

## Editorial

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This latest edition of JLDHE provides further evidence of the extent to which learning development as a field of practice has evolved during more than a decade of scholarly and practical investigation which has established a firm evidence base for our work. Issue five in March 2013 reflected on 'Learning Development 10 years on', and the tenth anniversary conference held in Plymouth confirmed the sense of growing maturity within our community. As Stella Cottrell remarks in her guest editorial, the concept 'has come of age, or at least new ways of thinking are becoming established in the collective psyche'.

Confirmation of this continued growth comes in the significant expansion of our editorial capacity, and we are delighted to welcome Amanda French, Andrew Doig and Moira Maguire to the team. Each has brought fresh perspectives, experience and expertise to the group, and as a result we are now able to increase our output to two regular issues per year.

This issue begins with a guest editorial by Stella Cottrell, building on the themes developed in her inspiring keynote address at the Plymouth conference. Stella charts the development of learning development over the last four decades against a backdrop of

significant change in the HE sector, providing clear evidence of how our work is relevant to all students at all levels of study and not simply confined to 'weaker' students or those from a 'widening participation' background. Turning to the future, she speculates about the possible impact of technology, and how advances in our understanding of neuroscience may allow us to shape students' intelligence through the design of educational inputs.

As a further output from the Plymouth conference, and in a departure from the traditional paper, we have published an interview by Helen Bowstead with Ken Gale. Ken's masterclass on 'Deleuze and Collaborative Writing as Method of Enquiry' was particularly well received at the conference, and in this interview he talks about how Deleuzian concepts have informed his practice. Helen then reflects on how these concepts, such as nomads, rhizomes and lines of flight, can provide alternative lenses through which to explore the rich and complex landscapes of learning development practices.

Lyn Farrell's paper addresses what many may argue is a neglected branch of Learning Development: support for the development of academic IT skills. In particular she challenges the enduring myth of the 'digital native' first described by Marc Prensky, arguing that students should not be treated as a homogeneous mass, and that social uses of IT do not automatically translate into effective academic usage. The paper calls for enhanced support for IT skills and the development of a coherent approach to digital literacy as part of HE programmes of study.

The topic of assessment feedback has received a great deal of attention in recent years, largely due to the National Student Survey highlighting extensive student dissatisfaction in this area. Adam Burns' paper provides a comprehensive review of existing literature and issues, and then explores lecturers' perceptions of feedback based on interviews with a number of History lecturers. Related to this theme is Sue Wilkinson's opinion piece which calls for greater use of audio feedback as an example of inclusive design which would not only benefit students with disabilities but could also bring benefits to all students and staff.

The JLDHE welcomes accounts of original and innovative practice in Learning Development. Kirsten Jack's case study describes the use of story-telling as an original way of encouraging student nurses to reflect on the topic of ageing. With reflective practice a professional requirement for nurses, its overuse as a learning method has reportedly led to cases of 'reflection fatigue' and the need to explore less formal ways to reflect. An

alternative way to stimulate reflection is presented by Alison James, who offers a fascinating account of the use of Lego Serious Play as a thinking tool with Creative Arts students. Both papers conclude that the approach could be equally effective in other disciplines.

A further example of innovative practice comes from Peggy Murphy and colleagues, who describe two collaborative projects between Learning Developers and Nursing lecturers, aimed at promoting writing and numerical skills. Their paper offers a useful reminder of two key principles: the value of collaborative approaches to learning development embedded in subject delivery, and the importance of providing students with early opportunities for formative feedback.

Jane Mackenzie and Jane Pritchard investigate the variations in students' learning experiences in contexts different from their normal environment. Their phenomenographic study related to students on an accelerated, residential, study abroad setting, and identified four distinct but related ways to describe their learning. While recognising that not all students can take advantage of an intensive study period abroad, the paper concludes that there are still lessons to be learnt in terms of offering different learning formats that take students out of their normal environment.

Sheila Cunningham and Deeba Gallacher describe a project to assess the impact of volunteering on the development of employability skills among biomedical science students. While work experience is widely recognised as having a positive impact on employability, volunteering may offer a viable alternative, especially in areas where placement opportunities may be limited.

Kate Chanock describes the process within one Australian University of developing criteria to assess 'graduate attributes' in a way that recognised the specific and different meanings they can have in different discipline areas. Maeve Ann Gallagher and Niamh Flynn are also concerned with graduate attributes. They contribute an interesting piece that makes a case for a greater focus on self-regulated learning, illustrated with examples from an Irish University

Finally, Carla Solvason and Geoffrey Elliott ask why research remains invisible in Further Education, identifying the continuing marginalisation of research in the FE sector through interviews with lecturers in a Further and Higher Education partnership.

In a further expansion of the journal, we also include book reviews by Helena Beeson and Craig Whittaker. We would welcome suggestions and contributions for our review section in future issues. Reviews of books, websites, blogs, conferences, apps and tech tools of interest to the learning development community would all be considered.

We feel proud of the broad scope of material in this issue of our journal, the originality of approaches described and the depth of thinking represented by the more theoretical items - overall it is an impressive collection and a tribute to our community. We hope readers will find this issue a valuable addition to the growing body of literature on learning development and that it may stimulate others to write for the JLDHE. Remember that we can accept material at any time as there are no fixed deadlines for the journal - we will always consider material for inclusion in the next edition, space allowing. We are also willing to discuss ideas for articles in draft form.