

Medical Curriculum: Introduction to Library and IT Services

Subject area

At the very start of their undergraduate studies, medical students are to be presented with an opportunity to explore and use Library and IT Services. The aim is to familiarise them with buildings, people, resources and technologies that will be of value in the first few weeks of their studies. This foundation knowledge is to be built upon and developed further in subsequent sessions.

The content and format of the session has been designed so that it can be re-purposed for students studying other kinds of health related courses such as Nursing, Midwifery, Physiotherapy and other professions allied to medicine.

Scope and context

A new medical curriculum is currently being developed at Cardiff University and will be run for the first time with the 2013/14 undergraduate intake. Throughout this process senior subject librarians have worked closely with curriculum planners and academic leads responsible for designing and coordinating the provision of content and learning activities. This has presented opportunities to raise awareness of the importance of developing information and digital literacies in students and academic staff, and explore practical and achievable ways of doing so in an incremental and evolutionary 'spiral' curriculum.

The Digidol project took the opportunity to work with the Subject Librarians involved in the medical curriculum design process to identify how the development of literacies could best be embedded into the sessions allocated.

Two sessions were identified for librarians to work with students: an introduction to the library in the first week and a follow up session five weeks later.

Due to the complexity and urgency of the curriculum development process it was not possible for the librarians to meet as frequently as desired with the curriculum designers and academic leads. To overcome this problem Cardiff's internal social media environment (IBM Connections) was used to facilitate communication and collaboration to realise the design and development of the library session learning activities. A wiki was set up to share the content and develop the structure and format of the planned sessions. This approach allowed the academic leads to review and comment on what was being

developed at their convenience. It proved to be highly successful, providing a way for everyone to keep apprised of developments and contribute when necessary.

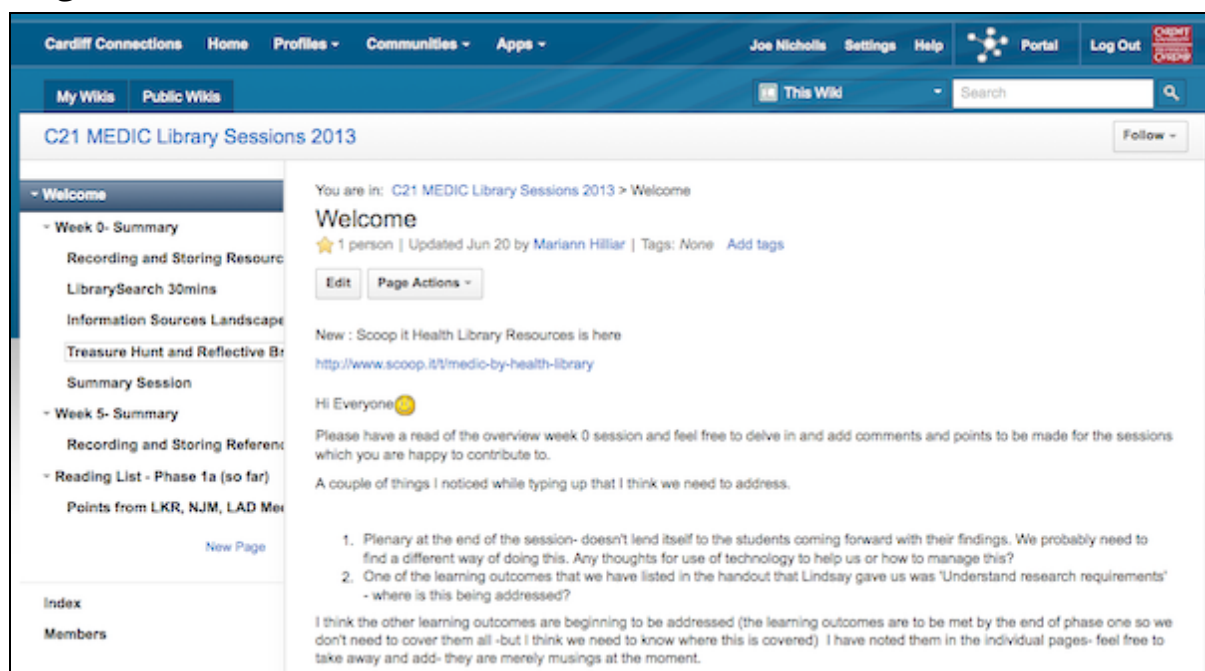
Rationale and aims

The purpose of the library sessions at the very start of the course is to provide first year medical students with a basic introduction to those library and IT services that are likely to be of immediate relevance and value to their studies.

It is intended to provide them with opportunities to engage in a range of useful and beneficial study and research practices. For example, the learning activities are designed to help students identify and locate relevant data/information sources (local and online), to explore their 'Information Landscape', engage in basic information search and retrieval tasks, and perform simple data and information management practices that will be of value throughout their studies.

'Professionalism in Medical Practice' has been chosen as the academic context for the sessions. So, the tasks and problems presented to students are framed with a view to finding out more about what professionalism means from a health and medical practitioner's perspective. This will include aspects of digital identity and its significance for professional practice.

Digital literacies addressed



The screenshot shows a Wikispaces page for 'C21 MEDIC Library Sessions 2013'. The page has a blue header with navigation links like 'Home', 'Profiles', 'Communities', and 'Apps'. The main content area is titled 'Welcome' and includes a message from Mariann Hilliar, updated on Jun 20. The message discusses the session's focus on health library resources and mentions a 'Scoop It Health Library Resources' link. It also lists two points for discussion: 1. Plenary at the end of the session and 2. Learning outcomes related to research requirements. The page includes a sidebar with a table of contents and a 'Members' section.

The Library, IT and Academic staff involved in the design and development of the sessions made use of the internal social media platform **IBM Connections** to share outputs, invite comment and contributions. This was used because the difficulty getting everyone involved together at the same time for face-to-face meetings and run-throughs. The wiki set up in Connections allowed lead academics to read and comment on the work being done by the Subject Librarians directly involved. This was used very effectively to monitor and comment on progress.

The introductory session was designed to raise the awareness of students to a wide variety of digital tools and services, internal and external, considered useful for the early stages of learning to study. These include key internal information and communication systems, such as the internal **Networked Desktop** environment, **email**, **Portal**, **VLE** (Learning Central – aka. Blackboard), **Voyager** (Library Search) and a range of related mobile applications (n.b. devices can be easily registered to gain wireless access to Eduroam). In addition, a number of popular social media tools and services are to be introduced, with some being explored in more depth than others.

The team were concerned about the possibility of overwhelming the students with too much information and too many different technologies that they might not make use of straightaway. With this in mind, tools were chosen so that their use could be illustrated by getting students to use them in the sessions themselves. In this way the students gain early hands-on experience in an educational context.

Twitter will be introduced to help students connect and share information with staff and each other. The Library already makes extensive use of Twitter to keep users informed about library related services. Students will be encouraged to sign up to Twitter and follow the Library service tweets and introduced to the associated hashtag. They will be encouraged to monitor this for library news and updates about the future sessions.

Students will be instructed in the use of tools such as **Padlet**. The intention is to make use of the virtual post-its to allow groups of students to make comments, upload resources and links so that they can be accessed and reviewed later by all involved.

Personal and collaborative **mind mapping** tools will be introduced to illustrate how they can be used to help develop and share ideas. The potential of tools such as **Evernote** for note taking and personal information management will also be explored.

Overview

At the time of writing the introductory library session had not formally been run. It is due to take place for the first time in September 2013.

Five different activities form the basis of a 3 hour session:

- Recording and Storing Resources - 30 mins
- Library Search - 30 mins
- Information Landscape - 30 mins
- Treasure Hunt and Reflective Break - 1 hr
- Summary Session - 30 mins

Recording and storing resources

Students will be encouraged to discuss the ways they are currently storing and keeping track of information. They will be prompted to think about the kinds resources, services and tools they could make use of in the first few weeks of their studies, such as webpages, podcasts, lecture notes, books, journals, videos, etc.

The students are to be divided into groups to look at methods of keeping track of information. They will be asked to explore which are the most effective at enabling them to retrieve a reference and share it with others, and identify three benefits and two drawbacks of using each method.

For example, Pen and Paper, Post-it notes, Bookmarks, Bibsonomy, CiteULike, Delicious, Social Citation Software, EndNote/Web, Zotero, Evernote, Diigo, Qiqqa, Reddit, ScoopIt, Stumbleupon, Pinterest, etc.

Students will be asked to explore and experiment with their chosen tools over the intervening five weeks and come to following session with comments and questions.

Library Search

Students will be introduced to the Cardiff Portal and to techniques for finding reading list items using Library Search. The aim is to help students identify and explore a range of resources in response to research needs, design and follow a structured plan of retrieving source material, and practice retrieving content from appropriate and reliable scientific and medical sources.

The session will get them using the Cardiff Portal to establish some basic familiarity with its functions and features. They will use the Library Search interface and understand its role in the information research process and be

able to personalise their use of Library Search via e-shelf, tagging and saved searches. They will obtain practical knowledge of the techniques required to search for reading list items in various formats e.g. e-books, textbooks, journals, and appreciate the importance of managing their library account, including how to renew and reserve items.

Information landscape

Using the context of professionalism in medical practice, and possibly an assignment (to be decided) as an anchor, students will be introduced to evaluating sources of information, identifying the difference between good scientific and poor source material, and introduced to effective team working skills.

Students will be encouraged to explain how and where they currently get their information from and to consider where they anticipate they will gather information from in the future. Focusing on what differences there might be and to explain which are suitable for using in an academic/professional context and which are not.

The students will use tools such as virtual noticeboards, mind mapping and photographs to record their findings. They will be required to identify the types of information they would consider using in their academic studies and post their responses to Padlet.

They will be required to create a mind map of what they understand their information landscape to consist of. This will also include responses given by students in previous sessions. The mind map will be added to during the session to take into account the students responses in Padlet. It will then be used to generate discussions around the points raised above such as what sources the students feel are most suitable for their academic studies etc.

In addition, one of the e-Learning leads in the medical school is to introduce students to the potential of Scoop.it as a way of curating and sharing resources.

Treasure Hunt and Reflective Break

Students are primed well in advance of doing a library session by being referred to a series of blog posts that provide an overview of the library layout and main resources. This will also include a short video from one of the academic leads on the course introducing them to key issues on the topic of professionalism in medical practice, and instructions to sign up to the library's

Twitter feed which will be used to send out references to sources in the library.

End of session summary

All participants are to be brought together for the final part of the session. They will be asked to feedback on their most useful insights. For example, they will be encouraged to recommend resources and tools they think they will make the most use of and give reasons why. They will be asked to share their thoughts and findings with each other using the tools and techniques they have been introduced to, eg., Twitter, Padlet and VLE. Polleverywhere (licensed by the Medical School) may be used to obtain feedback from everyone involved.

Digital resources and know how used

The library staff involved in the design and development of the sessions used the opportunity to explore a broad range of digital practices and enabling technologies. These have including the use of both internal and external technologies (detailed above). But most successful was the adoption of the IBM Connections environment to enable asynchronous collaborative working with colleagues who were geographically remote from each other. Getting hold of and communicating with clinical academic staff can be quite difficult and this approach provided an effective way for everyone involved to work together. Connections made possible by working in this environment have already led to further collaboration on other parts of the curriculum.

Benefits and impacts

Work on these introductory library sessions will form the basis for continued involvement with the new medical curriculum. At the time of writing only parts of the curriculum had been finalised. The aim is to run the session in September 2013 and, following a review, repurpose it for other health related undergraduate courses. This will provide a mechanism for enabling students to take the very first steps towards developing their digital literacy in the context of their course and discipline.

Conclusion and lessons learned

The session design is complete and required resources are currently being developed (June 2013). At the time of writing a 'walk through' of the session involving the academic leads had taken place and all involved were very satisfied with how things have been designed and planned.

This has demonstrated a really productive team approach to designing and developing a completely new and engaging way of introducing undergraduates to essential university services, and through this process initiate the development of key information and digital literacies.

Links and further information

Once fully developed, lesson plans and associated resources will be made freely available online.

Further opportunities

The intention is to evaluate the delivery of the session and then build upon this in week five of the first year undergraduate medical programme. Further development and refinement the sessions is planned so that that it can be repurposed for other first year undergraduates studying health related disciplines.

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