Mercian Collaboration Conference: Parallel Sessions and Workshops

Parallel Sessions (1): 11.20am

Session 1: You Only Get What You Give: A new radical approach to promoting trust at University of Worcester Library Services

Madalene George, Student Engagement Co-ordinator, with Allie Taylor and Victoria Collins, University of Worcester.

At University of Worcester Library Services, we recognise that, when it comes to student engagement, trust is a two way street and that giving it is just as important as gaining and maintaining it. In any university environment, but particularly in a unique and complex library setting such as The Hive, gaining students' trust is the first step in ensuring they are equipped to make full use of the resources available and are satisfied with their library experience. However, once trust is gained, it is useless if not maintained and particularly damaging if lost; so, with student expectations higher than ever, how do we gain, maintain or regain students' trust? We believe the answer lies in placing our trust in students and working alongside them as partners in the development of our service.

In this presentation, we will outline how University of Worcester Library Services build and maintain trust by seeking year-round feedback from our students, by listening to and trusting their opinions and, crucially, by acting on concerns raised. We will explore in detail how we have been active in targeting groups from whom trust is less forthcoming and taken measures to uncover the issues affecting these particular students' experience. Placing our trust in these students has been integral to this process and, where students have raised concerns, we have been prompted to investigate the issue, sometimes revealing problems of which we were previously unaware. The acknowledgement of these issues and subsequent remedial actions taken by Library Services have been crucial in demonstrating the faith we have in our students and, consequently, have begun to restore target students' trust in us. This renewed mutual trust has not only strengthened the relationship between Library Services and our students, it has also resulted in a measurable upturn in student satisfaction amongst targeted groups.

The presentation will also explore how University of Worcester Library Services invite students to work with us in positions of trust. We will discuss our offer of Students As Partners projects and self-guided work placement projects, in which we rely on students' judgment, experience and skills to contribute to the services' output, and how we include students in staff recruitment, trusting them to provide their unique insight into a candidate's suitability for a student-facing role. In each instance, students gain invaluable experience of the processes involved in delivering the service and, in turn, we gain students' trust by recognising their skills and demonstrating the importance of their contribution in shaping Library Services' development. Moreover, when students feel their contribution is significant and recognised, we see an upturn in their desire to engage with us.

We hope to demonstrate that this, perhaps not so radical, approach to promoting trust between students and service providers not only encourages departments to build stronger relationships with students as partners, significantly effecting levels of student engagement and satisfaction, but, since it requires no specialist staff or budget, is easily replicated in a diverse range of institutions.

Session 2(a): The Shifting Sands of Open Access – gaining trust and influence?

Dawn Hibbert, Head of Research Support, University of Northampton

Session 2(b): Excited? Terrified? Bored? How do researchers feel about Open Scholarship?
Grant Denkinson, Open Access and Research Data Advisor, University of Leicester

What motivates researchers to engage with Open Scholarship? What feelings lead to enthusiasm, grudging minimal compliance, prevarication or resistance? When advocating openly sharing research publications, tools or data we highlight benefits and warn of consequences of non-compliance but do we emotionally engage with our audience? When we offer professional services and advice do we take into account researchers' hopes and fears? We'll informally and confidentially share how we feel about what we do and how we think researchers feel about Open Scholarship. We'll share ideas for how we might further elicit how our patrons feel so we can tailor our advocacy materials and personal interactions appropriately.

Session 3: Beyond Building Trust – Co-design and Co-delivery.
Mark Toole, Head of Libraries and Learning Resources, Nottingham Trent University.

In the 2011 NSS, the level of satisfaction of Nottingham Trent University's undergraduate students with their library service was 76%; in 2015, 91%: in PTES, satisfaction by taught postgraduates has grown from 76% in 2013 to 88% in 2016. At the heart of this transformation is the library's student co-design and co-delivery philosophy, underpinned by a close partnership with NTU's Students' Union, NUS HE Students' Union of the Year 2015. This philosophy brings different perspectives to all service aspects and, through structured engagement with projects and service developments, leads to a strong active partnership generating fresh ideas and solutions.

The presentation will include examples of co-design and co-delivery from a librarian and student perspective. For example, the Students' Union and library teamed up to solve the problem of students leaving bags, coats and other belongings at study spaces in the libraries "to reserve them for their exclusive use" while going away for other activities, sometimes hours at a time, and denying other students the opportunity to use those PCs or study spaces. A new policy was co-designed by library and Students' Union for the removal of student belongings from study spaces which have been left unattended for more than an hour and forced logout of PCs in the library which have been inactive for over an hour (length of time suggested by the Students' Union). The policy was jointly presented to the relevant University Committee for approval; when implemented, officers and course representatives of the Students' Union were prominent in promoting the rationale and benefits of the change. This has been a success in freeing up unused study spaces, has changed student behaviour, with few student complaints.

A further example to be discussed with be support for academic skills for students which was fragmented across the University. While keeping the distributed nature of the service delivery, the library worked with the Students' Union to develop and promote a portal for students to discover & access resources, expertise and to make appointments at workshops or with advisors; the Students' Union selected the name "Skills for Success" for the service. The 35 students employed by the library as peer mentors are a key component of the service delivery, last year holding over 500 workshop and individual sessions with other students during the year. They provide advice on information literacy, maths, stats and academic writing skills. As well as benefits to those students who receive advice, many of whom particularly value the opportunity of interaction with a "successful" student, the student

mentors themselves reported how much they gained in employability skills & experience and increased confidence.

The presentation will cover some of the critical success factors used to develop this highly trusted environment both through and outwith the Students' Union, a frank assessment of what has worked well and what has not and conclude, based on our experience, with hints and tips for building and sustaining trustful partnerships.

Session 4: Do they trust us, do we trust them? Key considerations for developing and maintaining trust in the academic writing support service at Lincoln.

Cheryl Cliffe & Daren Mansfield, Academic Subject Librarians, University of Lincoln

We would like to address four main perspectives surrounding trust under four headings: 'do they trust us?'; 'do we trust them?'; 'do our colleagues trust us?'; 'does the room engender trust?'

Student Perspective: 'Do they trust us?' Students perceive us as experts so it's important to establish boundaries and limitations on what we offer. By providing non-judgemental support we are able to engender trust, and encourage discussion without students feeling they are being 'assessed'. In terms of assurance students know that the discussion won't be fed back to their tutor. On the flip side, we do not influence their grade and this might be perceived as a disadvantage. Students are often upset when they come to us. AWS is an occasional non-specialist counselling service for the distressed student worried about a whole range of issues.

Staff Perspective: 'do we trust them (students)'? Are mechanisms in place to avoid the student becoming over-reliant on the AWS service? Added to this, a student might rely on one staff member in particular so the member of staff is *responsible* for the outcome of the final grade. Is it possible to establish physical barriers/boundaries with students without causing offence? In light of essay mills, we need to be aware of plagiarism issues – are we able to trust all students? Our work is rewarding: We see the results, the impact of our advice i.e. improvement in work, grades, and the passing of failed assignments. A number of repeat visits confirms the trust that is built up over time. The job is full of variety in that we become aware of a range of different styles of writing/disciplines enabling us to earn all-rounded trust and respect. It is also useful to become aware of dyslexia support issues such as notetaking problems and environmental concerns.

Colleague Perspective: 'do our colleagues trust us?' There's some need to build relationships between academics and AWS as there's some resistance because may be considered as un-contracted academics. We are able to spend more time with students than academics because of our non-academic role. What do other teams in the Library think of AWS? Word of mouth advertising which is the most trustworthy form of advertising. The creation of the AWS role offered opportunity outside of customary librarian responsibilities. We aide student retention through reassurance and encouragement for students who have failed assignments. The English Language Service offer a very similar service, but there is little communication between us.

Environmental Perspective: 'does the room engender trust?' The room where the AWS drop-ins take place is dyslexia unfriendly, and can be surrounded by noise and lack of privacy. Reading white pages underneath florescent lighting makes the page almost unreadable even for non-dyslexics. Room is not a pleasant environment to work in. Advantages of the room are location, openness (drop-in) and shared service provision.

Parallel Sessions (2): 12.10pm

Session 5: Students as Partners: Library Associates at Warwick University Library.

Kate Courage, Academic Support Librarian, University of Warwick.

This presentation will focus on our "Library Associates" scheme, which Warwick Library piloted in 2016/17. We worked with a group of undergraduate students from English and History, to get a more meaningful, two-way communication channel with students in those departments, on topics such as reading lists, new services and research support. This fits with the theme of "Giving trust", as we encouraged the students to contribute to decision-making and prioritising, and to spend some of the book budget for their departments.

The scheme was a success, from the Library's perspective, and judging from the feedback, from the students' perspective, too. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with comments such as, "It's been brilliant to see the Library not only caring about the voice of the students but also acting on it". It led, in turn, to a project working with English students to create peer-support learning materials for first year modules. The idea for the project came from the Library Associates, who suggested that targeted, module-specific resources be made available online for key modules in the English department, to help the students to develop their research skills and to supplement the existing face to face training provided. The Library agreed to fund a project to create peer-support learning materials with English students. We decided to target first year modules, as these have large student cohorts, and many struggle with independent research for their studies. These materials have been created in term 3 of 2016/17.

In the teaching project the students have been full partners throughout - through the conception, pedagogic design and creation of the teaching materials. This project takes student-focused approach to addressing the research skills training needs of undergraduates, by getting students to identify what skills they are lacking and how best, pedagogically, to address and fill those gaps.

The trust in students as partners in both Library decision-making and in pedagogic design has really paid off. The model of "students as partners" is one we intend to continue and develop in the coming years.

Session 6: Creating a trusted support network: the Mercian RDM support group

The Mercian Collaboration RDM Support Group.

Research Data Management (RDM) has become increasingly important over the past few years for Universities because of the data requirements and compliance expectations of, amongst others, funders and publishers. University libraries (and their staff) have predominantly taken on the role of providing and leading RDM support to their institution's academics and researchers. However, with the existing budgetary pressures, it is not always easy for libraries to employ a single staff member (let alone more than one) with dedicated responsibility for RDM.

Due to these pressures RDM is increasingly being added to the job descriptions and roles of existing staff (e.g. research support librarians, institutional repository staff, and academic liaison/subject librarian roles). These staff do not generally have a background in RDM, nor a support network on which they feel comfortable to call if they are unsure of solutions or answers to their researchers' questions and data requirements.

The MERCIAN RDM Support Group has been created to try and help staff who support RDM but may not have extensive experience in the area. It initially grew out of a workshop hosted at the University of Leicester in June 2016 on RDM where feedback from attendees suggested the creation of such a group. This suggestion was taken on by Cole, Veasey, and Williamson who created an unofficial co-ordination group. Having met with the MERCIAN Development Officer a proposal was sent to the Steering Group and the Support Group was approved. We have since held an initial launch meeting at Loughborough in April 2017 and propose six monthly face-to-face meetings.

In addition to the meetings, a closed email list has been created and a number of activities have been proposed such as a buddying/mentoring process as well as exploring options for shared tools and services, including training resources.

The aim of the group is to act as a trusted body where less experienced staff can ask questions of those who have worked in the RDM arena for longer. However, as the RDM world is changing quickly, it is hard for even dedicated RDM staff to stay up to date. As such, building an additional regional support network, particularly of institutions within easy travel distance of each other, is useful for staff of all experience. Ultimately, the aim is to increase the skills and knowledge of staff within the MERCIAN collaboration in RDM and provide a regional forum which provides authoritative and trusted support and guidance.

Due to the nature of RDM work, the group is also open to staff in Research Offices and IT departments who also have responsibility for RDM.

In addition to outlining the work and focus of the RDM Support Group this presentation will demonstrate the process by which the group was created and possibly act as an exemplar of how similar groups could be set up under the MERCIAN umbrella.

Session 7: Texts for Every Reader: accessible format services.
Carol Keddie, Senior Assistant Librarian: Arts Design and Humanities, De Montfort University, and Beck Maguire, Librarian: Accessibility Support, University of Nottingham.

A workshop focussing on accessible format services in academic libraries and the way in which these have developed at our respective institutions. This fits within the 'building trust' theme, as the services are relatively new for us. This area of work builds on collaborative relationships with central services supporting disabled students. It also requires close working with the students themselves to establish their particular needs. The workshop will take the form of a facilitated discussion, led by us sharing our experiences of managing these services.

Legally, and morally, institutions are obliged to make their information resources accessible to all users. Everyone should have the opportunity to participate, to fulfil their potential and become who, and what, they aspire to be. Accessible format services enable print disabled students to read texts in their preferred way.

Making information resources accessible, provides an equitable experience which enables all people to participate, and this is the focus of this presentation.

We will discuss:

- accessible resources and what this means

- the context and background regarding specialist transcription and accessible formats

- how accessible formats are provided in our respective institutions

- how our services have been implemented and subsequently adapted and changed in this fast moving environment to build confidence and trust in our provision

- the technologies that impact upon this area

- the future in terms of service improvements and developments

- the future in terms of sector wide initiatives and input

Accessibility fits with great usability – it adds value! This is an area in which funding changes have occurred and new services and roles have had to be implemented, or existing services adapted, to provide support. It's also an area in which changes in library processes, attitudes and awareness can make a difference, building upon existing trust and expertise to provide a better experience for all.

Session 8: Using Digital for Listening and Leadership
Eric Stoller

This session will expand on some of the themes in Eric's keynote address.

Parallel Sessions (3): 1.40pm

Session 9: Building Trust and Engagement with Students Through Activities Which Link Specific Library Enquiries to Communications and Publicity'.

Lydia Matheson, Head of Library Enquiries, and Joe Carey, Dave Palmer, Enquiries Team Assistants, Aston University

In September 2016, Aston University Library Services introduced a new dedicated Enquiries team to handle email, live chat, social media comments and queries and phone calls, as well as face-to-face referrals.   The creation of the team enabled us to capitalise on the emerging link between enquiries and marketing / publicity. As a result, the team reviews enquiries on a daily basis to establish the sorts of queries that students are asking and then plan communications and displays based on these.

Over the course of the academic year 2016-17, the team have created a schedule of communications matched to incoming queries to help with future planning. The Library are creating displays around these communications to enhance student engagement and promote a positive learning environment. These displays are being reviewed by staff and students and the information gathered, is then going towards a bank of A1 posters to encapsulate themes, ideas and feedback around topics. An example of this is a 'Time to talk about Fines' drop-in surgery session which was held twice in the Library over lunchtimes in the third term, resulting from several queries relating to the 'fines exceptions policy'.

The Library has put on a variety of displays appealing to a younger demographic, e.g. celebrities saying how their mothers have inspired them for Mother's Day with the invitation for students to add their own comments. One student commented: "I like to see changes in the library and I appreciate the effort towards students. I would like to see more of these motivation posters."

From speaking to officers at the Student Union and Senate about how best to promote student agendas, to work with Aston's Student Wellbeing and Enabling Team, the Library has been able to prove its place as a 'hub' at the centre of the campus and a real source of support for students trying to adjust to the demands of university life. Sharing study tips activities with the SU and stress-busting sessions organised with the wellbeing team led to the following Tweet: "Love that the Library is doing this, sometimes people don't understand the effect exams can have on mental health!!"

To increase engagement and build trust, we've also made efforts to gather feedback from students both one-to-one and through surveys. The Library has responded to student requests for extra study space through setting up "Library 2" and through opening up the Library teaching rooms for group study. The Library has also been reaching out to students to arrange personal meetings to help them manage difficulties with Library charges - actively seeking and speaking with students about significant fines, a process which isn't easy but ultimately helps to resolve an issue which brings stress to many students. This session will share practical examples of this work starting with the student enquiry, through to communication activities, review and results.

Session 10: Placing the Library at the Centre of Institutional Trust
Kaye Towlson, Academic Team Manager and Fair Outcomes Champion, De Montfort University

At De Montfort University (DMU) Library and Learning Services is a trusted and respected partner in the delivery of university strategy. Two recent initiatives have provided us with the opportunity to demonstrate and build upon this trust, to locate ourselves at the heart of university support for learning and to work alongside faculty colleagues in its application.

The University has adopted Universal Design for learning (UDL) as the pivotal ethos underpinning all its learning delivery and experience. In order to deliver this UDL agenda the University has appointed Champions to spearhead and promulgate the adoption of UDL practices across all levels and disciplines. In response to this development DMU Library and Learning Services requested permission to appoint their own University funded UDL Champion. The University granted this request, reflecting an Institutional acknowledgement of the crucial role played by the Library in the student learning and experience.

The university's UDL agenda has now expanded to embrace the inclusive curriculum as a way of addressing the BME attainment gap. De Montfort University has become part of a HEFCE funded, cross-institutional project researching ways to close this gap. As part of this high profile project "Fair Outcome Champions" have been appointed in each of the four Faculties and also in Library and Learning Services. Both Champion roles confirm institutional trust in the value and position of the library to deliver these crucial pedagogic agendas.

The nature of UDL in both of the above contexts is attentive to sensitive student needs, perceptions and learning engagement. UDL deals with the areas of disability and learning differences in the first instance and then that of race, culture, ethnicity and attainment in the second. Both agendas strive to be inclusive, to identify and iron out hurdles to student learning and attainment. Work in these areas involves sensitivity to student/staff attitudes and experience as well as a willingness to listen to perceived issues. Library involvement here demands the building of library staff trust, enabling them to articulate observations and experience that may be subject to harsh judgement. Likewise, students must trust in the confidential treatment and response of the Library to their cultural experience and observations. Faculty staff will also need to place their trust in the Library in supporting the development of an inclusive curriculum and a culturally competent learning environment.

This workshop will detail the Library and Learning Service involvement in UDL and the delivery of the Champion roles. It will look in detail at the question of trust and how this can be developed alongside the identification of issues and their potential solutions in working towards the common institutional goal of even and equitable student attainment. Attendees will be invited to reflect on and share their own experience of trust building and dealing with sensitive issues related to disability, learning differences, race, culture, ethnicity and attainment.

Session 11: Re-envisioning Academic Services at the University of Northampton for the 21st Century: new roles, new structures and new purpose'.

Georgina Dimmock, Head of Academic Services, & Fiona Watkins, Digital Resources Manager, University of Northampton

In 2016, the library at the University of Northampton found itself at a critical juncture. The University had moved to an active blended learning (ABL) model, offering ample opportunity for interoperability between systems and resources, and the academic librarians and many others were keen to get on board; but some areas of the library were approaching acquisitions and resources as they had done for a decade and were not in a position to respond to the possibilities afforded by this new environment. This short presentation will be the candid story of the new organisational structures, budget structures, roles, processes and workflows that we are putting in place across the area of Academic Services - covering Academic Liaison, Scholarly Systems and Resource Development - to try to turn the ship around ready for the move to our new Waterside Campus in 2018! Getting buy-in and building trust has been key, and not always plain sailing. This presentation will reflect on our successes and failings, with the opportunity for delegates to feedback, share and discuss their experiences.

Parallel Sessions (4): 2.30pm

Session 12: Understanding and Responding to Student Reading Strategy Behaviours, Practices and Needs.

Louise Savage, University of Nottingham

In April 2016, Libraries, Research and Learning Resources (LRLR) embarked upon a reading strategies project aimed at giving students the resources they need, when they need them, and in a way that supports the University of Nottingham's teaching endeavour. One of the specific project aims was to gain an understanding of how students engage with information, to positively inform service development and the growth of information literacy amongst the undergraduate population.

A work package was developed around the title of this presentation: Understanding and responding to the student reading strategy behaviours, practices and needs. The first stage was to commission a piece of research to improve understanding of student academic behaviour in the information age and the integration with academic pedagogy. This research was then shared with a group of students, who had identified themselves as interested in exploring the findings further for their school. The final deliverable was a set of four student led projects delivered under the Students as Change Agents scheme (http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/currentstudents/studentopportunities/students-as-change-agents/index.aspx). This was the first Students as Change Agent project commissioned by a Professional Service at the University of Nottingham and later this month there will be an opportunity for the students to show case their projects to senior teaching colleagues across the university and LRLR staff.

The presentation will discuss the approach taken and how we engaged with students and schools giving them freedom to develop their ideas within a framework that met the aims of the project. Project learning will be shared as well as reflections on what did and didn't work. Clips from the showcase event will be shared with the audience and there will be an opportunity for audience interaction using bring your own devices. I hope to also involve a member of staff from a school involved in the project and or a student who took part.

Session 13: In Data We Trust? The rewards and dangers of using data to drive collection development decisions.

Mandy Harper, Head of Collection Development and Tamasine Ashcroft, Head of Library Engagement, University of Birmingham.

The opening of the new University of Birmingham Library and the launch of the Talis Aspire Resource List system in 2016 have been the catalysts for change in how the library grows and manages its collection. The major changes in the library have led us to explore data-based collection management and development decision making.

In the ongoing search for more efficient ways of working, we have developed a new focus in data-driven:

- Strategic collection development - for example standardised textbook purchase ratios; semi-automated resource list review processes; and evidence –based business cases for new resources

- Strategic collection management – keeping our collections under constant review to decide where and how books should be shelved to anticipate their likely use.

- Strategic engagement – collating and presenting relevant data on library spend to use as a springboard for identifying engagement opportunities with The Academy

These developments have required us to develop trust in our data and systems, and trust between library teams as routes of decision making within Library Services have changed. It has also given the opportunity to develop trust with the academics that Library Services are working in partnership with them to make the right decisions on their behalf.

This presentation will outline the many advantages we have found in a more data-driven approach to our collection management and development, in terms of consistency, engagement, efficiency and a more dynamic collection. However it will also cover some of the limits we have found to trusting the data: pitfalls where the raw data may mislead or fail to tell the whole story. In data we trust… but with our eyes wide open!

Session 14: From Aspiring to Practicing W.I.S.E Interactions.
Anna Pelekanou and Sally Barratt, University of Nottingham

Amidst diversity, library users not only enter a contractual relationship with our institutions but also one of trust. Library users entering our physical and virtual University library spaces represent a wide range of ages, ethnicities, education and life experiences. Diversity can also be discussed in terms of · comfort with libraries, technology, research, studying and writing, as well as different levels of competency to find, access, evaluate, and ethically access and utilise information. In this context, trust is closely linked to vulnerability in terms of the library user feeling safe within the library environment to be who they are, feel included, engaged and valued. How do we demonstrate care and consideration for the customers with whom we interact in order to respond to the vulnerability they experience throughout this relationship?

Back in 2014, our University of Nottingham libraries conducted 'Big Conversations' workshops that introduced staff to our mission and invited them to explore ideas of culture change that would respond to the highly dynamic environment of an academic library amidst diversity. These sessions led to the formation of the Aspire to be W.I.S.E (Welcoming, Inspiring and Supporting of Everyone) ethos. Staff were invited to share ideas and behaviours which they might associate with their job in relation to W.I.S.E. These covered aspects of the job such as how we communicate, how we work with customers, the team we belong to, how we relate to others, how we solve problems and how we manage time and keep up to date. What started as an ethos underpinning staff behaviours and interactions, now, in 2017, it is the backdrop in establishing the importance of building connections and personal bonds that acknowledge and embrace diversity in all our interactions with customers and throughout the different stages of the customer   journey.

In this workshop we will explore and share good practice on:

1. How 'ethos' can translate into customer interactions and creating initiatives designed to promote a community of trust and cohesion amidst diversity? [Library space, Website, Social media, Lean approach to processes]

2. How can we successfully demonstrate we are valuing our relationship with two different types of customers: a) the relationship that is frequently forming and we want to build momentum (i.e. new cohort of students representing the emerging relationship between unfamiliar others), b) a relationship that is already established and we want to maintain momentum (i.e. existing staff and students representing an ongoing relationship between familiar others within a dynamic environment)? [Enquiries, Feedback, Publicity, Targeted Support]