

ALDinHE Bulletin

Newsletter of the Association for Learning Development in Higher Education

Recent Steering Group Activity

Christine Keenan—Chair



It's that time of year again! We will soon be gathering at Plymouth to mark a very special occasion, our **10th Anniversary Conference** and I'm looking forward to welcoming about 150

delegates to our celebration of Learning Development. Some of you might even be reading this newsletter in hard copy form in your conference delegate pack, in which case, welcome and we hope you enjoy what's in store!

Since 2002, there has been much to celebrate in the field of Learning Development. Thanks to a successful bid for HEFCE CETL funding by a small group of us following the very first annual symposium held at London Metropolitan, we were able to develop LearnHigher which has evolved into a well respected, prestigious, award winning resource. Remember to visit the LearnHigher stand at the Plymouth conference to find out more. During this time, we also published a book with Palgrave in the Universities into the 21st Century Series entitled:

Learning Development in Higher Education.

We continue to work towards recognising and accrediting the professional development of learning developers and, through the publication of our regular online journal and the work of our research and development group we pursue a scholarly approach to theorising learning development.

There are some changes afoot within the Steering Group. **Julia Braham**, a long standing member and Chair of the Conference Working Group is standing down from the Steering Group this year. Julia's commitment and enthusiasm will be greatly missed. Thanks to her strong leadership the organisation of our annual conference has grown from strength to strength in recent times. **Kerry Bellamy** is stepping

down from the post of vice-chair this year. Her very special mix of fun and hard work has made her a highly valued and well respected Steering Group colleague. Her warmth and quiet support for her colleagues and the Association will not be lost completely however, as she will continue to serve on the Steering Group. Another change this year will be my retirement from the post of **Chair**, and from the Steering Group. I have been involved in one way or another since the early beginnings in 2002 and it's time to make way for a new generation to take the very important work of the Association into the future. I've made many friends along the way and worked with the very best. Rock on LD!

Celebrating Learning Development 10th Annual Conference

Julia Braham—Conference Group Chair



Well another year has flown by and we find ourselves in Plymouth for the **10th annual conference**. I am one of the small group of ALDinHE members who first met up at London Metropolitan University and our conference as an

annual event has grown and grown since then. But, as the number of delegates increases I'm sure you will all agree we manage to retain the friendly collegial atmosphere of the early days.

Jules Dawson and the team at Plymouth have proved to be excellent hosts and this year I am really looking forward to all the experiences that the conference provides.

What are those experiences? Let's start with learning from others. I am taking an increasing responsibility for Peer Assisted Learning at my university and whilst reading all the abstracts in early December, I was delighted to find myself pencilling so many workshops and presentations I felt I could learn something from. Our

conference includes workshops on new and innovative topics I hadn't previously considered such as 'differentiated development' and 'sustainability' and examples of the wide scope of learning development as it joins together with digital identities and information literacies, plus opportunities to discuss issues about service delivery and evaluation. All these and others are examples of how and where I am looking forward to learning from others at Plymouth.

We are really lucky this year to have an illustrious group of keynote speakers and are delighted that **Les Ebdon** and **Stella Cottrell** have found time in their busy schedules to share their thoughts and ideas with us, not to mention **Dave Cormier** who has travelled across the Atlantic, from Canada, to spread the word about MOOCS and Rhizomatic Learning.

Then, of course, there are the many social experiences. Conferences are such lovely ways to consolidate old friendships and make new ones, and what better place to do that than exploring cultural heritage sites like the [Plymouth Gin Distillery](#) or walking around the navel yards and historic sites of Plymouth, not to mention sharing hors d'oeuvres with sharks at the [National Maritime Aquarium](#) or even chatting with colleagues over lunch during our 'meet the presenters' slot.

Yes, I'm really looking forward to this conference. At least I'm confident we won't have a repeat of last year's fire alarms and Easter snow (fingers crossed) so I won't have to keep apologising for how grim the weather is 'up north' – we'll save that for sunny [Huddersfield](#) in April 2014!

Conference interviewing

Fran Keirle & Co—Steering Group Member



Just as you start your conference journey, our busy bees are working hard behind the scenes to produce a really dynamic post conference resource for you to refer back to, but we need your input.

Take a moment to fill in and return the **“Celebrating 10 Years”** card in your delegate packs and tell your Learning Development memories and triumphs.

Also look out for our budding reporter and give five minutes of your time to answer some questions about how the ALDinHE conference helps you to achieve goals and progress strategies in your institutions. We don't bite!

ALDinHE membership growing strong! David Bowers—Association Secretary



As a professional membership association, ALDinHE draws its strength from the commitment and energy of its members and the Learning Development community as a whole.

Therefore we are pleased to announce that we have recently **hit our target milestone** of 50 paid-up Institutional Members. This means that **50 universities** have made that public commitment to supporting learning and the student experience.

A list of our Institutional Members is on our website. Are you among them? If not, please do what you can to convince your managers of the value that ALDinHE adds to those involved in Learning Development. That includes the LDHEN mailing list, the Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education, our CPD events, the LearnHigher resources, and not least our annual conference.

In addition to Institutional Membership, we also offer Individual Membership to those who wish to support our work on an individual basis.

Everyone attending our conference is granted Individual Membership for the following 12 months.

Please contact secretary@aldinhe.ac.uk with any membership enquiries, or see our website www.aldinhe.ac.uk

Joining the editorial team

Dr Stephanie McKendry, JLDHE Editor



It's been a whirlwind four months since I joined the editorial team of the Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education (JLDHE) and things are getting really exciting as we head towards the launch of our latest issue.

John Hilsdon and Andy Hagyard have been fantastic: supporting me as I learn the editing ropes, patiently responding to my questions and willingly listening to my ideas and suggestions. Whilst clearly still an apprentice, I've always been made to feel like an equal member of the editorial board.

Initially, the greatest challenge was coping with the technologies involved in the role, in particular video conferencing and using wikis and the open journal system (OJS). It's surprising just how quickly you get used to seeing (and then completely ignoring) your face on the screen though. In fact, I'm now quite happy to edit a wiki page, discuss a journal contribution, and read through an abstract, all whilst ignoring several faces on my screen.

Working with authors as they negotiate their journey towards publication has been as rewarding as I had hoped. It has been so interesting to see reviewers' comments and the way in which authors respond and incorporate those constructive suggestions. In my experience, as an author, reviewer and now an editor, the peer review process always leads to a better final submission and it is a privilege to play a part in that.

LearnHigher website update

Dale Potter—Web Designer

As members may be aware, the LearnHigher website has been undergoing some design changes over recent years. Following mixed reviews of the first redesigned site last year, Dale Potter has been responding to feedback and making improvements this academic

year. Work is now ongoing to produce a further revamped version of the LH site for roll out soon. The new design templates, currently in development, aim to provide a clearer and more visually appealing site. New resource 'cover sheets' will also present key information (original author, types of media, licence, etc) in a standardised format.

A preview version is already available: <http://new.learnhigher.ac.uk/template.html> This will be updated as work progresses towards a final, fully-functioning design. The revamped site will also be available to view on a large screen at the ALDinHE conference.



Dale will be on hand throughout Tuesday 26th March (at the conference) to talk more about the site and answer your questions.

Have your say from your desk!

Join our mailing list.

The LDHEN list offers members and non members an opportunity to share best practice, discuss ideas and contribute to threads on hot topics. To get involved visit our JISCMail or click <http://bit.ly/LDHENSignUp> and join the list.

Reflections, thoughts and stories

Staff, student or partner in education, share your experiences, thoughts and reflections here. Email your pieces to kerry.bellamy@newport.ac.uk for inclusion.

Why get involved?: Student Voice.

Liam McAlinden (Social Studies Student & SLTN Committee Member)



Amazing. Bold. Captivating. These are words that one would expect to see alongside a London West-End theatre show review, or even a daring new opera. However, they are in fact, words that briefly articulate my opinions with regards

to taking the plunge and joining an external Learning & Teaching committee.

I took the leap and joined the **SLTN committee** (<http://studentlandtnetwork.ning.com>) and it has been both fruitful and insightful, not only on my personal academic journey, but also in terms of my development as a relative newbie to the Learning and Teaching sector.

The themes and concepts we discuss reflect the real debate that is ongoing in the sector and since joining the team I have developed a rather unhealthy appetite for academic discourse on such matters and I believe it is paramount that both students and academics learn from one another!

I'm really looking forward to further enhancing my understanding of Learning Development by attending the ALDinHE conference. I am sure it will play a key role in strengthening my resolve to rationalise the complexities of learning development for the student population. Ultimately I am hopeful that new ideas will be created and new networks and working relationships established.

My message to anyone thinking about taking the plunge and trying something new with a committee or group.... Do it, you won't regret it!

Take the leap... I joined a Working Group

Julia Dawson, Plymouth University

... and I'm glad I did!



I've had a great year as part of the ALDinHE conference working group. I started out last February as a novice, sitting in the wings, watching and listening. I could feel the buzz

even though I was only a voyeur. Now I know what that buzz was all about. As I write this there is only week to go to the 2013 conference and the working group is operating like a well-oiled machine and I'm a cog turning with the others on a seemingly ever spinning wheel, supported and supporting each other through Flash meetings and countless email exchanges. It's been a great experience and I've learned a lot from the group. After organising 10 conferences they take it all in their stride, never seem flustered and always maintain their sense of humour. If all goes well, I would love to do it all again!

Professional Development Working Group

Janette Myers—Working Group Chair



It has been a busy and productive year for the PDWG – and we are really pleased to announce our big news for the conference: the **Professional Development Website** is revamped and open for business: [http://](http://aldinheprofdev.wordpress.com/)

aldinheprofdev.wordpress.com/ .

The core of the website is the CPD planning resource which enables you to assess your strengths and weaknesses and provides resources, contributed by members, to help with your CPD. Areas have been mapped against the HEA Professional Standards framework which we hope will be a big help to those of us applying for HEA Fellowships. We also have personal stories, in various formats, and contributed by you so that we can learn from each other's experiences.

Our special thanks to Pauline Ridley and Michelle Reid for all their hard work on this resource.

Our plans for the future include:

- Developing a resource that will help inform your personal development planning for your next post, and could be used to devise role descriptions for new posts. This has been developed through extensive collation of sector specific job descriptions and person specifications.
- Watch out for an email to the LDHEN list as the project called LD5D develops. This project will see members of the LD community join us to develop your Digital Literacy; this will involve an opportunity to learn how to use possibly unfamiliar tools and share the experiences.

If you would like to join the Professional Development Working Group or have an idea for a project please contact the Chair, Janette Myers on jmyers@sgul.ac.uk. You can join the group temporarily, to work on a specific project, or on a longer term basis.

Top Tips from you...

*"I've increased my **free** Dropbox space by sharing files and promoting the service to others, now I have plenty of room for ALL my pictures (and files)!!"*

"Know where you should be all the time by synchronising your home and work calendars—Crucial to manage a busy work / life balance."

Got a **hot topic** or **top tip** to share? 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.

Could you get Involved?

Have you got ideas, skills or fancy broadening your professional network by meeting and working with like-minded 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**
- **Journal**
- **LearnHigher**
- **Membership and Communications**
- **Professional Development**
- **Research and Development**

If you are interested in joining a working group and would like to find out more, get in touch.

A little birdie told me...



You can keep up with everything that is happening and update us on your activities via our twitter feed

@aldinhe_LH If you want to hear more about our conference or join in discussions follow **#aldcon**

Why not share your LD thoughts and updates with the world using **#LoveLD** or join in discussions with an online community **#edchat**

Final thought...

*"Never be afraid to try something new. Remember, amateurs built the ark. Professionals built the Titanic."
—Anonymous*

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
Kerry Bellamy (Vice Chair) University of Wales, Newport
Andy Hagyard (Treasurer) University of Lincoln
David Bowers (Secretary) University Campus Suffolk
John Hilsdon (Journal) University of Plymouth
Carina Buckley Southampton Solent University
Julia Braham University of Leeds
Steve Rooney University of Leicester
Sandra Sinfield London Metropolitan University
Louise Frith University of Kent
Francesca Keirle University of Wales, Newport
Janette Myers St George's University London
Amanda Pocklington University of Exeter

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Celebrating Learning Development

Edited by K. Bellamy & F. Keirle