# *A*LD*in*HE *Bulletin*

## Newsletter of the Association for Learning Development in Higher Education

### Recent Steering Group Activity
*Michelle Reid —Vice-Chair of ALDinHE*

Time has flown past – it seems like only yesterday we were putting together our last newsletter. We have been very busy since then and have a lot of exciting progress to report.

The New Year saw the launch of our new ALDinHE website incorporating the association logo and colours: www.aldinhe.ac.uk/ . Hopefully, many of you have already seen the new website when you booked your ALDinHE conference place.

The Conference and Events group has been hard at work putting together an interesting and stimulating programme : http://bit.ly/2012ConferenceProg

- if you haven't already registered, the variety and creativity of the sessions should persuade you to get booking. I am also assured that a team of fiendish quiz masters are setting an appropriately tricky quiz for the conference dinner!

Thank you to everyone who responded to the Developing Digital Literacies survey and posted to the blog. We really appreciate your thoughtful comments and experiences; they have contributed to the findings of the baseline project report which are summarised in the news item below. The report provides useful, and sometimes surprising, insights into our own digital literacies.

On the strategic front, members of the ALDinHE steering group met with Julie Farmer from the QAA about her project to review the specification of the Access to HE diploma, and we are in contact with the NUS to express our support for their Charter on Academic Support.

The Association is only able to undertake such wide-ranging work through the contributions and support of the wider Learning Development community. Later in this Newsletter you can find out more about how you can get involved.

Look forward to seeing you in Leeds in April!

### 9th Annual Conference (April 2012)
**"Learning Development in a Digital Age: emerging literacies and learning spaces"**

**Don't miss out...book your place NOW!**
**Bookings close 19th March**

With a full programme of practical 'how to' sessions, discussion workshops, papers, seminars, lightning talks and poster presentations this year's annual conference is set to be stimulating, inspiring and thought provoking.

Further details, including keynote speakers, a programme of events, travel details and evening events are available on the website www.aldinhe.ac.uk/leeds12.htm

Who will take away a coveted **Conference Spoon** this year? Brush up your general knowledge and get ready for our quiz which will form just part of the this year's festivities at the Conference Dinner set in the fabulous Royal Armouries www.royalarmouries.org

### Why Not Get Involved?
Have you got ideas or skills? Do you like to learn by getting involved in hands on projects and work with a diverse range of people? We would like to hear from you! We are looking for people to get involved with our working groups and you could be just who we need!

Just look at the diverse range of activities you could turn your hand to….

*Conference group* who are looking for event planners with excellent organisational skills
*Journal group* as a reviewer or member of the editorial team
*LearnHigher group* to help us extend the range of resources that have made LearnHigher one of the most popular websites for learning development practitioners
*Marketing and Communications group* who are always looking for creative individuals with an eye for a story

*Professional Development group* welcome contributions to events and resources or acting as mentors for the growing professional expertise of our community.

*Research and development group* help us to set up this new initiative - we are really keen to hear from people who have experience of bid writing and applying for grants, but we also want to hear from you if you are just starting out and want to learn more!

You might also consider becoming a member of the ALDinHE Steering Group. This is an exciting and professionally rewarding role. The Association has a growing reputation at national policy level and you'll be contributing to all aspects of our work including consultations by government and other bodies such as the QAA and the Higher Education Development Community Group.

No one is thrown in at the deep end, and new members of the Steering Group and working groups receive mentoring and full support from the Chair and other colleagues.

If you are interested in joining a working group or standing for election to the Steering Group, and would like to find out more, please contact Chris Keenan, Chair of the Association or any other member of the Steering Group (all contact details can be found in the Get In Touch section at end of this newsletter)

## LearnHigher's had a makeover...



...without the aid of Trinny and Susannah! The new website design aims to offer a more accessible, modern and user-friendly way to access the freely available, high quality, peer-evaluated resources that have made LearnHigher so popular. We look forward to unveiling the website's new look at the ALDinHE Conference in April.

**See us at the annual conference!** Come along to our LearnHigher Network meeting on Monday 2 April at 13:30-14:45 where we will be demonstrating our new site - all welcome whether you have been involved with LearnHigher before or not. Or come and find us on the LearnHigher stand with the poster displays - we'll be there every break and at lunchtimes.

We will also be looking for new members of our LearnHigher Working Group - so if you'd like to help us maintain and develop this successful resource, get in touch.

## More time for entries to the LearnHigher Animation Challenge



As you'll remember, we are challenging learning developers to show us their creative expertise by producing simple animated learning development resources.

As we've had a lot of responses from people saying they would like to take part but don't have time in this busy term we are extending the **closing date to Friday 29 June**.

For more information about the challenge visit http://bit.ly/AnimationChallenge

There will also be the chance to get some ideas and tips at the ALDinHE conference at one (or both!) of the pre-conference workshop sessions on *How to use screen capture software to create e-learning resources* (Mon 2 April 13:30 -14:45) and *How to enhance PowerPoint presentations with animations and interactivity* (Mon 2 April 15:00-16:00).

For more details of these, see the conference links at www.aldinhe.ac.uk.

## Digital Literacies for Learning Developers - baselining report published

Following the ALDinHE's successful November 2011 bid to become one of the professional associations funded by JISC as part of its Developing Digital Literacies project, the project team undertook a baselining survey of digital literacy practices, training and attitudes for learning developers.

The main findings included:
- The popularity of digital technologies for creating teaching and learning resources, with some highly creative and innovative examples of good practice.
- The diversity of technologies and tools that are in use.
- That lack of time for training and exploration, and cost implications of equipment can mean that expertise becomes concentrated in a small number

of enthusiasts.

- Most learning developers were either self-taught when it came to using new technologies, or used informal training such as colleagues and friends (or, in one case, teenage children!).
- Relevance to LD work was the key motivator for learning new technologies.
- There were anxieties around the replacement of face-to-face teaching with digital resources, and difficulties in keeping up with new developments.
- Social media and mobile technologies were identified as areas where more guidance would be welcomed.

You can read the final report on this survey on the JISC Design Studio at http://bit.ly/JISCDesignStudio

Look out for more discussions and opportunities to get involved with this project at the annual conference!

## Professional Development

The Professional Development working group have drafted a newly developed **Professional Development Toolkit** and will entering a period of consultation and feedback from mid-February. Your thoughts and input are vital to the success of this resource so join in the debate by getting involved in the Professional Development blog at http://bit.ly/ProfDevBlog and tell us what you think.

Also, this well established working group is looking for people to help contribute to the training, mentoring, and growth of professional expertise of our Learning Development community. All meetings are conducted online so you don't have to travel further than your desk to get involved.
Email michelle.reid@reading.ac.uk

**Save the date** - there will be a professional development training day on **'Embedding skills and integrating learning development'** at the University of Leicester on Friday 22nd June 2012.

Don't forget to check the **Dates for your Diary** section for details of up coming development events and look out for further updates via the LDHEN list and association website.

## Journal (JLDHE)

Issue 4 of our journal, JLDHE, is currently being edited and we expect to announce publication towards the end of March. This is a little later than we had intended, but we certainly plan to have the issue in print (online actually!) before the ALDinHE conference.

Speaking of print, you may be interested to know that hard copies of issue 3 are available to purchase at £15 per copy. This is a limited print run we decided to do as an experiment to test demand for a paper version of the journal. The production is very professional and this volume would make would be an elegant addition to any academic's bookcase!

To order your copy, please go to http://www.aldinhe.ac.uk/journal.html and click on the link at the bottom of the page.

## Special Edition (JLDHE)

We are now preparing a special edition of JLDHE on developing skills for writing in the STEM disciplines.

Our second call for papers for this edition went out in January and the **deadline for submission is April 30 2012**. Publication is planned for the Autumn.

If you would like to know more about the journal, are keen to write for us or get involved in reviewing or editing, please get in touch via email john.hilsdon@plymouth.ac.uk

## Institutional Membership

Institutional membership of ALDinHE brings many benefits, including reduced registration fees at our annual conference. If your institution is not already a member for 2011/12, it is not too late!

Apply for membership now and, as well as being able to recuperate much of the cost through re-duced conference fees, you will join a thriving and supportive network, have access to our CPD provision and demonstrate your institution's commitment to enhancing the student learning experience.

Plus, for a limited time, all new institutional members receive a **free copy of Learning**

*Development in Higher Education* **(Hartley et al, 2011)** with many contributions from ALDinHE members!

Full details on our website [www.aldinhe.ac.uk](http://www.aldinhe.ac.uk) or contact [secretary@aldinhe.ac.uk](mailto:secretary@aldinhe.ac.uk) with any queries. We look forward to having you among our number!

## New Website Goes Live!!

The ALDinHE website ([www.aldinhe.ac.uk](http://www.aldinhe.ac.uk)) has undergone a complete overhaul, with the new site being launched at the end of January to coincide with the opening of conference registration.

Using a modern content management system, the new site enables all steering group members to keep relevant sections up-to-date, as well as hosting news and events databases and linking to ALDinHE's blog and twitter page.

Now it's over to you to tell us what you think! We welcome any comments you may have on the design or content of the new site. What else would you like to see on there? How do **you** use the site? Let us know on [info@aldinhe.ac.uk](mailto:info@aldinhe.ac.uk)



## Talking the talk

As an association that is ever growing, we are keen to find the right blend of communication channels to suit our membership. With the website, the LDHEN jiscmail list, twitter, the increasing use of blogs, and other emerging tools, this is an increasing challenge but we are ready and willing to rise to it.

What we need to know is how **you**, our members, want to receive information and updates about association activities,

opportunities etc. Share your thoughts via your chosen channel.

## Research & Development

If you're interested in research and development activities, have a keen eye for funding opportunities or just fancy dipping your toe into new waters we want to hear from you. Whether you're a candidate for Chair or just want to get involved in a specific project drop us a line.

## Supporting our Students

### What do we want? Academic Support for all!

As many ALDinHE members will have noticed, the National Union of Students (NUS) recently launched their *Charter on Academic Support*.

The ten-point Charter – which has been produced by Usman Ali (NUS Vice-President for Higher Education), and is available online ([click here](#)) should make welcome reading for learning developers.

Its recommendations include, for example:

- Prospective students to be provided with information about academic support provision, in order to 'help them make an informed decision about whether an institution meets their needs.'
- The need for induction to be an 'ongoing process throughout a student's time at university' and the need for students to be 'made aware of continuing support in place to help them' with managing the challenges HE learning can present.
- The provision of, and support for, peer-mentoring schemes to aid transition to, and integration into, life at university and learning in Higher Education.
- Support and recognition to 'be available for those who provide support to students' in order to ensure that services can develop, and that best practice can be shared across institutions.

More broadly, the Charter aims to place academic support at the heart of discussions about the future of Higher Education. As such, it's hugely relevant to our community of practitioners.

In recognition of this work, ALDinHE will be contacting Usman Ali, to welcome the publication of the Charter, and to express our broad support for its aims. We will also seek to

explore ways in which we and the NUS can work together to ensure that the issue of academic support is recognised and valued across the whole of the HE sector. Watch this space…

## Consider a Student Led conference!
*Lauren Winkelman & Bruce Bruce*
*(Students at London Metropolitan University)*
Calling all Learning Developers, if you are not already working closely with your students and getting them to lead on important teaching and learning projects – here's something to think about.

We are third year Event Management students at London Metropolitan University and this March we are running a student conference at our University – organised by students, for students.

Our version of the Get Ahead conference will focus on key aspects of improving many aspects of student skills including learning development issues, memory magic, drawing for learning, dissertation strategies, right through to careers development and perfecting that tricky CV.

The opportunity to manage the conference first and foremost requires us to provide a wide selection of sessions in order to offer the best for the student delegates. This has presented a challenge in negotiating the different possible topics that could be included and also in working with the many experts behind them.

Networking is proving to be a key skill for us – and in the process we are discovering a little bit of information about each person's speciality within learning or career development. This has developed our own learning and will in turn help our delegates – everyone wins!

Having this hands-on experience gives us an opportunity to apply the knowledge we have acquired during our degree into a real situation. We are really looking forward to seeing the other students learn, develop skills and hopefully enjoy what we have spent time organising.

We'll keep you posted! - **@GetAhead2012**

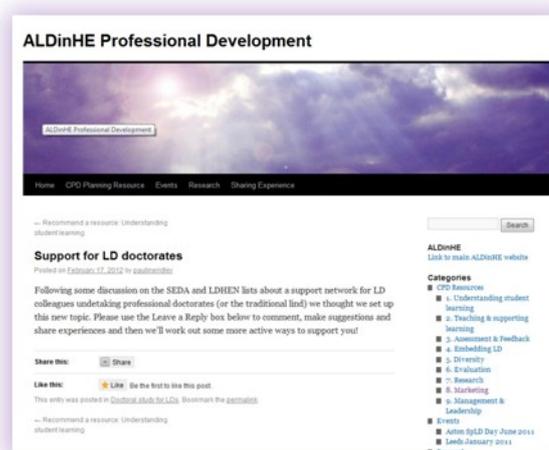## Share your student experience / views
Are you a student or do you know someone who has something to say about their student experiences around Learning Development? We are looking for short pieces for future newsletters

so contact the newsletter editor with your ideas *(approx 150 word limit).*

## Are you doing a doctorate?
If you are currently in the process of working on your EdD and finding it all a bit of a solitary struggle you might want to visit our 'support for LD Doctorates' section of the ALDinHE Professional Development blog . You'll find it at http://bit.ly/LDDocSupport and can also it access via a  link from the main Research page on the site.

You can use this to share experiences – link to your own research blogs if you have them - and ideas about doing  a professional or traditional doctorate or suggest new ways that ALDinHE could help individuals to network.



## Member Hot Topics
There has been lots of discussion on the LDHEN list recently around the question of 'Pastoral v LD' and 'Obtaining samples of students writing.' It has been great to see so many people sharing opinions, experiences and resources.  If you missed these or any of the discussions catch up by visiting http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/ldhen and sign up to the LDHEN list.

If you have a **hot topic** or **top tip** to share let us know. Perhaps you have found new resources or got advice to share on pitfalls to avoid, engagement techniques or perhaps a review of something thought provoking that you've read, we want to hear about it. Get involved, share your thoughts. *(approx 100 word limit)*

## Annual General Conference (AGM)

Don't miss the chance to have your say about ALDinHE business, direction, projects etc and find out who are the new members of the Steering Group are.

Not sure what goes on? All papers for the meeting will be on the website 10 days prior to the meeting so have a look through those and feel free to ask lots of questions!

## A little birdie told me...

Keep up with everything that is happening via our twitter feed **@ALDinHE**

Hear more about our conference **#aldcon**

Tell the world about your work with **#LoveLD**

## And remember...

**'Anyone can make the simple complicated. Creativity is making the complicated simple.'** *(Charles Mingus)*

## Dates for your Diary

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|---|---|
| 19 March 2012 | Conference bookings close |
| 2 - 4 April 2012 | 9th Annual Conference (University of Leeds) |
| 30 April 2012 | Deadline for Special Edition submissions |
| 22 June 2012 | Approaches to embedding learning development *(University of Leicester)* |
| 29 June 2012 | Learn Higher Animation Challenge closing date |
| November 2012 | Evaluating the impact of your learning development service *(London Metropolitan University )* |

## Get in Touch

We'd love to hear from you! You can contact any of the Steering Group by emailing us at: **info@aldinhe.ac.uk**

**Christine Keenan** (Chair) – Bournemouth University
**Michelle Reid** (Vice-chair) – University of Reading
**Andy Hagyard** (Treasurer) – University of Lincoln
**David Bowers** (Secretary) – University Campus Suffolk
**Kerry Bellamy** (Newsletter) – University of Wales, Newport
**Julia Braham** – University of Leeds
**Terry Finnigan** – London College of Fashion
**John Hilsdon** (Journal) – University of Plymouth
**Steve Rooney** – University of Leicester
**Sandra Sinfield** – London Metropolitan University
**Pauline Ridley** – University of Brighton
**Kim Shahabudin** (LearnHigher) - University of Reading

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