

Great day in Worcester

Big thanks to everyone who came to my training day last Friday in Worcester. It was organised by Walford and North Shropshire College and brought together staff from further education colleges across the region. It was called From Theory to Practice and the idea was to develop lots of practical activities to use in the classroom with Foundation level students. These may have learning difficulties but certainly will have literacy issues and be 'quick forgetters' so teachers will need a variety of materials and approaches to revisit the subject matter in different ways.

✘ I wanted to make it a very lively course with lots of group work and hands on activities to do. I was lucky as the delegates were keen to take part. We took the theme of food hygiene and played card games, made a podcast about a dirty hotel, created pop ups so when the mouse hovers over a picture of a chicken, information about temperatures pops up. We played with PhotoStory and Smart Notebook software to make some drag and drop and rub and reveal activities using visuals and a kinaesthetic approach.

By the end of the day we all knew more about food hygiene than we thought was possible and the delegates had a workbook of materials to adapt for their own subject.

Check out the [PROGRAMME](#) here. Similar courses can be booked through Martin Smith at [Education Associates](#)

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Bett – The seminar ...

☒ Last week I did a seminar at BETT. Because of the heavy snow I was quite confident I would have an audience of about 6 people, duly bedraggled and damp, and would struggle to keep going in an atmosphere of gloom and despondency. Well I was wrong. There were about a hundred people in total, including those sitting on the floor and standing at the back and they were an interested, interesting and knowledgeable crew so I learnt some new stuff as well.

The seminar was called Technology and the Future of Literacy. It was based on the findings of the Niace book [Screens and Pages -Technology and Reading for Pleasure](#) •

It looked at iPods, e-readers, the internet and digital literacy and you can read a review [here](#).

I will be doing it all again at the Education Show at the National Literacy Association Campaign for Reading Conference: The Future of Reading? on Friday 5th March at 3pm

Pitching and Dealing in Manchester!

Yesterday I went on a Pitch and Deal course run by the National Union of Journalists in Manchester. I chose Manchester for family reasons and had a great night out at Dimitris Tapas Taverna – a cross cultural confusion if I ever saw one. Check out their website <http://www.dimitris.co.uk/>. You won't thank me for this but it's fine once you get past

the first page.

Role Play

✘ Anyway, on to the course. There were only 7 of us so we got a lot of practice at role play. I started the day off pitching a piece about technology for older people. Lisa, a freelance music journalist and photographer, obligingly played an editor. Each time the group stopped me and we started again, Lisa sounded more abrupt and short tempered – so like real life. In the end I would rather have chewed my arm off than pitch to her again. I resisted the urge to apologise for troubling her and tried very hard not to waffle on about my experience and why I was the only person who could produce the copy.

Good Networking Opportunities

✘ One of the other course members was Louise Bolotin. We got talking about epilepsy. I have just finished a big article of *Special Children* and won a *Responsible Reporting Award* from the *National Society for Epilepsy* 2 years ago so it is a subject dear to my heart. Louise developed epilepsy a few years ago and has written *Epilepsy: The Essential Guide*. It was published by Need2Know earlier this year and the first edition sold out within a week. Louise is a very interesting person and in addition to her experience as a music journalist

and a finance writer, she is also editor of Skin Two, a fetish magazine which produces a 'coffee table' hard back year book. Check out this multi talented woman at <http://louisebolotin.com/>

Armed and Ready

The Pitch and Deal course was really good. Humphrey Evans & Phil Sutcliffe, the tutors, really know their stuff and after surviving the day none of us are going to be palmed off by magazines which say they have no budget. Oh no – we know the inside story now. For future courses, have a look on the NUJ site .

☒ The only worrying thing about the course is that the group reckoned I had a natural talent as a commissioning editor, so maybe I need to look for another job now.