

Transcript for Enhancing Academic Practice Episode 4

Chloe: Welcome to episode four of enhancing academic practice. The host for today is Chloe Courtenay, in this series we're discussing best practice and learning and teaching and how these can be applied in your own academic practice. In this episode, I'm joined by David Bedford from the Learning Skills team.

David: Hello. Yeah, and so I'm one of the learning and research librarians from the learning skills team I've been around Christchurch since the year 2000 in a few different roles and over that time And I'm currently the learning and research librarian for the Medway and Salomon's campuses.

Chloe: Okay, so would you like to just unpack a bit what that job title means? Yeah, so it means that I work alongside the academic departments at both of those campuses to support students and in Anything to do with information really so and making sure that the right information is available on the shelves and in the digital library for them and but also and More obviously from the title of the team that I'm part of it's about supporting their skills in being able to find and evaluate select reference manage All of that information that they need as part of their course

Chloe: Okay, so you're so obviously a part of the team. So, what is the wider team?

David: Yep, so and for the I'm unusual in that I'm supporting campuses and the other members of the team supports aaaahh. Oh gosh That wasn't a word So! I'm quite unusual in my support to campuses and the other members of this the team they support specific schools or faculties and the Canterbury campus and so we have librarians attached to each of the schools there and And we also have a team of learning developers and who we work very closely alongside and who are again attached to particular campuses or schools and they Their job is to support students in developing the other academic skills that they need So around the different styles of writing required in their discipline time management criticality and Group work presentations all of those things that are required to develop as a student and to excel on their course

Chloe: Okay, so you've mentioned that you support students and you've mentioned a lot of different skills that you can support them with but how Do the students get that support?

David: Yep. So there there's two aspects to that. The first is the the sort of the on-demand stuff So we all offer tutorials that students can book either online or face-to-face and so students can talk to us about the particular challenges that they're having with an assessment or about a skill that they want to develop and independently of the assessments and And yes students can book those with the relevant members of the team and who know their school We also have the learning skills hub, which is our online home, which provides a whole load of on-demand resources videos infographics Interactive modules that students can take a look at and to help them develop different academic skills So that's the on-demand.

Chloe: Yeah, so obviously when you say on-demand, I mean, how do students know that you're there? How can they turn to you in that moment of need?

David: So and we try to make sure that we meet the students from every course and Because students are much more likely to contact a team or a person if if they've kind of seen a physical embodiment that team and that So we'll we run some sort of introductory events during welcome week But we try much more to actually go out to each course and meet the students in the first few weeks Of terms so that they know that we exist we're friendly. They understand why why they might want to talk to us I mean, maybe obviously not necessarily physically, but there's a virtual presence It's easy to locate on the web page or yes So again, that's through the learning skills hub and so on on the learning skills hub and there are links to that all over the Christchurch website and on the assist menu on blackboard and things like that and There's a page for each faculty which lists all of the librarians and learning developers for that faculty which schools they support which campuses they support and then? within each person's page There are buttons that they can click to book appointments with us also gives our email addresses and all that sort of stuff, because of course increasingly students don't use email.

Chloe: Yeah, even web pages are starting to feel a bit obsolete aren't they? It's having that real virtual presence.

David: It's having that real virtual presence. Yeah, and sometimes and so obviously we direct people to the learning skills hub and With modules where we know that there's a particularly high demand for us then we'll make sure that there's a direct link to the bookings Buttons and on the blackboard module as well so that it's In the same place as all of the students course material and hopefully easier to find without having to go and route around for it And what can staff do to help because obviously when you're marking or a problem comes up you want to be able to refer students What's the right thing to do?

Chloe: What's the right thing to do?

David: And the right thing to do is Make it in in the comments and that are part of the marking and You can advise students to contact their librarian or their learning developer And if they do that need to make it really clear why and what it is And because we do sometimes get students come to us and say well, I was told to contact you But we don't know why and so it's really difficult to help them when we don't know what they need help with Okay, that's important.

Chloe: Thank you. So obviously you were mentioning on demand. So what else is there to support you?

David: Yes, so probably the from the university's perspective the key part of our job is that we go out and we teach workshops and generally embedded as part of modules across all the different courses that the university runs and so that can be workshops on any of the skills that we cover and potentially ones that we haven't covered before. If people have a conversation with us and we realize that it's something we can do and so we'll go out online or in person and teach as part of the modules. And it is always timetabled as part of the modules so that it's not seen as a random extra thing it is part of it. And that also helps with the students confidence in approaching us because they've seen us they've heard from us And they know that we know what we're talking about

Chloe: Okay, so we've mentioned referrals, but how else can your team and teaching and course teams work together? Yes, so and it's worth reaching out having a conversation with us and To discuss how we could potentially support and there may be really obvious things So if there's a module where the marking shows that students regularly struggle with a particular aspect of their academic skills That's more obvious and but it's worth sitting down with us and just talking through What are the skills that the students' needs to thrive on this course? How could we potentially support that either with on-demand resources or going in and teaching? Workshops and we can do that as part of the course approval process and Or just at any time Really, maybe if someone's taking on a new module that might be something that you want to do is to talk to us about How we could potentially support that module that you're taking on.

Chloe: So obviously as you said, you're part of a team so thinking about this logistically, how could academic teams get hold of you or the right person for them?

David: Yeah, and so we have a team email address and which is learner at Canterbury the IC dot UK and which means that if you don't know who the relevant members of your team are then just email that and the right person will get back to you and obviously the learning skills hub also lists which and Librarians and learning developers work with each school as well So that's a way to find out if you want to go out and contact us directly and we do try to make ourselves as known as possible, but there are a lot of staff Christchurch, so we have no doubt that there are people we don't know exist.

Chloe: That's really great David, thank you so much. Obviously. We're trying to keep this bite size So this is going to be the end of this podcast, but you're going to be back for a second one Could you just give us a quick idea of what might be in that second podcast? Yeah, so I'm going to talk a little bit about some case studies about different ways.

David: We've worked with various courses and because we try to be discipline specific and and work in ways that work for specific specific and cohorts and demographic groups and so we'll talk about some of those and yeah, different ways we've worked with different courses.

Chloe: That's great, and that will really help people to see an illustration of all the things you have been mentioning today.

So thank you for listening to episode four of enhancing academic practice podcast which has been about the Learning Skills team and if you enjoyed this episode, please join us again for another. There will be links for further information on the web page and when you go to when you listen to this on Spotify. Thank you