

Journal of Information Literacy

ISSN 1750-5968

Volume 13 Issue 1

June 2019

Conference update

Pearce, G. 2019. Interview with the LILAC 2019 bursary winners. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 13(1), pp. 96–98.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/13.1.2644>



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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> [Accessed: 18 November 2015].

Interview with the LILAC 2019 bursary winners

Gemma Pearce, University College London. Email: gemma.pearce.18@ucl.ac.uk

The Librarians' Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC) provides a sponsored place through the Rowena Macrae-Gibson Student Award for two students to attend the conference. This year's conference took place at the University of Nottingham. LILAC also provide a bursary for those working within under-represented sectors or communities, including BAME, schools, further education, public and health.

As a winner of the student sponsored place, I was lucky enough to spend time in conversation with the five bursary winners. The winners this year were Baljinder Bains, Sarah Fox, YiWen Hon, Neena Morris and Ros Parkes.

As the winners came from such a wide range of backgrounds I was interested to find out about their roles and how information literacy was currently incorporated into their role. My first interviewee, YiWen, works as a librarian within an NHS hospital. Her belief is that within the health sector information literacy is key to evidence-based practice as it underlines what is happening in healthcare medicine. Specifically, within her role she is responsible for helping doctors, nurses and any other healthcare professionals to make sure that they have the information skills that they need in order to negotiate all of the complex information available to ensure the best outcomes for their patients.



The beautiful University of Nottingham campus
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My second interviewee, Neena, works as an assistant information advisor at a university, within their art library. A large part of her role is supporting and teaching students to use information in an ethical manner. Particularly as a lot of their resources are visual, it is important that the students understand copyright.

My third interviewee, Sarah, works in a school where pupils aged from two-and-a-half to 18 are taught information literacy skills. Sarah works most closely with the secondary school students, aged 13 to 18. This includes research skills being taught to students when the need arises or specific project work. An example of a project done with year nine students (aged 13-14) is a weekly information literacy lesson which incorporates them completing their own research project. At sixth form level Sarah teaches 16-18 year-olds high level research skills in line with what they will need at university.

My fourth interviewee, Baljinder, works in a college, and information literacy for her takes place within curriculum sessions and tutorials that are delivered throughout the college. These sessions cover a wide range of information literacy and research skills such as evaluating and referencing.

My final interviewee, Ros, works as a solo librarian within a public library. Ros believes that she has an important role to play in ensuring that her customers are able to evaluate the information they read online, use the computers efficiently and productively, and stay safe online. As a frontline public library worker, she frequently helps her users to get online, search the internet, and use Facebook and other social media sites.

Next, I was interested to find out why they all wanted to attend LILAC and what it was that they hoped to get out of the experience. Everyone had specific reasons for wanting to attend LILAC relating to their sector or more specifically their job role. Neena is new to her role in higher education and therefore wanted to learn more about how information literacy has been incorporated into this sector and apply that best practice to her own work. Baljinder is in the process of creating a policy around independent learning and therefore wanted to discover new ideas around information literacy and ensure the policy is as up to date as possible with those learnings. This she hopes will lead to more useful and purposeful sessions for her students. Ros was hoping to gain a further understanding on how to teach her users to evaluate what they read on the internet, develop their digital skills and raise awareness of privacy issues. Sarah was interested to discover how university libraries were teaching information literacy skills and gain further understanding of the skills that her pupils would need for that transition to university. She also saw this as a great opportunity to network with people from different organisations. This echoed what was said by YiWen who saw LILAC as a great opportunity to meet new people and gain new ideas to help improve her teaching.

As the interview took place on the last day of the conference, I was able to ask the bursary winners what they would be taking away from the experience. YiWen spoke about how the session by Hannah Hickman was very inspirational. The session was on imposter syndrome and professional identity. YiWen commented on how this session shook up the way she sees herself, her role and the way she will approach being a professional.

Neena was most interested by the social justice talk by Elizabeth Brookbank that looked at how leisure reading can be a tool for change. She also really enjoyed the keynote by Ruth Carlyle about health information and how it is so vital to our lives.

Sarah commented on how she went to a session on the post truth world, focusing on fake news. This session was interesting as it encouraged us to think about how we move away from a static attitude of assessing content, particularly online. Rather than assessing this information for if it is correct or not we move towards a more flexible system where, as the reader, we think about your own biases and gain understanding of what we think before reading information. They presented a toolkit to help use this more flexible system. She has also learnt a lot about digital skills, technology and things that she has never heard of before. Sarah jokes that she is taking away a very full brain!

Baljinder emphasises how there are so many sessions and ideas that she is going to be taking away with her to reflect on and use with a focus on the reading element, particularly with journals and the importance that reading plays within information literacy. The first keynote speech by Sandeep Mahal really summarised this nicely. One of the key messages she will be taking back to her workplace is how she can develop this reading culture throughout the organisation. Another useful and fascinating area was discovering what other people are developing in terms of online content. Finally, an area that really resonated with Baljinder was

how important information literacy skills are within a real-life context. Bringing back into focus how important information literacy is in helping individuals to make decisions within their personal lives.

Ros started by mentioning how friendly the information literacy world is, with the conference having a lovely atmosphere about it and the presenters being very knowledgeable about their areas. Some particular areas that she will be taking away with her include thinking about the role libraries can play in health literacy and how developing information literacy skills can enable people to make better choices and thus play a more active role within society. She will also look into supporting families with their digital skills through picture books. Finally, she will look to make use of specific contexts (for example, job hunting) as a vehicle for incorporating information literacy.

Finally, I asked the five winners what they would say to anyone thinking of applying for the bursary next year. Unsurprisingly every single one of them said that you should go for it! Both YiWen and Sarah commented on how easy and straightforward the application process was. Baljinder mentioned how surprised she was by how many people from across the world attended the conference, giving it a cross cultural feel. Neena reiterated how much she had learnt, that will not only help her in her current role but also for the rest of her career. Sarah had a final message particularly for school librarians who may not think the conference is for them, it definitely is!

After winning the student sponsorship I would also like to reiterate what the bursary winners have said. If you are a student and interested in information literacy, make an application for the student sponsorship. It has been an absolutely amazing experience and completely worth the time spent on the application. On behalf of myself and the bursary winners I would just like to end by saying a huge thank you to the LILAC committee.