



Libraries and Learning Resources (LLR)

Enhancing life-long learning, teaching and research through information resources and services

Academic and Research Libraries – Hot Topics session, IFLA WLIC, Gothenburg, 2010

New partnerships for improving student and academic staff support

Mike Berrington

Nottingham Trent University



The Government Standard

Why is this a 'hot topic'?

After all...

- Long tradition of librarians working collaboratively (to varying extents) with academic staff
- More recent (last 10 yrs?) examples emerging of work with other learner support professionals, in part prompted by learning commons type developments

However...

- Funding constraints affecting all Universities will put libraries under increasing pressure to demonstrate they are adding value, and contributing to the overall success of the institution. This potentially goes beyond the traditional definition of a library service.
- Demonstrating the contribution we can make to the student experience and to academic outcomes has never have been more important

The current situation?

- **Teaching staff**

- Positive, friendly relationship, reasonable contribution by library to academic programmes. Library staff highly regarded by academics.
- But reactive role, verging on deferential? Rarely challenges – wants to please.
- Low expectations of academic staff?

- **Other learning support professionals (learning technologists, study skills tutors, language support staff etc)**

- Reasonable awareness of what each does, so library good at 'signposting' students to other services.
- Mutual respect for each other, but no/little collaborative activity.
- Acknowledgement that they should work together better, but little institutional pressure to do so.
- Team structures and physical (location) constrain opportunities

Potential developments...

– **Organisational / team structures**

- New synergies, shared priorities,
- learning technologists, study skills tutors, librarians working side by side?

– **Library spaces**

- Shared collaborative spaces, act as a catalyst for innovative practice
- Common 'front-door' to a range of support services
- Better institutional return on prime campus learning space

– **New student centric skills portfolio**, for e.g.

- Reading skills and evaluation of information resources
- Exam revision and library refresher
- Dissertation writing and literature searching
- Basic IT skills and library induction

– **Better utilisation of professional (expensive) librarian resources**

Some questions to consider....

- What strategies might we use to improve collaborative working with academics?
- Who else should we be work more closely with, and what might the benefits be?
- Do our librarians have the right skills to take on a more central role? What support might they need?

...and finally,

- Are you aware of good examples, possibly from your own institutions, that you could share with us?