



## 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.)



### CoLRiC Innovative Practice Award (CIPA)

#### 2022

The **winner** of the prestigious **Innovative Practice Award for 2022** was the Learning Resources Service at **Bridgwater & Taunton College/University Centre Somerset** for its **'Embedded Librarian or Taking the Library to the Classroom'** initiative.

The Learning Resources Service at Bridgwater & Taunton College/University Centre Somerset impressed the judging panel for several reasons:

- The collaboration and dialogue with teaching staff to create an engaging bespoke service for students
- The effective utilisation of digital curriculum platforms to contextualise learning resources within the wider learning environment, embracing everything from print and electronic sources of information, information retrieval and research skills to equality, diversity, health and wellbeing awareness
- The use of universally understood social media communication techniques to engage with the student community
- The introduction of complementary 'pop in' classroom visits at specific and relevant times of the academic year to offer guidance, hints and tips on common queries like referencing, most notably 'speed databasing'
- Sensitivity to the needs of a diverse student community
- Overwhelmingly positive feedback that evidences a major impact on student learning, including the accuracy of bibliographies, improved writing skills, the wider exploration of information resources and overall academic confidence.

The judges Highly Commended the **Chichester College Group Library Service** initiative '**Creating an Actively Anti-Racist Library Service**'.

- Its commitment to creating an anti-racist library service that will help 'change lives through learning' and address the underperformance of non-white students in FE
- Significant research, discussion and collaboration around racial literacy and 'decolonising the curriculum'
- Motivating the teaching community to reflect on curriculum content
- Empowering the student community to engage in conversations on an emotive, sensitive topic
- Positive academic feedback that evidences the impact decolonisation could have on the learning experience.

## 2021

In 2021, CoLRiC launched its Innovative Practice Award to replace the Best Practice Award. CIPA was designed to reflect our members' responses to the unprecedented circumstances of Covid and [multiple] lockdowns.

The winner of the inaugural (2021) CoLRiC Innovative Practice Award was the **Trafford College Group Library Service for 'LibraryLive – integrating the Library Service into curriculum delivery'**.

As Microsoft Teams became a key method of delivering teaching and learning during lockdown, the team at Trafford College Group integrated library resources and support into the new learning environment. The project is a wonderful example of designing and delivering a rapid response to changing circumstances. The team at Trafford College Group will be invited to share their story with members in a CoLRiC Impact article.

The quality of all of the entries was extremely high, and the Awards Committee specifically commended the following entries:

- **Bolton College** for the innovative development of their Online Art Gallery
- **Bradford College** for the high level of inclusion associated with their project as the online reading groups covered all curriculum levels
- **Buxton and Leek College** for the interactive nature of their inductions, which led to a recognised increase in their students' level of Information Literacy

## The Jeff Cooper Inspirational Information Professional of the Year 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.

## 2022

The winner of the Jeff Cooper Inspirational Information Professional of the Year Award for 2022 was **New City College's Vanessa Munro**.

Vanessa's contribution as Learning Resources Assistant impressed the panel for several reasons. Her:

- Creative and engaging transformation of the library and learning spaces through art

- Excellent partnership and collaboration with teachers and students, evidenced by overwhelmingly positive feedback
- Commitment to literacy and the joy of reading
- Dedication to service excellence through her continuing professional development, most notably by learning the unique language programme Makaton.

**James Golab** of **Bradford College** was **Highly Commended** by the Judges. James' contribution as Library Learning Facilitator impressed the panel for several reasons. His:

- Commitment and dedication to his job
- Regularly acknowledged respect, affection and feedback from students
- Collaboration with academic staff
- Proactive and engaging role in reading groups to support English for speakers of other languages
- Sensitivity to the needs of a diverse student group, including those with special educational needs and disabilities
- Personal investment in professional development based on his work experiences, (most notably his recent graduation as Young Persons Mental Health First Aider).

## 2021

The winner of the Jeff Cooper Inspirational Information Professional of the Year Award 2021 was **Emma Luby** from **Bradford College**.



In the nomination form, Emma's proposer praised her "...enthusiasm, resourcefulness, ... commitment to staff development, and ... focus on student achievement" and went on to say "... she has been creative, dedicated and has provided opportunities to our students which otherwise may have been unavailable to them this year." Very many congratulations to Emma.

The Awards Committee also highly commended **Iram Shireen** from **Calderdale College**. Her nominators commented on her ability to be both "creative and realistic" and praised her ability to offer "... lots of encouragement to the students and [to] form... a very good rapport with both the tutor and students."

## 2020

In September 2020, CoLRiC was delighted to announce that **Ben Poore**, Library and Study Skills Assistant of **Leyton Sixth Form College** was awarded the Jeff Cooper Award. The judges felt that Ben was 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.'

## 2019



**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.'

## 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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

## **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



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