Community Keynote

Defining the future of Learning Development

In 2016, the ALDinHE conference presented its first community keynote, asking participants to answer two vital questions: What is Learning Development? What does Learning Development do? In short, it empowers and engages. It works to create independent, critical and reflective thinkers to help shape global society, enabling each person to develop and reach their potential and seeing them as the individuals they are. A learning developer must juggle their roles, responsibilities and positions, reaching all corners of the university and widening opportunity rather than simply participation. The ALDinHE Steering Group took all of these ideas and distilled them into a Learning Development Manifesto.

This keynote will start by thinking about who we are and what we stand for. We want to present a vision for how we think higher education could be and the stance we wish to take towards it, so that we can then understand our goals as a profession and our motivations as practitioners.

Once we know these things, we can move to consider what learning development might aspire to. Given the range and variety of the people whose work falls within the shade of learning development, this is unsurprisingly broad, encompassing the ability to respond flexibly to the changing environment, the desire to empower students, and the need to be more comfortable as the expert.

As part of that final point, we present a new scheme for the formal recognition of individuals who demonstrate core attributes related to working as a learning developer, and ask what the criteria might be for someone engaged in the type of work the Manifesto identifies. Based on our aspirations for the profession, what are the criteria for being a learning developer?