

SCONUL Task Force on Information Skills, meeting, 29th March 2001

Present: Hilary Johnson (Chair), Deborah Bragan Turner, Helen Hathaway, Janet Peters. In attendance: Michele Shoebridge (CURL).

Apologies: Margaret Oldroyd, Stephen Town, Sheila Corral, Jo Parker, Martin Jenkins (UCISA)

Matters arising

JCALT. Result of JCALT 9/00 now known. Contact made with Colin Harris at Manchester Metropolitan. To be followed up at Glasgow SCONUL Conference.

SCONUL Conference workshop. Arrangements in hand to run a participative workshop on critical success factors in information skills work. The meeting briefly considered CSFs, identifying user satisfaction, 'impact', integration, market penetration, and the quality of the liaison relationship as among potential factors.

UCISA TLIG – decided that it is worth continuing links with TLIG (probably via Martin Jenkins attending meetings of the TF, and Janet Peters attending annual TLIG 'round-up' meeting. Janet reported on this year's TLIG meeting. Areas of overlapping interest are IT skills, MLEs and VLEs, Datasets, measuring customer satisfaction, and support for distance learners. The Association for Learning Technology (ALT) was felt to be an organisation with related interests.

Agenda

Membership.

Need to consider membership in the light of Margaret Oldroyd's withdrawal. Margaret's useful role in bringing a staff development perspective was noted, and thanks recorded for her efforts for the TF. At this juncture, it was also noted that the continuance of the TF activities had not been formally ratified by the Executive Board for a further period. Agreed to put an action plan to the EB (HJ action), and return to the issue of membership at the next meeting.

CURL interest.

Michele Shoebridge sketched the background for CURL's interest in aspects of teaching and learning. There was to be a CURL one-day meeting which will look at the pedagogical skills needed for library staff to work with and develop MLEs and VLEs, particularly content. This will consider issues of exploiting special collections in research libraries for the benefit of undergraduate teaching and learning. The group had also been considering aspects of reference services for the 24x7 library, and online reference services such as that being developed by the Library of Congress. Helen McFarlane is undertaking a project to look at how far new methods of learning and teaching are being used. Aspects of staff training for the new situations are felt to be important, with liaison librarians being seen more as knowledge managers. Michele commented that there is a danger that library staff will be 'left out of'

developments aimed at equipping teaching staff with the skills required to operate in the new environment, for example, being able to create new digital content. The University of Birmingham has been looking at options for training for staff, e.g. OU course 2400(?) and the Lancaster networked learning course. Librarians needed to understand the technology involved, understand the underlying pedagogical issues, and know about appropriate resources in the subject. The meeting reflected that some of this was what the EDULIB project had attempted to address. The CURL group had also considered issues related to the new AS qualifications. The meeting agreed that a greater awareness of what the 'Key skills' AS levels were about would be useful (HJ agreed to investigate). Agreed to keep in touch between the groups (via Michele).

OU short course

HJ, DBT and JP outlined developments at the meeting with OU staff in early March. The meeting discussed the idea of a development being 'badged' by SCONUL. The idea was felt to be worth floating. HJ/JP agreed to do some 'sounding out' at the Glasgow conference, with a view to perhaps putting together a proposal for the EB (meeting 8th May). Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) were suggested as a way for students to pay for any extra costs incurred.

Subject approaches

JP outlined results from the email survey conducted with education librarians (circulated via email).

DBT has continued discussions with Nottingham staff. There was an idea to include something about IS in the formal course documentation. Also discussed with other subject librarians at Nottingham – will email some notes from this. Discussions had raised the profile of IS work, but it was felt that it will be necessary to have something with credits attached and to formally include in the curriculum to have any specific effect.

HH pursuing an idea of an annotated bibliography to help put the content of IS work into the context of the subject.

Discussion identified the necessity to adopt a more common approach to TF work in this aspect in order to begin to answer the question – are there distinct subject norms in relation to IS work, and if so, are they important? Is it the subject which is key to differences, or is in fact the institutional context a more critical factor? What should be informing good practice in institutions?

Provisional date for next meeting Thursday 7th June. To be confirmed.

HJJ 17/4/01