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Conference Corner

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Chan, L. et al 2002. *Budapest Open Access Initiative*. New York: Open Society Institute. Available at: <http://www.soros.org/openaccess/read.shtml> [Retrieved 22 January 2007].

LILAC and IL: Views from outside the academy

Penny C.S. Andrews, MSc student, University of Sheffield. Email: pennyb@gmail.com



From left: Konstantina Martzoukou (Robert Gordon University), student award winner Penny C S Andrews and Rebecca Mogg (Cardiff University, Vice-Chair of the CILIP IL Group) at LILAC 2014.

This year, LILAC awarded three bursaries to librarians from sectors traditionally underrepresented at the conference due to a lack of funding: School/FE, Health and Public libraries. I am studying the MSc Digital Library Management at the University of Sheffield and was one of two students sponsored to attend LILAC. I am particularly interested in information literacy (IL) in a lifelong context and the application of critical pedagogy to IL teaching. I interviewed the winners at the conference. We talked about LILAC, their experience of IL and their specific sectors and roles.

Donna Gundry, Head of Library Services, Plymouth College of Art

Donna Gundry won the bursary for school and FE librarians and works at a further education college in the South West of England. What came across most strongly when talking to Donna was her passion for her students and willingness to try new things. She is currently designing a new library for her college and, despite LILAC's hectic pace, the conference provided something of a break for her.

Working with art students is wonderful. There's a real energy about my students that I don't know if they lack when they hit 18 – maybe on your 18th birthday, you just lose it? On my first day, there was a man dressed as a full-on ballerina. I just casually went up to him and said, "Oh, are you raising money for charity?", and he went "No...just thought it was a bit different."

I am the only person who actually teaches IL here. It's embedded into Contextual Studies, which is a module that every student does in our college. It has been really well taken up by the academics. Whenever we buy new stuff or have new resources, we put it on our blog, which links to our Moodle page. This means it goes straight to the students that it is relevant to on the home page of their virtual learning environment (VLE). We have found this has dramatically increased our library usage, because of these recommendations.

I really wanted to come to the conference and meet other librarians. I've heard great things about LILAC in the past. We have FE and HE, so it's really nice to get that balance. If you are an FE librarian, sometimes you can feel really isolated. Just while I was having a cup of tea, someone mentioned Library Lottery, and I'm going to try that when I get back. I've got 13 hours of inductions coming up and it'll save my voice! If there was a way you could get more FE librarians here, it would give it a different vibe as we are used to working with younger students. I would tell them, "You should come! It is brilliant!"

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Ruth Jenkins, Librarian, Berkshire Healthcare Trust

Ruth Jenkins won the bursary for health librarians. Before taking up her new NHS post at the beginning of this year, Ruth was a trainee academic liaison librarian at the University of Reading. Ruth and I have two things in common: we both won SLA Europe Early Career Conference awards (2012 and 2013) and we both studied for our librarianship qualifications at the University of Sheffield.

I am new to healthcare libraries, so I thought LILAC would be a really useful opportunity to find out about IL in health, because there's a health libraries strand on the last day. I have gone from teaching students how to find literature for an assignment [in academic libraries] to helping healthcare professionals find information, evaluate it, find the best and most comprehensive source and actually use it to treat patients. It's kind of scary because there's a bit more responsibility in terms of what the information is actually being used for.

LILAC is a really great conference and I have been really impressed by the scope of the presentations. The first session was all about online skills resources and that's exactly what I am doing in my job so it was really useful to get the perspective of Jade Kelsall and find out how she's been planning these toolkits and tutorials because I don't have experience in that yet. I was making furious notes and I will use that at work.

Health libraries, as in many different sectors, have to prove their value, to make sure everyone knows what we do and what we can offer. It is really bad working in health if you're a hypochondriac, because you can get away with looking on all these health websites and checking up on symptoms. The biggest benefit is all the biscuits and chocolate that people bring you when you have done a good job for them.

There are two sides to changing sector. The core base level of knowledge, of being a librarian, is the same. We do cataloguing, we do acquisitions, and we do training for people on using databases, which is similar to what I was doing in a university library. The sheer amount of health information that is out there, that is what I still have not got my head around yet and I don't know if I am going to as it is always changing.

If you are looking to strengthen your skills or knowledge, the best thing to do is to try to make contact with people in that sector or at least read up about it. When I was looking to change and was reading up about health libraries, I found that reading blogs of healthcare libraries was really useful because obviously they are blogging about things that are important to them and things that are going on currently, which is the stuff that is going to come up in your interview really. It is going to show that you are engaged with that sector and know what the issues are.

Jacqueline Geekie, Information Literacy and Learning Librarian, Aberdeenshire Libraries

Jacque won the bursary for public librarians, and we finally managed to catch up on the last day as she had thrown herself wholeheartedly into networking with librarians from a range of sectors and cities across the world. It was interesting to hear her perspective on putting yourself forward to talk about your work and I think we should be encouraging more public library staff to speak at conferences so that their voices are heard – they are not just doing their jobs.

I work with primary- and secondary-aged children through our network of school librarians and I work with the public as well, running IL sessions for them. You make the teaching appropriate for their age and stage. I line manage somebody who co-ordinates a project called *Cool Computing for Couthie Customers*. That is, young volunteers, 16-18 year olds, who are tutoring older people on how to use a computer. The other thing I do for the public is running iPad sessions, getting people past the digital divide.

In public libraries, budgets are uncertain, structures are uncertain and it is like walking on shifting sands. But actually working with the public is brilliant; they are just lovely. I work with primary-aged children who think the library is the best thing since sliced bread. Older people [also] really appreciate the service you provide. So working in public libraries, the best thing is the public.

My line manager had been to LILAC before and she encouraged me to go for the place. I am delighted to have won, I have learned a lot. People are here from all over the world and think so highly of LILAC that they come all that way. I really loved the *Herbal Magic* session, where I won a bath bomb; that session was full of energy and it's just brilliant. I want to start working with our university library in that same way. The other session I really enjoyed was *Information Flow*, which was geared towards working with the same age of children that I work with. The majority of people there were university librarians so it was out of their sphere of work, but I had a project we could use with the model so we worked on that.

There is a wee bit of work to do in getting different sectors to work together, but we need more public librarians to be here. I think we are more shrinking violets than the university librarians; we tend to think, "That is just what I do". When I started talking about the project I was doing and the resources I was going to be using and my ideas, somebody tweeted about how fantastic it was. You do not think it is anything anybody will want to hear about.

I'm glad I was given the opportunity by the Journal of Information Literacy to ask these passionate librarians about their work, and am grateful to Donna, Ruth and Jacqueline for giving up their time. I was keen to ask them about IL and the conference, but also to understand the challenges and rewards of the different sectors and it would be fantastic if this results in more school/FE, health and public librarians attending LILAC in future.

RESOURCES

LILAC 2014 programme is available online:
<http://www.lilacconference.com/WP/programme/>