



CoLRiC Awards – a brief history

Since its inception in 1993 CoLRiC has sponsored four awards: the Best Practice Award (BPA), the Jeff Cooper Award, an Association of Colleges (AoC) Beacon Award and, since 2021, the CoLRiC Innovative Practice Award (CIPA.)



Best Practice Award

The Best Practice Award, (2013-2020), was designed to highlight impactful initiatives in Libraries and Learning Resource Services. Every year any college Library or Learning Resources Service that is a current member of CoLRiC was invited to apply for the Award. Entries were shortlisted by the CoLRiC Executive Committee and winners chosen by a judging panel supported by an external judge. Winners received a trophy and a certificate and were invited to make a short presentation at the CoLRiC events. Winning entries were also featured in CoLRiC publications.

2020

In 2020 we announced the call for BPA nominations shortly before we entered the Covid-19 lockdown. The circumstances we all found ourselves working in changed dramatically. What would have been considered extraordinary just a few months previously became, for many colleges, the 'new norm.'

For our members, their priorities shifted to finding innovative ways to provide day-to-day support for students and staff. Many were busy creating and rolling out new types of services and support. Our members were making significant efforts in the face of difficult circumstances. These unprecedented circumstances impacted the quantity and type of nominations we received for our BPA.

With these considerations in mind, the Executive Committee took the decision not to award Best Practice Award for 2020. Instead, we celebrated the lessons shared by Highly Commending each of the entrants: Chichester, Isle of Wight South Gloucestershire and Stroud and St Francis Xavier.

2019

In 2019, CoLRiC presented two BPAs. The Library at Northampton College demonstrated excellent practice in digital literacy. The DigiCap scheme is an excellent initiative helping to improve and develop



IT skills and confidence in using new technology across all levels, from very basic to advanced. Kate Brown, Learning Facilitator Coordinator at the College was delighted with the outcome. 'Winning the Best Practice Award means so much to everybody on the team. We've worked hard to deliver DigiCap to as many students as possible; to ensure that they are prepared for the technological challenges they will face in employment. DigiCap has raised the standard of digital literacy in our students, and they are more likely to succeed in their chosen careers.'

Chichester College Group Libraries was also presented with an award for demonstrating excellent practice in marketing and social media. The team has successfully utilised Twitter as a tool for internal advocacy and service growth; showcasing their services and embedding the library in the teaching and learning community. Jo McKenna-Aspell, Library Assistant at the Chichester College Group says: 'The aim was to create an engaging Twitter presence that would re-energise service delivery and improve both the number and quality of interactions and engagement with students and staff. Twitter has been instrumental in bringing the wider community into the libraries and cementing their place at the heart of the College. We are so grateful that we have won this prestigious Best Practice Award in recognition of what we have achieved.'



2018

In 2018, our 25th anniversary year, we presented two BPAs.

The Library at Northampton College was presented the award for demonstrating excellent practice in engaging students in numeracy skills. 'Maths Magician' is an original and innovative 20-week numeracy scheme developed by library assistants at the College in support of the Government's agenda to improve literacy and numeracy in the UK. The aim of the scheme is to embed numeracy skills by inviting students to continually practise their maths skills through completing a weekly maths puzzle. Northampton College's Librarian Amy Harnaman says: 'Maths Magician has raised awareness of the role of the Library as an indispensable service in the promotion of learning. Above all it breaks down the barrier of the general fear of maths in society and makes maths magical, not menacing.'

The Learning Resource Centres, part of Information and Learning Services at Exeter College, were presented with the award for demonstrating excellent practice in digital implementation and innovation. They responded to the increasing importance of student digital literacy skills and their parity with traditional information literacy skills by evolving the traditional subject librarian role into a new Information and Digital Practitioner role. The IDPs have designed and delivered new courses on topics including fake news, the opportunities and pitfalls of social media and professional online identity. Tammy East, LRC Customer Experience Manager says: 'Winning the Best Practice Award in

Digital Implementation and Innovation is a wonderful recognition of more than a year's hard work developing a contemporary digital literacy provision and reaching more students than we ever thought possible.'

Previous winners include:

- Bridgwater College
- Buxton and Leek College
- City of Liverpool College
- East Kent College
- Esher College
- Grwp Llandrillo Menai
- Hillcroft College
- Lincoln College
- Northern College
- Oldham Sixth Form College
- RNN Group
- Somerset College
- Sparsholt College
- Weston College

Jeff Cooper Award

The Jeff Cooper Award was originally conceived to recognise gems of institutional good practice discovered during CoLRiC Peer Assessment Scheme (PAS) visits. Since 2019 the award celebrates the contribution of inspiring individual information professionals and their passion for quality service delivery and the importance of embedding Library and Learning Resource Services into the curriculum.

Previous winners include:

Ben Poore, of Leyton Sixth Form College - In September 2020 we were delighted to announce that the award winner was Benjamin Poore, Library and Study Skills Assistant, from Leyton Sixth Form College library. The judges felt that Ben is a 'committed, creative and innovative individual, who is making a really impressive contribution to library service delivery.' In response to the news, Ben said it was 'humbling' to have been nominated by his colleagues and how proud he was to 'enrich the life of the College and our students.'



Liz Organ, of Bournemouth and Poole College was presented with the 2019 award for her work with students with special educational needs and disabilities. Her 'Share a Story' initiative has made reading more accessible and attractive to students, inspiring their curiosity, and encouraging them to explore their reactions to situations in the wider world. Her interventions have helped students with both their social and literacy skills. Deb Farrell, the College's Library Manager commented at the time: 'We are delighted that Liz has won this award recognising the commitment and work that she has put into making the Share a Story initiative such a success. It has been wonderful to see

the high level of enthusiasm generated amongst the students as they develop in personal confidence and ability to read aloud.'

2018

The learning resources service 'For Your information' (FYi), part of the Learning Resource Centre at Blackpool Sixth Form College, was awarded the Jeff Cooper Award in 2018 for demonstrating good practice. FYi is fully integrated into strategic planning and the operational process of the College with the full support of the Senior Leadership Team. The Service is seen as integral in meeting the academic, vocational and employment needs of the students. The FYi is at the heart of the College's steer to support independent learners and the development of independent learning. Staff engage with, and cultivate, productive collaborative partnerships with curriculum and student services managers. Helen Crowther, Library Manager at Blackpool SFC says: 'FYi demonstrates a clear desire to change the lives of students through raising the awareness of information and empowerment through gaining knowledge.'

CoLRiC Beacon Award

CoLRiC previously sponsored an Association of Colleges (AoC) Beacon Award. This recognised outstanding achievement and good practice, encouraging innovation and excellence in all Library and Learning Resource Services throughout the FE and HE in FE sectors. It was open to all FE colleges in the United Kingdom.

The assessors evaluated the:

- Liaison and collaboration between Library/Learning Resource Services staff, academics and college management
- Participation of Library/LRS staff in the college information and curriculum delivery strategies
- Integration of students in curriculum delivery (including flexible and distance learning)
- Innovative use of information and learning technologies.

Previous winners include:

- Weston College
- Northern College
- Northampton College
- Exeter College
- Nelson and Colne College
- Bournemouth and Poole College

