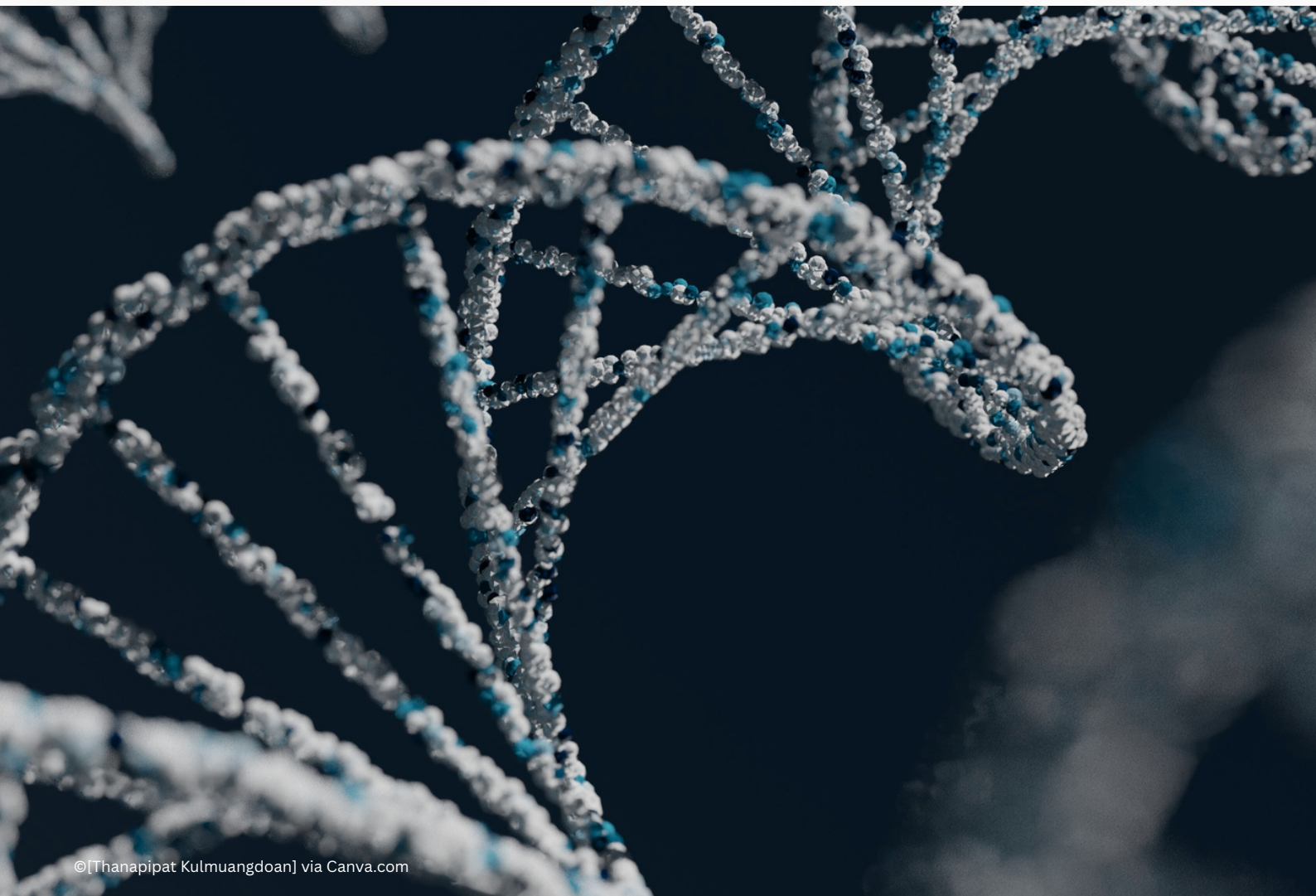


Health Sciences Libraries Journal

Official Journal of the Health
Sciences Libraries Group of the
Library Association of Ireland



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Health Sciences Libraries Journal

Official Journal of the Health Sciences
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Editorial

Jean McMahon

Tallaght University Hospital, Dublin

Welcome to the first issue of the Health Sciences Libraries Journal (HSLJ), a publication of the Health Sciences Libraries Group (HSLG). HSLG is the group of the Library Association of Ireland that is dedicated to health librarianship in all of its many and varied incarnations. The HSLG has been producing a newsletter called [HINT](#) for many years and the increasingly high quality of submissions led us to the conclusion that they merited publication in a journal rather than a newsletter, hence the idea to publish HSLJ was born.

Our first issue centres around the 2025 HSLG conference, which had the wonderfully themed title: ‘Cultivating Curiosity – A Wonderland for Librarians’. We welcome both research and practice-based articles for HSLJ as well as articles on any topics of general interest to health librarians and the wider librarian community. We will carry over popular features from HINT such as ‘Librarians Past and Present’, which has included pieces on Belle Da Costa Greene, first director of the personal library of banker, J.P. Morgan, in New York ([22\(3\)](#)), and Charlotte Serber, the librarian appointed by Oppenheimer to work on the Manhattan Project ([22\(2\)](#)).

Health librarians have traditionally worked in hospitals or academic libraries, however, the highly transferable skills of the library and information professional are in demand in other health-related organisations, where we carry out evidence synthesis and support research and innovation. It is important to note that in this journal, when we refer to librarians and information professionals, we mean the terms to be as inclusive as possible and to encompass all who work in information management, knowledge sharing, data management or libraries and librarianship. We endorse the view that, “What makes someone a professional is the knowledge, skills, attitude, behaviours and values that they bring to their work.” CILIP (n.d). Common to all of us is our commitment and expertise as guardians of the gateway to the evidence-base of health, providing curated access to trusted, fact-based sources of information. If you are working in what might be regarded as a non-traditional area of librarianship, we would like to hear from you for another feature we will be carrying over from HINT: Librarians in Interesting Roles. Write a piece telling us about your work and how you use your expertise as an information professional in your organisation.

As well as research articles and articles discussing an aspect of your practice, we want to hear from you if you have a book, a podcast or a film you would like to recommend. We’re not looking for literary or cinema critique, rather, a recommendation of something you read, saw or listened to that you think other librarians would find useful or interesting.

This is a time when access to truth and to evidence-based information, together with a well-honed sense of critical appraisal, have never been more important. This is a time for librarians to shine. We thrive on change and if there is an information-related bandwagon, we will eagerly jump on it. We did it when the internet was invented; we eagerly sought to bring e-books into our libraries when they first appeared, and right now we are already seeking ways to understand and harness the potential of Artificial Intelligence. We would love to hear from you on your experience of, or ideas about, any aspect of technology that is impactful in the world of libraries and which requires us to be agile in how we respond and adapt.

HSLJ will have two issues per year: summer and winter. We are already seeking submissions for the winter 2025 issue, which will be published in December, and you can consult our guidelines for authors or email us at hslj.hslg@gmail.com to enquire about making a submission. The summer 2026 issue will be published in June and as well as our regular articles and features, we would welcome additional pieces that have a Diversity, Equity, Belonging and Inclusion (DEBI) focus, allowing us to reaffirm our commitment to libraries as safe spaces for all. You have plenty of time to think about submitting an article on any aspect of DEBI that will be of interest to our readers. We look forward to joining in the celebration of June as Pride month.

Finally, this journal would not be seeing the light of day were it not for the incredibly dedicated Mary Dunne, who produced the journal policies and guidelines and managed the editorial meetings; Breeda Herlihy who managed set-up and hosting of the journal by UCC achieving her aim of ensuring the first Irish journal for health librarians would have an address in Cork rather than Dublin; Paul Davidson, Digital Library Developer, UCC Library who provided technical support with Open Journal Systems and expert journal publishing advice; and Julianne O'Callaghan, who oversaw all the graphics and design, resulting in the fabulous cover and layout. Niamh Lucey, Chair of HSLG, has been actively involved since the idea was first proposed and has guided, supported and encouraged throughout, as have all of the HSLG committee members. Thanks also to those who have agreed to sit on the journal Advisory Board.

We hope you enjoy issue 1 of the Health Sciences Libraries Journal and we look forward to hearing from you.

Jean McMahon

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<https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/professionalismdefinition>



Practice-Based Article

Cultivating the Power of Curiosity in Professional Practice

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ABSTRACT

Curiosity is the drive to seek information and explore ideas and perspectives in order to learn something new. It is fundamentally tied to how people make sense and draw meaning from the world and may be viewed as a knowledge network-building process. There is increasing acknowledgement that being curious can bring significant advantages, particularly in jobs characterised by high demands for learning. Cultivating curiosity helps foster open environments that inspire new ideas, innovations, efficiencies and adaptive behaviours. We can enable this by providing sufficient novelty and complexity in our systems and teaching, and by building deeper connections with stakeholders. This article briefly examines how and why we should cultivate this trait in our work and workplaces.

KEYWORDS

curiosity, connections, networks, skills, professional

BACKGROUND

Curiosity is a central human motivation that encourages us to explore new situations. It stems from an intrinsic drive for acquiring new knowledge and experiences that can motivate exploratory behaviour (Celik et al., 2016). This enables us to challenge the status quo, to build intellectual and creative capacities and strengthen social relationships (Kashdan, Goodman, et al., 2020).

Some people have high trait curiosity, so are naturally curious, but everyone can be curious in particular situations (state curiosity) (Birenbaum et al., 2024). In every case two judgements need to happen, a person has to recognise that an event is interesting and warrants attention, and they must believe they can cope with any distress that may arise during exploration, that is, they have sufficient stress tolerance (Kashdan, Goodman, et al., 2020). This means that when cultivating curiosity, we must consider how to introduce enough stimuli to pique interest but not so much that it becomes overwhelming.

There are differences in the way researchers conceptualise curiosity and its components (Birenbaum et al., 2024; Jach et al., 2024; Kidd & Hayden, 2015; Roberts et al., 2022). Several types have been identified as particularly relevant to those in the library and information sector (Deitering & Gascho Rempel, 2017).

Perceptual curiosity is sparked by the drive to experience the world through our senses (Kidd & Hayden, 2015). It's why the visual, auditory and tactile nature of resources such as library websites, search platforms

and physical spaces are key to successful interactions. These interfaces are tied to perceptions of quality and can inspire or inhibit use (Liu et al., 2023). To spark perceptual curiosity, we must include intriguing elements that attract attention, so they capture the interest of potential users.

Epistemic curiosity is the desire to obtain new knowledge (Lievens et al., 2022). It is commonly described as having two states (Kashdan, Disabato, et al., 2020; Litman, 2012). The first, joyous exploration (or intellectual interest) is about seeking knowledge simply for the joy and interest in discovery. It's associated with a broad love of learning and the pleasure felt when seeking new information and experiences. The second state, deprivation sensitivity (or information deprivation), is a compulsion to acquire information to resolve an information gap, to reduce uncertainty and alleviate the frustration of not knowing. It's associated with taking a deep dive into understanding something and developing expertise. These two motivating reactions, feelings of pleasure or relief, explain why we invest time and effort obtaining knowledge without apparent immediate rewards (Junça-Silva & Silva, 2021).

Social (intrapersonal and interpersonal) curiosity is the desire to know more about our own and other people's behaviours, thoughts and perspectives. Intrapersonal self-reflection enables us to continually learn from our decisions and interpersonal observation and communication is one of the most effective ways to acquire new information (Kashdan, Disabato, et al., 2020). These interactions can be overt, where social information is gathered openly, directly and with empathy or it can be covert, where details about people are gathered in indirect, secretive ways. The latter is associated with gossiping and prying so has negative connotations. 'Openness to people's ideas', where there is active seeking and appreciation of diverse views, is a facet of social curiosity used in workplace studies (Kashdan, Goodman, et al., 2020).

Understanding the perceptual, epistemic and social nature of curiosity enables us to identify wide ranging opportunities to stimulate and promote it. Yet there are other ways of describing the concept that may appeal. It is not just about personal acquisition, it's about seeing knowledge as a network of interconnections, with curiosity as the practice of building that network.

In 2022, Zurn and Bassett published their book (Zurn & Bassett, 2022), *Curious Minds: The Power of Connection*, and have shared some of the core ideas online (Zurn & Bassett, 2023). They see curiosity as connecting ideas into networks of knowledge as well as connecting people both to knowledge and to each other. Curiosity is everywhere and in each of us. We are simply curious about different things and in different ways. The authors identify three styles of curiosity: the butterfly (also often referred to as the busybody), who welcomes all kinds of information and creates loose knowledge networks; the hunter, who purposely hunts down secrets or discoveries, creating tight networks; and the dancer, who takes leaps of imagination, creating loopy knowledge networks. Each of the three common styles (the open butterfly, the focused hunter, and the creative dancer) are ways that we navigate information-seeking. We can be one or all in different contexts and times, so must consider how our workplace and social environments support these diverse styles in ourselves and others.

Cultivating curiosity in our library and information services

The most popular theory about the function of curiosity is that it motivates learning (Kidd & Hayden, 2015). It is also believed that curiosity can help us focus our attention on information that is neither too complex nor too simple, but a 'Goldilocks' amount of information that is conducive to learning (Zhou et al., 2024). Most research on libraries and curiosity describes how we might encourage it in our user services. Many

enquiries we receive stem from the need to answer a specific answer or assignment rather than from curiosity, as such, and we need to respect that quick results may be the primary focus. But there will be opportunities where we can inspire further learning and creativity.

In 2022, Roberts and colleagues explored the connection between curiosity and feelings of joy in information seeking in a large academic institution. Themes that arose in their interviews included excitement in discovering the resources of a large academic library; interest in ideas; curiosity inspired through hands-on learning experiences or initiated by connecting topics with personal values and relevance to life or career. Sadly, 'no student directly related librarians to the support of their curiosity' (Roberts et al., 2022, p.624). If we want to have a role here, we need to talk about what works. This is about going beyond teaching techniques, it's how we can promote the joy and potential rewards of openly, yet safely, exploring information sources for a lifetime of discovery.

Librarians have proposed several methods to encourage curiosity in library instruction, such as emphasising broad inquiry over process, asking questions that nudge or stimulate questions, shifting our focus from finding sources to learning about, and browsing outside journal literature for context (Arp et al., 2004; Chant, 2017; Deitering & Gascho Rempel, 2017; Roberts et al., 2022; Yu, 2017). Another key recommendation is having learning activities that connect students to human experience, such as guest speakers, documentaries or discussions, that may inspire students by showing how others connect to their topic at an emotional level (Deitering & Gascho Rempel, 2017). This makes sense in the light of engaging social curiosity, where we learn from linking in with others.

Cultivating curiosity therefore requires fostering of an open, non-judgemental environment that encourages free topic choice, questioning, an exploratory state of mind, and a highly interactive and collaborative learning approach (Arp et al., 2004). In recent years, library and information professionals have made advances in our teaching and instruction methods. Success in teaching is often measured by how easily someone can find the 'correct' answer, but useful indicators of our long-term impact could include if they learned something unexpected that they will follow up and if they feel inspired to apply our lessons to other contexts.

By engaging our own curiosity (including asking 'why' questions) and contextualising queries, we gain a greater understanding of stakeholder needs, which can be used to devise creative and effective responses. As a profession we must become integral parts of our stakeholders' networks and be seen to provide unique, additional value. In this way we can be a significant, recognised point of contact and source of inspiration for lifelong learning.

Cultivating curiosity in our professional lives and workplaces

There is a significant amount of literature on the value of having highly curious people and stimulating curiosity in the workplace (Birenbaum et al., 2024; Spencer Smith, 2023; Wells, 2023). In recent years the business world has promoted curiosity as a 'superpower', interwoven into crucial organisational tasks and professional values, and needed for learning, change, innovation, entrepreneurship, social relationships, competitive advantage and effective leadership (Gino, 2018; Lievens et al., 2022).

The M-Workplace Curiosity Scale has been used to examine how scores on four workplace curiosity dimensions could predict adaptive outcomes of workers (Junça-Silva & Silva, 2021; Kashdan, Goodman, et al., 2020). Those who got high scores for joyous exploration were associated with divergent thinking, creative ideas and stamina, and adaptability to acquire resources that transform ideas into action. Deprivation sensitivity was associated with self-direction and seeking demanding tasks, leading to greater competence. High scores on openness to people's ideas and stress tolerance were consistently the two

strongest predictors of healthy work-related outcomes including wellbeing at work and high frequency of innovative behaviours. The authors concluded that curiosity is an important antecedent of seeking new knowledge, motivation to learn, idea generation, organisational commitment, innovation and creativity, productivity and job crafting (Kashdan, Goodman, et al., 2020). It is not surprising, therefore, that curiosity has become a cornerstone of leadership and an important variable for the prediction of work-related behaviour and affective states in the modern workplace (Barber, 2023; Junça-Silva & Silva, 2021; Mussel, 2013). Numerous reasons why curious people contribute significant benefits at work has been identified (Table 1).

Table 1. Attributes and benefits of curious workers

Curious people:	Resulting benefits:
• automatically assess the nature and quality of information • question assumptions and how things could be improved • see problems as challenges to be solved rather than setbacks • apply a vast and varied knowledge base to decisions • actively explore different perspectives and creative solutions • are flexible and responsive to trends, diverse situations and change • hone problem-solving skills and easily adapt to uncertain external conditions and pressures through repeated practice	enhanced problem solving, adaptability and innovation
• use self-reflection and feedback to gain better understanding of performance and impacts • learn from every opportunity to enhance informed decisions • foster resilience and the ability to manage stress • boost morale and prevent stagnation by seeing possibilities and trying new approaches • use the spirit of inquiry to enhance other workplace competencies (such as coaching and negotiation) • open possibilities by building increasingly compressible and flexible mental representations of the world	professional growth and greater self-awareness
• have a genuine interest in the views of others and ask more questions • foster a culture of collaboration and trust in and across organizations • garner mutual respect and understanding to improve teamwork and create a more cohesive and supportive work environment • are appropriately responsive to diverse views and personalities, reducing potential conflict • maximise the diverse talents of colleagues • engage in broad, active stakeholder networks	development of deeper connections and stronger, meaningful relationships

Sources: Barber, 2023; Flaws, 2024; Kashdan, Goodman, et al., 2020; Lydon-Staley et al., 2020.

People tend to have positive experiences when performing activities that fit their behavioural tendencies, so curious people are satisfied and perform better if they can engage their inquisitive nature (Junça-Silva & Silva, 2021). On its own, curiosity may not lead to professional success, as shared motivational and environmental factors must also be cultivated (Birenbaum et al., 2024; Fernández-Aráoz et al., 2018). And although some managers may fear it as a challenge to authority or distraction from defined goals, the most effective leaders look for ways to nurture curiosity.

Rachel Wells (Wells, 2023) provides a useful list of six practices that promote curious behaviours: relinquish control, jettison judgement, expect surprises, gag the 'fix it' reflex (take time to engage and learn before fixing), embrace ignorance and woo the cue (be alert for signals and cues that require exploration). There are numerous other proposals for ways to cultivate curiosity in the workplace (Flaws, 2024; Spencer Smith, 2023; Wells, 2023).

Meet problems and opportunities with creative solutions: we should challenge the status quo by considering why and how we engage in current practices, and to identify inefficiencies and potential improvements. We should foster an environment that enables everyone to feel safe asking questions, try new things and suggest areas for change. This may include, for example, instigating ideation (brainstorming) sessions into process workflows.

Create adaptive and stimulating personal and professional frameworks: leaders can promote a learning mindset by emphasizing learning goals (developing skills and competencies) rather than focusing only on performance targets. We can all demonstrate intellectual humility (acknowledging that we always have more to learn) in practice and adopt a continuous, lifelong learning approach. Engage in self-reflection. Ask for regular feedback and hold project debriefs. Acknowledge and view mistakes or apparently negative outcomes as learning opportunities. Importantly, we must share what we discover.

Connect with each other in meaningful ways: we can seek diverse perspectives using open and clarifying questions to gain a deeper understanding of what we hear. Focus on listening actively, thoughtfully and with empathy so others feel heard and respected. Engaging in this social curiosity means we are more likely to collaborate within and across disciplines, are less likely to be subject to our own biases and make fewer decision-making errors.

Curiosity has been described as an ongoing sequence of seeking, engaging and conquering that ultimately leads to higher levels of competence (Mussel, 2013). It is no wonder that there is increasing interest in employing people with this trait and in maximising opportunities for everyone to apply it in our workplaces.

LIMITATIONS

This article provides a brief, simplified and largely uncritical overview of curiosity. The concept is more complex than presented as it likely reflects a constellation of cognitive and emotional processes, motives and traits with different weights and styles in individuals (Jach et al., 2024). Aspects that may negatively affect the workplace such as covert curiosity, the potential additional time and effort required or lack of focus on tasks are not addressed. The purpose of the article is simply to spark curiosity, leading to further exploration of the subject.

CONCLUSION

Being effective in our work requires us to care about our service users, collections, resources, value and impact, so it's interesting to note that the Latin word 'curiosus' is associated with being careful and attentive as well as inquisitive. Combining care with an active respectful, inquisitiveness means that curiosity is a powerful attribute that has the capacity to enable significant change.

Even when service users are motivated primarily by external goals, we can look for opportunities to spark curiosity by helping them engage more deeply with their subject, contextualising and connecting it to relevant ideas, sources and people. By framing our conversations to stimulate inquiry, and sharing our

experience and expertise, we are more likely to be seen as a valuable resource for future engagement and become an integral part of our stakeholders' networks. A first step may be to identify potential connection points and ensure that we maximise those interactions.

In our professional roles, we can also foster reflection as a habit of mind, nurture a passion for learning and build personal connections. In a practical sense, understanding the nature and components of curiosity allows us to talk about its benefits and the value that it brings to our work. Being curious gives us access to a wealth of knowledge and skills that are vital to a modern workplace. We can frame the conversation and speak about these advantages in job interviews, performance reviews and library advocacy work.

Throughout the literature there is emphasis on curiosity as a connective force that allows us to weave together thoughts and understandings, people, and communities (Zurn & Bassett, 2023). Essentially curiosity can be viewed as a 'self-directed, purposeful walk across the vast landscape of knowledge' (Patankar et al., 2023, p.3). Let us consider how to make the most of the journey, and who we can bring with us on the way.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT:

The author has no known conflicts of interests to declare.

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Practice-Based Article

Strengthening the Future of Health Science Librarianship: An Introduction to Coaching and Mentoring

Eimear Carney

Koi Business Coaching and Consulting

In the evolving landscape of Irish health science libraries, librarians increasingly expand their roles beyond traditional resource management. Coaching and mentoring, distinct but complementary disciplines, offer invaluable support for professional development, leadership growth, and for navigating the growing complexities of library services. Through structured guidance, experience-sharing, and role-modelling, they foster continuous learning, career advancement, and a strong professional network, ensuring librarians remain adaptable, resourceful, and effective.

A Continuum of Professional Development Approaches

Coaching and mentoring share foundational principles, existing along a structured conversational continuum that encompasses various professional interventions. At the therapeutic end, practices such as psychotherapy, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), and counselling address emotional and mental health concerns. Moving towards more action-oriented approaches, life coaching, executive coaching, and mentoring focus on personal and professional growth, goal setting, and performance enhancement. At the other end of the continuum, training and consulting leverage specialised expertise to provide knowledge, strategic insights, and tailored solutions.

Coaching as a Professional Development Approach for Librarians

Coaching empowers individuals to identify goals, take ownership of their professional development, and plan for future career aspirations. Sir John Whitmore (2009) described coaching as “unlocking people’s potential to maximise their own performance”. For librarians navigating evolving roles and responsibilities, coaching fosters self-confidence and leadership capabilities, strengthens communication with colleagues and stakeholders, and enhances their ability to advocate for library resources and innovation. So, how does coaching unlock potential? Central to the process are dialogic and relational skills, structured conversational frameworks, active listening, and open questions designed to develop self-awareness and drive change. Coaching begins with contracting between the coach and coachee, defining expectations for the scope of work and the coaching relationship. Sometimes, the coachee’s organisation is involved in initial expectation-setting. Between sessions, coachees reflect on discussions and experiment with new ways of behaving or thinking about situations.

Coaching balances support with challenge. A skilled coach encourages reflection by questioning assumptions, identifying patterns of thinking, and presenting alternative perspectives. This approach cultivates professional agility, resilience, and continuous growth, making coaching an invaluable resource for librarians. A coach’s presence and engagement are vital, ensuring the focus remains on the coachee’s agenda while fostering self-discovery. Many coaches use structured frameworks, such as Whitmore’s GROW model - Goal setting, acknowledgement of current Reality, exploration of Options and Will to change and the Way Forward. Coaching helps professionals refine their thinking, develop effective relationships, and

enhance their leadership impact.

Mentoring: Building a Supportive Professional Community

The European Mentoring and Coaching Council ([EMCC Global](#)) defines mentoring as “a learning relationship, involving the sharing of skills, knowledge, and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing, and role modelling. This relationship may cover a wide variety of contexts and is an inclusive two-way partnership for mutual learning that values differences.”

Like coaching, mentoring is dialogic and relies on relational skills, providing a safe space to discuss experiences, ideas and possibilities. Trust, respect and positive expectations underpin successful mentoring relationships. Unlike coaching, mentors impart knowledge and experience in addition to fostering reflection. Traditionally, mentors guided mentees by sharing their approaches to similar challenges, imparting knowledge and experience, advice and guidance. More recently, mentoring has evolved into a learning partnership, encouraging mentees to explore their ideas before mentors offer insights.

While coaching focuses on skill development and personal growth, mentoring provides a broader platform for career guidance, knowledge transfer, and professional networking. In health science librarianship, mentorship supports established and new entrants by facilitating the sharing insights and knowledge, fostering confidence, and cultivating a collaborative professional environment.

Mentoring enables early-career librarians to navigate professional complexities, from managing specialised collections to supporting healthcare professionals with critical information. Research by Shin Freedman (2021) highlights mentoring’s role in fostering growth, social and professional networks, career advice, knowledge sharing and resources, coping strategies, and confidence building. As a two-way learning partnership, mentoring also benefits mentors by refining their leadership and communication skills. Formal mentoring programmes cultivate organisational learning cultures, strengthening professional networks. Mentoring helps to build a supportive culture of shared collective learning and strengthening personal and professional networks.

Choosing the Right Support Structure

There are times when mentoring may not be the best option, and other interventions on the professional continuum should be considered. Mentoring should not extend into personal or professional challenges beyond its scope, as this may lead to emotional strain on the mentor. Psychotherapy or counselling may be more appropriate for emotional concerns or trauma. For mentees with skills or performance gaps, their manager, not a mentor, should support. Major change initiatives often require specialised consultants. Formal HR processes should be followed for organisational concerns such as bullying, or where mediation is necessary.

Unlike coaching, typically delivered in a structured format, mentoring may occur through formal programmes or develop informally. Professionals often seek mentors based on personal rapport, relevant experience, networks, or shared career interests, such as transitioning from general into health librarianship. Mentorship strengthens the profession by facilitating the exchange of institutional knowledge, best practices, and career support. Both formal and informal mentoring connections foster inclusive and collaborative environments, benefiting the wider librarian profession.

Cultivating a Culture of Professional Development

Both coaching and mentoring thrive in workplace cultures that prioritise continuous learning and professional development. Coaches exemplify this through their own commitment to training, accreditation, on-going professional growth, peer group support, and supervision. Librarians at all career stages benefit from environments that encourage knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and professional development. In addition to core coaching and mentoring initiatives, organisations could offer mentor training, peer mentoring circles, group coaching, coaching skills for managers courses or structured networking events as valuable additional resources.

By embracing the power of coaching and mentoring, librarians can shape their professional growth, build resilience, and strengthen their leadership capabilities. As the Irish health science library sector evolves, investing in these practices will not only sustain the profession but also empower librarians to drive innovation, cultivate collaboration, and enhance service delivery in a dynamic landscape.

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Practice-Based Article

Guiding Success: Staff Support for Undergraduate Nursing Students in Academic Poster Design

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ABSTRACT

Posters are a dynamic and innovative assessment tool in undergraduate nursing programmes offering benefits for both students and faculty, while moving beyond traditional assessment methods. Since the inception of the undergraduate nursing programme at Hibernia College in 2022, posters have formed a key part of its diverse assessment strategy. Recognising the need for structured support, the nursing faculty partnered with the Digital Learning Department (DLD), specifically the digital librarian and DLD researcher, to leverage our expertise in poster design to help guide nursing students through the creative part of the assignment. We developed an instructional workshop drawing on active learning principles, as well as additional resources, to help students develop the skills and confidence to create impactful academic posters. This paper explores the development and outcomes of this collaboration, and its role in student learning and engagement.

KEYWORDS

academic poster design, student instruction, active learning, undergraduate nursing students, teaching and learning

INTRODUCTION

Hibernia College is recognised for its expertise in delivering innovative hybrid and online education. While well regarded for its postgraduate education programmes, the introduction of the undergraduate nursing programme *MSc in Nursing in General Nursing* in 2022 has expanded the college's academic offerings. The programme integrates diverse assessment strategies, including poster presentations, to enhance student learning.

Academic posters are a dynamic and engaging assessment tool, offering significant benefits to both students and faculty while moving beyond traditional methods, such as case studies and exams (Conyers, 2003). Summers (2005) has emphasised that academic requirements on nursing programmes must align theory with practice as traditional assessment methods alone are no longer sufficient to ensure that graduates are prepared for professional practice. Academic poster creation helps to develop essential skills including critical thinking, creativity, communication and problem-solving, while accommodating a variety of learning preferences. This assessment method develops a student's ability to effectively present complex ideas within a limited space, while still maintaining visual clarity and engagement (Halligan, 2007). Developing a poster presentation requires students to engage with current research, gain a deeper

understanding of a subject, and skilfully present content in a way that engages their audience. As such, academic poster assessments encourage active and meaningful engagement with course content (Crawley & Frazer, 2015).

Communication skills are an increasingly important aspect of the role of practising nurses. The development of poster creation skills can help to support practising nurses to communicate effectively with colleagues, patients, and the wider community (Conyers, 2003). Crawley and Frazer (2015) have highlighted the benefits that skills acquired during poster design can bring to patient care, such as information synthesis and effective visual communication. Furthermore, poster presentations at professional conferences are an engaging and impactful way of sharing research findings. They also help to facilitate networking among researchers. These valuable contributions that posters can make to the professional lives of practicing nurses further highlight their value beyond undergraduate programmes and their contribution to lifelong skills (Halligan, 2008; Hardicre, Devitt & Coad, 2007).

Crucially, research suggests that students generally enjoy poster assessments. According to Conyers (2003, p. 39) “nursing students embraced with enthusiasm the opportunity to explore their creativity and develop alternative communication skills. Many students expressed relief at not having to write an essay.” An assignment method that is intrinsically enjoyable for students, coupled with its long-term benefits, seems to be an obvious choice.

Due to our experience in designing and presenting posters at academic conferences, both librarian and DLD researcher inadvertently acquired a reputation as the ‘poster people’ within the institution. As a result, the nursing faculty approached us to collaborate in providing instruction and support to nursing students on academic poster design principles. We approached this novel request with curiosity and enthusiastically took on the challenge of developing an effective strategy to guide and support the nursing students in poster creation. We now play an established role in supporting the nursing programme’s poster assessment strategy.

THE INTERVENTION

At the beginning of their *Care Needs of the Older Adult* module, the students received guidance on the assignment from the module lead, which included a comprehensive assignment brief, general guidance, and a PowerPoint template for the poster layout. Then we focused on guiding students regarding the visual design aspects of poster creation. We developed a workshop that combined instructional components with collaborative, hands-on learning activities.

We incorporated active learning principles into the workshop design. Active learning methods, which encourage students to take greater responsibility for their own learning, have been demonstrated to enhance educational success (Saunders & Wong, 2020). A collaborative, team-based, active learning approach has been shown to increase student engagement with workshop material (Opuda & Bresnahan, 2019). Research suggests that active learning improves problem solving and critical thinking skills, leads to higher achievement, and is the preferred learning strategy among students (Ul Huda et al., 2016). The approach we took with the poster design workshop at Hibernia College blended traditional teaching methods with active learning principles to give the nursing students a richer experience and encourage better learning outcomes. The key components of the workshop were:

- An instructional section, outlining design principles and the differences between academic posters and written academic assignments.
- A group activity, where students were divided into groups of four or five and given the task of analysing sample posters collected from various sources.
- A collaborative discussion led by us, as facilitators, where students shared insights and critiqued poster designs and facilitators collated key points on a whiteboard.

Student engagement in the workshop was evident to us, as we observed increased energy, discussion and collaboration as students analysed sample posters during the group activity. The interactive nature of the session, along with facilitator guidance, helped to build confidence as students recognised that they could intuitively identify effective design principles.

We also created handouts for students to use after the workshop, consisting of a poster design checklist and concise writing tips. They were made available in the module area on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), allowing students to refer to them as they developed their posters. These resources reinforced the key concepts from the workshop and gave students the support they needed to work independently.

OUTCOMES

Student feedback

As a follow-up to the most recent workshop, a survey was conducted of the 2024 cohort. The cohort comprised 25 students with 4 students responding to the survey, giving a response rate of 16%. Among respondents, the workshop satisfaction rating was 4.25 out of 5 (Figure 1). Furthermore, all respondents found the provided handouts useful. There was a considerable increase in student confidence regarding poster design, as the confidence rating rose from 3.5 before the workshop to 7 afterwards (Figure 2). Student comments indicated general satisfaction with the content of the workshop and handouts (Figure 3). However, some constructive feedback was given, including a request for advice regarding how to include references in posters, and a request for more practical guidance on designing posters using PowerPoint (Table 1).

Figure 1. Student feedback on satisfaction with the workshop

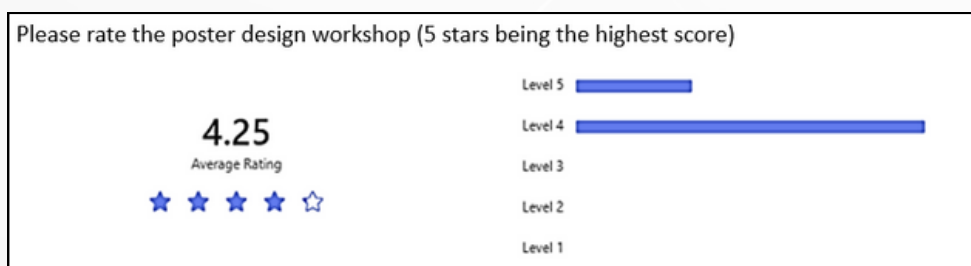
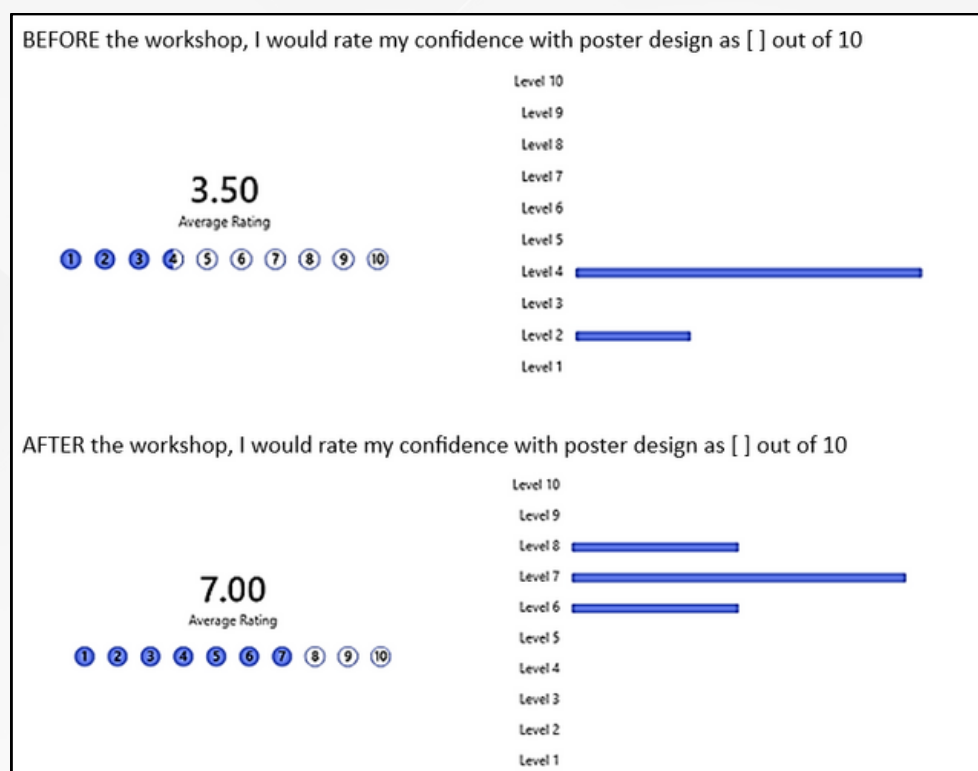
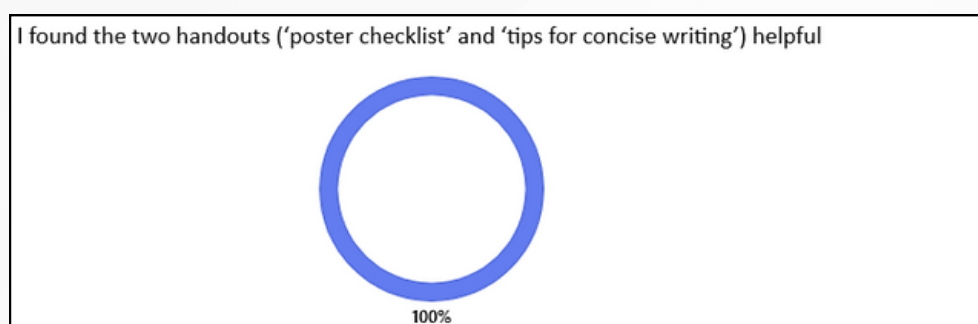


Figure 2. Student feedback on confidence levels before and after the workshop**Figure 3. Student feedback on helpfulness of the handouts****Table 1. Sample Feedback Comments**

Question	Response
What did you like about this workshop?	Clarity The example posters Explained what made a good poster
What could have been better?	Everything was good Ways to reference How to actually make the poster on PowerPoint etc

As outlined, student feedback indicated overall satisfaction with the supports provided, with most respondents indicating a clearer understanding of poster design following the session. Additionally, the workshop provided valuable face-to-face interaction enabling the facilitators and students to interact in a more spontaneous way than would be possible via a support webinar. The active learning component contributed to the success of the workshop by encouraging enthusiastic and lively engagement among the

students. It not only kept the students actively involved but also supported their understanding of key concepts. As a result, it became a valuable component of the workshop design, facilitating deeper learning.

As well as benefiting the students, the process also contributed to our professional development. It allowed us to expand on our skills, knowledge, and experience in instructional support and academic poster design. From a wider staff and faculty perspective, the initiative fostered active collaboration across different roles and departments, which strengthened interdisciplinary partnerships.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A limitation of this study was the small response rate to the survey. For future workshops we intend to change our method of gathering responses to ensure a more representative sample. For example, instead of distributing the online survey after the workshop, we could leave time before the end of the workshop to allow students to complete it in class.

To build on the success of the poster workshop, several future initiatives are proposed to further enhance student engagement and support. Since poster assessment is now incorporated into additional programmes, such as the Postgraduate *Professional Master of Education in Primary Education*, there is an opportunity to expand collaboration to include the School of Education.

Library staff are currently developing a research support page for the library site on the student VLE. This page will be expanded to include supports for academic poster design, including the handouts currently distributed to nursing students.

Additionally, in response to student feedback, future workshops and handouts will include guidance on referencing and specific instruction on PowerPoint to better support the technical aspects of poster creation. There may also be scope in these areas to develop further instructional handouts for students to refer to after the workshop.

Finally, students will be encouraged to submit their posters for academic conferences, such as the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) student poster award. This will facilitate greater academic engagement and provide opportunities for networking, allowing students to connect with peers, educators and professionals as they advance in their studies and move closer to their professional careers.

CONCLUSION

The collaboration between the nursing faculty, the librarian and DLD researcher highlights the value of structured support to develop the poster design skills of undergraduate nursing students. By drawing on active learning principles to provide an interactive workshop, along with additional resources, the initiative improved student confidence and engagement. Student feedback also demonstrated the success of this approach, with participants expressing overall satisfaction with the workshop and additional supports, and greater understanding of poster design principles. Some areas for improvement were also noted. The initiative also led to cross-departmental collaboration among staff in different roles at Hibernia College.

Beyond its immediate impact, this initiative has set a foundation for continued improvement and growth. Future developments will focus on integrating technical training, expanding support to other disciplines, and encouraging students to showcase their work in academic settings. By sustaining and developing this support framework, Hibernia College can continue resourcing students with a diverse skillset that will benefit them throughout their academic and professional careers.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

We have no known conflicts of interests to declare.

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Practice-Based Article

Navigating Complexity: Strategies for Libraries in a Rapidly Changing World

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ABSTRACT

In a world marked by rapid change and increasing complexity, libraries can play a pivotal role in helping communities navigate uncertainties. This article summarises the presentation '*How We Make Better Sense of a Rapidly Changing and Complex World*,' delivered at the Health Sciences Libraries Group annual conference in March 2025. The presentation, led by Mairéad Mc Keown and Amy Bond, explored the challenges posed by a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous) world and proposes strategies for libraries and librarians to thrive. This includes adopting a systems-thinking approach, practicing conversational leadership, and leveraging the Knowledge Café methodology to foster dialogue and collaboration. Our presentation underscored the importance of developing 21st-century skills and AI literacy to remain adaptable and resilient.

KEYWORDS

VUCA, systems thinking, conversational leadership, Knowledge Café, libraries

INTRODUCTION

In the face of rapid technological advancements, geopolitical shifts, and environmental challenges, the modern world has become increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA). Libraries, as centres of knowledge and information, must adapt to these changes to continue serving their communities effectively. This article summarises insights from the presentation '*How We Make Better Sense of a Rapidly Changing and Complex World*,' delivered by Mairéad Mc Keown and Amy Bond at the Health Sciences Libraries Group annual conference in March 2025 (McKeown & Bond, 2025).

PRESENTATION

Diverse Experience and Expertise

At the start of the conference, we asked attendees to complete a short survey via QR code for quick responses. This was designed to engage diversity and expertise within the library community, in the practical Knowledge Café which followed our presentation. Our survey revealed that amongst attendees there was 1,061 combined years of experience across eight library sectors and four generations (61 survey respondents). The conference community was well-equipped to tackle the challenges of a VUCA world. This diversity fostered a lot of conversation and knowledge flowed freely whilst connections and networks were deepened and built.

Understanding the VUCA World

The concept of VUCA, initially introduced by the US Army War College, describes the turbulent and unpredictable nature of the modern world (Kurylo, 2021). Our presentation emphasised the interconnectedness of economic, environmental, geopolitical and societal global risks, which are too complex for any single leader or group to address alone (Elsner et al., 2025). Traditional approaches are no longer sufficient, and a more distributed, participatory form of leadership is required (Gurteen, n.d.-a).

To navigate the complexities of the VUCA world, libraries must adopt a systems-thinking approach. This involves viewing problems holistically and understanding the interconnections between various factors. Systems thinking enables better decision-making and problem-solving by considering the broader context (Systems Innovation, 2018).

Conversational Leadership

Conversational leadership, as advocated by David Gurteen, is a key strategy that libraries can use to navigate complexity. This approach involves stepping up, practicing leadership as an activity and adopting a conversational approach to the way we work. If we are to sustain the future of information, this type of leadership is vital (Dezuanni et al., 2024). By practicing conversational leadership, libraries can enhance their ability to influence, make better sense of complex issues, and renew the way they work together (Gurteen, n.d.-a).

The Knowledge Café Methodology

The Knowledge Café, a conversational leadership tool, was highlighted as an effective method for bringing people together to discuss and understand complex issues. This methodology encourages dialogue, knowledge sharing, sensemaking and community building. It provides a safe space for participants to express their ideas and learn from one another, engage in dialogue and emerge from conversations as slightly different people, all of which can ultimately lead to better outcomes (Gurteen, n.d.-b).

Developing 21st-Century Skills

The presentation also underscored the importance of developing 21st-century skills and AI literacy to remain adaptable and resilient. These skills include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy. By embracing these competencies, libraries can better navigate the challenges of the VUCA world and continue to serve their communities effectively (Wikipedia, 2024).

PRACTICAL CASE STUDY

This section of the article focuses on work being done on Conversational Leadership at Bord Bia. Bord Bia is an Irish semi-state agency whose purpose is to bring Ireland's outstanding food, drink and horticulture to the world, thus enabling growth and sustainability of producers.

Peer Assist

Bord Bia's librarians have co-created a series of best practice templates (see below) for generating insights on food and drink categories and markets around the world. The librarians assist colleagues to complete these through access to authoritative library sources and the transfer of skills and knowledge needed for successful report generation. Colleagues are offered an introductory call at the outset of a new project and the library team are on hand to peer assist if any further support is needed. These templates are now being used by colleagues across different functions and locations across the world.



Real World Examples of Conversational Leadership in Action at the Bord Bia Library

Image sources: Bord Bia

Knowledge Cafés

The librarians at Bord Bia create *Hot Topic* reports where they read a broad variety of resources on timely topics and analyse and synthesize the findings into a 10-page report with insights and implications for the Irish Food and Drink industry. After completing these reports, on areas such as food waste, AI and gut health, Bord Bia's librarians host a series of Knowledge Cafés. These are designed to disseminate the report findings, build a sense of community and bring colleagues together to help them make better sense of each topic through conversation and knowledge exchange.

After Action Reviews and Lessons Learned

Bord Bia's Knowledge & Market Intelligence Manager is leveraging tools like [After Action Reviews](#) (AAR) and [Lessons Learned](#) to bring colleagues together and convene conversations that help them stop, think, and reflect on learning experiences from strategic activities, to uncover insights that help drive a culture of continuous improvement (Gurteen, n.d.-c). It's worth noting whilst After Action Reviews and Lessons Learned activities have some similarities, they are in fact two different things. Lessons learned is a more

reflective learning activity that's conducted at the end of a project or programme. It explores similar questions to the AAR but the recap of objectives and what happened will be a more in-depth exercise (Goodman, 2012)

A number of these sessions have been hosted with multi-functional teams across the organisation, both face to face and online. Many colleagues are now using these tools as a way of working to strive for continuous improvement.

CONCLUSION

The information provided in our presentation included valuable insights for libraries seeking to thrive in a VUCA world (McKeown & Bond, 2025). By adopting a systems-thinking approach, practicing conversational leadership, and leveraging the Knowledge Café methodology, libraries can enhance their adaptability, resilience, and ability to serve their communities. Indeed, developing 21st-century skills and AI literacy is crucial for remaining relevant and effective in the face of rapid change. As the world continues to evolve, those working in libraries must embrace new strategies and approaches to navigate complexity and foster a thriving future for our role, as well as strong information and knowledge provision.

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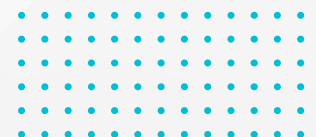
AUTHOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

I have no known conflicts of interests to declare.

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Practice-Based Article

Practical Techniques for Being More Creative at Work

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ABSTRACT

This article outlines simple strategies and techniques for applying creativity to your own daily work in a library setting, by developing a growth mindset. It discusses the psychology of being creative, and how everyone can realise their true potential to achieve it and explains that inspiration occurs at any moment, anywhere, providing insightful novel approaches for solving complex problems. Creativity compels us to step out of our comfort zone by taking a risk, to explore something new. Realising the true value of the experience itself, is the actual learning involved and not being afraid to repeatedly make mistakes and try again.

KEYWORDS

creativity, work, advice, Artificial Intelligence, critical thinking

INTRODUCTION

How do you know if you are already being creative at work?

In considering this question and applying it to your own work, the answer depends on how you define the term creative. The literature discusses creativity as an ambiguous concept normally in terms of motivation, innovation and problem solving (Reilly, 2017). From my own experience of working in an academic library environment for nearly two decades, these are all essential qualities, which contribute towards the delivery of a successful library service to patrons. Over the years in collaboration with faculty, I developed creative approaches for teaching information literacy to engage diverse cohorts of business students in deep learning. For a more detailed discussion on cultivating a creative learning environment to ensure student engagement see (Reilly, 2015).

Reflecting on my own teaching practice, I generally only have one opportunity to make an impact on these students and employ playful learning techniques to engage them from the start of the session. As an icebreaker task to ensure active participation, I use an abstract image of a square wooden box attached to the top of a rock (see Figure 1). I explain to the group that I discovered this object strewn among the rocks while walking along a beach and have no idea of its purpose.

The aim of this task is to provoke a reaction from students, which is known as “Effective Surprise” while encouraging collaboration and peer to peer learning. The cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner described “Effective Surprise” as something which provokes a reaction and occurs in ordinary situations and is not

unusual or bizarre (Bruner, 1962). All students seem to enjoy this task. They form their own groups to devise a list of keywords to describe the image and embrace the challenge of thinking critically while competing against each other. The learning outcome from this exercise is that students realise the value of brainstorming a list of keywords as a means to developing an effective search strategy for searching and critically evaluating online resources.

Figure 1: Square wooden box on rocks



Another lens in which to approach creativity, is to view it in terms of problem solving. When you think about it from this perspective you are already being creative but may not actually realise it. On a daily basis in the workplace, we are constantly problem solving in terms of overcoming both large and small challenges. We are internally motivated to succeed, as we do not want to disappoint ourselves or, the person who originally asked the question.

Sometimes the best solution to clarifying a problem is to refine it further by asking another probing question., such as the following: “What does it mean to be creative in an Artificially Intelligent pervasive work environment?” Artificial Intelligence (AI) poses new challenges, and we need to learn to become comfortable collaborating with it. This involves the successful integration of this rapidly evolving technology into our own workflow. Used responsibly and ethically it provides an opportunity to both embrace our creativity and expand our imaginations. Image generating AI such as ‘Dall-E’ and Canva’s ‘Magic Media’ facilitates us to explore our curiosity by expressing ideas visually. However, these tools have certain limitations due to the large language learning model they were trained on, and the inherent bias of their creator. These flaws are evident by the unusual and hallucinatory results they can produce. For example, after I instructed these tools to create images of the male literary characters “Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee” containing the words “curiosity and creativity”, some of the attempts incorrectly portrayed them as female (See Fig. 2).

Figure 2: Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee generated by artificial intelligence



To be creative with this type of AI involves using very precise prompts and refining these further until you achieve the intended outcome. This process is like engaging with text-based AI, the main difference being the results are more interesting and visually appealing.

6Ds of Solution Fluency

Another strategy for collaborating with AI is the “6Ds of Solution Fluency”, a creative approach to problem solving applicable to any domain. It was developed by the Global Digital Citizen Foundation (2015). This simple six-step process outlined in figure 3 for solving problems creatively, can apply to any task big or small. Students really like the simplicity of this technique which encourages critical thinking to complete assignments and research projects. The next time you encounter a problem, apply this simple strategy and see if it results in a successful solution. The table (See Fig. 3) provides more details about each of the individual stages. This creative approach to problem solving is closely related to Design Thinking which is explored in the next section.

Figure 3: 6Ds of Solution Fluency

6 Ds of Solution Fluency	Description
Define	Consider the scope of your research topic or problem
Discover	Explore what information is already available on the topic
Dream	Visualize yourself solving the problem well before the allotted deadline
Design	Identify the various stages involved in the process to achieve a successful outcome for solving the problem.
Deliver	Complete and submit your topic in advance of the due date
Debrief	Reflect on the lessons learned from completing this topic

Applying the Principles of Design Thinking:

Design thinking concerns taking a large problem and subdividing into smaller more manageable ones, which makes them easier to solve. In his best-selling book “Thinkertoys” the Psychologist Michael Michalko (2006) calls this technique “to centre a challenge”. He recommends always beginning by applying the phrase “In what way might I...?” to the problem itself. This process is repeated several times until all aspects of the problem are considered. These now become subproblems which are solvable, and are stretched further by asking the questions “How else?” and “Why else?” (Michalko, 2006). User Experience or UX now popular in libraries involves thinking about the problem in the user’s shoes or from their perspective (UXLibs, n.d.). This concept places the user at the centre and emphasises building the system or service around them rather than vice versa (Young et al., 2020).

Andy Priestner applies a UX Research & Design Process Model for UX in libraries (Priestner, 2021). This model proposes 4 phases:

- Research user needs and behaviours.
- Code and theme user data.
- Ideate and devise prototypes.
- Test and refine prototypes.

Ideation is the process where a group generates many ideas quickly by engaging in both convergent and divergent thinking (Priestner, 2021). Play is integral to this process as it lets us expand our imagination by brainstorming both daft and conventional ideas, which all have equal value. Each one of the ideas is written on different coloured Post-it® notes and stuck on a notice board. Group members are then invited to select their favourites. After a process of elimination, one idea is selected. The next stage is prototyping, an

effective and cheap way to test out the most popular idea. This involves using cheap materials such as cardboard and adhesive tape, aluminium foil or whatever is available at hand to build a rough prototype or model. The idea now becomes more concrete and is easier to refine further by solving the problem with both hands and mind. Immediately you can see what works and where the potential obstacles lie. At my own institution when we were considering a redesign of the Librarian's Consultation Desk, I built a small-scale prototype model of the proposed desk using cardboard. This allowed us to move components around to test out their functionality and optimise the final design.

Applying Creative Techniques to Daily Work

Outlined below, based on my own experience are six practical steps you can take in applying simple creative techniques to your daily work. Creativity involves being confident to step out of your comfort zone and take a risk by following your curiosity to try something new and learn from the experience. American choreographer and dancer Twyla Tharp suggests the first step to conquering failure is to acknowledge it (Tharp, 2003) and to not be afraid to constantly repeat and refine the process until it becomes second nature to you. Although her book 'The Creative Habit' is over twenty years old, it provides insight and practical tips which are still relevant today.

Step 1 - Reframe Problems

Reframing a problem makes it more manageable while providing a different perspective to explore it. Adopting this approach ensures you are already halfway there to solving it, as something which initially seems quite overwhelming may not be as difficult as originally anticipated. One of the most enjoyable experiences for any individual is the process of playing with ideas, which leads to a new discovery. This only occurs if the person feels they possess the requisite skills and knowledge to solve it. To achieve this involves setting the problem aside and devoting their attention to something else. This allows their subconscious time to still work on it and provide a solution when they least expect it (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

Step 2 - Brighten up a Dull Wall Space

Use old postcards, humorous birthday cards, or any other visually appealing material to decorate a blank wall at your workspace. Children's art can be highly effective as it normally consists of bright colours. Emotionally this gallery of images has a positive impact on your mood by appealing to the senses and serves as an inspiring space for generating ideas. It will also subconsciously encourage you to think in terms of pictures rather than in text, when communicating ideas.

Step 3 – Seek out Collaborators

Collaborating with other colleagues both within and outside your organisation is personally rewarding which contributes to improving productivity. It also provides opportunities for working on larger type projects, which improves skills, knowledge sharing and networking. Members of these teams motivate and inspire each other to succeed and overcome any unforeseen challenges they encounter. Another benefit is that a person can achieve more collaborating as part of a work team, rather than operating in a solo capacity.

Step 4 - Learn to Think Differently

To think differently is a skill, which requires practice, but begins to feel quite liberating once it becomes a habit. Ideas that originally seemed impossible by conventional thinking are suddenly achievable. Adopting a holistic view to overcoming a challenge allows you to see the bigger picture and all its interconnecting parts. Problems become more interesting and mysterious when interpreted from a different perspective. According to David Bohm, to obtain a creative solution to a problem requires pure thought, which is achieved by suspending all preconceived notions or ideas about it (Bohm & Nichol, 2003).

One example I use to explain this concept to graduate students undertaking their dissertation, is a photo of frost on my car roof. (See Fig. 4). I frame this picture on a PowerPoint slide and ask them to identify what they think it is. The answers provided reveal the students' prior learning, and I probe them further to ascertain their thought process. I explain to the group that looking at something from a different perspective makes it more mysterious and interesting to the viewer. As frost is something which we take for granted in the winter and consider it quite mundane. However, present it out of context and it suddenly becomes unrecognizable, magical and quite ambiguous. They can adopt a similar approach to devising their own research question.

Figure 4: Frost patterns on car roof



Step 5 - Work within Boundaries

Always define limits for completing a certain task, this compels you to be more resourceful by challenging your critical thinking. To be effective, creative individuals need to operate within certain boundaries, allowing them to focus their mind on the kernel of the problem. Otherwise, the challenge becomes too unwieldy and eventually overwhelms them due to lack of any coherent structure. Luckily in a work environment, these boundaries are often imposed by constraints such as project deadlines and scheduling of classes.

Step 6 – Use your own images

To be inspired by your environment is a wonderful experience, and taking photos to capture these moments is both rewarding and empowering. The advantages of using your own images in future presentations means there are no copyright issue concerns. It allows you total creative control over the context in which they are used to either engage an audience or convey an idea. Always realise that inspiration can come from anywhere and follow your curiosity to capture something that is visually appealing whether it's a place or an object. One example is a broken melted ice cream cone lying on the ground, (See Figure 5 for more details). I have used this abstract image as an icebreaker task in my workshops to engage hundreds of students over many years, like the process outlined earlier in this article for the square wooden box on the rocks.

Figure 5: Broken and melted ice-cream cone lying on the ground



CONCLUSION

All the ideas discussed in this article are easy to incorporate within your own daily workflow. Although, some may require more practice than others to master them. Start small by trying out one of the above mentioned six steps to build up your creative confidence slowly. You will be surprised how quickly they start to form part of your normal routine. Explore and experiment with any of the examples mentioned and adapt or modify them for your own teaching purposes. Gradually you begin to think visually rather than with text when devising presentations which is more engaging for an audience. This allows you to explore your imagination and thought process further by conveying complex ideas succinctly in pictures, ultimately stimulating you to become more aware, observant and curious about the world around us.

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Report

Report of the HSLG Conference 2025 “Cultivating Curiosity: A Wonderland for Librarians”

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This year I was the recipient of a bursary to attend the HSLG annual conference which took place in the Ashling Hotel, Dublin on 6th March. The following is a brief synopsis of the day's presentations.

Mary Dunne - Conceptualising curiosity.

Mary Dunne, HSLG Research Officer and Vice-Chair, opened the day by giving her thoughts on curiosity, the theme of the conference. She provided some definitions, described its components as described in the literature and suggested how we might apply curiosity to library and information services and the workplace in general. She recommended we cultivate curiosity in our working lives by asking open-ended questions, paying attention to the thoughts and knowledge of others, staying humble and keeping our minds open to new ideas.

Keynote Speaker Sue Lacey Bryant - Making curiosity count.

This year's keynote speaker was CILIP President and former Chief Knowledge Officer at NHS England, Sue Lacey Bryant. Addressing the conference theme, Sue suggested that we should be curious about patients' rights, ask the right questions and consider how medical information affects practitioners and patients. She took us through her long career in health librarianship from her earliest days to her most recent role as Chief Knowledge Officer and offered her thoughts on the future of healthcare and our profession.

Healthcare workers will need to be digital savvy in order to continually adapt to new ways of working and new IT solutions. Health librarians must play a role in bridging the gap between evidence and practice and medical evidence must be available to be mobilised by the right people at the right time. On the subject of AI, Sue shared that, it will create, change and, in some cases, displace jobs, information professionals can move into new roles including as knowledge architects, taxonomists, user experience (UX) librarians and research data management librarians. She reminded us that AI guides humans to answers but humans must put in accurate data first. Sue believes the future lies in “knowledge management in action” and called on us to align our skills with our values, build on our strengths (not least our searching expertise) and, above all, to skill, reskill and skill again.

Breeda Herlihy - New HSLG open access journal.

After the break, Breeda Herlihy, UCC Library, unveiled the HSLG's new peer reviewed diamond open access journal called *Health Information Sciences Journal*. Replacing *HINT* newsletter, the first issue of the new journal will be published this summer.

Peter Reilly - Cultivate your creativity by being curious!

Peter Reilly, Learning and Engagement Librarian at the University of Limerick, shared some tips on learning by being curious and using curiosity to foster creativity. He identified some of the elements of creativity,

including motivation, innovation and problem solving. Creativity requires complex thought, inspiring and motivating leadership and collaboration. Peter encourages shifting between conventional and unconventional perspectives, prototyping ideas and rethinking assumptions and he advocates for 'creativity clinics' to encourage collaboration with users and the adoption of universal design principles to better support diverse learners.

Peter offered a six- step solution for creative problem-solving and shared some excellent tips for incorporating creativity in daily work and, in particular, in teaching information skills in the classroom.

Dymphna McGettigan - Health Information Calendar: a health calendar for all.

Dymphna McGettigan presented on the HSE Health Information Calendar which currently lists 151 events for 2025, including cervical cancer prevention and mental health as well as partnerships with Arthritis Ireland and Cystic Fibrosis Ireland. The goal is to build a supportive environment through community actions. She also spoke about the principles of health promotion and talked us through some of Ireland's most successful public health campaigns.

Dympna Lynch and Shona Nolan - Everything everywhere all at once... but in one place.

Dympna and Shona are part of the HSE Inter Library Loan (ILL) Team, and they outlined the development of the ILL service which began as decentralised system with fragmented access, variation in staffing and resources and a lack of standardisation. In 2022 the service shifted to a centralised model. Today, user requests are dealt with from a single virtual desk with a dedicated team that administers ILLs for the entire country. A monthly staff rota means the ILL desk is staffed all week which ensures access to the service for all library users, regardless of location. Use of the service has doubled since the centralised model was initiated.

In 2023 the HSE ILL Team took over the running of the HJNI and Shona talked about this process and the current practicalities of running the service. Between 2023 and the first half of 2024, there were 502 requests, 80% of which were fulfilled. The strength of the HJNI in its collaborative approach. Challenges include the reduction of members since its move to the HSE and reduced collection development in individual libraries.

Ann Byrne - Follow the White Rabbit: guiding nursing students to creative poster presentations, protocols.

The first presenter after lunch was Ann Byrne, Digital Librarian at Hibernia College. The college has run an undergraduate nursing programme since 2022 and poster assessment has been part of the assessment strategy since the beginning. Ann presented on the poster/people workshop that was developed by the library and the digital learning department to teach nursing students how to design good academic posters. The workshop covered the difference between academic papers and posters, converting written text into a post and provided checklist for good design.

The workshop was well received by its attendees. There was overall satisfaction with the support offered and students reported a better understanding of poster design afterwards. Future directions include adding resources on poster development on the library webpage.

Niall O'Brien - Following protocols: adventures in tracking the life cycle of review protocols.

Niall O'Brien is an Information Specialist at the Health Research Board and his talk was on the difficulty with tracking review protocols.

In 2011 PROSPERO was launched as the first international register where protocols can be registered free of

charge and the PRISMA statement provides registration information for the review which should make protocols traceable and transparent. However, looking at a recently completed HRB project, Niall discovered that in many of 1,323 protocols examined, the unique PROSPERO identifying number was not mentioned in the abstract or citation. In some cases the number is also not mentioned anywhere in the paper and this can provide a challenge to connect the protocol with a final paper, particularly when the title of the paper has also changed from the protocol title. In conclusion, Niall called for greater consistency in reporting protocol details within a paper and suggested that a protocol registry's unique ID should be referred to within the abstracts or methods of any resulting papers.

Aoife Lawton - LAI Library Labour Market Taskforce report: key findings.

Aoife Lawton, HSE National Librarian, has recently chaired the LAI Labour Market Taskforce and presented the findings of the report at the conference. The main aim of the taskforce was to identify areas where the LAI could make a positive difference to the Irish library labour market. To achieve this a literature review and a survey of members was carried out, followed by a focus group and some independent research on job analysis.

Results from the literature search revealed a growing need for librarians, together with the need to continuously learn and adapt to changing work environments. The survey revealed librarians account for 0.08% of the Irish workforce and are a highly educated profession, most of whom are in employment and in public sector jobs. Meanwhile results from the job analysis reflected a need for greater data related skills, the diversity of roles and a growth in project-led work. Lastly, the Focus Group recommendations included the promotion of work – life balance, making CPD mandatory and a need to change the public perception of the profession.

A Virtual Group Workshop was being planned which will create an Action Plan to be approved by the LAI Council.

Mingli Gong - CPD needs for librarians in ICT engagement.

Mingli Gong was recently awarded an MSc in Information and Library Management from Dublin Business School. For her degree, she conducted research to understand Irish librarians' experiences and challenges when engaging the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in their Continuing Professional Development (CPD). She conducted a literature review around four themes and carried out a survey of librarians working in all sectors in Ireland and presented her findings at the conference.

There are challenges in engaging with ICT. While most librarians agree that ICT improves the quality of services, gaps remain in areas like AI and literature searching. Workshops could help remedy these shortcomings, as could liaising with colleagues and social media. Mingli concluded that librarianship and ICT service delivery within libraries can be improved by appropriate CPD.

Mairéad McKeown & Amy Bond - Knowledge Café: how we make better sense of a rapidly changing and complex world.

Mairéad and Amy from Board Bia Library closed the day by leading us in a Knowledge Café. In a new world of knowledge that is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, librarians can be the catalyst to help navigate this complexity by adopting a new approach and a more democratic and participatory form of conversational leadership. Mairéad took us through the concept of a Knowledge Café, a tool to bring people together in conversations they might not otherwise have in a safe authentic atmosphere. The Bord Bia librarians create 'Hot Topics' where they synthesise information into ten page reports and then run Knowledge Cafés where the information can be disseminated and discussed. To give delegates an idea of how these are run, she divided us into groups of four or fewer people and gave us a discussion time frame

of ten minutes. When the time was up, we switched seats to begin a different discussion with another group.

The presentation concluded with Amy's top tips on running a Knowledge Café.



REGULAR FEATURE**SHOUT****Sharing Hints, Outcomes and Useful Techniques**

In this feature we draw together some of the excellent knowledge and information that our international colleagues have recently produced.

If you have seen or published an open access study that should be highlighted in our regular SHOUT feature, please submit the reference, link and short summary (max 150 words) to hslj.hslg@gmail.com

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- Journal of Health Information and Libraries Australasia (JOHILA) <https://www.johila.org/index.php/Johila>
- Journal of the Medical Library Association (JMLA) <https://jmla.mlanet.org/ojs/jmla>
- Evidence Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP) <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/ebliip/index.php/EBLIP>

SELECTIONS FROM [EAHIL 2025, VOL. 21 NO. 1](#)

Metzendorf, M.-I. (2025). Introducing Global Health, One Health and Planetary Health. Journal of EAHIL, 21(1),3-4. <https://doi.org/10.32384/jeahil21665>

Understanding the concepts of Global Health, One Health and Planetary Health is essential for health information professionals and medical librarians that wish to support research and education in these public health domains. This very brief note provides a short overview of the concepts and lists further reading.

Brown, F. J. (2025). Identifying resources to support searching for planetary health topics, with a focus on grey literature. Journal of EAHIL, 21(1), 14-7. <https://doi.org/10.32384/jeahil21661>

The authors report briefly on the establishment of the Global Academy of Agriculture and Food Systems (GAAFS), a new interdisciplinary research group at the University of Edinburgh and how this required the library to identify and learn about additional search resources on top of those within their usual repertoire. They share examples of some of the resources which were found to be most useful for One Health and Planetary Health.

SELECTIONS FROM [JOHILA 2025 VOL 5 NO 1](#)

Gorton, C. (2025). Tech showdown – AI search tools special issue. Journal of Health Information and Libraries Australasia, 5(1), 5-8. <https://doi.org/10.55999/johila.v5i1.188>

Tech Showdown is a regular feature of JoHILA. Novel products, software, and technologies are compared to

determine who is the winner, based on available features, ease of use, and price.

In this short article, 22 AI search tools were assessed and ranked. Following this assessment, a one-page matrix was developed that listed key components of the rating as well as a “best for” field. The matrix is available on the [Monash Health Library search guide](#).

Edwards, J. (2025). Creating a user-centric library evaluation tool. *Journal of Health Information and Libraries Australasia*, 5(1), 14-17. <https://doi.org/10.55999/johila.v5i1.191>

This brief article describes the process of following four library users as they performed a number of tasks. The authors observed and recorded the journeys, feelings and “thinking out loud” of participants. The objective was to create a user-centric evaluation process and to create a visual tool to demonstrate critical issues to colleagues and other stakeholders.

Bethune, S., & Giles, M. (2025). Taking a structured approach to problem-solving: A case study in Open Access retrieval. *Journal of Health Information and Libraries Australasia*, 5(1), 18-21. <https://doi.org/10.55999/johila.v5i1.192>

This case study detailed a structured approach for improving access to Open Access articles through an online information portal (OIP) used by healthcare professionals. The exploration highlighted trends in the difficulty retrieving some full-text Open Access articles via OIPs. It also demonstrated that improvements could be achieved by creating a simple yet well-constructed dataset to identify and report trends, and by working collaboratively with the OIP provider.

SELECTIONS FROM [JMLA 2025 VOL. 113 NO. 2](#)

Helbing, R. R., & Hausmann, R. C. (2025). Non-clinician involvement in interprofessional health sciences education: Educator experiences and attitudes. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 113(2), 133-142. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jmla.2025.1763>

This study assessed educator views on the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by interprofessional education (IPE) facilitators and explored their attitudes toward, and experiences with, non-clinician facilitators of online IPE activities, particularly health sciences librarians. The 48 (out of 131) responses to their questionnaire indicated that educators view interpersonal skills and the ability to elicit engagement as more important skills for IPE facilitators than a relevant clinical background. With proper facilitator training, non-clinicians could build upon their existing skillsets and increase their involvement with IPE, creating a larger pool of potential facilitators. A greater availability of skilled facilitators could increase the incidence of IPE, potentially resulting in more collaborative care and improved patient outcomes.

Cyrus, J. W., Brown, R. E., Hurst, E. J., Alsaadawi, R., & Sabo, R. (2025). The structure and experience of interim roles in academic health sciences libraries. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 113(2), 148-157. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jmla.2025.1924>

Interim leadership roles are commonly used in academic libraries to ensure continuity and oversight within the organization. Interim roles can be rewarding but fraught with challenges, including the assumption of responsibilities in unstable environments, unclear expectations, and poor organizational preparedness. This article presents findings from a survey of librarians' experiences serving in interim leadership positions. Results from 54 completed surveys show that interim leaders were given adequate authority and support, but that organizations were not necessarily prepared for the interim leader, and lacked policies, procedures, and clear expectations related to the position. Libraries can better prepare for the future by creating permanent structures and policies to facilitate the transition into and out of interim leadership.

Bethel, A. C., Shaw, N., Abbot, R., Rogers, M., Price, A., Anderson, R., Bell, S. de, & Coon, J. T. (2025). Insights from search summary tables for evidence and gap maps: A case study on peer support interventions. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, 113(2), 177-183.

<https://doi.org/10.5195/jmla.2025.1831>

Evidence and Gap Maps (EGMs) are a visual representation of the available evidence relevant to a specific research question or topic area. This case study presents two search summary tables (SSTs) from an evidence and gap map on peer support interventions. The first SST presents findings of the search for systematic reviews and the second for randomised controlled trials. Different databases and searches were undertaken for the two different study types. The two SSTs indicated that MEDLINE and PsycINFO were key databases required for the identification of both systematic reviews and randomised controlled trials of peer support interventions, with the addition of CINAHL for systematic reviews, and CENTRAL for randomised controlled trials. For both study types, forward citation searching found additional included studies although it was more lucrative for identifying additional randomised controlled trials. Search summary tables are a simple way to share the effectiveness of the search methods chosen for a specific evidence synthesis project. The more SSTs, the more data we will have to inform evidence-based decisions on our search methods.

SELECTIONS FROM [EBLIP 2025, VOL. 20 NO. 1](#)

Abel, J., & Rod, A. B. (2025). LIS program representatives' perspectives on preparing students for careers in research data management and data-related librarianship. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 20(1), 2–19. <https://doi.org/10.18438/eblip30622>

This study uses qualitative empirical evidence from five semi-structured interviews of representatives of Canadian library and information studies (LIS) programs to investigate first-hand perspectives on the research data management (RDM) and data-related opportunities they can provide to their students. The interviews identified five major themes related to LIS programs' RDM and data-related training offerings, including the range of formal and informal opportunities currently available in the programs; the ways in which the representatives would mentor and advise students interested in RDM or related career paths; the challenges posed by both the lack of instructors for RDM and data-related courses, and the lack of students who are interested in, or ready to pursue, data-related careers; the need for programs to develop a curriculum that meets the requirements of many stakeholders; and the effects of the rapidly changing library landscape on LIS curriculum development.

Dabengwa, I. M. (2025). Are academic libraries doing enough to support the sustainable development goals (SDGs)? a mixed-methods review. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 20(1), 148–184.

<https://doi.org/10.18438/eblip30551>

The goal of this single-author review study was to assess global academic libraries' role and activities aimed at achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The paper highlights the enablers and barriers encountered in SDG programming. The author concludes that future research should investigate the impact of institutional factors on SDG implementation in academic libraries and identify strategies to overcome the common challenges in SDG initiatives. Specific SDG targets and indicators should guide context-specific recommendations. The author also advises development of standardized tools for measuring and comparing academic libraries' SDG contributions.

Lasou, P., Neugebauer, T., & Carson, P. (2025). Identifying socio-technical risks in open-source software for scholarly communications: tools, metrics, and opportunities for libraries to support sustainable development. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 20(1), 20-48.

<https://doi.org/10.18438/eblip30630>

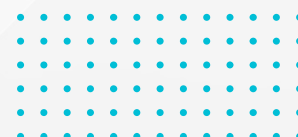
This research aimed to establish whether tools that automate the evaluation of open-source software (OSS) project communities could be used specifically on scholarly communications (SC-OSS) projects to provide

actionable insights for libraries to guide strategic decision making and corrective interventions. Seven OSS project communities were selected for evaluation, chosen from widely used scholarly communications software applications used in Canada for repositories, journal hosting, and archives. The authors identified a community analysis tool called csDetector that identifies community smells (i.e., types of organizational and social dysfunction within software projects). The analysis suggests that the SC-OSS project communities are experiencing knowledge sharing difficulties, weak collaboration practices, or other member interaction dysfunctions that can eventually permanently affect community health. They conclude that while the OSS community analysis tool csDetector presents several hurdles before it can be used, and results generated come with caveats, it can be part of an approach to support evidence based decision-making pertaining to SC-OSS in libraries.

Note:

The focus of evidence summaries in [EBLIP issue vol 2, issue 1](#) is on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within the library profession. Topics covered include curriculum development in library and information science programs, hiring practices in libraries, workplace environments and EDI training programs, and EDI publication trends within the library science literature.

SHOUT is a regular feature of the HSLJ and is compiled by Mary Dunne, of the editorial team.



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