



UTEA Application Exemplar – Professional Services Award

The application (it should be no longer than 2,000 words)

My role at the Drill Hall Library supports students on health-related programmes across all three of the Universities at Medway. For Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), this primarily involves working alongside programmes from the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Social Care, though I have also worked with some of the programmes run by the Faculty of Education and the Christ Church Business School on campus. The content of this application refers solely to work with CCCU students and Schools.

A large part of my role involves teaching students. From September 2019 to May 2020, in addition to library orientations/inductions for each Medway-based programme, I have run 75 group teaching sessions for CCCU students, most of them embedded as part of a module. This has continued since the COVID-19 “lockdown” – prior experience of webinar-style teaching for postgraduate programmes stood me in good stead for synchronous teaching sessions using Blackboard Collaborate.

The core of what I teach is information literacy, defined as “the ability to think critically and make balanced judgements about any information we find and use” (CILIP Information Literacy Group, 2018). This has a particular relevance to health-related programmes due to the crossovers with both evidence-based practice and the professional digital skills expected in the professions’ codes of conduct and professional standards documents. I also teach elements of wider digital literacy, where I take a “visitors and residents” approach to online engagement (White and Le Cornu, 2011).

I have a particular concern for the emotional aspect of information literacy, which ties in with the key strategic principles of educating the whole person and supporting success for all students. Many of the students I teach have significant anxieties surrounding the use of technology and the expectations of academia. This can often include the library – library anxiety was first named as a phenomenon in the 1980s (Mellon, 1986) and has been suggested to be a particular concern for students of the health professions and for adult learners (Cooke, 2010; Still, 2015). I have therefore been involved with developing Drill Hall Library orientation activities which have the primary purpose (while also introducing key library services and spaces) of showcasing the library

as a warm, welcoming environment. Medway representatives from Christ Church Students' Union have commented on how effective these activities have been.

Another way I have addressed library anxiety is through a small-scale adaptation of the Traffic Lights Toolkit (CCCU, 2018) – I am the author of the [Library Case Study](#) on the site. This has allowed me to address the affective domain and bring it in to the classroom. The tool allows both me and the students to identify areas of confidence and anxiety and to consider how/whether these have been addressed. It also allows me to adapt and flex my teaching plans in order to concentrate on those areas of most need, and address and reduce student anxiety through practical exploration of the relevant skills. I spoke about this at the CCCU Learning and Teaching Conference in 2019 and was due to present at a national librarianship conference this year (cancelled due to COVID-19).

My teaching that is embedded as part of a programme is more effective than any other mode of delivery. However, this approach is not always possible and is not always enough for all students. It is vital for the library to support success for all students, so I also run generic drop-in workshops on using LibrarySearch, referencing and dissertation literature searches. This allows students from programmes which do not yet have embedded sessions, have missed those sessions, or would like a refresher to attend and to ask additional questions. I also offer individual or small group tutorials, to allow students at whatever level to ask individual questions and develop their skills further. I have run these in person, by telephone and online through Skype or Blackboard Collaborate. Students are able to book these sessions through a simple online interface. See appendix for total CCCU students seen across taught sessions, drop-in workshops and tutorials.

The work that I do is intended not only to support students' studies, but to prepare them for employment, as part of the university's commitment to integrating graduate employability in teaching and learning. Skills relating to finding, understanding and applying evidence, which are the majority of what I cover, are vital for 21st-century health professionals, and some of the teaching sessions I run are specifically aimed towards developing and supporting skills for employment – this includes Professional Use of Social Media which I have run with several different programmes and an Evidence for Practice session run for MSc Physician Associate Studies and MSc Advanced and Specialist Healthcare, which introduces evidence tools which can be used after completion of the course. As with the rest of my teaching, these sessions are focused on the needs of the particular profession(s) the students are training to enter.

In addition to teaching and tutorial work carried out in person, I develop digital learning objects, some of which have been used in Blackboard as part of flipped or blended learning, others which are available for students to refer back to when needed (hosted on our subject guides). This includes resources such as the [Anatomy of a journal article](#), used by several programmes, and videos such as [Searching databases](#) and [Inside ebooks](#), the latter developed specifically in response to student queries raised during Spring 2020. The ongoing creation of these resources has made it possible for me to create asynchronous learning sessions for students on a number of programmes since the move to off-campus learning, using a mixture of existing learning objects, external resources and newly-created bespoke material and activities. All resources I create are shared with the team of librarians across campuses. This is an area of my practice I wish to develop further, particularly as the need for our learning environments to be flexible will continue to be vital for the coming terms.

My work is well integrated into and helps build the wider university learning community. I have presented at the university learning and teaching conference, learning objects which I have developed have been used by programmes outside of Medway, and I have contributed to central community resources, such as the library blog (posts [Exploring physiotherapy with your digital library](#) and [Picturing your digital library \(or not\)](#)) and the Poetic Nursing Heart community ([The librarian's tale of openness](#)).

The quality of the work that I do locally has been recognised outside of the immediate university environment. Two examples of national recognition of my work:

- I developed a framework for evaluating and selecting information sources, with the needs of health students in mind. This has been adopted by a number of programmes within the Faculty, and academic colleagues from Adult Nursing encouraged me to disseminate this more widely. Following this recommendation, I approached the *Nursing Times*, who published it on their blog site: [Nurses must consider which information to use and trust](#).
- During the beginning of the pandemic, I used my Twitter feed to direct students to reliable sources of information regarding COVID-19. This was spotted by the Information Literacy Group from CILIP, my professional body, who invited me to write a post for their site: [Seeking reliable information in difficult times](#). I am now also preparing a case study for the same group regarding how I have conducted teaching support online.

My teaching is always responsive to the needs of the specific programme or group I am working with. Although information literacy can be viewed as “generic”, the types of information required by different groups and for different purposes, as well as the ways in which that information will be managed and understood, vary greatly. Although perhaps more obvious in the difference between, say, English Literature (my academic background) and Medicine, this is also true within the broad category of “health” – the needs of Physiotherapy students are not the same as those of Paramedic Science or Child Nursing students. I am always careful therefore, to ensure that the requirements of their professional bodies and the needs of their studies are the first things I consider when planning teaching or other support. I have spoken on this at national librarianship conferences (e.g. [Using professional standards to inform information literacy work](#) – see pp.64-66).

I continually seek to develop and improve the work I do, and am keen to learn from others within the librarianship profession and beyond. Indeed, when working towards FHEA status (achieved in 2018), I learned a great deal from observing others’ teaching and from the observation and discussion of my own teaching sessions. Therefore, even if delivering “the same” session that I have taught before, I return to students/staff feedback and my reflections from previous delivery, re-examine the approach and amend where necessary.

Some anonymised examples of feedback I have received:

- Academic staff members, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social work, following Collaborate sessions (April/May 2020): “thank you for the excellent Collaborate session - many said they found it helpful.” / “a very valuable session and with over 100 students logged in I thought a very good level of engagement too”
- Senior member of FMHSC staff (April 2020): “I would like to thank you for all that you do for our students. [...] I know that our students highly evaluate you and the difference you make to their overall learning. You and I have discussed how daunting it can be for a student who is returning to study either as a second career or having made a decision to study whilst bringing up a family. You help them make this transition and ease the apprehension they experience at having to use a library.”
- Academic staff members, Faculty of Education (December 2019): “I just wanted to let you know that the students found yesterday's session really helpful - lots of positive comments, so thank you” / “██████████ has done a sterling job in tailoring the content to the needs of the students, but still providing ‘appropriate challenge’”

- Student from School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work (November 2019) requesting the reference for my information evaluation framework (BREAD) 10 months after attending a session on it: “I found this a very useful tool but I have since been unable to locate this, but feel that it would be very useful for my literature review”
- Academic staff members, Institute of Medical Sciences: (November 2018): “I have just completed my annual report for the programme and the students have highlighted how much they have appreciated your support during their studies. Thanks for all you have done” / (December 2019): “I thought you would like to see the evaluation summaries [...] Your session was selected for positive comments and they also fed back to me in class that it was a very useful session.”