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All the shapes your learning takes: the development of a library welcome toolkit

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Introduction

A key part of library induction at the University of Sunderland is to welcome new students whether on or off campus, provide them with the information they need to get started and encourage them to come back and use library services. Library induction at the University of Sunderland is known as Library Welcome. As suggested, the primary objective is to provide a welcoming environment, friendly faces, and give students enough information that they want to come back, but not so much that they are bored and stop listening. Salzer (2003) cited in Rhoades and Hartsell, (2008) argues that "librarians must take a proactive approach, viewing strategic marketing of their services and resources as critical". This is a sentiment that is taken seriously at the University of Sunderland, where marketing strategies underpin all major library activities.

After reviewing past induction activities and feedback from students and staff, liaison librarians used strategic marketing principles to develop a Library Welcome Toolkit for use during the 2014/15 academic year, the elements of which could be used in different ways by liaison librarians to suit a variety of participants and situations.

All the shapes your learning takes

In 2014/15 the Quality and Marketing team introduced a new theme - *All the shapes your learning takes* - centred around the idea that the library is not just a building - it is a variety of services and support. It aligns with the recognition that the students and staff who use the library are all individuals with different learning styles, different study preferences, and different technology needs. All the shapes your learning takes' promotes that the variety of services we offer support the full range of those needs. The liaison librarians at Sunderland are also individuals, and while it is expected that we will give the same level of support and offer the same messages, the induction group recognised that each librarian may need to do that differently. Induction for some librarians is a 20-30 minute slot amongst a range of other services. Others are asked to spend an hour or sometimes two with new students. Some Librarians will see their students again for follow up information skills sessions, others may only have that one shot at giving students the information they need.

The library induction group used a seven step marketing strategy (Grieves, 2010) to identify first the groups of students who required an induction, second, to determine the key services that would be communicated during induction and finally, to write benefit messages for each service offer. The groups of students identified were on campus students and distance learners. For on campus students the services that would be communicated during induction were learning spaces, resources, IT and help and support. For distance learners, the focus would be on e-resources, document delivery and help and support.

The Welcome Toolkit

A welcome toolkit was developed consisting of a variety of elements for use during induction. Each element of the toolkit used the central shapes theme. The Liaison librarians could use any combination of the elements they felt would work best with their students.

Welcome Video
A four minute welcome video was created to showcase the library offer.   The video was designed as an introduction to the four service offers the induction group had identified: learning spaces, resources, IT and help and support. A video was chosen to serve as a visual tool that would give a consistent message. Powtoon, an online presentation package was used to create the video because it proved easy to use and provided an intuitive interface. Librarians could choose to play the video in a number of situations for example as a standalone presentation if time was limited, or as an introduction to a longer small group session. They could also choose between a version with a commentary or a version without.

Prezi

A presentation was created using Prezi. The content of the Prezi mirrored that of the on campus video. It was designed as an alternative to the video for staff who wanted more control over content and the ability to go into greater detail if appropriate. Staff could choose an appropriate path for the prezi and narrate it themselves, perhaps focusing on specific areas for specific students, for example focusing more on Apple Mac provision for arts and design students or on e-book availability for local partner college students who may not visit the Sunderland campus frequently.

Scavenger Hunt

Rugan and Nero (2013) found that the library scavenger hunt, a commonly used approach to instruction, was now viewed by many academic librarians as an "ineffective method of instruction". Danforth (2011) holds a different view, that "hunting for information and then putting into practice what they've [game players] learned in a fun context makes the knowledge they've acquired that much more likely to sink in." It was decided that the scavenger hunt would be a part of an origami puzzle which would align it with the shapes theme and offer an extra challenge for students.

Six activities based on the four key offers (learning spaces, resources, IT, and help and support) were identified that would encourage students to use library services and would require successful navigation of the library to complete, for example taking a picture of themselves enjoying one of the library spaces and sharing on social media. The activities were incorporated into four origami designs on A4 sized paper which upon completion would form an origami shape. One side of the completed origami shape was an open ended question: 'what have you found out about the library that is going to help you the most?'.

One shot lesson plan

A generic lesson plan for a 60 minute 'one-shot' was created that was underpinned by the four key service offers previously identified. The lesson plan incorporated hands-on activities such as choosing where to search for information and searching for e-books and journal

articles in a guided classroom environment. The librarian could contextualise the session with subject-specific examples or simply use it as a template to develop their own session.

Reading List

Librarians in the induction group created an online reading list in support of library welcome. The list included titles to help students learn about topics such as referencing and plagiarism, writing academically and thinking critically. One of the activities on the scavenger hunt was to locate this list online and find books about academic writing. Librarians were also able to use this list to demonstrate how the reading list software worked, if it was appropriate.

Student feedback

The open ended question included in the origami scavenger hunt was the primary method of collecting feedback from students. Responses were collated by theme and broadly corresponded to the four key service offers identified by the group. The majority of responses to the question, '*what have you found out about the library that is going to help you the most?*, related to resources. Responses included:

> "that we can access books online as well as coming into the library"

> "My Module Resources, week by week reading list"

> "I have access to resources anytime, any day. Learning is a never ending process indeed!"

> "How much [sic] resource is available for me not to fail"

Other responses related to learning spaces, IT and help and support included:

> "I think it is a very relaxing place to stay and not just for the study. I could stay here all day!"

> "Helpful and friendly staff willing to guide you when confused"

> "quiet rooms and study lounges. Love the advertisement for the library ie. the trees and pictures"

> "we are able to book study rooms"

> The fact it is 24/7".

Librarian feedback

The induction group collected feedback from liaison librarians, specifically asking what elements of the toolkit had they used and what was their experience? This feedback was collated and presented as case studies, an example of which have been included in this paper.

Case study 1: Culture librarian
Elements used: on campus video and scavenger hunt
Comments:
"On the whole I felt this years was a much more positive, interactive and inclusive induction which set up a strong foundation for future sessions. Feedback from the students was very

positive, they liked the relaxed feel of the session and that they were learning what they needed to know in a slightly unusual format".

Conclusion

Student feedback indicated that the library welcome campaign was well received and more engaging than in previous years**.** Library induction or library welcome at the University of Sunderland has developed each year, informed by feedback from students and liaison staff delivering induction, but also by professional discussion and experiences. An important outcome for 2014/15, and one that is reflected by the learning shapes theme adopted throughout the campaign, is the recognition that a one size fits all approach will not succeed. Factors such as class size, venue, or discipline of the student may influence the approach adopted by the librarian. A co-ordinated approach that takes this into account can ensure that although students may not experience induction in the same way, they will receive a consistent message of library support.

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