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Librarian TeachMeet at Huddersfield

The idea for holding a TeachMeet for librarians at Huddersfield came via the Librarians as Teachers Network (<http://latnetwork.spruz.com/>) where the first ever TeachMeet for librarians was advertised for Cambridge, September 2010 (<http://teachmeet.pbworks.com/w/page/28149182/Cambridge-Librarian-TeachMeet>). The idea of a TeachMeet, an unconference style meeting to share teaching ideas and experience sounded fantastic to me, so I got together with a group of other librarians at the University of Huddersfield to organise our own!

Myself (Andrew Walsh); Lisa Balman; Kirsty Bower; Zoë Johnson; and Sarah Munks organised the Yorkshire event in February 2011. We sorted out a small room within our University and planned an afternoon of networking and sharing of ideas.

Perhaps a little nervous about leaving the afternoon too unstructured for our first TeachMeet we had three distinct activities – a set of short talks (normally the core of a TeachMeet), plus thirty minutes of Speed Networking and an activity based around stimulating ideas using a “Bag of Goodies”.

The afternoon started off with a fantastic, noisy, enthusiastic half hour of speed networking, something flagged up by several attendees as their favourite part of the day. Everyone met at least half the other people present, sharing their favourite teaching tips and writing down contacts, tips and useful information on their “speed networking” card. We were a little worried though at the amount of people who called it speed dating, which wasn’t something we were deliberately trying to encourage! The speed networking really helped to break the ice, as no-one was quite sure what to expect from a TeachMeet, we think it really set the scene for the rest of the afternoon.

“Speed networking was fabulous (the most valuable part of the teach meet)”

“Liked the speed dating (would liked that to be longer)”

We then moved onto the short presentations, which were recorded and put onto YouTube straight afterwards (<http://hudteachmeet.blogspot.com/search/label/talks>). There were a real mix of talks here, all allowing us a valuable little window of insight into what our colleagues were doing with their own teaching. We suffered here slightly by not being strict enough with timings, so we ran over time somewhat and didn’t have enough time for questions. Perhaps the next event we organise, we might try Pecha Kucha (<http://www.pecha-kucha.org/what>) for the talks, forcing us all to stick to schedule! We think it might have also been helpful to send out ideas for the sort of topics to cover in the talks, as the TeachMeet idea was so new for everyone, some struggled to know what to talk about.

“Enjoyed the mini-presentations - just the right length”

“5 min sharing hour was very informative”

Last of all, we had a chance for everyone to get together in groups and discuss teaching ideas, using a “Bag of Goodies” to stimulate discussion. Everyone was split into small groups around tables with a bag of things to look at, from clothes pegs, to modelling clay. The groups wrote

ideas down on paper tablecloths (<http://hudteachmeet.blogspot.com/2011/02/bag-of-goodies-notes.html>) as they went.

There was some great general feedback about the day (<http://hudteachmeet.blogspot.com/2011/02/some-feedback-from-day.html>), and we'll definitely organise another in future. Before that, they'll hopefully be other people organising some Librarian TeachMeets in the North of England – Liverpool is sounding promising soon!

“V. enjoyable afternoon - lots of activity in bite sized chunks”

“Excellent, thoroughly enjoyable and informative - great to share and learnt a lot”

“Great networking and information sharing experience”

“Time rushed by - really good & stimulating session - enjoyed very much”

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