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Sunderland**

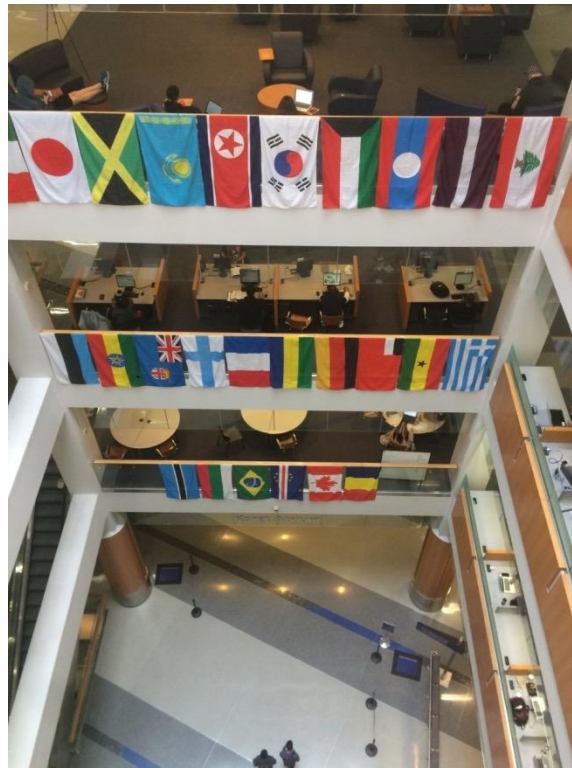
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Travelling Librarian 2016



Initiatives to support distance learning students and teach information literacy in United States Academic Libraries

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Acknowledgements

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I'd like to thank especially all of the library staff that welcomed me to their libraries and shared so much of their time. Their hospitality, openness and kindness made my trip as enjoyable as it was informative.

Personal profile and context

My primary role is Distance Services Librarian at the University of Sunderland. I also have responsibility for liaison and support with the department of tourism, hospitality and events and I am currently leading developments for my library's skills support service.

Pedagogy increasingly underpins library activities such as teaching and use of space, to help students develop critical thinking and literacy skills, yet students are diverse and one teaching method does not fit all. At my institution, between 30- 40% study off campus. Our distance learners live primarily overseas and often have different experiences of education and libraries to traditional on campus home students. They are a key customer segment but historically difficult to reach and engage with. As distance learning librarian I not only ensure that our off campus students have library access but that they know how to use resources and have the information skills they need to succeed.

My academic liaison role and leadership of skills for learning mean that I also need to consider skills support for on campus students. My library's focus on skills support is directly linked to wider issues in higher education including the Teaching Excellence Framework and graduate skills and employability. Academic libraries need to demonstrate how they support these issues and we need to continually reflect on our practice and identify good practice in other institutions. Although I've been the Distance Services Librarian for ten years and we have established an excellent service, I feel that there's always something you can learn. The travelling Librarian Award has provided me with an opportunity to visit libraries in the United States where distance learning librarianship is an established field and to speak to other distance learning librarians. It also enabled me to meet with several other different librarians responsible for teaching information literacy, and discuss teaching methods and use of technologies.

Study tour objectives

- Learn about outreach, engagement or collaborative initiatives such as makerspaces, in particular use of marketing, promotions, partnerships and how technology is used
- Learn about the pedagogies that inform information literacy teaching and explore differences in on and off campus delivery
- Identify the ways international librarians tailor support and teaching, for example use of learner analytics,
- Share my own experiences of supporting a diverse range of students and of teaching literacy skills online
- Build relationships with international colleagues and make personal contacts, potentially identifying areas for future collaboration

Preparation and planning

I decided to visit academic libraries on the west coast of the United States (US) following an internet search on initiatives and projects in the US. One approach I took was to review conference abstracts from library conferences across the US and identify where there was good practice I could learn from. In order to make the most of my time and use the funding efficiently I also decided to focus my travels on one geographic area.

I shortlisted a number of higher education institutions and used their official websites to find initial contacts prior to submitting my proposal. The institutions I ultimately visited are those that responded to my email and all who did were enthusiastic and were happy to help devise a programme of activity. Only one institution did not reply to my email.

It was a goal to make the budget stretch as far as possible, although the UK had just voted to leave the EU and the pound dropped dramatically. I was unsure what effect this would have on prices. I shopped around online for airfares as there would be a number of internal flights around the US as well as the return flights to the UK. Although I looked at budget airlines, once I factored in travelling to London from the north east it was not much more expensive to fly with a larger airline that would leave from my local airport. I did find cheaper fares by choosing routes with 1 or two stopovers. I booked the internal flights via a price comparison website and found a very reasonable deal. In terms of accommodation I checked local hotels as well as Airbnb guest houses. Along with cost, my main priority was having accommodation as near to the host library as possible so that I could ensure I was on time for all appointments. I found that hotels were the best option in all but one location, so I stayed I stayed in an Airbnb apartment in Tucson.

Itinerary

My Itinerary began in Tucson, Arizona and took me west and then north up the Californian coast. Although I focused on one geographic area, the locations were quite a distance apart or in some cases fairly remote and a number of internal flights were required. Most visits were scheduled over a full day or half a day and I was able to speak to a variety of staff including liaison librarians, learning technologists, academics and library managers. I was in the US over two weekends. The first weekend I was able to meet with library staff from Arizona Western College. One librarian and her family took me out for lunch and took me to see some sites such as Yuma Territorial Prison. This was a wonderful experience and added real cultural value to my trip.

University of Arizona Library, Tucson, Arizona

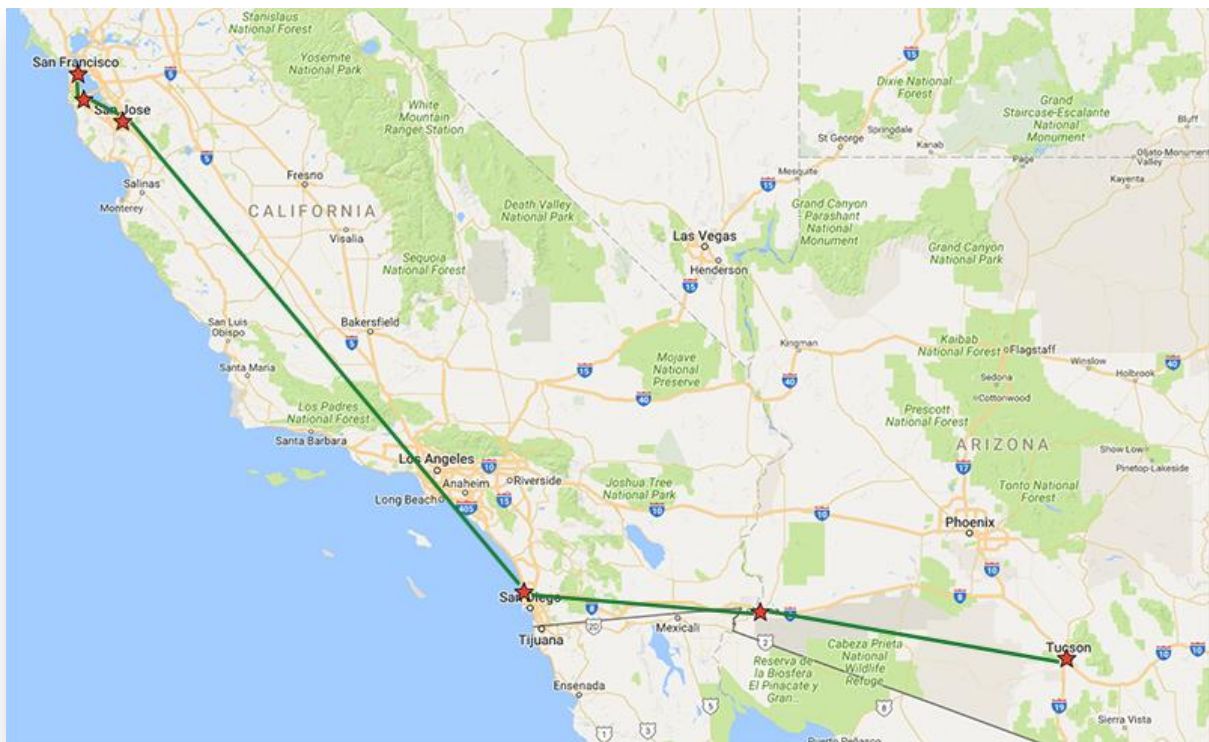
Arizona Western College, Yuma, Arizona

UC San Diego, California

San Jose State University, California

San Mateo College, California

California College of the Arts, San Francisco, California



Library visits

University of Arizona Library, Tucson (4th November)

The University of Arizona (UA) has four campus libraries. I was able to visit the Main Library and Special Collections and the Health Sciences Library. My visit took place on the same day as the Arizona Library Association Conference and although some staff were attending the conference I was still able to speak to quite a few members of staff at the main library and Health Sciences Library. I began the day by having breakfast with some librarians which was an excellent opportunity to chat with them about their roles and share my own experiences too. I was then able to meet with some individual members of staff to discuss their specific areas in relation to information literacy and skills development. In the afternoon I ate lunch and met with health science librarians. Below are my findings, arranged thematically.



University of Arizona campus

Information literacy and instruction at UA

UoA have moved away from one-shot instruction and towards a programmatic approach that focuses more on collaboration with Faculty and scaffolding within disciplines. I met with Nicole Pagowski, who talked to me about this. The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education provides a foundation and is used alongside big questions based on Wiggins and McTighe's Essential Questions to inform student learning outcomes. I have included a link to the document outlining this at the end of this section. This instruction approach at UA Library addresses two issues, firstly that the one-shot isn't very effective. This is something that my own institution has recognised and like us, UA work on the premise that instruction is more meaningful to students when it is incorporated into their classes. The second issue is one of availability of staff. With a limited number of librarians it is not possible to deliver a one-shot to every class. Within this structure, liaison librarians work with faculty to identify areas of their curriculum that fit with information literacy and develop activities and assessments. Some examples of activities are available on the UA Library web page

Development of Tutorials

In 2013 UoA library staff won two awards for development of a web based open source software called Guide on The Side. I met with one of the librarians involved in the development, Lesley Sult, and another librarian Michael Brewer who had used the software to develop tutorials. Lesley and Michael demonstrated some guides they had created and how they integrated with the virtual learning environment (VLE) where they needed it most. Guides on the Side are easy to create, even for non programmers and are designed to create an interactive learning experience for students. UA have had positive feedback from students since creating and using Guides on the Side and having shared the software as open source have found it is used by librarians (and other educators/trainers) around the

world. A further benefit of developing and sharing this software has been the collaboration between library staff and IT developers and building relationships with academic departments as well as other organisations for example public libraries. It was useful to see Guides on the Side in action. I started to see how it could be used within my own institution to support Sunderland students, particularly distance learners who cannot benefit from the hands on activities in the same way as on campus students.

Makerspace

The University of Arizona have a makerspace called iSpace, based in the Science-Engineering Library. Library staff are involved in the development and activities of the iSpace although it is not exclusively a library initiative. One of the Librarians I spoke with, Anthony Sanchez, was involved in the library management group for the iSpace and had worked with colleagues to arrange 'Friday Tech Talks' on topics such as 3D, virtual reality and mapping. Staff viewed the makerspace as a great opportunity to work with faculty staff and develop student skills in areas of interest – especially technical skills. One advantage of the makerspace was that it was for everyone, not just students on technical programmes.



UA Special Collections

Special Collections

UA Libraries Special Collections include archival material of the Borderlands of the Southwest and Northwest of Mexico, regional and local manuscripts, political affairs, scientific ideas and performing arts. I met with the librarian and curator for the Borderlands collection Veronica Reyes-Escudero, for a tour of the department and to discuss information literacy in a special collections context. Librarians and archivists teach students to use special collections as part of their historical research. There is a teaching room within the department and they may use examples from the collection and set activities to become familiar with using

primary sources. Special Collections have student workers who are actively involved with processing collections. Not only does this help with making collections accessible but helps those students become familiar with the collections.

Health Sciences

Many of the librarians at the Health Sciences Library are embedded within the faculty departments. That is, they have desks within the department and are based there.. The liaison librarians for science subjects also have a background in their area, for example the librarian for the College of Medicine is also an MD. This, it is felt, is advantageous in building relationships and working closely with academic staff to provide library support such as information literacy

Reflection on UA visit

I was able to meet with a lot of staff at UA staff and our conversations were about many aspects of librarianship. Although the focus of my visit to UA was to learn about their approaches to information literacy, our conversations covered many aspects of librarianship and staff there were equally interested in practices at my institution. My thoughts when learning about Guide on the Side immediately moved to how this could be used to support distance learners at my institution and provide them with information skills in an interactive way. I was particularly interested in the UA Library instruction philosophy and the development of student learning outcomes based on essential questions and the ACRL framework. My own institution has developed learning outcomes for our own workshops, but this has encouraged me to look at whether our own learning objectives can be better mapped onto a framework such as the Sconul Pillars of information literacy, or the ACRL framework.

UA Links and further information:

Guide on the Side: <http://code.library.arizona.edu/>

UoA Libraries Frames, Big Questions and Student Learning Outcomes:
http://libguides.library.arizona.edu/ld.php?content_id=20486725

Arizona Western College Library, Yuma (7th November)

Arizona Western College (AWC) is a public community college in Yuma, Arizona. During my visit to the AWC library I was able to have a tour of the campus, meet with some specific members of staff one-to-one as well as meet with the wider staff for a group discussion. I found a lot of areas of commonality between AWC and my own institution the University of Sunderland. AWC, like Sunderland recruit heavily from their local region, they are open to the public and have a number of educational partnerships.



AWC enquiry desk

Educational partnerships and distance learning

The University of Sunderland has partnerships with a number of local further education colleges as well as partnerships with overseas colleges. As distance learning Librarian I support many students at our partners and I was very interested to learn how AWC Libraries support their distance learners and partnership students. AWC have several educational partnerships, particularly with Northern Arizona University (NAU) and University of Arizona (UA). Students can obtain their Associates degree at AWC and easily transfer onto a Bachelors degree at NAU or UA.

Tina Sibley is the Distance Education Librarian at AWC. Distance learners at AWC study at satellite campuses in the region. Tina has worked to become embedded within Blackboard classes to offer help around assignments. Tina also offers support at satellite campuses, by meeting with students and offering workshops and drop-in session and in recognition was awarded the 2015 Distance Learning Librarianship Conference Sponsorship Award.

Renee Westphal is a librarian from NAU who is based at AWC. Renee supports NAU students who are based in Yuma or who take classes online. On my tour of the campus I was able to see the interactive television network used to enable Yuma students to attend and participate in NAU classes while in Yuma. Both AWC librarians and Renee use LibGuides to support students and a lot of information is delivered through LibGuides. Renee also offers live-chat support, delivers library workshops and collaborates with academic writing instructors.

Information Literacy at AWC

AWC Library use LibGuides to inform students of library resources. Guides include evaluating web sites, citing sources and how distance learners can request delivery of library materials to their home. There is also a guide for information literacy which links to Credo tutorials. AWC have purchased tutorials by Credo that can be customised and at the time of my visit the Information Technology Librarian Wendy Hoag was working on customising them for the AWC context. Students are able to use the tutorials themselves with access via LibGuides, which is ideal for distance learning students. Librarians also guide students

through them in instruction sessions. The photograph included in this report shows a display at the entrance to the library promoting the upcoming skills workshops taking place. This is updated regularly to communicate with students. Upcoming library events are also promoted via a calendar on the library web page. In our discussion meeting we talked about the practicalities of arranging and staffing library instruction when you have quite a small staff. The library asks for 7 days notice from academic staff for organising instruction classes. Academic staff must submit a form to request a session. The amount of instruction that librarians do is mapped, so that work can be shared out for example teaching outside of usual hours.



Display at library entrance

Reflection on AWC visit

My visit to AWC was initially to focus on their distance learning support and I'm so glad I was able to meet and chat with Tina. During my visit I was also able to talk to several other members of staff and I saw that we had other areas of commonality. One example is having a smaller staff and finding ways to share out workload. Although the University of Sunderland is a University, we do have quite a small number of professional librarians and we have, as a team, started to look at ways we can share responsibilities such as teaching. I found that AWC have a system for mapping teaching workload particularly interesting. At Sunderland we are currently devising and implementing a new model of skills support within the library and will ask academic staff to request teaching sessions through an online form. We will also ask academic staff to give details of what the session should cover so that librarians and study advisers can develop sessions that are relevant and include learning outcomes. The intended outcome of this is to share teaching workload more fairly. We are at the early stages of this and could learn from methods used by AWC.

In terms of promoting our library skills events, we've used posters and social media but I really like the idea of having a colourful notice board that is updated daily about what is happening that day in the library. It is easy to keep up-to-date but can be colourful and attract attention.

UC San Diego, California (9th November)

My third visit was to the Geisel Library at UC San Diego. UC San Diego has a total enrolment of 35,821 students and as their website notes, is recognised as one of the top 15 research universities in the world.



Information Literacy at UC San Diego

My first meeting was with Crystal Goldman, Instruction Coordinator. Crystal coordinates library instruction for undergraduates and in particular with outreach and instruction to the writing programme. Higher education in the US is different to the UK in that students take general education courses prior to choosing a major. In the UK, in most cases students apply to the subject they wish to study and they take modules on that subject. In effect they have a major from the beginning. Crystal has worked to become embedded in programmes, but this varies across the colleges for example she sees students at Eleanor Roosevelt College for instruction focused on engaging with primary sources and different media types. The librarians employ active learning techniques in delivering this instruction, such as game-show style activities. In designing learning objects and lesson plans there is close collaboration with instructional design librarians. One example is the course *Making of the Modern World*. Librarians worked with faculty to use the flipped classroom to replace a traditional one-shot library workshop. Rather than use the library workshop to teach students how to use a database or find academic sources, Crystal worked with the instructional design librarian to develop an online tutorial for students to work through before attending the workshop. The tutorial covered searching databases and finding academic papers. Students were asked to bring academic articles they had found to the library workshop where they learned how to construct a research question.

Later in the day I met with Alanna Aiko Moore who is the librarian for sociology, ethnic studies and gender studies. Alanna was kind enough to share with me some of her approaches to teaching information literacy. Alanna sends a summer newsletter to her academic department which also aims to find out which instruction classes are needed, and does a lot of outreach in the faculty for example attending programmed events and learning

what the academics are researching. In terms of teaching methods and activities, Alanna highlighted discussions she has with students relating to power and privilege, and how this can impact what actually gets published, and in turn what keywords are used to search. This is sometimes demonstrated by asking students to look at Library of congress categories and talk about concepts and how they would categorise things, acknowledging that structures may have been established before some modern concepts. Alanna also highlighted the importance of using real world examples, for example when thinking about evaluating information she used an example from her own experience of retweeting articles on twitter.

Outreach and relationship building

I was also able to meet with Amy Butros who is an embedded librarian based at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography. This campus is in a wonderful location right next to the beach and I can imagine it is quite an inspiring site to be based, It is a credit to Amy that the department requested that they have a librarian on site. I was interested in how Amy does outreach with the department and whether it was easier with being based within the department. Amy regularly attends department meetings and develops relationships with academics and students by being visible and available. For graduates this tends to be one-on-one consultations, although they do have a general orientation. Amy talked to me about promoting herself and the library within her department and methods of doing that. This resonated with me in particular as we've done a lot of work at Sunderland on identifying and promoting the benefits of our services rather than just the services themselves. Amy also does this and offers incentives to students which may be small prizes.

Library initiatives to engage students

Reference & information Services co-ordinator Gayatri Singh gave me a tour of the library and we chatted along the way. As with some other libraries I visited, students help at the research desk by answering enquiries about logins and equipment. They are supported by a librarian who answers the more detailed questions. There are a lot of collaborative spaces around the library, with movable whiteboards that students can use. In fact, most of them were being used by students while we were walking around. There were several charging points for students to recharge their phones and tablets - some of them were movable which provide more flexibility for the student. There is a makerspace of sorts, with free 3D printing and the ability to loan technology. As we were walking around for the tour we spotted a group of students completing a library scavenger hunt which is part of the first year experience orientation. Gayatri informed me that students do tend to complete the scavenger hunt in groups. I also love the jigsaw puzzle half finished on a large table in the library. Students can just add to it when they need a break or want to relax. I thought that was a wonderful idea and since my return have noticed this in a few other libraries too.



Jigsaw puzzle at the Geisel Library

Reflection on UC San Diego visit

After learning about critical pedagogy at University of Arizona, it was interesting to hear a teaching experience that reflected this. Although Alanna didn't identify her teaching as critical pedagogy, the inclusion of discussion around power and privilege and how that is reflected within structures designed to collect information stood out to me as a practical example of critical pedagogy and encouraging students to think critically about society. As distance learning and tourism librarian I want to identify ways to incorporate critical pedagogy into the information skills I teach and I came away from UC San Diego with some ideas of how to begin.

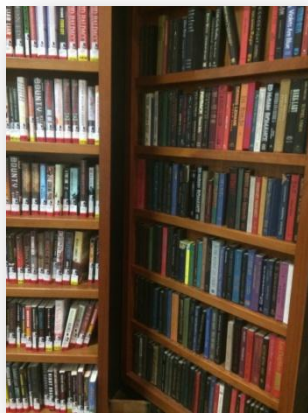
The collaborative work that the liaison librarians do with instructional design librarians is very interesting. The instructional design knowledge is invaluable to developing pedagogically sound sessions that students find relevant and interesting. At Sunderland we have, over a number of years, worked with members of our institutions learning development team, but they are not part of the library and they have their own team priorities supporting academics with use of the virtual learning environment. I wondered if instructional design was a development need for liaison librarians at my institution? Perhaps it is an area where we can develop our knowledge.

San Jose State University Library, California (15th November)

My visit to San Jose State University (SJSU) was initially focused on their information literacy initiatives but also how they supported distance learning students. During my visit I was able to speak to liaison librarians, public library staff as well as academics. I was even given the opportunity to observe a staff recruitment discussion. As with other visits, I have summarised thematically.

Academic and public partnership

As an international traveller I thought it was appropriate that it was international week when I visited SJSU. There was a very impressive flag display in the Atrium to celebrate the diverse student body, and the diverse community. The Martin Luther King Jr Library (King Library) is both an academic library serving students and staff of San Jose state University, and a public library serving residents of Silicon Valley. The library opened in 2003 and has proven to be very successful partnership. I began my visit to the King Library with a tour from Ann Agee, a librarian and information literacy and assessment co-ordinator. There is a merged reference desk staffed by both academic librarians and public library staff. During my visit I spent some time at the library desk talking to librarians and saw that they worked well together to support all users. The King Library has great facilities that both students and the public benefit from, including hidden bookcases, a cultural heritage centre and study rooms.



Information literacy

SJSU librarians work with academic staff to integrate information instruction into the curriculum for example embedding their support into the virtual learning environment. One such project that librarians at SJSU have been involved with is how to measure the information literacy skills of students following library workshops or lectures through the use of rubrics. Such an endeavour requires close collaboration with academic staff and directly linking library instruction to the curriculum, rather than delivering a one-shot. SJSU library also provide skills support through tutorials on the library website. These were originally made in Adobe Captivate but the campus now has a site license for Camtasia. One example of video tutorials were made for the iSchool, which teaches the MA Library and Information Science programme, entirely online. There are videos targeted at students on this programme to guide them through the use of the library.

Facilitating online learning

One of my meetings was with Dr Linda Main, the Associate Director of the Library and Information Science programme. The department has over 1800 students who study fully online. The students are based all over the country, and many are based in other countries. All teaching is done online, but interestingly, faculty meetings are held online too. Staff do not need to be based in San Jose, and as such they meet virtually using Blackboard Collaborate. Dr Main shared their experience of teaching online students. The students prefer asynchronous teaching and their student feedback indicates that they feel synchronous sessions remove the flexibility of the course. As with many distance learners, students enrol on to online programmes at SJSU for many reasons and the need for flexibility is expected. Teaching therefore take the form of weekly modules with discussions and lectures that students can complete within a given time frame, but students are not expected to be online at any set times. Material is made available in a range of formats for accessibility for example, Panopto lecture slides, Powerpoint, video etc.

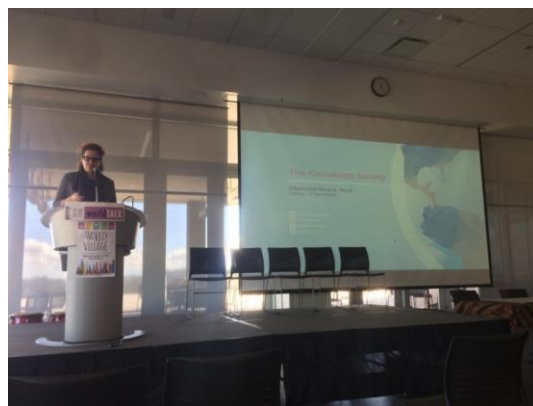
Reflection on SJSU visit

The focus of the SJSU iSchool on asynchronous learning and feedback that it was the preferred mode of teaching was interesting because in a way it mirrors my own experience. I do not teach a full programme, but at Sunderland I have in the past, and do still currently offer optional synchronous sessions. Talking with Dr Main encouraged me to think about how I could adopt synchronous methods of delivering information skills that would enable a conversation or a level of interactivity. At Sunderland we, like SJSU provide some library videos on our web pages, but we do not currently measure their success or student learning as a result. Since my visit I have been considering ways in which I could become more embedded into the virtual learning environments of distance learners in a way that would promote student engagement with the material, possibly setting discussion questions when videos are embedded, or having an online orientation with tasks. These are some ideas that I will work on over the summer.

College of San Mateo Library, California (16th November)



College of San Mateo (CSM) is a community college with approximately 10,000 students. It is an attractive campus with amazing views of San Francisco Bay. CSM were also celebrating a diverse body of students with World Village events taking place during my visit. Stephanie Roach, the Online and Digital Resources Librarian, was one of the librarians who aided in arranging my schedule while at CSM. Stephanie, who had won a Stanford University Fellowship looking at teaching information from a global perspective, was giving a presentation on information privilege as part of the World Village Event. Following this we visited some stalls and tried some world foods. I ate durian, which is a fruit. It was unusual and I'm a bit thankful that being vegan was a good excuse not to eat chocolate covered insects.



Stephanie Roach presenting at World Village

Makerspace

CSM Library has a makerspace and tool lending library where they hold a range of different events. The creation of the makerspace has a number of objectives, two of which are:

- “Build and foster a safe and non-judgmental space to engage in hands-on, DIY learning and encourage creative collaboration across College of San Mateo communities”



- Expand the Library's role as an interdisciplinary technological, cultural, and intellectual center of campus

Makerspace activities are held within the library classroom. Events and 3D printing are free. Examples of events held at CSM Libraries include a weekly hour of code, a robotics club led by students, learn to knit and an annual family science and astronomy festival. In running the makerspace the library have developed partnerships with student clubs, faculty members and departments, and members of the community.

Information literacy

Both Librarians I spoke to at CSM, Stephanie and Teresa Morris (Instruction and Reference Services Librarian) teach on modules within the virtual learning environment Canvas. One example is a credit bearing module LIBR100 centered on research and information literacy. The class is fully online and asynchronous and students can opt to take it, although students at CSM have an information competency requirement in order to graduate, and this module is one pathway to gaining this. The module takes students through the research process and the librarians set online discussions, exercises for students to complete and assignments which are graded. Along with more traditional concepts of information literacy and research, this module asks students to consider their own information privilege. CSM have been in the process of introducing Canvas as their virtual learning environment. During a meeting with an instructional technologist, Erica Reynolds, I was given a demonstration of how Canvas currently is integrated into teaching and how it is used alongside other tools to support students studying online.

Reflection on CSM visit

The CSM makerspace is very innovative in terms of its offer but also in use of space. There is limited space within the library and repurposing a teaching room to have multiple uses is a great use of space. Makerspaces can encourage creative thinking and critical thinking and it makes sense for librarians to participate in such activities. Teaching critical thinking can take many forms, for example within a makerspace students get hands on experience and often have to make decisions to determine which tools to use or solve a problem. It has the added benefit of encouraging visits to the library and raises awareness of facilities.

My own institution is currently moving to a new virtual learning environment. Canvas may be one of the options, so it was very useful to be able to see how it is used to deliver information skills, and the inbuilt tools to support distance learners. Although I do not think it will be possible to introduce a credit bearing information literacy module at my own institution I can certainly take away a lot of ideas such as using online discussions and the inclusion of information privilege as a topic. This mirrors some of the work in other colleges and universities I've visited where ethical, social and economic issues are included as discussion points to understand the uses of information.

California College of the Arts, San Francisco (17th November)

California College of the Arts (CCA) has campuses in Oakland and in San Francisco. Focusing on art, design, architecture and writing, the college has around 2000 students, (In Autumn 2015 enrolment was 1968 students comprised of 1512 undergraduates and 456 postgraduates. While visiting CCA Libraries I met with Teri Dowling, Associate Director of Libraries and Daniel Ransom, Instructional Services Librarian. I was able to chat to both Teri and Daniel about their information skills support and Teri gave me tour of the library, the campus and the materials library.

Information literacy at CCA

Daniel's role is to engage with faculty, build relationships and embed information literacy into the curriculum and move away from the traditional one-shot. A starting point was reviewing curriculum and doing an assessment of courses and where students were struggling and the goal is to consult with faculty, possibly restructure course learning outcomes and make recommendations for different types of assignments that incorporate an element of information literacy. The majority of library instruction takes place in classrooms without technology so some creativity is required in developing sessions for example checking out laptops from the media centre or setting activities. Daniel kindly shared some examples of activities he uses, for example providing a mock up of an assignment with some incorrect citations. Students are asked to work in pairs to discuss and identify the errors. This leads to a class discussion on referencing.

Materials Library

CCA Library provides a materials library. The library itself is on the ground floor of the college and the materials library is on the second floor.



Only for use by staff and students, the materials library is a collection of over 1000 material samples that can be checked out. The whole building is a makerspace of sorts although in a building made up of workshops, sometimes the library can be the only quiet space in the building. Student work is displayed and some library cabinets were designed by students.



Reflection on CCA visit

The nature of the subjects taught at CCA mean students benefit from having access to a large variety of materials to study and, like books or journals, the materials are a collection within the library. It demonstrated to me that even without a lot of space libraries can be innovative in the ways they serve their community and CCA identified a need, found a way to provide it and continue to support students in using those materials.

At my own institution we often experience difficulties finding a suitable room for our information literacy sessions. There is currently no dedicated space for information literacy instruction at my campus library, and much like CCA, all of our teaching takes place within faculty buildings and classrooms. I was grateful to both Teri and Daniel for sharing with me their experiences, particularly examples of activities and how they engage students, often without technology.

Conclusion and observations

Pedagogy

Quite a few of the librarians I spoke to about teaching information literacy were including elements of social justice, and social and ethical awareness into their teaching to help students develop critical thinking. I was certainly aware of the ideas of critical pedagogy prior to my trip but had not yet seen examples of it in practice. Whether it is encouraging students to ask questions of their information sources, think about how information is structured and categorized or think about how access to information is varied. I am definitely taking away from this trip a greater awareness of this topic and some ideas as to how to use critical pedagogy myself.

A further element that was voiced across a number of the libraries I visited was the move away from one-shot instruction and towards information literacy being embedded more into the curriculum. At my own institution we have been working towards this for some time but, like many of the libraries I visited it is slow process.

Makerspaces

My assistant director in supporting my trip was interested in makerspaces within libraries and how they support critical thinking. I wanted to find some examples of makerspaces and see how they work in practice. Everyone I spoke to felt they were a positive addition to their libraries, and encouraged students to visit the library and to build or create things and experiment.

Distance Learning

Much of the information I gathered about skills support was relevant to distance learners. There were a couple of instances where it was noted that students prefer asynchronous support. This is evidenced through the means of supporting off campus students which include online video tutorials, online discussions through virtual learning environments and online guides for example LibGuides or Guide on the Side from the University of Arizona. We do some of this along with some synchronous support at my own institution, but I will be thinking about ways to interact with distance learners asynchronously, perhaps using online discussion forums.

Collaboration, partnership and building relationships

A significant theme to come out of this trip was collaboration, partnerships and relationship building. Whether it was collaborations between librarians and academic staff in embedding information literacy, partnerships between different institutions or with other colleagues in the same institution, working together and utilizing the different skills of your peers and colleagues was key to implementing many of the initiatives. One of the aspects of our work at the University of Sunderland that I was able to share with my hosts is the move towards a relationship management model of support. We're at the early stages of this, but working together and building key relationships is central to achieving our strategic plans.

Expenditure

International Flights Newcastle – London – Dallas – Tucson; San Francisco – London - Newcastle	£537
US Domestic Flights Tucson-Yuma; Yuma-San Diego, Burbank-San Jose	£294
Taxis and Lyft rides	£50
Accommodation Air BnB	£163
Accommodation Yuma, Holiday Inn San Diego, Residence Inn Marriott San Mateo, Best Western San Hose, Ramada San Francisco Intercontinental	£270 £350 £131 88 £469
Telaway US Sim card	£83
ESTA	£12
Travel Insurance	£59
Subsistence	£519
Thank you Gifts	£28
I self funded the weekend in Burbank prior to the visit to San Jose State University.	