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Title: Collaborative learning: enhancing the student experience through LLS

Date: 2012

Originally presented to: Research Active: Library and Learning Services Conference 2012

Conference URL: <http://llsconference2012.files.wordpress.com>

Example citation: Beeson, H., Swinton, K., Woods, N. and MacLellan, F. (2012) Collaborative learning: enhancing the student experience through LLS. Poster presented to: *Research Active: Library and Learning Services Conference 2012, Sunley Conference Centre, University of Northampton, 19 June 2012.*

Version of item: Presented version

Collaborative Learning: Enhancing the student experience through LLS

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Library and Learning Services (LLS) is a new department within the University which brings together the Centre for Academic Practice (CfAP), a specialist study skills unit which provides support to students through individual tutorials, workshops and taught modules, and the library. CfAP staff will work alongside academic librarians (ALs) in a team known as Learning Development which will focus on addressing students' questions regarding study skills and research at their point of need. The creation of such a structure has proved successful at other Higher Education institutions, enabling possibilities for collaborative delivery, holistic support, the sharing of best practice and the discovery of new opportunities.

Adding collaborative value to existing good practice

- ✿ Creating and delivering dissertation workshops collaboratively providing holistic support to students. This will cover the initial location and selection of sources and follow the process through to structuring, writing and referencing, to give a clear, seamless and thorough overview.
- ✿ Open days, currently attended by CFAP tutors, will be extended to include other library staff, enabling everyone to elaborate to prospective students the full range of support available from LLS.
- ✿ An extension of our drop-in sessions will provide the opportunity for students to see us, at their convenience, with any queries concerning their writing, research and cognitive skills.
- ✿ CfAP will be operating within the library, a positive learning environment in the students' own space. Awareness of CfAP's services should increase.
- ✿ Bespoke workshops for groups who have identified a particular need will enhance the student experience.
- ✿ CfAP and Librarians have good relationships with academics. Joining together and pooling these relationships will increase awareness of what LLS offers around the University.



We encourage suggestions and feedback about how we can help your students. We want to explore some new approaches so please let us know if you can get involved. It is envisaged that our innovative approaches will lead to some interesting collaborative research outputs.

References

- Aiken, V. (2012) *Dissertation club: A concept for collaborative cross-subject support for dissertation students* [conference paper] Leeds University: ALDinHE conference
- McKie, A. (2009) Mapping the territory: a new direction for information literacy in the digital age *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education* 1 Available from: <http://www.aldinhe.ac.uk/ojs/index.php?journal=jldhe&page=article&op=view&path%5B%5D=12> [Accessed 22 May 2012]
- Pillai, M. (2010) Locating learning development in a university library: promoting effective academic help seeking *New review of academic librarianship* 16 (2), pp. 121-144

New opportunities for LLS

- ✿ Dissertation clubs, such as those at Keele University (Aiken, 2012) enable students from a range of courses to discuss their own topics and approaches and get feedback from peers. These will be facilitated by LLS staff, but ongoing support could be available via NILE discussion boards
- ✿ Collaboration on the development of Open Educational Resources to identify student needs and devise online tools to solve these.
- ✿ A shared platform for Open Educational Resources, to be known as the Skills Hub, where students and staff can access key resources for skills support 24/7.
- ✿ CfAP will be operating within the library, a positive learning space in the students' own environment. Awareness of CfAP's services will increase as a result, which has happened in a similar setting at De Montfort University (Pillai, 2010).
- ✿ We are keen to extend our drop in sessions to multiple areas across the campuses such as restaurants and foyers.