CILIPS Conference

6/7th June, 2022

Apex Hotel, Dundee

#CILIPS22

<https://www.cilips.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CILIPS22-programme.pdf>

I was very honored to be asked to speak at this year’s CILIPS Conference, and very pleased to receive a funded place for day 2 from CILIPS North East. It was the largest gathering of librarians in Scotland since before Covid. Although I have attended the conference in the past, this is my first as a Further Education Librarian and I was so excited to experience the conference from an academic librarian point of view. I always wondered what those boring sounds sessions were like… now I know… and newsflash… they’re not boring!

The theme of the conference was Scotland’s Libraries – Homes of Scotland’s Stories and this theme was clear in the narrative from the keynote speakers; Damien Barr, Kate Robinson, Zandra Yeaman, Gemma Cairney and Catherine Salmond.

Kate Robinson, President of CILIP kicked us off, reminding us of the importance of our professional body, launched the new PKSB and talked about the concept of being information leaders not information managers. This is something that I strongly agree with and do not believe I am a *manager* (excuse my job title) but I *lead* the team and my area within the college.

The first breakout session I attended was *“Library Lounge Virtual Study Sessions at the University of Strathclyde: Supporting the Student community through the creation of an online study environment.”* Since lockdown they have been running 2 x 2 hour sessions per week, facilitated by 2 members of the library team. The theory, like the thoughts round our ill-fated body doubling sessions, is that students like accountability with their studying and to feel part of a community. Students signed up to the session and received a reminder email in the morning.

There is an intro where everyone introduced themselves and what they were working on that day. Then cameras and mics off, and work for 55 minutes. There is a short comfort break and short discussion or Q&A and then another hour of study. The chat can be used for any questions the students may have – this can be library queries, referencing, IT etc and the facilitators monitor this chat. The majority of the attendees have been postgraduate students and they have had 713 over 100 sessions.

Feedback from students has been:

* Breakout rooms for group work
* On screen timer
* Longer sessions
* More sessions
* Longer breaks
* Music in the sessions

I think this is something we could look at exploring here at NESCol, however, possibly in partnership with the whole Student Experience team so facilitators can be from the Library, Student Advice and Support and the Student Association.

The second breakout session I went to was by the National Library of Scotland and their Archive of Tomorrow project. <https://www.nls.uk/about-us/working-with-others/archive-of-tomorrow/>

The internet archive was something I knew nothing about, never mind this particular project. The librarian did talk about the importance of publicising more to the general public. Although I do not feel I am in any way an expert on this subject now, it is fascinating and highlights the huge variety of work in the Information and Libraries Sector.

After lunch (always great at the Apex) it was my turn to speak. My session was called *“The Heart of the College? Why FE Libraries are Essential to Health and Wellbeing”* I highlighted all the new wellbeing initiatives here at NESCol, from fiction, to light boxes, wellbeing hubs and the two SLIC projects. The talk seemed to be well received with questions asked afterwards – always a good sign!

The last two keynote sessions of day were Zandra Yeaman, Curator of Discomfort at The Hunterian Museum and author Damian Barr. Inspirational but not always easy to listen to with challenging content, the day all round was fantastic.

Day 2 donned, albeit bright, not so early. I could get on board with starting work at 10.30am! Networking was high on the agenda on first arriving as I was able to catch up with former colleagues from Dundee Libraries. One asked if I could be their Chartership mentor. Since I’m just finishing up being a mentor for a current RGU student I agreed. Although I have undertaken the training in the past I have never been a Chartership mentor so will need to look at this again, and familiarise myself with the new PKSB.

Tuesday’s keynote speaker was Catherine Salmond, the Editor of Scotland on Sunday. She was discussing the libraries campaign in her paper: “*Stop the press - but never our libraries: the importance of media campaigning.”*

We always like it when people tell us how important a job we hold in society, but it was very nice to see these sentiments put into action on a national scale. There was discussion about how librarians are wary of being advocates and campaigners, especially when they work for local authorities, something we could all relate to.

Keynote speaker 2 was DJ, tv presenter and author Gemma Cairney – live from New York in conversation with CILIPS President Amina Shah – live from her study in Tayport with covid! Although I didn’t know who Gemma was (I am so uncool) she was very fun and engaging and values the work of libraries and the importance of story and information for young people.

Next came Pamela Tulloch, CEO of SLIC who launched, along with a colleague from the NHS, the new Information for Wellbeing course: <https://infoforwellbeing.scot.nhs.uk/>

This is something I will be looking at to see if it would be relevant and useful for the library team here at NESCol. It may also be useful for SAAST and the SA.

Breakout session 1 was *“#ebooksos: the ebook crisis and Scotland Yohanna Anderson, University of Gloucestershire and #ebooksos campaign”* It was good to hear from Yohanna about how she got involved in launching the campaign and having a discussion about how we can extend it into the Scottish HE and FE landscape. She stressed the importance of speaking to the end user – the students and staff about the issue and ensuring that they understand why sometimes we have to say no. I spoke to Yohanna after the session and will be inviting her to speak at the next CDN Librarians meeting in the new term. <https://youtu.be/tuZUJs72288>

Breakout session 2 was *“Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) and how libraries can support LGBT inclusive education (in association with the CILIP LGBTQ+ Network”.* Although mainly focused around school libraries it was very interesting to hear how LGBTQ+ education is changing in Scotland, to be seamlessly embedded at every age and stage. It would be very useful to look at the Scottish Government website to see how this looks: <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/lgbt-inclusive-education/>

Graeme also recommended lots of LGBT+ books for school libraries and discussed the importance of this. I believe we have a good range of LGBT+ books in our fiction, graphic novels and wellbeing sections and will continue to add to this.

Breakout session 3 was *“Advance Your Library Research: supporting student dissertation research at the University of Edinburgh Library”* This was a fantastic session by the Edinburgh University Library team. It was in two parts – the first looking at their Dissertation Festival and secondly, looking at their online library skills module Libsmart. Although the Dissertation Festival is aimed at a much more advanced audience than our students here at NESCol, the idea was simple. Workshops and talks based around library skills and resources, and partner organisations (NLS) that can help them with their research. This was co-created and co-hosted by students. It was branded and marketed as something special and was a success. They run two at different times of the year as different courses have different hand in dates. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/help-consultancy/rm-and-consultancy/academic-support-librarians/dissertation-festival-2021-22>

I think the takeaways from this session would be that we are trying the right things putting on sessions for students, offering recordings of these etc, but maybe working with M&C would be useful to increase the impact of our advertising and create an identity.

The second part was about the online, self-enrolled library skills course. There are two levels, one for undergraduate students with the basics of how to use the library, how to use the resources and where to go for help. The second is for post graduate students which is more advanced and more subject specific.

In both there are ten modules and students can pick and choose what they need when and they collect digital badges along the way. ( <https://info.badgr.com/>)

As it is self-enrolled they know that all students don’t do this so are looking at working with the Learning Technology team to get all students enrolled on the course.

This is something I think we need to work on here at NESCol. We can’t really sustain the amount of synchronous teaching that we have done in the last year. Although creating something of quality will take a long time, and 22-23 isn’t the time for this with the new LMS project as well.

Overall the CILIPS Conference was such a great experience. So much to take back to college and work on. You can’t ask for anything more. Thank you so much to the team at CILIPS North East for funding my place. It was enormously useful in terms of new ideas and initiatives, but also to make me feel I really have a place in the academic library world – and probably know more than I think I do!

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