



The Mercian
Collaboration
Conference 2019

Building Bridges...

10th September 2019

University of Nottingham

**Mercian
Collaboration**

Keynote

How to Make a Library Partnership Work

Janine Downes and Judith Keene, The Hive, Worcester

The Hive is currently celebrating its seventh year of operation and demonstrates many benefits of a service run jointly by the county council and university. However, since opening in 2012, there have been many profound changes in the operating environment and context of both partners. These have meant it has been necessary to recognise and embrace the diverse and sometimes conflicting constraints and drivers of each partner in order to ensure that the integrated service offer remains of long-lasting value to its communities.

This keynote will give a brief background to The Hive, including examples of some of the successes to date. The speakers will draw on lessons learned about how partnership working helps deliver vital functions in a challenging context and could help future-proof libraries more widely. They will also reflect on the personal qualities that have been found to be important for staff and leaders working in a partnership context.

Parallel Sessions & Workshops

Parallel Session 1: UBWell – designing and creating a Wellbeing Space for the library

Catherine Robertson, Engagement Advisor and Teresa Jordan, Head of Service Delivery, both University of Birmingham.

Wellbeing has generally been on the sidelines at libraries, whereas at UoB@MainLibrary it became front-and-centre when UBWell@MainLibrary was launched. This space, on the busy ground floor of the building, was created to support, educate, and inform users about wellbeing, whilst being in the heart of a busy university library. It is a space where users can access general and mental health support material, recipe books, colouring in, and more. It is an innovative space and we will share the steps we took to create it along with the challenges we faced along the way.

Parallel Session 2: Unlocking Our Sound Heritage

Colin Hyde, Researcher and Outreach Officer, University of Leicester.

‘Unlocking Our Sound Heritage’ is a UK-wide project that will help save the nation’s sounds and open them up to everyone. Professional consensus is that we have approximately 15 years until many of our sound collections become unreadable and are effectively lost. I will talk about both the project generally and the work done by the Midlands Hub of the project, which is based at the University of Leicester. Illustrated with unusual and interesting sound clips, this presentation will open your ears to a project that is both fascinating and important.

Parallel Session 3: Research Data Teaching Network – creating a coding community

Beth Montague-Hellen, Senior Research Librarian and Kate Snaith, Teaching and Learning Support Librarian, both University of Nottingham.

Data literacy is a hot topic in libraries, with its importance becoming increasingly obvious but many librarians are only just starting to look at how to teach it. The University of Nottingham Libraries Team is working to equip our researchers, students and staff with the skills required to work with data confidently. We are identifying, exploring and filling the gaps that exist – by using existent data carpentry resources (<https://datacarpentry.org/>) and expertise garnered from both academic and professional services across the University – and creating a community of practice from which to recognise and build institutional data literacy. This presentation will cover the beginnings of this process!

Parallel Session 4: ‘Right... where do I start?’ – the first year in the life of a partnerships librarian

Katie Mann, Academic Liaison Librarian, Coventry University.

Coventry University is one of the UK’s largest providers of transnational education (TNE), with over 16,000 students studying for Coventry degrees at over 30 partner institutions around the globe. In 2018, the library appointed its very first Academic Liaison Librarian with a specific remit for supporting partner institutions.

This presentation will focus on the highs, lows and lessons learnt from a year developing library liaison and support from the ground up for Coventry’s TNE partners. Key themes include: understanding what is actually meant by ‘TNE’ and establishing what a partnerships librarian could and should be doing.

Parallel Session 5: Collaboration Through UX Design

Stacey Bate, Library Supervisor and Tom Hicks, Arts Librarian, both Wolverhampton University.

The library at the University of Wolverhampton is in the process of planning a major refurbishment, including redesigning its learning space. Rather than design and plan this refurbishment in isolation, the library recently delivered a project aimed at engaging and working with library users called UX (User Experience), a key aim of which was to plan library learning space, stock, enquiry services and other services with the thoughts and ideas of students and other users at the forefront.

Libraries often imagine that they have a clear understanding of user needs and expectations in terms of space, service and layouts and this can result in a fixed view of how the library runs and plans its services and learning environments. The UX approach recognises that what libraries think users require and what users actually want are, in reality, very different. At Wolverhampton, the UX project engaged users in a series of workshops, drop-in sessions and consultations and allowed space for more experimental methods of engaging users.

In this presentation, we will discuss how the UX project was introduced and how it has informed design and planning decisions. We will also give examples of how the project has continued to resonate, leading to the introduction of an Artist in Residence Scheme and a signage redesign in collaboration with Graphic Design students.

Parallel Session 6: Supporting Open University Students in Prison

Hossam Kassem, Learning and Teaching Librarian, Open University and Verity Robinson, Head of Student Support, Open University Students Association.

In collaboration with the Open University Students Association the OU Library has piloted a scheme whereby OU students in prison can request literature searches to support their studies. The searches are carried out by OU student volunteers with study experience equal to 3rd year undergraduate and enable access to online library content that students in prison would not otherwise have.

Delegates will learn how the service was set up and run, what we have learned from it, the unexpected benefits and how we will evaluate it

Parallel Session 7: Sustainability Through Collaboration

Liz Lafferty, Senior Library Assistant, Lizzie Hazelhurst, Library Assistant and Steve Parton, Liaison Librarian, all Keele University.

Discover how the development of Keele University Libraries' Green Team has helped our library service to meet one of the institution's strategic aims to 'promote environmental sustainability in all we do.' In this interactive group presentation we will demonstrate how collaborating with a network of staff and students across the university has helped to mitigate challenges and embed sustainability into our service. We will discuss successful initiatives, reflect on what we have learned in relation to collaboration and outline plans we have for the future. Join us to share what environmental sustainability means to you, your institution and your library.

Parallel Session 8: Students in Charge – developing library collections in partnerships with students

Deniz Bilgen, Collection Management Librarian, Birmingham City University.

Almost every academic library in Britain has an online ‘suggest a book form’ on their websites to encourage their users to contribute to the development of their library collections. However, this service does not always provide a holistic view of the needs of the users and often fails to create a meaningful engagement.

Based on the student-led book purchasing project implemented at Birmingham City University, this session will give an overview of how working in partnership with students can provide librarians with the opportunity to put a student lens on collection development while enhancing students’ transferable skills. The session will also share good practices as well as challenges of working with students as partners.

Workshop 1: ‘Escaping’ the Library Induction – a game-based learning approach to developing library skills

Hazel Glasse, Academic Librarian and Naomi Bowers-Joseph, Senior Skills Officer both University of Derby.

‘Library Lockdown: Zombie attack’ is a student-staff collaborative project designed to enhance the student experience. This fun and challenging resource invites students to solve puzzles and clues that introduce them to our library services and encourages the initial development of information literacy skills.

Participants in this interactive workshop will have the opportunity to play the escape room game (amended to fit the environment) – the winning team will get a prize! The workshop will also include a discussion by the presenters on the design process, the benefits and challenges of working with students and other departments and what the results and feedback from groups has been to date.

Think you can escape the zombie apocalypse? Come along to our workshop and have a go!

Workshop 2: Sensory Refresh – exploring sensory preferences in a learning environment

Ana Kedves, Undergraduate Community Engagement Officer and Laura Waller, Disability Support Officer, both University of Warwick.

This workshop will showcase the collaboration between different library teams in organising interactive sensory events and initiatives, and reflect on ways to use students’ individual experience and input to develop peer-support and foster collegiality and cooperation in the use of shared study spaces.

The participants will have the chance to try different activities designed to encourage students to explore their sensory preferences and use this knowledge to improve the ways they study, as well as relax.

Workshop 3: Live Teaching – working with academics to integrate engaging online library teaching into modules

Fiona Durham, Learning and Teaching Librarian and Hossam Kassem, Learning and Teaching Librarian, both Open University.

The Open University Library has been delivering live online information literacy teaching to distance learners since 2007. We run a number of generic sessions and also design targeted sessions for particular modules.

In this workshop we will share how we design targeted sessions to be effective and engaging, with polls, quizzes, individual practice and reflection. We will also demonstrate how we work with academics to identify modules that need library input. In the second part of the workshop participants will have the opportunity to design their own session with guidance and feedback from OU Librarians.

Workshop 4: Students as True Partners – meaningful collaboration between students, academics and the library

Catriona Matthews, Student as Researcher Officer and Kate Courage, Academic Support Librarian, both University of Warwick.

This workshop is based on a project we ran in 2018, in partnership with undergraduate students and academic staff, to co-design and co-create peer support videos for student research. These videos, designed to support students at key transition points, explored:

- Starting out at university
- Researching your first assignment
- Transitions to honours level research

We will discuss our aim of achieving authentic co-creation between students, library and academic staff. We will also consider approaches to building student-staff relationships, how to balance student and departmental voices, and the value of co-created projects.

Speakers

Ana Kedves: Workshop 2

Ana is the Undergraduate Community Engagement Officer at the University of Warwick Library. Her role is focused on the delivery of the [Study Happy programme](#), which is designed to support students' wellbeing and development, in study spaces and beyond. She has over ten years of experience in formal and non-formal education, having worked in youth information services, project management, SEN and widening participation.



Beth Montague-Hellen: Parallel Session 3

Dr Beth Montague-Hellen is a Senior Research Librarian who specialises in Research Data Management and Scholarly Communications. Beth started out her career as a Bioinformatician, and is a trained Carpentries Instructor – and as such has lots of experience in teaching coding and statistics to students. As someone who has moved from research to professional services, Beth has no time for siloed working, but lots of time for just getting things done.



Catherine Robertson: Parallel Session 1

Catherine Robertson is a Library Engagement Advisor at the University of Birmingham. She has worked in libraries for fourteen years in a variety of roles, and wellbeing and libraries is a subject she is keen to do more work on.



Catriona Matthews: Workshop 4

Catriona Matthews is the Student as Researcher Officer at the University of Warwick Library. She supports the creation of subject specific skills sessions; working with library and academic staff to bridge the gap between library instruction and departmental syllabi and assessments. Her work revolves around creating meaningful, interactive workshops and online resources. She incorporates innovative pedagogical techniques to create opportunities for students to engage with and develop their academic skills. She also works in partnership with students to create exhibitions, co-produce support videos and work towards institutional and departmental development.



Colin Hyde: Parallel Session 2

Colin Hyde is the Project Manager for the Midlands Hub of the Unlocking Our Sound Heritage project. Colin has been working with oral history archives since the 1980s and has extensive knowledge of collections across the region. For the last 10 years he has been managing the East Midlands Oral History Archive and has delivered many training sessions and talks to groups across the East Midlands. Colin also has an interest in local history in Leicester & Leicestershire, and photographing and recording urban environments.



Deniz Bilgen: Parallel Session 8

Deniz Bilgen is currently working at Birmingham City University as a Collection Management Librarian. Deniz holds an MSc in Library Information Technology and has more than 15 years of experience working in a number of academic libraries in the UK, USA and Cyprus. He is a Chartered Member of CILIP and an Associate Member of the HEA.



Fiona Durham: Workshop 3

I have been a Learning and Teaching Librarian at the Open University for 18 years where I work on the Library Helpdesk, and also support academics writing new modules in STEM, Education and Languages. I am a member of the award winning Live Engagement Team in the library (we won the Information Literacy award at LILAC 2019); the team run library tutorials and events using a variety of media including Adobe Connect, Facebook, Livestream TV and Podbean.



Hazel Glasse: Workshop 1

Hazel Glasse is an Academic Librarian at the University of Derby. Her current role involves providing support for staff, students and researchers in the College of Life and Natural Sciences and the Access and Further Education Centre. She is also a committee member of the East Midlands Academic and Research Libraries Group and is currently working towards CILIP Chartership. Professionally, Hazel's interests include gamification in HE libraries and how it can be used to develop students' information literacy skills.



Hossam Kassem: Parallel Session 6 and Workshop 3

Hossam Kassem is a learning and teaching librarian at the OU Library and the Operational Lead for the library's Live Engagement team. He is also member of the Library's accessibility team. Hossam has a PhD in Law and qualified as a barrister but developed a passion for working within academic libraries, something he has been doing for the past 16 years.



Janine Downes: Keynote

Janine Downes is currently interim Manager of The Hive in Worcester, Europe's first fully integrated University and Public Library. The Hive is also home to the local Archive and Archaeology Service and Worcestershire County Council's Customer Service Hub. Previously she has managed and delivered excellence in customer service in a range of environments including college, public and university libraries, heritage and theatre. Outside of the Hive she enjoys allotmenting, camping yoga and theatre.



Judith Keene: Keynote

After a PhD in Palaeoecology, Judith Keene started her librarianship career at the University of Birmingham and Birmingham City University before moving to the University of Worcester. Her current role (since 2012) is that of University Librarian and a member of the University Executive. She was involved from the outset in The Hive project and has published and given many talks on the subject. The challenges of running a library in partnership with Worcestershire County Council, whilst meeting the developing needs of the university community, mean that life is seldom dull.



Outside of work, she has been a school governor for over 10 years and is a lay minister in the Church of England. Gardening, singing in the Malvern Festival Chorus and walking in the Malvern Hills fill up any spare time!

Kate Courage: Workshop 4

Kate Courage is the Academic Support Librarian for English, Philosophy and Modern Languages at Warwick University. She was a teacher before becoming a librarian and her professional interests include pedagogy, student experience and co-creation with students. She is very keen to promote the student voice and leads Warwick's Library Associates scheme, where students work with the library to assist in identifying issues and deciding how to resolve them. She is a fellow of the HEA and of Warwick's International Higher Education Academy (WIHEA), which supports teaching and learning at Warwick.



Kate Snaith: Parallel Session 3

Kate Snaith is a Teaching & Learning Support Librarian at the University of Nottingham. She works with students to develop their information and digital literacy skills in a variety of formats. A data literacy novice, her interest in data was recently piqued and she was prompted to approach librarian colleague and data carpenter Beth Montague-Hellen and to look at how the library could support this area of work.



Katie Mann: Parallel Session 4

Katie has been working at Coventry University since May 2018, splitting time between subject librarian duties for the Engineering Faculty at CU and leading on library liaison with the University's 30+ collaborative partners. As the partnerships role was new to the Library, Katie still has lots of ideas and a very long to-do list.



Katie enjoys eating cake, refereeing roller derby and taking far too many cat photos.

Laura Waller: Workshop 2

Laura is the Library Disability Support Officer at the University of Warwick and also the current Chair of the Mercian Collaboration subgroup, the Mercian Disability Forum.

Laura develops the Library's physical environments, technologies, and virtual/online provision for disabled students, creating a positive and supportive learning environment and student experience. She also provides advice and support for students and works with Library staff to promote best practice in the provision of inclusive services, developing staff training and focused awareness raising events. Laura won 'Brilliant Newcomer' for all these activities at the 2018 University of Warwick staff awards.



Liz Lafferty: Parallel Session 7

Liz Lafferty has worked as a Senior Library Assistant at Keele University since 2018. She organises the provision of alternative formats for students with a print disability. Previously, she worked in the library at MMU Cheshire, where she completed the Information and Library Studies post-graduate diploma through distance learning with Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen.



Lizzie Hazelhurst: Parallel Session 7

Lizzie has worked as a Library Assistant at Keele University since 2015, initially in Customer Services and now within the Library Support Services team. Her background is in museums and heritage and she has held curatorial and collections management roles in a variety of different settings. Through these roles she has gained much experience of collaborative and creative working. She now enjoys putting these skills to good use in Keele University Libraries' Green Team.



Naomi Bowers-Joseph: Workshop 1

Naomi Bowers-Joseph is the Senior Skills Officer at the University of Derby Library. She joined the Library in 2010 as a Library Assistant and has had a number of roles within the frontline library teams, including Team Leader for the Library's Enquiry Service. In her current role as Senior Skills Officer she looks after the Library's Skills Team which provides help and support with universal study skills through one-to-one meetings, workshops and resources. The Skills Team also has responsibility for the library's outreach activities during open days, school visits and community days.



Stacey Bate: Parallel Session 5

Stacey is a Library Supervisor at University of Wolverhampton, where she oversees the Customer Services team across four campuses. Prior to this, she worked as an Information Assistant at the University, in addition to 20 years' experience in customer service, including working overseas for Thomas Cook. In her 11 years at University of Wolverhampton, Stacey has worked on many projects but the User Experience project has been the most interesting and enlightening and she is excited at the prospect of embedding UX into the everyday practice of the service. Stacey is also a member of the board of governors and Chair of the Curriculum Committee at a local nursery school.



Steve Parton: Parallel Session 7

Steve has worked in libraries for over 15 years, with the majority of those being in HE in academic liaison roles. He is a chartered member of CILIP, a Fellow of the HEA and a member of the Mercian Collaboration Staff Development Group. He has been Liaison Librarian at Keele University for the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences since 2014. He previously worked as Subject Librarian for Design Engineering and Computing/Media at Bournemouth University. Steve has led Keele University Libraries' Green Team since 2017.



Teresa Jordan: Parallel Session 1

Teresa Jordan is Head of Service Delivery at University of Birmingham. She has a background in both education and public libraries. This experience has strongly influenced her proactive approach to meeting the needs of library users. She is firmly of the opinion that many heads are better than one and partnership working is the way to achieve excellence.



Tom Hicks: Parallel Session 5

Tom Hicks is the Liaison Librarian for the Faculty of Art at the University of Wolverhampton. He teaches research and information skills and is responsible for managing collections relating to the Faculty of Art across two campuses. Tom works closely with academics in visual arts, performing arts, humanities and media. He is closely involved in curriculum planning, including the embedding of academic skills.



Tom is also engaged in project work and manages the Welcome Week project which ensures that all new students are introduced to the university's libraries. His recent work on the User Experience project has seen him working to engage students and academics in feeding back their ideas for the future direction of the library.

Verity Robinson: Parallel Session 6

Verity Robinson is the Head of Student Support at the Open University's Students Association and works closely with the Vice President's Student Support and Equality and Diversity teams. Whilst qualifying as a barrister Verity discovered a passion for helping others and now does so daily through the work of the Students Association

