

TMI

Too Much Information

A resource created for the **Creating Future-proof Graduates** project
Centre for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching



National
Teaching
Fellowship
Scheme



Throughout their courses students are gathering information, facts and knowledge about their subject area. When they go out into the world of work, it can be very tempting to make sure everyone knows they know their 'stuff'. Employers have raised the issue of new graduates not always being appropriately selective in the way they use their knowledge, resulting in confusion, dismay or dissatisfaction on the part of the client, customer or service users (for convenience here, we will use the word 'client' in future).

But even more important is the understanding that it is how you use the information, that it is suitable to the circumstances and meets the needs of the other person being communicated with.

TMI (too much information) examines what can happen when a knowledgeable new graduate doesn't focus on the needs of others in their communications with them. Although information literacy is usually used to mean how to source the 'right' information, the definition below suggests it is also about how appropriately you use this information:

Information literacy is an understanding and set of abilities enabling individuals to recognise when information is needed and have the capacity to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information. An information-literate person determines the extent of information needed, evaluates its sources and understands issues surrounding its legal and ethical use.

(Australian Information Literacy Standards)

The following suggestions are ways to use the TMI resource with students to help them apply their knowledge in an appropriate, less complicated way, which meets the needs of their client. There are four scenarios, created using photo audio clips, demonstrating what happens to one 'client' when she encounters the new graduate in different parts of her life. There are a further four short clips in which the client explains how she felt and what it was she had needed from the encounter.

Our message is TMI can happen anywhere. The four scenarios illustrate this can be a common problem. We do understand that students may often have a blinkered view of the world and if the materials don't directly relate to their subject area they may not see the relevance. So, if your students are from a different discipline to those in the TMI resource, using the model scripts for inspiration, you could create or get your students to create new scenarios tailored to their professional or vocational subject area.

TMI has been produced as one of the resources for the Creating Futureproof Graduates Project at Birmingham City University with funding from the Higher Education Academy National Teaching Fellowship Project.

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Full information about this resource can be found on the website www.bcu.ac.uk/futureproof



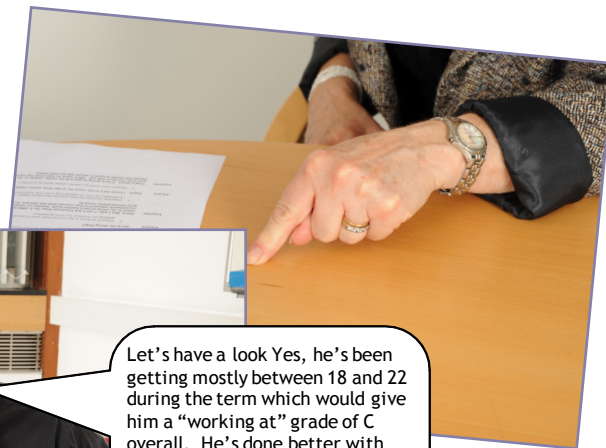
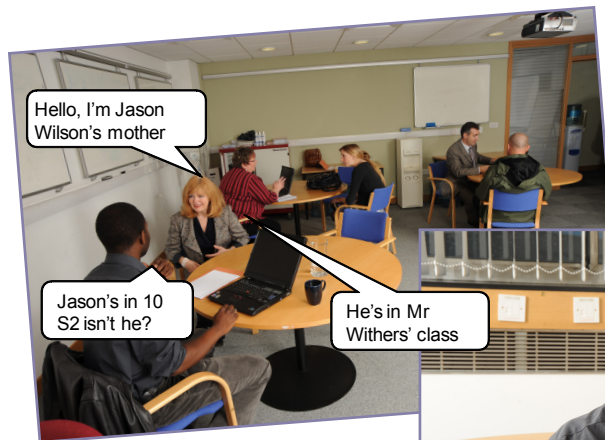
Hello, my name is Sally Wilson

I am married with two teenaged boys, Jason who is 15 and Nigel, who has just gone into Year 8. I have to attend a parent's evening very soon to discuss Jason's progress with his GCSEs.

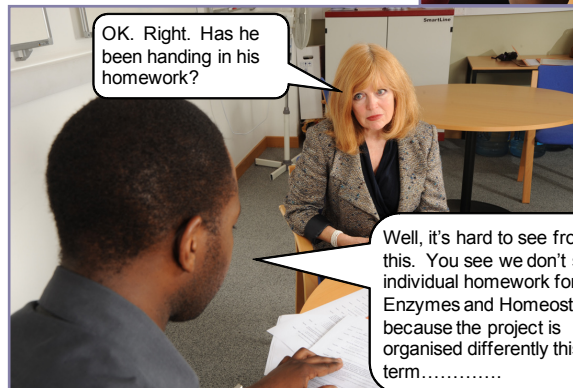
My husband Trevor was, until very recently, an electrical engineer, but his firm have just made him redundant and we are concerned we might not be able to manage the mortgage, although we do have his redundancy pay and some savings which will tide us over for a few months. We don't actually have a very large mortgage, but it is still worrying. I have been told I should go to the local housing office at the council to see what options we might have to save our home.

Still, I have been running my own business for a while now and at a friend's suggestion, I am going to see a web designer about setting up a web site as that might be a way to bring in much more business.

This hasn't been my year. Perhaps with all the stress, I have been having stomach problems and have to go to the hospital for a barium enema, which I am quite nervous about. It is always so personal to talk about things happening 'down there'.....



Let's have a look Yes, he's been getting mostly between 18 and 22 during the term which would give him a "working at" grade of C overall. He's done better with Enzymes and Homeostasis than he did with Bonding and Reactions. He only got 14 for his test on Bonding and Reactions which would actually give him a D.



If he's going to get a B he needs to be getting above 23 and he's e really needs not done that yet.



Parent: I'm Jason Wilson's mother.

Teacher: Hello Mrs Wilson. Do take a seat. Jason's in 10 S2 isn't he?

Parent: He's in Mr Withers' class

Teacher: That's his form tutor. He's in Science set 2.

Parent: Right!

Teacher: Let's have a look (consults spreadsheet on laptop). Yes, he's been getting mostly between 18 and 22 during the term which would give him a "working at" grade of C overall. He's done better with Enzymes and Homeostasis than he did with Bonding and Reactions. He only got 14 for his test on Bonding and Reactions which would actually give him a D.

Parent: Oh!

Teacher: Since he got a 6 for his SATs we're really looking for him to be getting on for Bs at this point in the course.

Parent: Right. What about the Enzymes one...?

Teacher: Yes, Enzymes and Homeostasis. That's where he's been getting the higher marks. Let's see.... He's got one 22, a 20 and three 18s so far. That would give him a C but, like I say, we think he should be getting Bs really.

Parent: OK. Right. Has he been handing in his homework?

Teacher: Well, it's hard to see from this. You see we don't set individual homeworks for Enzymes and Homeostasis because the project is organised differently this term. Last term when we were doing Bonding and Reactions they did have separate homeworks but not this term.

Parent: I see. So, should he be doing homework for science?

Teacher: Oh yes. We expect them to be doing something around one-and-a-half to two hours a week really.

Parent: So is he doing that?

Teacher: We'll, like I say, I can't tell because they do it differently this term. They need to do more project based work, based on what we do in class. It's the coursework element of the course that we always do through the Enzymes and Homeostasis module.

Parent: Right. I know he's in his room for a fair time every night.

Teacher: That's good. If he's going to get a B he really needs to be getting above 23 and he's not done that yet. We'll have to see what his next mark is when he hands the whole project in which will be next week.

Parent: OK. So if he does get 23 or above, does that mean he'll get a B?

Teacher: Not necessarily. All the marks have to be put together. So far he's working at a C. We'll take the average mark from Bonding and Reactions (consults laptop) which was 13.4, and add that to the average mark from Enzymes and Homeostasis. I guessing that he'll end up with something between 19 and 20. Let's say it's 19.5, just for now, that would give him a combined average of 32.9 so far.

Parent: Right. Is that good?

Teacher: Well, we'd need to add the Radioactivity and Space average to that...

Parent: Sorry. Radioactivity and Space...?

Teacher: ...that's what we're doing next term. We'll add the averages together, but, as I say, he wouldn't get above a C at the moment. We won't know the final result until he's done all four modules for this year.

Parent: No, of course not.

Teacher: And once we've got the final result for this year, we'll add the results that he gets in year 11. Because it's a double award in science, the marks are carried forward.

Parent: I see.

Teacher: Hopefully he'll do really well with Radioactivity and Space, I think that will interest him a bit more.

Parent: Yes, let's hope so. I've told him how important science is.

Teacher: That's good. I think if you just keep encouraging him with the Enzymes and Homeostasis coursework, that will help him quite a bit.

Parent: Yes. I'll have a word with him when I get home. Thanks very much.

Teacher: Pleasure. Nice to meet you.





I need your help as I am going to lose my home in a few weeks and I am desperate. I was told you help people like me.

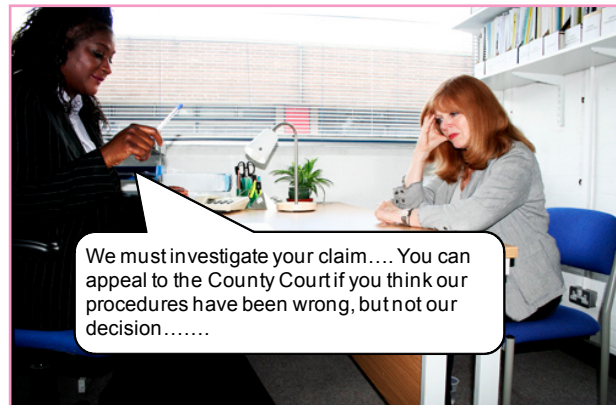


Well let me explain the rules. First of all we have to see if you are **eligible**, that means you can't be an asylum seeker....



We will get to that. I am still trying to explain our procedures first

I am trying to tell you what is happening, my husband lost his job...



We must investigate your claim.... You can appeal to the County Court if you think our procedures have been wrong, but not our decision.....

Officer Good afternoon. My name is Mrs Hill. How can I help you?

Client I need your help as I am going to lose my home in a few weeks and I am desperate. I was told you help people like me.

Officer Well that might depend on your circumstances. There are very strict rules we must follow to see if you qualify for our assistance

Client Oh dear, what if I don't qualify?

Officer Well let me explain the rules. We have to follow Part Seven of the Housing Act 1996 as it has been amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. First of all we have to see if you are eligible, that means you can't be an asylum seeker....

Client But I was born here.....

Officer Let me finish please. Once we have determined you are eligible you have other tests you have to pass. You have to either be pregnant or someone who always lives with you must be pregnant.....

Client Do I look as if I might be pregnant? My children are both boys and I have brought them up properly so they don't get a girl pregnant

Officer Or you have dependant children. Then we have to see if you are actually going to be homeless within the next 28 days.....

Client I am trying to tell you what is happening, my husband lost his job...

Officer We will get to that. I am still trying to explain our procedures first. Once we have established that you are in priority need and going to be homeless, we then have to see why you are going to be homeless and that you haven't deliberately done something to make yourself homeless.

Client (head down and looking defeated)


Officer

We must investigate your claim to be homeless and once we are satisfied we know what is what we must send you a Section 190-198 notification in writing of our decision. (Client now looks very distressed). You will then have 28 days to make an appeal on a Section 202 if you aren't satisfied with our decision. If we say we can't help we may have to provide you with accommodation until the appeal is over. You can appeal to the County Court if you think our procedures have been wrong, but not our decision.....

Client

But what will happen to my family if you throw us out?






Mrs. Wilson, nice to meet you, I believe you are interested in setting up a website?

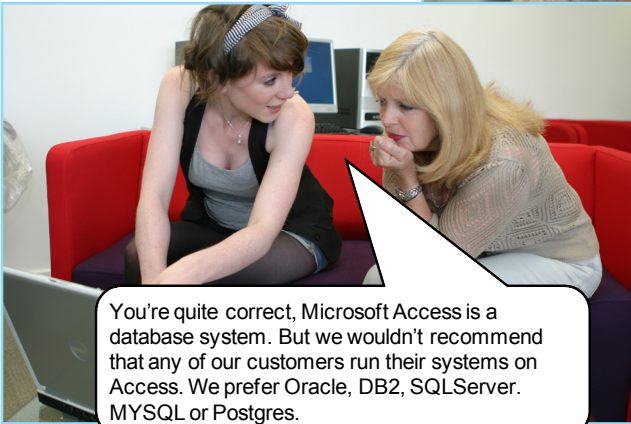
Yes, I am. I grow organic vegetables and I'd like to expand my business with a mail order service.




Server technology?



We need to know how your site will be hosted. So you'll need to work through an ISP. They will offer you the opportunity of co-location, shared server or dedicated hosting. We can work with all three of these solutions but we need to know what server technology they support.



You're quite correct, Microsoft Access is a database system. But we wouldn't recommend that any of our customers run their systems on Access. We prefer Oracle, DB2, SQLServer. MySQL or Postgres.



I'll make an appointment again when I feel ready. It may be some time before I am.

The web designer's office

Salesperson Mrs. Wilson, nice to meet you, I believe you are interested in setting up a website?

Client Yes, I am. I grow organic vegetables and I'd like to expand my business with a mail order service.

Salesperson Well you've come to the right place. The Web is a wonderful place for engaging new customers but some people find it difficult to cope with the technology. We specialize in making the business of constructing a web site as simple as putting an advert in the paper.

Client I'm glad to hear that. I use my computer for doing my accounts but beyond that I'm not up to date on modern technology

Salesperson Just leave the worry about technology to us. All you need to do to get the website you want is to answer a few simple questions.

Client Ok. What do you need to know?

Salesperson We need to know how your site will be hosted. From what you've said it doesn't look likely you'll be able to manage in house hosting. So you'll need to work through an ISP. They will offer you the opportunity of co-location, shared server or dedicated hosting. We can work with all three of these solutions but we need to know what server technology they support.

Client Server technology?

Salesperson They will either support Linux and Windows. Depending on which of these they have then they will support different types of server software.

Client And this makes a difference?

Salesperson Yes, we can develop for IIS or Apache. If they have Linux then the server will almost certainly be Apache. If they run Windows then it's likely to be IIS but it could be Apache.

Client Suppose it's not either?

Salesperson Not either Windows and Linux or not either Apache or IIS?

Client Both, I suppose.

Salesperson Well, I suppose conceivably there might be someone who is running Solaris and there are other server technologies. They aren't very common and there shouldn't be a problem. What might create some problems for us is the database technology used by your ISP.

Client What technology?

Salesperson Well you can't expect to have an e-commerce site without a database. We have expertise in a number of database technologies but we can't guarantee to work with every flavour of database system.

Client Is Microsoft Access a database system? I believe I have that on my computer.

Salesperson You're quite correct, Microsoft Access is a database system. But we wouldn't recommend that any of our customers run their systems on Access. We prefer Oracle, DB2, SQLServer. MYSQL or Postgres.

Client And this choice will make a difference to me?

Salesperson No difference at all to you but it would make a difference to our capability to deliver if the database was one we've not used before. You just have to make sure your ISP supports something we are familiar with.

Client So what would suit you best?

Salesperson We prefer LAMP.

Client You've referred to lots of technology so far but I think this is the first time you've said lamp? Is this something new?

Salesperson No, I have. LAMP is Linux, Apache, MySQL and PHP.

Client I'm sure you haven't mentioned PHP.

Salesperson You're right and it is important. PHP is a scripting language. If we are developing on Windows with IIS then we would probably use ASP.NET but otherwise we prefer PHP. We can develop in JSP as well. You just have to make sure your ISP supports one of these technologies.

Client I think I've understood that I need to talk to someone else before I talk to you. Perhaps I could talk to you again when I'm better prepared?

Salesperson Great then, I'll look forward to hearing from you in a few days when we can go through the few simple questions I mentioned.

Client You mean we haven't started yet?

Salesperson Well not really, but when we do it will only take a few minutes of your time. Quite straightforward.

Client I'll make an appointment again when I feel ready. It may be some time before I am.



Hello Mrs Wilson. I will be the radiographer helping Dr Singh with your barium enema this morning.



Now, I just need to make a few checks. Have you followed the low residue diet?

Well, I followed the diet instructions that the hospital sent me.

Do you have a history of Glucagonoma or phaeochromocytoma.....



Fee o what....?

...we will get you to roll around on the table into different positions whilst the radiologist takes some fluorographic images.

So, are you happy for us to get started?

Let me explain the procedure. We need to get you up on the screening table and place a rectal catheter into your rectum. We may have to inflate a little balloon too but only if we have to as we want to minimise the risk of perforation



Perforation? What do you mean?



The hospital appointment

Radiographer Hello Mrs Smith. My name is Jane and I will be the radiographer helping Dr Singh with your barium enema this morning.

Patient Hello, I'm a bit nervous actually

Radiographer Not to worry Mrs. Smith, I'll explain everything to you so there won't be anything to be scared about. We perform these examinations all the time. Now, I just need to make a few checks. Have you followed the low residue diet?

Patient Well, I followed the diet instructions that the hospital sent me.

Radiographer It is very important to follow this low residue diet so that your colon is completely clear from any faecal material as this could potentially simulate colonic pathology such as polyps or cancer

Patient Cancer?

Radiographer Yes, so you can see why this is so important. Did you take the picolax at the appropriate time too?

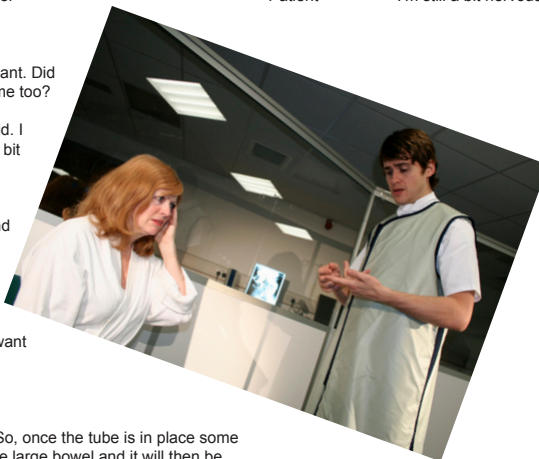
Patient Was that the stuff in the sachets? Yes I did. I must say that all this has made me feel a bit poorly.

Radiographer Yes, well I'm sure you're a bit dehydrated but not to worry, it will all be over soon and you can have a nice cup of tea. Now. Let me explain the procedure. We need to get you up on the screening table and place a rectal catheter into your rectum. We may have to inflate a little balloon too but only if we have to as we want to minimise the risk of perforation

Patient Perforation? What do you mean?

Radiographer It's only a miniscule risk so not to worry. So, once the tube is in place some barium sulphate will be introduced into the large bowel and it will then be insufflated with air. If that becomes too painful then do let me know. We will also give you an injection of a smooth muscle relaxant. Do you suffer from angina or heart disease?

Patient No



Radiographer Glaucoma?

Patient Erm, I don't think so

Radiographer Do you have a history of Glucagonoma or phaeochromocytoma

Patient Fee o what?

Radiographer These are just some contraindications to the smooth muscle relaxant that I need to check. So, once everything is in place we will get you to roll around on the table into different positions whilst the radiologist takes some fluorographic images. So, are you happy for us to get started?

Patient I'm still a bit nervous actually...

The hospital appointment



Suggested Classroom Activities

Brainstorm with students what they have been learning (the range of topics) in their subject area (5-10 minutes).

Ask students to discuss in small groups who they will be communicating with in their chosen professional or vocational field. In what capacity will they be interacting with these people? What kind of information will people want or need? Why will they want or need the information? (10 minute exercise, plus feedback)

Show a photo audio clip. We recommend you select the area closest to your discipline area or select the most likely scenario in which students may encounter clients (each of the three scenarios lasts only a few minutes)

As the teacher, discuss the TMI issue – ask students to review what was happening to the client as the situation progressed.

Following this review, show the short clip where the client Sally discussed how she felt and what she needed. (Allow 10-15 minutes for the exercise and viewing)

As an additional element or an alternative, ask students to review one of the scenarios which is removed from their subject experience, as the students are more likely to watch this from a client perspective and then again using small group discussions ask them to explain their feelings, as if they were in Sally's shoes in that scenario.

Focus students to debate what the needs of the client were in the viewed scenario(s) and how that might have been addressed by the graduate in the clip. Create a list of options and priorities for preparing for and dealing with a client in your selected field of study (10-15 minutes).

Get students, working in pairs or small groups to create and role play a scenario where the graduate does focus on the needs of the client (allow 20-30 minutes for scripting/outlining and 10 minutes for demonstrating one or two of the role plays).

Creating Scripts

There are four scenarios here, but TMI is an issue which faces many other disciplinary areas and by providing the full scripts here, you will see it is possible to create your own scripts to suit the circumstances your new graduates may face and which can be easily photographed and captioned for a tailor made solution or which your students can role play for you. We created some of these with the help of employers who provided the ideas for the scenarios.