

Kasia's research discussion-20231220_141249-Meeting Recording

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24m 5s

● Kasia Idzi started transcription

The background of my project:

I'm especially interested in supporting our students learning about different kinds of resources and how we can help them to see the wide range of resources we have and actually start using them and evaluating them; think what can be used for what (purpose). You know, like they have some practical things they do that could be supported in terms of research, but also that practical [side of] making things and then things that they can use for anything in their life, to be honest, (...)

Before I say what I want to do, is there anything you think you have in your head that you think we could do or would be good to do (in support of my query)?

Librarian 1: Well, it's strange because we were talking about this earlier on, about the activities week that's coming up and we were asked to put ideas into that spreadsheet. We were talking about, the Speakeasy and whether we should rebrand it and sort of try a different way. Because you (librarian 2) had an interesting idea when you were saying about how that was only relevant to acting students.

Librarian 2: Yeah, cause like the whole Speakeasy thing, like the naming of it and the branding of it, very much came from what? It was kind of designed and promoted towards making the acting and performance students feel part of the college and included, and now that that's not such an important thing, not that it's not important to include them, but it's not as important to target them.



Librarian 1: Yeah. Because they're embedded now.

Librarian 2: I wonder whether we still want to call it Speakeasy, because I don't necessarily think that even means a lot to some student, to a lot of students. Do we want to slightly rethink what we're saying, what they are about? Cause we were talking about like we said, bring something to perform. Well, design students

might not want to perform. So we were thinking maybe it could be more: bring something which inspires you, and if it inspires you to make a costume or set design or a sketch, then you know you can tell us about this poem or this piece of work, or this writing and why and what inspired you.

It doesn't have to be about performance, but it can still be about performance, because that is still half of our student body. So we don't wanna shut that down, but maybe we wanna widen it a bit.

Librarian 1: Yeah, I had an idea that we could maybe create a space that maybe if a student didn't like ~~sort of unsure and didn't really want to share~~ straight away that they could come and maybe be a bit passive at the beginning of the session, so maybe we could use films. We, you know, were thinking about maybe for this activities week doing something on London for example. We've got lots of DVDs, small short films about London, about 15 minutes each, from the swinging 60s.

So we could have, for an example, a type of session we could have like a 15 minute, let's watch this small film about the subject that we've picked, and then we'd have some items from the collection, maybe a book of London walks something, you know, just some fun things from the collection of all out on the table.

And then for this particular session, Librarian 2 was saying that a lot of the students from overseas won't have gone home, so they will be stuck in London. They won't be flying back to China or, you know, spending all that money just for a short time to go home. So to have a session like that, then about London, they might be inspired then to go and walk the streets, to go into town, you know, go and look at something or, you know, come and borrow some of those books around the subject area.

And so having the watching bit first takes that anxiety of 'I've got to come with something' and I think it will make the conversation more natural afterwards, because people feel relaxed.

Librarian 2: Like I think not having a starting point [for students to present] takes the pressure off the students.

me: You gave me ideas for 4-5 sessions already. London theme is great for us to start anything and then we can have different resources on this. So it's great we can show those to the students. When we think about the programs joining now, we aimed Speakeasy at performance and acting students, and I think it's great what you said.

(that) they can bring anything; like the students on my course: they sculpt things that maybe they could bring and we could talk about research on this. What to do further on? How to go deeper into the subject they interested in or something like that. It could be an object they bring, as you said, but it doesn't have to be [a text]. It's something that they inspired by or like a sketchbook or something like that. So I really like that.

Librarian 1: Or a show and tell sort of thing like we'll show you something from of our collection. You bring something for you. You know, that could be one of the sessions.



me: So it's like, I think, I can see two things at least: like one when they bring their objects and/or this could be something that you want to perform so we can start with anything like that, like a bit of exercise. [before introducing our resources]

To be honest we touched upon my next question. I thought how can we be inclusive, how we can support the students and not from being in this position of authority but also letting them, encourage them to participate in the session and speak more; allowing the space when someone wants to be quiet as well, but finding ways to include these people somehow too.

So I think we really touched upon it, but is there anything else you think we could do?

Librarian 1: Yeah, I thought of another idea because you were talking about inclusivity and it's sort of trying to pick topics, like the show and tell one could be anything you know, whatever anyone's working on. But if we pick themes or topics, then pick them so everybody can sort of come at it. So say like London, we all live in London. We're all here, the actual physical space of London.



Other thing I thought, you know, and you were talking about is poetry, you know, poetry is another thing that everybody can come together with.



I thought about food. We've got this some videos like Fanny Craddock and all mad, you know, really old food cooks on television. We could have a little showing of, you know, 10 minutes of someone doing a recipe and we've got loads of books about the history of food, food photography, making the food for set design. We could even ask people if they wanted to bring a recipe to share, you know?



ME: That sounds amazing because I straight away think that it's something we all relate to and it could be from different cultures and we could show blog posts, like random things from the websites but also what we have, like images.

I'm sure we can show some images that would be important for our students. 'Look at that.' You know, how they could relate that to their courses and stuff?

Librarian 1: And some weird like Victorian recipes. You know, the cookery books and all. All that sort of stuff. We've got stuff on BoB. We could watch one of those kitchen through time type. We could make a clip on BoB with particular interesting snippets. I just think that wouldn't be a scary thing to go to. As a student, you'd think "Ohh God, there's something about food in the library. They're gonna show a little film and then move to think a recipe." You know, so you want things that I think are gonna be fun. You gonna feel relaxed. You're gonna feel able to just come along and enjoy,



Librarian 2 and we'll sneak in the learning while they're not looking.



Me: I like it, I really like that, because I think I was really, how to say, my thinking was really old school librarian session: just come, and I show you the resources. I'm thinking: how can we include the students' voice? and you just talked about the solution- you more fun than I am.

Librarian 1: Well, I think you know, I think that's the Speakeasy I, you know, it worked. It was good, it was a good idea, but I think we've moved on from that now. There's still a space that students can come and we could have a performance one, but let's warm them up first. Let's say that they're not frightened about coming, you know, if we have stuff about London, poetry, food.



Librarian 2: Yeah, we start very general and then we can kind of maybe get more specific later on. If we start really specific, yeah, they'll just think well, they're not doing it for us. Why? Why would we be interested? But if they know that we have a whole series of them and one of them isn't really targeted to their general interest, well, that's OK. It's also like introducing to something that we can do later upstairs in our room with doing an on-line resources session, showing different kinds of resources, the ones that they can use in everyday [life] but also in their



practical research but maybe academic resources as well, not maybe, definitely academic resources, the ones that we subscribe to and they are so like underused in my opinion.

Librarian 1: Yeah, they are. And even if in one of these sessions we, you know, we'd be using the DVD with maybe using something from one of the databases or two of the databases. You know that that they will be sneaked in, you know, they won't even know. And then it's like ohh, what was that? "I didn't realize you had that."

Librarian 2: So many times when they asked and you said actually we got databases about this and you showed them from very specific targeted reason. It's like: "My God, that's amazing. I didn't know you had this" I do think that is something that came out of my research as well, the lack of knowledge about or lack of awareness about all those electronic resources and partly it's to do with [the fact that] we mentioned them [databases] in induction because we kind of want them to know about them, but we don't show them that we don't know, overwhelm them.

And then if we lose the opportunity to get in and actually show them to students in the first year, then they reached their second year when they don't know about it and quite possibly they reached a third year and don't know about it.

And then they turn around and say, well, I didn't know you have this or they just never know about it.

Me: I think it's really helpful talking to you, because I thought of doing something on sustainability, maybe climate change or something like that. But I think it's kind of serious thing to start with and definitely it's something I want to do because we have lots of things on sustainability and I think it's important for theatre students. (...) We could think of things like where they can get the resources on how to be more sustainable in what they're doing. I know that teachers, the tutors, they already doing their bit. I heard how they recycle things and stuff like that, but you know it could be something interesting [for us] to look into later on. So I think I might change what I wanted to do [next term].

Librarian 1: But I think the main thing I think for them is to make it fun, because that's how they're gonna come, you know, that's why they'll come back then, because if it's, you know, an hour they come along and they think, wow, good. Yeah, we just popped in and saw this bit of a film and then we had a really interesting

conversation together and that was funny or I found this weird thing that I'd never knew about before. Then the more likely to pop into the "ohhh what's the next one? Oh, it's on such and such." You know, you could have it on stuff like comedy. What is comedy? You could show some clips and if you can get people to talk.



Librarian 2: and In terms of inclusivity, you could say to international students: you you could bring (not that you have to) but you can bring examples of comedy from your culture that we don't know.. It's not just about us telling you: Look, here's Charlie Chaplin falling over, or something like that.



Librarian 1: And we could even suggest if we could even ask them, could you, you know, any we could have like a book or something and you could write in any themes that you would like for the future. Not promising that we would do them, but just if you got a theme that you would like us to use.



me: Yeah, I'm thinking, you know, that basically we started the conversation on one subject and we are touching upon another [one already] because from the questionnaire it came out clearly that we want, we need students' perspective to be able to do anything. And you just said: yes, ask them what things they would like the sessions on in the future, what would they enjoy? and base the sessions on this a bit more.

Librarian 1: You know, to collect that info. So then we might notice a certain theme coming up, you know, maybe more than one student might suggest something and that would give us an idea of "ohh wow. I never even thought that they might want something on Jane Austen" , you just don't know what they're gonna come out with.



Librarian 2: Yeah, that's true. They'll come out with something. They'll probably come out with video games, knowing our students, but maybe we could do video games [theme], and actually we could look at video games from the point of view of all the different courses. And like what that means? And world building.



me: Yeah, it would be costume design, could be scenery. Also the characters act. It's a voice over and stuff like that.

Librarian 2: Yep, yeah, you've got a performance. Definitely. So actually that that might be a way to get them in.



Librarian 1: And we've got lots of theory books on world building. I bought loads of them during lockdown for someone who was studying that, you know? So all stuff like Lord of the Rings, fantasy. The Narnia books? It's almost like the world building for video games, isn't it? There's a real crossover between fantasy literature and computer games.

me: And I think, from what we are saying, and when you talk to the students and read [about] - it's very transparent that students usually say ohh, I research things online. It's easy, an easy access. Everything has to be easy, quick and instant, and we can help by doing a more fun sessions. We can show that it [academic research] can be easy and fun because it is really not that difficult to go to our website, go through our web and the databases.

Librarian 1: Yeah. **Librarian 2:** Yeah, yeah.

me: It's scary, I think, for them in the beginning because it's different, but actually it's not as much. It is an easy access when you're studying at UAL. From the moment you have your username, you have your password, you have all these resources at hand, to be honest.

Librarian 1: Yeah.

Me: I think that's that will be all for me. I'm just like going through some of the things I [noted down].

There is one more thing, but I think it might be not for now. It's something we might discuss in the future, unless you want to [do it now].

Another thing that came out in the questionnaire is our academics and how we get them to understand that the library is not only books, it's us as well and our knowledge and, you know, how we make these connections with academics and if there is anything we could do.

Librarian 2: It's funny because that's part of what was being talked about in the meeting yesterday, really, wasn't it? Ultimately, what we can do is kind of restricted by what academics ask us for and, well, we can do these kind of sessions. But if academics don't know the full range of what we can do and what we can offer, then the students aren't going to ask us.

Librarian 1: I think that a lot of the academic staff, it depends on their experience, how they interact with the library. I think when they were a student that had strongly interacted with the library and got value out of the library so that's what continues

with them in their professional life. When they become an AL or whatever, then they will impart that on to the students. How important it is for them to come in, but if they've had a bad experience and I've got some friends who are terrified of library, a teacher. She had such a terrible experience with her librarian when she was at university that she just doesn't even go anywhere near the library.

And you know there's a lot of the dyslexia, you know, you could have an academic who's really severely dyslexic, has never really connected with the library, had a bad experience. And so it's not gonna funnel the students towards us.

me: Yeah, it's very difficult. I just like put it there because it comes up in everything we do. Yes, we can have the best will in the world ...

Librarian1: And you can try.

Librarian 2: I'm thinking, maybe in the next course committees we have something that we all say like, you know, sneak something in to promote the sessions more and doing more [of them] now when we have the space. I think we were also tired from renovations and moving books and everything.

Librarian 1 Yeah.

me: I think that we came to terms with it. We have our space and I think now we can brainstorm and work on things a bit more.

Librarian 1: Exactly. And you think this is the anniversary? It was this time last year. Course. Yeah, that we were working the weekends to get upstairs ready and everything was in crates, you know? So I think this next year... you're doing this at an ideal time because this is the time now we've got the space and these are the sessions that we've all sort of been dreaming of being able to do. It's amazing that you're doing the PGcert and this is what you're focusing on.

Me: and it fits well Librarian 2's research. So I think it's good.

