



CoLRiC Best Practice Awards 2013: winning projects

1. Weston College – Tech Genius

Tech Genius is a student led technology support service available in the LibraryPlus facilities at Weston College. The service helps those users who need support with using technology and also the e-resources provided by the College library.

This approach serves a number of needs – it certainly enables the library to support students needing valuable work experience but also ensures that the library is able to effectively promote its own services and provide for the extra demand technology has created.

The Tech Genius team members had to apply and be interviewed for their posts and successful applicants had to fulfil a number of objectives which included running a support desk, maintaining records, developing a website, conducting surveys, contacting the IT department for serious issues, maintaining IT support virtually through Second Life and working with the library team on other projects.

Tech Genius has been a very successful model which has extended to other areas of the college where the LibraryPlus facilities exist.

2. Somerset College – Conversation Café

The Conversation Café was started in February 2013 and is an initiative that has gone on to attract students to sign up for courses at the college.

Every week during term time the Café opens for an hour and provides opportunities for students and visitors learning English to talk to colleagues and their peers and practice their English language skills. The Café is facilitated by Learning Resource Centre staff who initiate new conversation topics with attendees.

For added value, participants are shown the extensive resources in the library and those who are not students are also given membership to allow them to borrow from the collection.

The services on offer have helped to increase both the number of participants to the Café and also student enrolments, especially for ESOL courses. The impact of marketing through various mechanisms and simply by 'word-of-mouth' has ensured that the project has remained sustainable and highly valued.

Joint 3. Esher College – Learning Improvement Programme

Esher College discovered that students who were falling behind with their work were generally those who did not use their Learning Resource Centre and as many of these students were also on a final warning, the staff decided to try a pro-active approach in an attempt to remedy the issues.

After investigations with teaching staff and having seen an example of a LIP at Reigate College with SEN students, Esher College developed measures that would see time, space and encouragement

offered to students who fell within this area by the LRC. In addition, LRC staff were able to develop methods to assist students with locating relevant resources to help with study.

Teachers work with the LRC and each student has targets to complete which they do so with the help of a study space in the silent area of the LRC and with a Librarian supervising and providing support. The project has been so successful that many students elect to stay with the programme and the LRC staff have been able to help develop valuable research skills for others, including those on the Extend Project Qualification.

Joint 3. Oldham Sixth Form College – Who Wants to Win a USB Pen?

Oldham Sixth Form College have radically improved their induction process by developing a quiz style show, borrowing ideas from the Cephalonian method and mixing it with TV's 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire'.

The induction now takes place in a large lecture theatre and the 280 strong audience are the question masters with answers provided on screen using video walk-throughs, slides and photos etc. With the clever use of theatre technicians to provide lighting sequences, the whole induction is very professional and relevant to the needs of new students.

Three students have the opportunity at the end to answer questions to win a USB pen while every student who has asked a question enters a raffle to win Amazon vouchers. The light-hearted and humorous approach and the involvement of a number of staff has made this an enticing combination which captures audience interest and promotes the service fully. Such is the success, this is now an established method of induction with yearly updates to reflect changes in the service and also in the use of technology.

Joint3. 3. Sparsholt College – Guerrilla Librarians are GO!!!

Sparsholt College have targeted staff in their project recognising that it was becoming increasingly difficult with traditional methods to engage with staff and keep them informed about the collections in the library.

The 'guerrilla' aspect of this was the after dark drops of small collections and props that awaited staff as they arrived at work the next day. Each collection was themed and contained a special Golden Ticket for someone to find. The finder then had to photograph the ticket and email, text or tweet the photo back to the library to be later entered into a prize winning draw. The library staff had planned the multi-media approach to also encourage staff to perhaps try something new and the library was on hand to support staff with this.

The library promoted this through emails to staff and had an excellent response, plenty of photographs and positive comments, plus an increase in use of the library and the collections.

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