

Education Outreach Impact Report 22-24





It is with great pride and pleasure that we share the latest report on the work of Newcastle University Library's Education Outreach team. Taking our extensive range of information resources and unique and distinctive collections as inspiration, the team offer a varied outreach programme to local schools and colleges to empower them to succeed academically whilst also raising their aspirations about their future education and careers.

Our Archives Alive programme offers opportunities for students to 'touch' history and engage with our rare books and archives, piquing their curiosity and widening their horizons. Students work alongside lecturers and university students, find out about current research and experience first-hand what it is like to study at university. They are encouraged to discover and reflect upon links between the subjects they study in school and the wider world. Our activities range far beyond the confines of the classroom – students may find themselves exploring the local countryside, visiting local heritage sites, or working in laboratories.

To ensure equity of access, we offer a successful study skills programme. Working alongside our own students in the library offers school students a glimpse of university life and helps inform future choices. Our Bridging the Gap resources, designed with students and staff, ensure all students are supported and empowered to successfully transition into higher education.

We are proud that our offer to schools and colleges encourages students to build upon their confidence, enhance their cultural capital and gives them the freedom and opportunity to succeed.

Jill Taylor-Roe, Director of Academic Services and University Librarian

Our vision

We aspire to shape brighter futures by providing opportunities for children and young people to engage with the University Library. We aspire to widen horizons, raise aspirations, and help students make informed decisions about their futures.



Education in the North East

The North East of England traditionally has one of the lowest rates of progression to higher education of any region in the country. We are seeking to address this imbalance by offering young people educational opportunities and experiences that will widen their horizons and raise their aspirations, enabling them to make informed choices about their future.



Our impact

209,757 users visited our websites in the last year

4,646 students attended our workshops over the last two years

227 students took part in our projects over the last two years

We've worked with 11 external partners over the last two years

We've received £18,158 through successful funding bids over the last two years



Archives Alive

Inspiring students to be curious about their past, present and future through a bespoke programme of workshops, projects and online learning, brought to life by our rare books and archives.



Project-based learning

Project-based learning allows students to access unique resources, places and people, inspiring them to think and learn creatively. The scope of these projects is beyond the reach of 'normal' school lessons, and they positively challenge students to succeed in real-life scenarios. Links with the University provide unique opportunities to glimpse what higher education is like and raise aspirations.

Over the last two academic years, we:

Delivered:

- 33 taught days
- 160 contact hours
- 4 exhibitions

Engaged with:

- 12 schools
- 227 students
- 11 partners



Species: Past, Present and Future

Too often climate change is talked about in terms of doomsday statistics. Funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund enabled students to find their voice and highlight the positive biodiversity research and work being done at Wallington by the University and the National Trust. In creating a public exhibition of poetry and prints about extinct, endangered and re-introduced species, the project offered a different perspective, encouraging everyone to look afresh at the positive work around climate change.

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Our students have gained more confidence within their own abilities to create artwork and poetry [...], developed a deeper appreciation for our environment and have been introduced to new and different career paths.

Teacher, Astley High School



Houses of the Future

Architecture, bio-technology and town planning are subjects that are not currently taught in schools. Working alongside academics and university students to create a public exhibition of model houses which addressed issues caused by climate change, students gained skills in teamwork, collaboration, problem-solving and creativity, helping to inform them about future careers in these fields.

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It has created a real sense of excitement for the students to watch ideas and objects grow and has really helped to raise aspirations and thoughts for future pathways.

Teacher, Sandhill View Academy



Parliamentary Debate

Equity is at the heart of our work. This project directly addressed the challenge some students feel in finding their spoken voice. Working nationally with oracy charity, Voice 21 and the National Civil War Centre, this project equipped teachers and students with the skills to debate. Participating students gained the confidence to continue their academic journey with equal opportunity to others.

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Both me and my students have learned huge amounts and we are keen on creating a legacy of the project in school through debating clubs.

Teacher, Newark Academy



Reflections on Seaton Sluice

Too often we dismiss our immediate locality, with complacency and familiarity leading to a lack of appreciation. By engaging with experts in a wide variety of subjects and sectors, from heritage and history to science and coastal management, students from Seaton Sluice were encouraged to look afresh at the complexities and beauty of our coasts and consider careers linked to them.

A Sense of Place

Working in collaboration with a variety of partners on projects is a key strength of the Education Outreach team. By working with Northumberland National Park, academics and creative professionals, this project enabled students to take part in creative wellbeing activities inspired by Northumberland's natural heritage, culminating in an exhibition of poetry and glass art at The Sill.



Workshops

Our Archives Alive workshops run throughout the year, inviting local schools and colleges to gain hands-on experience with items held in the University's Special Collections and Archives while engaging with the curriculum.

Over the last two academic years, we:



Delivered 47 workshops

From 'Cracking Cholera' and 'Letters from the Trenches', to 'Civil Rights in the USA' and 'Health and the People'.



Worked with 30 schools

From across the North of England and beyond.



Engaged with 1,395 students

Who gained hands-on experience with archival items held in our Special Collections.

Cracking Cholera

Providing cross-curricular experiences outside the classroom encourages students to see the links between disparate subjects. Cracking Cholera does just this by combining primary source work with archives and hands-on experiments in the laboratories. Visiting Newcastle University highlights the breadth of potential areas of study on offer, enhancing students' career aspirations.

Health and the People

Through handling rare books related to the history of medicine, students are literally touching history in a way that brings it to life. Teaming up with the Great North Museum has enabled us to not only offer more of our Health and the People workshops, but also to take a cross-collections approach to the topic, showcasing how archives, books and artefacts together enable us to learn about the past.



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The children absolutely loved looking at the special collections - their involvement and participation was great! The staff were incredible - so lovely, engaging and passionate about their work!

Teacher, St Bernadette's school



Online resources

Our online primary source-based learning activities and websites continue to see high usage. Over the last two academic years, we have worked with partners and school and college staff to further develop our online offer, and have exciting plans for the future.

Health and the People

We are redeveloping our GCSE Health and the People website in collaboration with Surgeon's Hall Museum, Edinburgh, mapping it more closely to the curriculum and developing brand new resources.

British Civil Wars

Our British Civil Wars website created in collaboration with the National Civil War Centre continues to see lots of use, with almost 69,000 views in the 23-24 academic year.

Downloadable activities

Our downloadable primary source activities have continued to grow, with new resources covering disease and death in 19th-century Britain, debating in the classroom and Civil Rights in the USA.



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The resources were hugely valuable to our year 13 students as they explored how to use primary sources in their A-Level coursework.

Teacher, Ponteland High School



Sixth Form Study Skills

Enabling A-Level students to succeed by providing free study skills resources and workshops.



Workshops

Our Sixth Form Study Skills workshops are offered in person at the University Library, online or in school. Our in-person sessions invite A-Level students to become University students for the day and complete their own research here on campus.

Over the last two academic years, we delivered:



On-campus workshops

- 2,846 students
- 104 sessions
- 69 schools



In-school workshops

- 140 students
- 3 sessions
- 3 schools



Online workshops

- 265 students
- 7 sessions
- 7 schools

Our online Sixth Form Study Skills workshops have allowed us to reach other areas of the UK, as well as Spain and Qatar.



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We really appreciated it. A great mix of presentations which kept their interest on an important and useful topic.

Teacher, Almunecar International School, Spain

Online resources

All students should be equipped to succeed, whether doing their A-Levels or starting their undergraduate degree. Our Bridging the Gap project, shortlisted for a Times Higher Education Award, directly addressed this by providing over 40 brand-new study skills resources. Informed by experts and created with students, our resources range from quizzes and interactives to videos and animations, enabling all to succeed and transition into higher education.

Over 21,000 views

In less than three months since the new website launched.



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The project is providing innovative and accessible resources that all students can access easily, and they are doing it in a compassionate, understanding way, which in my opinion is the most valuable asset that this project has.

Student intern, Bridging the Gap project



Networks

Learning Arc

We are one of the founding members of Learning Arc, a network of organisations representing the unique heritage of the North East region. It is a non-judgemental group for collaborative learning, offering the opportunity for project and practice review in a supportive environment. Using 'Networks for Change' funding from The National Archives, in 2023 we conducted an independent piece of research into our work within education settings, which will be disseminated in the 24-25 academic year.

North East School Librarians Network

Our North East School Librarians Network is a supportive and friendly group of school library staff from the local area formed in 2023. In the 23-24 academic year, we held our first event at the University - our North East School Librarians (un)Conference, where members were invited to share their personal highlights.



Working with students

3 Bequest Interns

We've worked with three postgraduate student interns supported by the Robinson Bequest bursary. One assisted with evaluation of our projects, one helped with developing new Special Collections resources, and one undertook user research with teachers.

6 Bridging the Gap Interns

Over the course of the project, we worked with 5 undergraduate interns and 1 postgraduate intern. These students were part of our project team and worked in partnership with us to develop our new Sixth Form Study Skills website.

1 Resource Development Intern

We employed a student to support in developing our Crime and Punishment and Civil Rights in the USA resources.

Casual student work

We have also offered lots of casual work opportunities to students, from supporting school and college students as part of our projects to testing out our learning resources and providing feedback.

Funding and awards

In addition to core funding from the University Library and Robinson Bequest, we frequently apply to other funding streams to support our work. While we continued to work on projects using funding previously acquired, we also successfully secured funds from:

National Lottery Heritage Fund

We received £9,983 to support us in delivering our Species: Past, Present and Future project in collaboration with the National Trust.

University Careers

We were awarded £3,200 from the University Careers Service to pay towards four student interns working on our Bridging the Gap project.

Catherine Cookson Foundation

We successfully applied for £4,975 to support us in delivering our Get Creative! project throughout the 2024-25 academic year, where we'll be working with creative practitioners and Student Wellbeing to deliver creative wellbeing activities for Stage 1 and 2 undergraduate students.

Sandford Award

We are delighted to have received formal recognition for our work this year in the form of a Sandford Award, the only nationally recognised quality mark for heritage learning. The assessor commented:

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The archives really are alive at Newcastle University Library! Using archives and special collections as a jumping off point for explorations into all manner of curriculum related topics, staff offer opportunities for students to 'touch history' and be inspired. Whether interactively investigating an outbreak of cholera, discovering what it was like to work in the mines, or learning about the impact of the British Civil Wars on their local area, schools will leave excited by the potential of primary source material and with an understanding of how local people and events relate to a national and international context.

Times Higher Education Award

In 2023, our Bridging the Gap project was shortlisted for a Times Higher Education award for Outstanding Library Team.

Find out more

ncl.ac.uk/library/in-the-community/education-outreach/

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