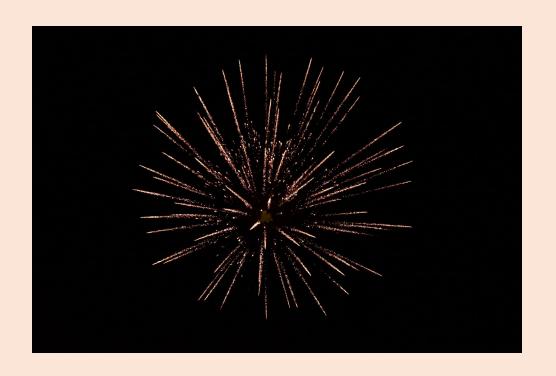# Working together for student success: a collaborative approach to dissertation support in Sport

Chris Cattell & **Kathryn Devine**

School of Sport and Exercise Science/Library Services

Rationale

- For academic staff, dissertation support often entails repetition of research skills instruction and conveyance of administrative information, and signposting to academic librarian for one-to-one appointments, with time implication for both staff members

- Therefore, we thought offering a writing retreat/workshop could help reduce repeatedly conveying core information and refreshing research skills on an individual basis

- By having the academic and the librarian jointly lead the session, we clearly present ourselves to students as a team, and can cover a wide range of queries between us

- Couture *et al.* (2020) note the challenge for (particularly first-generation) students created by "expectations" of "tacit" (p. 127) or "assumed" (p. 132) knowledge in negotiating "the hidden curriculum of higher education and academic libraries" (p. 142)

- Workshops attempt to overcome this by providing a "safe space" in which students can explore and ideate research interests, fostering learning communities and reducing feelings of isolation

Benefits of librarian/academic collaboration – the literature

- Raspa and Ward (2000, quoted in Zanin-Yost and Dillen, 2019, p. 48) argue that higher education has "reached a point at which neither librarians nor instructional faculty can adequately teach the research process in isolation of each other"

- "Collaboration enables the pooling of expertise and exploitation of available resources and technologies in ways that maximise learning opportunities for students" (Pham and Tanner, 2014, p. 16)

- Academics and librarians should collaborate to help students "address the complexity of the current information environment" (Gibson and Jacobson, 2018, p. 183)

So, in sum, research shows that collaborative working has benefits for both colleague relationships, and satisfaction, learning, and outcomes for students

What did we do and what happened?

- We ran a three-hour workshop in October 2023

- Four out of the five attendees were top up students

- Student-led, so no formal agenda, but to set expectations, in advance of the session we suggested covering topic selection, advanced searching, Zotero (reference management software), and ethics form completion

- We covered everything we intended but found that students were not as confident with more basic information literacy and referencing skills as we might have expected/hoped

- Students had questions about practicalities such as creating transcripts of interviews which we had not anticipated

Outcomes/what we learned

- Feedback received that the session was that it was "*really helpful and useful because I understood what I was doing throughout my IRP".* We struggled to get feedback after the fact, so next time we will ask at the close of the session, with a view to informing content of follow up workshop(s)

- Joint tutorials with students (requested by student)

- We feel this was successful enough to do again – next time, we will consider renaming the October session a "research workshop", since none of the students was at writing stage, and offer a follow up "writing" workshop

Any questions?

References

Couture, J. *et al*. (2021) '"We're gonna figure this out": first-generation students and academic libraries', *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 21(1), pp. 127–147. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2021.0009.

Gibson, C. and Jacobson, T.E. (2018) 'Habits of mind in an uncertain information world', *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 57(3), pp. 183–192. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5860/rusq.57.3.6603.

Pham, H.T. and Tanner, K. (2014) 'Collaboration between academics and librarians: a literature review and framework for analysis', *Library Review*, 63(1/2), pp. 15–45. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/LR-06-2013-0064.

Zanin-Yost, A. and Dillen, C. (2019) 'Connecting past to future needs: nursing faculty and librarian collaboration to support students' academic success', *Journal of Library Administration*, 59(1), pp. 45–58. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2018.1549407.