinars, Google Hangouts, and Twitter Chats were also held to explore using these tools, and also to further the sense of community with participants off-campus and elsewhere in UK and world.

Course Participation and Response

The course builds on the many strengths of the 23 Things model (e.g. open, literacy building, collaborative blogging), with a design that broadens the relevance to users with varied levels of digital literacy, and moves beyond library and research contexts in order to encourage multiple levels of participation. Additionally, the course was actively promoted to broader communities via social media and successfully attracted participants from a

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5   23 Things for Digital Knowledge, Community Blog, http://www.23things.ed.ac.uk/category/23-things-syndicated/
6   CMALT https://www.alt.ac.uk/certified-membership

variety of backgrounds including students, teachers, learning technologists, academics, support staff, information, librarians, and other professionals. It also appealed to an international audience with participants hailing from the UK, America, Australia, Germany, and Kenya.

The course has been picked up by libraries in Australia (Adelaide University, RMIT, and the University of New South Wales) who worked through the course as part of their own professional development and are now encouraging their own staff and students to take part. Scottish Social Services Council were also impressed by the course and after meeting with us used our design blocks to create their own 23 Things for social service workers in Scotland[7].

Feedback from participants on our first iteration of the course was very positive, many responding to our survey or writing feedback on their blogs that they gained a lot of confidence and digital learning through the course.

One clear concern however, was that many participants felt time pressed to complete all of the 23 Things within the time frame of one semester, which was set in order for participants to be eligible for the initial open badge and for UoE staff and students to enter a prize draw. We also found that time differences for global participants will need to be factored into the planning of future online events such as the webinars and twitter chats.

Accessibility, Open Licensing and Re-Use

The course content was carefully selected to be as accessible as possible to anyone with an internet connection; to appeal to a broad range of users with varied levels of digital literacy; to provide an original approach incorporating playful learning; and took care through the deliberate selection of tools available on multiple operating systems. Additionally, the website was built with an eye to meeting accessibility standards, using a responsive design, careful selection of colour contrasts, and consideration of assistive technology needs.

The UoE is committed to creating and sharing openly licensed content, and so the content of this course, except where otherwise stated, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY). This allows and encourages others to take our course and adapt it, as has already been done by the Scottish Social Services Council.

As we wanted as much of the content on the course to be as open as possible, all of the excellent images used on our website were created by our Interactive Content team at the University are also available on a CC BY licence and can be downloaded from the Interactive Content Flickr account[8].

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7   Scotland Social Services Council's 23 Things, http://23digital.sssc.uk.com/
8   Interactive Content, 23 Things Flickr account, https://www.flickr.com/photos/interactive-content/sets/72157673454583515

Future Development

The first active iteration of 23 Things for Digital Knowledge completed in January 2017 and the course continues to be available for anyone to work through in their own time and support continues to be provided via blog interaction, and social media on Twitter, Facebook and the email account.

The success of the first run will be built-upon with a second active iteration of the course which will run for the 2017/18 entire academic year with additional face-to-face and online activities and events. Further, the design and use of the Open Badges on the course is being broadened to provide pathway options for participants who may wish to complete some but not all of the Things. Our aim is to build upon this framework to continue to deliver an innovative approach to digital skills, literacy and education within our institution while ensuring that our content is open and accessible.

Stephanie (Charlie) Farley was awarded the LILAC Credo Digital Literacy Award 2017 for her work creating and running the 23 Things for Digital Knowledge course at the University of Edinburgh[9].

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9   LILAC Credo Digital Literacy Award 2017, http://www.lilacconference.com/lilac-2017/awards/credo-digital-award

Disability- higher education, libraries, teaching and learning Bibliography

Policy

BS 76005:2017 Valuing people through diversity and inclusion. Code of practice for organizations URL: http://shop.bsigroup.com/ProductDetail/?pid=000000000030338898
Abstract: This British Standard provides a framework and recommendations for valuing people through diversity and inclusion. It indicates how organizations of any size and sector can develop objectives, policies, practices and behaviours that go beyond compliance with legislation and increase the diversity and inclusion of people in or engaging with organizations. The framework has three dimensions to its recommendations

DWP deny work capability assessments to disabled students (2017, May 24)Retrieved from https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2017/may/dwp-deny-work-capability-assessments-disabled-students

The DWP has confirmed to Disability Rights UK that it will not enable disabled students claiming Universal Credit (UC) to have the opportunity of a work capability assessment (WCA).

Identity and stigma

Cox, Nigel.(2017) Enacting disability policy through unseen support: the everyday use of disability classifications by university administrators.
Journal of Education Policy. 32, 5, 542-563.
URL: DOI: 10.1080/02680939.2017.1303750.

Abstract

In the United Kingdom (UK), Higher Education Institutions share with other educational providers the duty to provide reasonable adjustments for students who disclose disabilities. The role of academic administrators in the operationalisation of legislation-driven policy related to disability within the university context is overlooked within empirical and theoretical literature, and explicit recognition of the administrative role is often reduced to descriptions of bureaucratic processes and training requirements. This paper makes an empirical and theoretical contribution by explicitly recognising the unique operational and personal practices of educational administrators as they undertake disability-related work. Drawing upon a larger ethnographic study that employed observation, in-depth qualitative interviews and discourse analysis, the findings start to reveal the subtle interactional practices that administrators undertake during their everyday work with people disclosing of a disability; these revelations offer indicators for future staff training and development.

Sayce, L.(2017) Othering disability:from pity and blame to strategies for full participation
Paper given at: III Annual Conference 2017 Challenging Inequalities: developing a global
response

 URL :https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/default/files/pdf/LSEJune2017LizSayce.pptx

Accessible Technology

Alexa 100 Accessibility Updates.(2017)
Retrieved from http://webaim.org/blog/alexa-100-accessibility-updates/ Some top
websites becoming less accessible than 5 years ago report published on WebAim website

Barker, A (2017, May 26) 13 super useful, easy, time-
saving tech tips for less stressful working and living
Retrieved from: https://www.abilitynet.org.uk/news-blogs/13-super-useful-easy-time-
saving-tech-tips-less-stressful-working-and-living

Abstract: From the AbilityNet blog: , we've put together 13 time saving tips together to
make it easier for you to use your devices, including tips on text-to-speech and speech-to-
text options. These are game changers!

Christopherson, R (2017, May 17) Microsoft's must-read accessibility
user tips for Vision, Speech, Hearing, Mobility and Learning disabilities
Retrieved from https://www.abilitynet.org.uk/news-blogs/microsofts-must-read-
accessibility-user-tips-vision-speech-hearing-mobility-and-learning

Global Accessibility Awareness day May 18, 2017

Official website : http://www.globalaccessibilityawarenessday.org/

Abstract: The purpose of GAAD is to get everyone talking, thinking and learning about
digital (web, software, mobile, etc.) access/inclusion and people with different disabilities.

MacMullen, R (2017, May 16) CILIP and LACA continue to push for ratification of the
Marrakesh Treaty
Retrieved from: https://www.cilip.org.uk/news/cilip-laca-continue-push-ratification-
marrakesh-treaty

The Marrakesh treaty is a copyright treaty that gives users rights; specifically, the right for print-impaired persons to make or have made for them accessible copies of works, and for those works to be sent cross-border between countries which have ratified the Treaty.

McNaught , A (2017) Collaborative activities and inclusion
Blog post . For Jisc Acessibility and Inclusion
URL: https://accessibility.jiscinvolve.org/wp/2017/06/22/collaborative/

Abstract: Online collaboration offers learners new opportunities. Alistair McNaught explores the inclusion pros and cons

Teaching and Learning

Braun, D.C.; Gormally, C., Clark, M. D. (2017)
The Deaf mentoring survey: a community cultural wealth framework for measuring mentoring effectiveness with underrepresented students CBE Life Sciences Education, 16
URL: http://www.lifescied.org/content/16/1/ar10.full.pdf+html

Abstract: Disabled individuals, women, and individuals from cultural/ethnic minorities continue to be underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Research has shown that mentoring improves retention for underrepresented individuals. However, existing mentoring surveys were developed to assess the majority population, not underrepresented individuals. We describe the development of a next-generation mentoring survey built upon capital theory and critical race theory. It emphasizes community cultural wealth, thought to be instrumental to the success of individuals from minority communities. Our survey targets relationships between deaf mentees and their research mentors and includes Deaf community cultural wealth. From our results, we identified four segregating factors: Being a Scientist, which incorporated the traditional capitals; Deaf Community Capital; Asking for Accommodations; and Communication Access. Being a Scientist scores did not vary among the mentor and mentee variables that we tested. However, Deaf Community Capital, Asking for Accommodations, and Communication Access were highest when a deaf mentee was paired with a mentor who was either deaf or familiar with the Deaf community, indicating that cultural competency training should improve these aspects of mentoring for deaf mentees. This theoretical framework and survey will be useful for assessing mentoring relationships with deaf students and could be adapted for other underrepresented groups.

Abstract: Testing agencies request documentation to verify a test-taker's disability status under the Americans With Disabilities Act of 2008 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A number of recent legal developments, culminating in technical assistance from the U.S. Department of Justice, suggest changes in enforcement of relevant laws are imminent. This article reviews the legal developments and presents results of a survey of the learning disability and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder documentation guidelines of 10 standardized tests commonly used to aid admissions decisions for undergraduate and graduate programs. Consistent with the recent guidance, virtually all guidelines requested documentation from a qualified evaluator, a diagnosis, and accommodation recommendations and rationale. In contrast, agencies were less likely to request the information necessary to grant accommodations based on history of accommodation use. Few agencies had policies allowing submission of reduced amounts of documentation for students with lengthy histories of disabling conditions. Finally, guidelines frequently neglected to provide the guidance that evaluators need to generate useful documentation. Benefits and limitations of the recent legal guidance are discussed, and recommendations for testing and enforcement agencies, as well as secondary schools, are provided.

Abstract: There are more students with disabilities going to college than ever before. It is important that colleges understand the experiences of students with disabilities when in university. This research project was carried out by 12 students with intellectual disabilities who are enrolled in an Irish university, under the guidance of their lecturers. The project looked at four research questions: (1) what do we like about going to college; (2) what do we dislike about going to college; (3) what supports do students with disabilities experience to participation in college; and (4) what barriers do students with disabilities experience to participation in college? The results show many interesting findings about what students with disabilities experience in college and this information can be used to help colleges better support students with disabilities.

Weedon, E. (2017)
The construction of Under-representation in UK and Swedish higher education: implications for disabled students
Education, Citizenship and Social Justice, 12, 1, 75-88
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1746197916683470

Abstract: This article examines the inclusion of disabled students in the UK and Swedish higher education systems. In the United Kingdom, performance indicators focus on the participation rate of disabled students in comparison with those of non-disabled students, while in Sweden there are no specific performance indicators relating to disabled students. The article notes that in both countries there is a dearth of intersectional data, recognising the heterogeneity of the disabled student population. It is argued that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who are also disabled may suffer a double disadvantage in accessing university and progressing through their studies. UK data show that disabled students are more likely to come from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, although this is due to the preponderance of dyslexic students who are disproportionately drawn from middle class backgrounds. The data also show that disabled students have lower progression rates than non-disabled students and that labour market outcomes differ in relation to type of impairment. The article advocates a greater focus on intersectional analysis in relation to ensuring effective support for all irrespective of impairment and social background.

Autism

Anderson, A,, Stephenson, J , Carter, M. (2017)
A systematic literature review of the experiences and supports of students with autism spectrum disorder in post-secondary education
Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders, vol,. 39, July 33–53
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2017.04.002

Abstract: A comprehensive systematic literature review was conducted of post-secondary experiences and supports of students with ASD. The strengths of students with ASD and the benefits of attending post-secondary education were described. There was a diverse range of social, emotional, and sensory difficulties that negatively impacted their education. Supports provided to post-secondary students were often incongruous with need and produced idiosyncratic benefits. The study demonstrated the need for novel and individualised supports

Richardson, J. T. E. (2017)
Academic attainment in students with Autism spectrum disorders in distance education
Open Learning, 32, 1 81-91 .
URL http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02680513.2016.1272446

Abstract: This investigation studied attainment in students with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) who were taking modules by distance learning with the UK Open University in 2012. Students with ASDs who had no additional disabilities were as likely as non-disabled students to complete the modules that they had taken, to pass the modules that they had completed and to obtain good grades for the modules that they had passed. Students with ASDs who had additional disabilities were less likely than non-disabled students to complete the modules that they had taken, but they were as likely as non-disabled students to pass the modules that they had completed and to obtain good grades for the modules that they had passed. Their lower completion rate presumably reflects the impact of their additional disabilities rather than their ASDs. In distance education, at least, students with ASDs tend to perform on a par with their non-disabled peers.

Visual impairment.
Banks, M. (2017)
Library Websites for all: Improving the experience for patrons with visual impairments.
American Libraries, 48, 6, 4-25
URL: https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2017/06/01/library-websites-accessibility/

Abstract: The article discusses the efforts of American libraries to improve websites and other services for library patrons with visual impairments, and it mentions legal precedents regarding access to Nook electronic readers (e-readers), as well as litigation involving potential violations of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Best practices for website design are examined, along with the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA

Bourgoyne, A; Alt, M (2017).
The effect of visual variability on the learning of academic concepts
Journal of Speech, Language & Hearing Research, 60, 6, 1568-1576
URL : DOI: 10.1044/2017_JSLHR-L-16-0271

Abstract:Purpose: The purpose of this study was to identify effects of variability of visual input on development of conceptual representations of academic concepts for college-age students with normal language (NL) and those with language-learning disabilities (LLD). Method: Students with NL (n = 11) and LLD (n = 11) participated in a computer-based training for introductory biology course concepts. Participants were trained on half the concepts under a low-variability condition and half under a high-variability condition. Participants completed a posttest in which they were asked to identify and rate the accuracy of novel and trained visual representations of the concepts. We performed separate repeated measures analyses of variance to examine the accuracy of identification and ratings. Results: Participants were equally accurate on trained and novel items in the high-variability condition, but were less accurate on novel items only in the low-variability condition. The LLD group showed the same pattern as the NL group; they were just less accurate. Conclusions: Results indicated that high-variability visual input may facilitate the acquisition of academic concepts in college students with NL and LLD. High-variability visual input may be especially beneficial for generalization to novel representations of concepts. Implicit learning methods may be harnessed by college courses to provide

students with basic conceptual knowledge when they are entering courses or beginning new units

Deaf Students.

Abstract: The authors explored how thinking styles relate to quality of university life among deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) and hearing university students in mainland China. The first of two studies affirmed the validity and reliability of a modified version of the Quality of University Life Measure (QULM; Sirgy, Grezskowiak, & Rahtz, 2007) among 833 university students (366 DHH, 467 hearing). The second investigated relationships between thinking styles and quality of university life; the Thinking Styles Inventory-Revised II (Sternberg, Wagner, & Zhang, 2007) and modified QULM were administered to 542 students (256 DHH, 286 hearing). Students scoring higher on Type I styles (i.e., more creativity- generating, less structured, cognitively more complex) tended toward greater satisfaction with university life; those scoring higher on Type II (i.e., more norm-favoring, more structured, cognitively more simplistic) tended toward less satisfaction. Contributions, limitations, and implications of the research are discussed