

## From the Chair

**Dear Colleagues,** as I took over the role of Chair in the summer 2010, I was warned that these would be busy times for the SDF—and I am delighted that is in fact the case. We are very active in all sorts of ways, not least in the last nine months.



*Matt Levi, SDF Chair*

Firstly though, a few thoughts about friends and colleagues. I took on the role from Sue Law who achieved a tremendous amount of work in a voluntary role during her time with us—and a lovely person. We also extended a special welcome to our first National Coordinator, Becky Robson, who has already made a big impact in moving our agenda forwards. Our newly elected Deputy Chair, Paul Dixon is now in full swing in his new role with the SDF and thanks are also due to Claire Bradshaw and Clive Betts for all of their work behind the scenes for the executive. Thanks to Council members who have left us for all you have done, and for those who have just joined us for what you are about to embark on! Finally, thanks to everyone contributing to our various task groups and all your efforts and work put in.

The work now underway is crucial to the future of our community. CPD as a scheme and series of events is at the centre of our activity, and rightly so. As a profession we help colleagues across the board in HE to improve their performance, engage in professional development activities, gain qualifications and to develop not just as professionals but as people too. Now it is our turn to shine by developing a recognised and accredited programme that we have conceived, developed and will deliver for ourselves—and by ourselves.

It is in my view long overdue, and although we are not shy of taking on our own development as well as delivering for others, this will be the first time that our community has a specific framework dedicated to our Staff Development profession in HE.

Much hard work has already been done in laying down the foundations of the programme which will enhance and recognise our contribution to HE and provide a quality kite mark, as well as a development framework. To me it is what the SDF is about; raising already high standards, recognition, and equal status in and with OD and HR.

So, what are my hopes and ambitions in being privileged to help look after the shop for the next two years? Many fold—success of our CPD programme and all of its facets is a priority; raising our profile and status; working much more closely with the Leadership Foundation and our friends and colleagues within it to deliver things to HE as real partners; working with HR and OD and in particular UHR for all of our benefit and that of the wider community; continuing to build our portfolio of activities and to become recognised as the staff development organisation that everyone wants to work with.

To do this we will as an organisation engage everyone on the Council as active members and supporters, and encourage the regions to come on board as still more active participants and beneficiaries—whilst respecting their independent status.

So, time to get on with it. No point having an organisation if we don't make an impact and bring about real benefits. See you soon, at a region near you...

*Matt Levi, SDF Chair*

## NEW! Our CPD Awards and Events

Our CPD Task Group has worked hard on the suite of Awards (for administrators, practitioners and leaders) for delivery starting in 2011. Talks with SEDA and with Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) have resulted in a very positive response. LLUK promised their help in developing the Awards for adoption at national level under the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework, and SEDA's executive team approved a detailed paper which included recommendations on adopting an appropriate recognition process for SDF programmes under the SEDA Awards framework.



The project has provided an opportunity to utilise an established and respected qualifications framework (SEDA-PDR), develop it, and gain national QCF accreditation which will give an important credit bearing element for our SDF Programmes.

This collaboration with SEDA has been a tangible first step in working together, and the negotiators on both sides recognised that this was a unique opportunity for SDF and SEDA and their respective professional communities. The CPD Task Group has detailed mapping of learning outcomes and programme content for each of the three Awards, and has also brought forward proposals on a Fellowship scheme for launch later in 2011.

Our CPD events programme was launched in November, at the National Staff Development Conference. This is an exciting programme covering topics most relevant to the advanced skills set and strategic thinking now required of staff and organisational developers. For example, there are events on winning bids, facilitation skills, leading staff development units, internal consultancy and using psychometrics. **All events are detailed in the SDF CPD Events and Accredited Programme 2011 brochure.** For extra copies, contact Wendy Mason—wendy.mason@staffdevelopment.ac.uk—or view on the SDF Website.

What makes this offering special is that the facilitators are developers themselves and specialists in the specific areas; therefore the networking and sharing of expertise will be a demonstrable outcome of the programme. The cost of attending has been kept to an absolute minimum to cover costs and is subsidised by the SDF through the funding received by the LFHE. Some of these events have already been trialled. For example, in March 2010, the North West Group hosted the first (and very successful) Heads of Staff Development Unit CPD Event—see overleaf.

# NW hosts first Heads of Staff Development Unit CPD Event

Paul Dixon (pictured) reports that the first national Heads of Unit CPD event was hosted by the North West Group on 19 March 2010. **The next event will run on 14th April 2011—book now, places are limited!**



The overall aim of the event was to enable colleagues to step back and consider the relative strategic positioning and contribution of their unit to the institutions. The content included: a case study on strategy development; consideration of their unit's positioning on the learning maturity 'scale'; and discussion of how to facilitate better partnerships working with HR generalist colleagues. The event was attended by 18 people, drawn from all regions—a mix of both 'old hands' and colleagues relatively new to staff development in HE. Feedback will, of course, inform the planning and delivery of **the next event which runs on 14th April 2011**—for details and booking, contact Wendy Mason—wendy.mason@staffdevelopment.ac.uk. Comments were very favourable, e.g.

*'some of the tools used were really useful and have already been used in setting strategy for staff development'*  
*'very relevant as developing an OD strategy, and information covered was extremely relevant'*  
*'it was a really good event, the morning session and the case study were both very useful'*  
*'it was great to spend a day working with people in similar roles from across a range of institutions'*

## DALEKS rescue action learning—*Elluminate! Elluminate!*

Love action learning? Hate the time and cost of travel? Andy Wilson tells us that DALEKS could be the answer! He says...



Action Learning is a powerful development tool. We've used it in the east midlands for many years to support heads of departments and sections. Regionally it works well. But for national groups the time and cost of travel can be a real drawback. So we're using software called Elluminate.

Think of Elluminate as multi-way Skype with extras. So up to six people can see and hear each other on their own computers—using webcams—and they can also send text messages, use emoticons, vote, share a whiteboard, and show each other what's running on their computers. So you can run PowerPoint presentations or demonstrate software or edit documents.

It's great for action learning. You quickly get used to the technicalities and then start to play with them. So we quite often make suggestions using the chat facility while people are talking. I know it sounds odd, and maybe a bit rude, but it seems to work well for us. No doubt other groups would develop their own ways of working.

Where do the DALEKS come in? The project—which has been funded by the LF as a Small Development Project—is called Desktop Action Learning: Experience, Knowledge and Skills. Hence the DALEKS, and hence the project's catchphrase of *Elluminate! Elluminate!*

To run this kind of action learning you need a participating institution with an Elluminate licence. All *you* then need would be a networked PC, a webcam, a headset with headphones and a mic, and possibly an easy-to-install upgrade to your Java. There's also something called vRoom—which you can use to try out Elluminate, but only for small meetings.

Do contact me if you have any queries, at d.a.wilson@lboro.ac.uk

## What do HR staff think of staff developers?

**... and what do staff developers think of HR generalists? Where the relationship works well, what are the significant factors that contribute to that? How are HRD/HRM structured within UK HEIs? How might better partnerships working between HR staff and staff developers be promoted?**

Paul Dixon (Staff Training and Development) and Susan Fields (Head of HR), both at Manchester University, have recently been successful in securing Leadership Foundation Small Development Project funding on behalf of a North West Regional collaboration.

The project to help overcome what they describe as the 'dysfunctional nexus' runs for a year (to 1 May 2011) with the aim of investigating the range of organisational models for structuring the HRD/HRM functions in the UK HE Sector, and considering the factors that support best practice partnership working between staff developers and HR generalists.

The outcome of the project will be a report to include examples of existing good practice and recommendations to better develop partnership working.

The project is supported by the Chair of the SDF and the Deputy Chair of Universities HR.

A questionnaire to HR and staff development colleagues has been sent out, and regional workshops planned—colleagues are encouraged to respond.

Anyone keen to contribute to the project or to find out more please contact Paul.A.Dixon@manchester.ac.uk, or telephone 0161 275 2070.

## Ideas Corner

**A creativity technique—put yourself in other peoples'.....**

Submitted by Orlanda Harvey, Learning and Development Consultant, Cranfield

1. First introduce this quote from Albert Einstein:

*'if at first an idea doesn't seem totally absurd, there's no hope for it'* - so don't be afraid of 'crazy ideas'!

2. Then introduce the concept of looking at the 'problem' from another angle, or someone else's viewpoint. As a good starting point, take a look at [http://interactive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/survivalguide/skills/s\\_creativity.htm](http://interactive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/strategy/survivalguide/skills/s_creativity.htm)

I have heard the technique referred to as 'The Professions Approach', or as 'Related Worlds', or 'Personas' - depending on your source. You can reframe a problem by looking at the problem from the viewpoints of different specialists/professions/departments (schools) or people e- actually asking people to 'stand in their shoes'. Then come up with ideas/solutions to the issue or problem. For example, a way a doctor looks at a problem would be different from the approach of a civil engineer. This would be different from a sales manager's perspective. Or try HR's perspective, or the client's, the military, etc. Again, Bart Simpson is different from President Obama, from Alan Sugar or Simon Cowell!

You can use different methods for this:

- Assign to each participant a person or profession and brainstorm 'the issue' individually; then swap with a colleague
- Take 3 or 4 people or professions (perhaps roll a dice to choose which, from a list) and brainstorm it as a group
- Prepare 6-8 flipcharts with a different person/ profession on each, pin them to the walls, give each participant a pen and just allow them to write on any of them



# From Scotland, reflections of a 'retiring' SDF representative

*Graeme Whyte, HR Development Manager at the University of Strathclyde, retired from SDF Council at the back end of the summer 2010—having served for three years as the SDF representative from the Scottish Management & Professional Development Group (MPDG). He writes...*

I can honestly say that this has been an interesting and rewarding experience. I have felt privileged to have had the opportunity to work with so many dedicated and committed colleagues and have, hopefully, made some small contribution to the work of SDF.

At the start of my three year term (not sentence!) SDF was a group that was still finding its way, had uncertain funding and was relatively unknown by its constituents. It has since matured into a Limited Company (with Directors), secured funding for four years, has an annual Spring Conference, an excellent website, appointed a part-time national coordinator and has a clear purpose and a sense of direction in terms of provision of courses and a CPD framework. Quite an achievement in the space of three years from a bunch of volunteers!

So what does the Scottish Group do? (we sometimes have to gently remind our English colleagues that, like Northern Ireland and Wales, we are not a region!)

The MPDG is a strange group in some ways as it is the only formal group of staff developers in the UK that has a University Secretary chairing it. This is useful in the sense that it reports into the Scottish Universities' Secretary's Group and keeps us in touch with the key issues facing HE and gives us access to some of the key decision makers.

The Group over the years has pioneered a number of programmes and collaborations including an Introduction to Higher Education and Middle Management programmes, which we run annually, in addition to others such as Project Management, Coaching & Feedback and Communication and Supervisory Skills. Basically we run courses that have added value in being run cross-institutionally as opposed to in-house.



The Group meets three times a year and over the past four years has organised an annual one-day practitioner event. The event this year was on the theme of Innovation and Creativity in Learning & Development, and provided a very useful insight into the use of IT in development and learning. It was also very pleasing to have a large number of colleagues attending from south of the border—especially when England were playing a crucial match in the World Cup (no, not the game against Germany!). Their attendance gave the event a much wider and richer perspective than with just the usual suspects from Scottish HEIs.

Collaboration is very strong within the Group and there is an East Coast Development Programme, an Edinburgh HEI collaboration for ILM programmes and a West of Scotland collaboration for facilitated HoDs and Senior Lecturer Action Learning Sets.

I will certainly miss my colleagues in SDF but leave in the knowledge that the Forum is in a very strong position and in good hands to face the future uncertainties. I trust that my colleague Adrian Egglestone from the University of West of Scotland will enjoy the role of SDF representative as much as I have.

Can I also take the opportunity to say thanks on behalf of all staff developers to the many colleagues who through SDF willingly give so generously of their time and expertise to support our development. We owe them a great debt of gratitude.

*(Ed: and our thanks and best wishes to you, Graeme)*

## Constructing gardens, building bridges, changing attitudes, 60 Technicians—and lots of red wellies

*Sandra Stevenson-Revill, CEDM Project Co-ordinator, University of Derby*

As developers we commonly receive requests for team building days, but when approached by senior colleagues in our IT function, something different and 'ground-(or should I say back-) breaking' was in order!

This request linked in with developing behaviours and values allied to effective teams, as these colleagues must rely on each other when delivering on high investment projects. Their ability to work cohesively and collaboratively ultimately impact on the achievement of the University's IT strategy and core operations—matters that affect all University areas.

Therefore our project aim was to build longer term relationships, enable individual self awareness and awareness of others' preferences, create an environment where each team member was dependent on each other to achieve a result with a specific outcome—and to facilitate networking, through developed networking skills.

The option we agreed was based around a community garden make-over project, which carried real risks, was of consequence, and engaged participants at a deep level. The project also carried a focus on personal, team and leadership values never really seen in conventional training. Through the support of a local company who organise 'red welly' projects we were also able to link in with the University's community ethos.

It was this innovative approach that was recognised by UCISA in its Staff Development Group Best Practice Award 2010.

So, how did it work? Well, 60 employees were split into four groups which included individuals from different parts of our IT areas. Each team was allocated a property within the university quarter of the town, near to our Derby or our Buxton site.

Whilst the garden makeovers were an overnight success, the task of developing relations was continued over 5 months, to ensure lasting and meaningful results. Project teams were responsible for allocating a project lead for communication, determining and allocating tasks, working with the external organisation on resources, design, and making the makeover actually happen. Post-event they also used their technical skills to produce a video reflection of their journey as a team.

There were many unanticipated good outcomes. The buzz from the day carried on for weeks, with colleagues you just wouldn't expect catching up in our Atrium. Individuals who took on the challenge of the project lead role showed potential that may otherwise have been missed, and many colleagues gained know-how they could take home with them.

There is no doubt that such a project takes a lot of effort, and of course there is a risk element—minimised here by the use of an external organisation. And as a developer, I did wonder at times how mad I was when I saw all the heavy slabs, pick axes, drills and hard hats. However, the relationships we have developed with these colleagues and managers and the stories we can share will have lasting effects.

Feedback was exceptionally positive—although the residents wondered why no-one was actually wearing red wellies! One of them, full of fun, said "I felt exhausted watching them work so hard. I had to go to bed for a rest!"

"This work took the University that bit more into the community" said Peter Walker, University Community Relations Officer. "You see it on the TV all the time, they reveal [the outcome] and always you think it's faked, but when the residents saw the gardens the joy they felt was apparent."

*For further information on this work please contact Bev Millinchip, Organisation and People Development Advisor, University of Derby, t: 01332 591287*





# Resource Review

In this section members of our community present a short review of their own 'must see/read/own' resource—whether a book or film or other resource—that can inform our work in HE. If you would like to offer a review, please send it to one of the editorial team (below)

In this edition, Helen Harris (Staff Development Advisor, HR group at the University of Huddersfield) is keen to tell us about *The Trainer's Toolkit: Bringing Brain Friendly Learning to Life*—by Kimberley Hare and Larry Reynolds (ISBN: 190442436)

There are lots of things in this book that you already know and already do. That's not a good start to my recommendation, so why am I writing this?

The Trainer's Toolkit takes ideas from a wide range of different sources including neuro-science, accelerated learning, NLP and recent research on learning—and weaves them together into a narrative that challenges all trainers to improve the quality and impact of their work. What is impressive about this book is the skill with which the authors combine different ideas and theories into a coherent whole.

Part of my role is developing a community of University trainers here in Huddersfield, creating development events for them and sharing ideas and activities. Doing this and developing courses and events for colleagues means I am keen to borrow, steal and 're-imagine' activities that will make sessions more engaging and learning more likely.

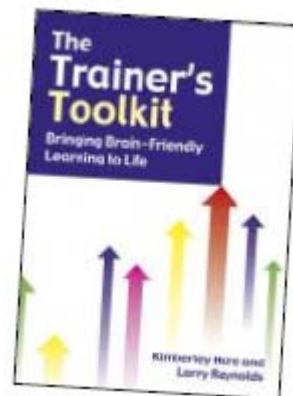
This book offers a set of 5 underpinning principles for designing learning interventions. These principles provide a framework for events where the key is learning rather than knowledge acquisition, and where the key to learning is engaging with people in a 'brain-friendly' way. These underpinning principles are:

- *Keeping it real*—linking content to situations and behaviours, and embedding behaviours by rehearsing them.
- *Facilitate creation rather than consumption*—creating learning by building links between information into our experience and existing mental models.

- *Honour uniqueness*—considering participants' individual learning preferences through a number of different theoretical models.
- *Make it rich and multi-sensory*—engaging the brain in different ways to embed learning and engage participants.
- *State is everything (well... almost!)*—helping participants to manage their energy levels and emotional state assists them to become better learners.

The theory behind each principle is described in the book, and incorporated into a process for designing events. The book also includes activities and tools for each principle, explaining their use and providing the opportunity to develop and adapt activities to suit your needs.

So, although there may be much in this book that is familiar to the experienced staff developer, there is also much here that is new or that is given a fresh perspective—and plenty of ideas that can be incorporated into your sessions.



## SDF Spring Conferences are a big success...

Clive Betts, the SDF Spring 2010 Conference Organiser, writes...



From a workshop by  
Clive Betts and Alison Leach

It was fantastic to see a total of 56 delegates, guest speakers and sponsors gathered in the Mercure Holland House Hotel in Bristol for this year's Spring Conference. It managed to successfully deliver a packed programme of workshops and plenaries, along with opportunities for networking and the traditional Conference Dinner.

The conference sessions were brilliantly recorded by graphic artist Nick Payne, who created two remarkable murals that captured the themes and character of the conference.

Although it is the delegates who ultimately make these events work, the venue, refreshments, meals, bedrooms, hotel staff and facilities were, for the most part, spot-on.

Some of my own memorable moments of the two days include: enjoying a liquid café; pearls of wisdom about Paris Hilton's dog; an energising walk through Bristol's old city; Kellie Cox's laid-back conference dinner entertainment; clarity about customer valence; Daleks; body-percussion; and a rousing Gilbert & Sullivan style song about being a staff developer! The session slides are all available on the SDF website, but you had to be there really...

## ...come and join us on 12-13 May 2011!

Don't miss out this year! Block the dates in your diary now, and watch out for publicity via the SDF@jiscmail email which will contain more detail and information about how to book a place.

The theme of the SDF's Spring Conference this year is "Fit for the future!" and is designed to help us support our HEIs and ourselves. It will be held at a Midlands venue, easy for transport links from any part of the UK.

Want to know more? Contact Becky Robson, SDF National Coordinator:  
becky.robson@staffdevelopment.ac.uk



## About SDF Update—and a call for contributions



*Update* is a twice-yearly newsletter for staff developers in Higher Education. Limited numbers of paper copies are distributed to HEIs in the UK, and it is available as a PDF download from the SDF website. We'd love you to share your news or a practical tip or information about a resource, or if you have a suggestion or comment about this issue, we'd really like to hear from you, especially about ways it can be improved—contact any of the editorial team.

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