

NoWAL Academic Skills Community of Practice

Meeting 4 – University of Salford

Clifford Whitworth Library, University of Salford, Crescent, Salford, M5 4WT

Monday 9th December 2019, 10am – 1pm

Attendees

Name	Institution
Bryony Parsons	University of Liverpool
Heather Johnston	University of Liverpool
Craig Morley	University of Manchester
Sam Aston	University of Manchester
Sarah Kneen	University of Manchester
Megan Benson	University of Central Lancashire
Ella Turner	University of Chester
Anne Williams	University of Chester
Liz Johnson	University of Chester
John Wright	Edge Hill University
Louise Speakman	Edge Hill University
Brigid Callaghan	Manchester Metropolitan University
Joe Greenwood	Manchester Metropolitan University
Rhian Wyn-Williams	Liverpool John Moores University
Suzanne Waugh	University of Salford
Catherine Tomlin	University of Salford
Vivien Bell	University of Salford
Brian Dunsmore	University of Salford
Ebba Brooks	University of Salford
Serena Chester	University of Salford

Apologies

Fran Robinson - University of Central Lancashire

Avril Buchanan – Manchester Metropolitan University

Dawn Grundy – University of Bolton

Kat Molesworth – Edge Hill University

Debra Elliott – University of Bolton

Agenda

1. Tour of Clifford Whitworth Library (led by Brian Dunsmore, Academic Skills Consultant, and other members of team)
2. Informal catch-up and break for tea/coffee/cakes/mince pies (there will be vegan options)
3. Overview of academic skills support at the University of Salford (Suzanne Waugh, Academic Skills Consultant)
4. Short presentations and group discussions on the theme of using external technologies:
 - a. *Smarthinking trial at Salford* (Catherine Tomlin, Academic Skills Consultant)
 - b. *External referencing software, e.g. Cite This For Me* (Ebba Brooks, Academic Skills Consultant)
 - c. *LinkedIn Learning trial* (Serena Chester, Academic Support Manager)
 - d. *Other technology used in teaching, e.g. Kahoot, Padlet, Slido* (Viv Bell, Academic Skills Consultant)

Minutes of Discussion

SW – Overview of Academic Support

JG asked what is meant by (academic) resilience and what it covers. VB explained...

JG asked to see examples of UoS downloadable guides. These are available on the Skills for Learning web pages <https://www.salford.ac.uk/skills-for-learning> .

CT mentioned that we do send recorded webinars to attendees using Collaborate. BC asked about recording chat box and names in chat box. BC uses Adobe for webinars and it's not possible to separate chat box and names from recording. CT responded saying that she believes this is possible with Collaborate.

SA asked how many distance learners we have? SC answered with approx. 2000.

CT – Smarthinking Pilot

JG mentioned the use of an alternative to Smarthinking, Studiosity, at MMU. Currently in an extended pilot phase. Studiosity send emails to University when students level of writing are identified by online tutors as being far below what is expected. Studiosity tutors are paid £10/h unless 'subject specialist' and work on a basis of 30 minutes per assignment.

CM asked about quality assurance for feedback given to students. CT mentioned that UoS staff can access all feedback given to students via admin page.

JG noted that Studiosity feedback also sometimes pays too much attention to 'easy fixes' (e.g. grammar) rather than main issues.

JG added that Studiosity is less specific in feedback than Smarthinking, identifying errors but not potential corrections – however, does specific feedback present the issue of proofreading? CT explained that Smarthinking feedback provides similar examples for students to use, but does not make the correction for the student.

BP mentioned that Studiosity was trialed last year for Law and that referencing feedback was causing an issue. UoL not going ahead with tool but using the money for an in-house version using PhD students.

BC raised the issue of student expectations / students getting used to quick feedback and how resilience/time management workshops may be contradicted by such online support.

It was also suggested that such packages are just an extension of marketing for consumers in HE.

JG mentioned that Studiosity often encourages student laziness – they often do not submit their best effort and therefore rely heavily on the guidance given by the tool and by the University staff.

SA asked about the storage of student essays – what do Pearson do with the student work? Is there a GDPR issue? BD and CT to follow this up.

EB – Online Referencing Tools

Other referencing tools mentioned: Cite as you Write, RefMe, MS Word

EB noted that UoS generally say to students that it's okay to use online referencing tools, but they must check referencing themselves.

BC says the MMU don't teach referencing, they signpost students to online guides and EndNote. JW adds that Edge Hill also do not teach referencing.

MB said UCLan subscribe to an online referencing tool but again do not teach referencing.

JG asked about how the group dealt with students who didn't add citations/references as they go. CT said that she warns students about how time consuming it would be if done all at once. EB said to warn about the risks of plagiarism and not remembering which reference was associated with a particular idea.

SC – LinkedIn Learning

SC noted that library (SC and EB) are leading this project, whereas in most institutions it would be IT due to the nature of the tool. Contains 9000 courses containing 30 mini videos.

- Academic staff not embedding material yet, except for level 4 Business Schools, where students are engaging well.
- Certificates of completion can be added to profile and academics are able to see which students have completed, therefore non-academic credits might be given.
- Can save academics/support staff time preparing own material, e.g. for presentation skills and reflective writing.

CM asked how UoS draw the line on what we direct students to (i.e. external or internal resources). SC responded that LiL would not replace but compliment in-house academic support. However, it may replace some digital skills support that UoS offer.

SC added that this tool is useful for blended learning and flipped classroom.

CT said that Smarthinking and LinkedIn Learning have yet to be evaluated fully therefore we are unsure how exactly these tools will compliment current in-house offering.

VB – Technology in Teaching

Some tools mentioned: Menti, Padlet, Kahoot, Ombea, Meetoo, Teams, Google Docs, Socrative, Actionbound, Slido, Hypothesis, Adobe Connect, Quizlet.

JG said that Ombia can be embedded in PowerPoint.

MB said that Actionbound is useful for scavenger hunt type activities.

SA added that Hypothesis is good for digital note taking.

CT said that Socrative is good for anonymous quizzing and team quizzes.

BC mentioned that colleagues at MMU have done research on this topic and will share.

A potential issue was discussed about when only 70/100 students participate in activity. SA and VB tend to set activities up as pairs/threes anyway and if people haven't logged in quickly enough they can join with someone nearby.

VB asked if there is still a place for pen and paper. AW noted that it's good to have paper as backup anyway for when tech goes wrong. There was a general consensus that paper and pen still has great value in teaching.

Future COP Meetings

- University of Manchester to host in March 2020.
- University of Liverpool to host in summer 2020.