



Developing LDers: a spotlight on resources and framework for the ALDinHE Continuous Professional Development project

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Presentation abstract

How do learning developers (LDers), at all stages of their career, contribute to their own development, and that of LD colleagues? Our community is rich with knowledge, experience, innovation and creativity, with which it enhances the professional development of LDers, and thus enhances the learning experience of the students we work with. The ALDinHE Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Working Group, along with the aligned Community of Practice, draws on this wealth of expertise to support the development of our CPD framework and resources. The current focus is on the CPD of new and early career LDers, across a number of areas of LD practice. Over time, this will develop to offer resources for more experienced colleagues.

We invited delegates in this workshop to experience some of the resources, and to contribute to their ongoing development. In doing so, our aim was for them to gain an understanding of the resources that will be accessible through the CPD project, reflect on their own CPD, and offer their perspectives to help shape the resources as inclusive, innovative and effective.

Keywords: continuous professional development (CPD); collaboration; inclusivity.

Community response

Learning development is now 25 years old and maturing as a field of practice and as a profession. Over that time, we have seen the growing confidence and significance of the *Journal for Learning Development in Higher Education*; through an increasingly visible ALDinHE, a successful professional recognition scheme and a drive to build active researchers, and the resulting evidence base for our impact; and the publication of key texts (Hartley et al, 2011; Syska and Buckley, 2023; Igiebor, forthcoming). All of these initiatives and priorities speak to a professional community keen to learn, develop and share knowledge. The new five-year strategy for ALDinHE is the final piece of the puzzle, in that it recognises the individual learning developer at the centre and addresses their need for professional development and fulfilment. Having a new working group dedicated to CPD for learning developers is an important step for the field in what it represents: a unifying way forward for what can feel like a disparate group of professionals. Indeed, one delegate, noting how impactful the session was, appreciated the conversation that the workshop sparked, especially in asking what learning development is and our identity within this.

Yet despite these advances, we are still only at the start of this particular journey. Delegates recognised the value of the CPD resources, not just for themselves but for colleagues too, with one saying, 'I am excited to see the final resources as they will benefit new staff members.' Another supported this view, suggesting that 'maybe there could be online drop-ins so those new to LD can find out about guidance and support?' However, our collective striving for recognition faces a significant obstacle in that we remain in a position where we must wonder how new staff find out about ALDinHE if their team and line management are not actively engaged. Where there is no mentor or line management guidance, it would be hard to find out about drop-ins and additional support on offer. How do we, as a profession, ensure that we reach everyone so that all can benefit from these resources?

Authors' reflection

AW: This workshop was a wonderful opportunity to share the CPD project with the community. We were delighted that the conversations around the resources and plans that

we shared were so reflective and constructive. The feedback we gained will be invaluable for us to pass back to the WG sub-groups responsible for the resources, and will impact their continued development. It is important for us to make the development of the ALDinHE CPD resources a collaborative endeavour, and this input from the community is valued. The resources, and feedback, will also be reviewed by the CPD Community of Practice as part of the process. We are really grateful to colleagues who attended the session and who were so thoughtful and creative in their feedback and ideas. In response to the question of how we reach LDers in all settings, I think this presents an interesting challenge which offers the opportunity to be creative. Perhaps there are new ways we can share the work we do. Perhaps we can also ask those who are newly in LD roles how they find out information, to help support decision-making around this. If the CPD offering can reach new LDers who do not know of ALDinHE through their colleagues, what a gift we would give them by introducing them to the association as a whole!

ST: It was great to get such a positive response from attendees about the progress the CPD Working Group has made to date. They also provided some useful challenges and meaningful contributions, which will enable us to continue developing resources that are thoughtful, inclusive and sustainable. It is heartening that, despite some of the professional challenges that we as individuals and the wider community face, there is still a real drive to focus on supporting colleagues' development and working collaboratively to improve the student experience. I am grateful for the conversations I had and the input from the participants as these will shape the development of the project as we work on it over the next few months.

KC: This session was a great opportunity to take the CPD Working Group's endeavours to a wider audience and test our approach in real time. In these situations, it is never clear how a new approach or project will land, but it was fantastic to see the delegates embrace this workshop by coming together in three groups and engaging with our work. We asked them to review several CPD packages that have been developed and then assess if they needed to be developed further. They worked so hard and were very effective in confirming that our project was on the right lines, and they even developed the ideas further which was very helpful and developmental for the overall project.

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