

Kent and Medway Lifelong Learning Network Newsletter - November 2008

The Lifelong Learning Network (LLN) is a partnership of Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury College, Hadlow College, Mid-Kent College, North West Kent College, The Open University in the South East, South Kent College, Thanet College, University for the Creative Arts, University of Greenwich, University of Kent and West Kent College.

Welcome to the bumper autumn term LLN Newsletter that highlights a sample of some of the great things that are being achieved by staff from right across the Network. It is a credit to all staff, both to LLN coordinating staff and managers and to academic and administrative staff in the LLN institutions involved in LLN development that we have met our targets for this year. There are progression agreements now in place covering over 3,000 learners and we have over 30 sector and employer engagement projects delivering LLN work on the ground. For more details on the work of the LLN in 2007-08, the Annual Report for 2007-08 will shortly be on www.gohigher.org.uk giving you details of the huge range and quality of the work undertaken through the LLN and the website also has details of projects and outputs.

This academic year we will be focusing on embedding vocational progression, continuing to develop models of best practice in workforce development and employer engagement focused on our key sectors and continuing support for the 14-19 Diplomas. Sustainability will be key and there will be a focus on the impact the LLN has made and dissemination through conferences and through newsletters and the website.

As Christmas is rapidly approaching, I take this opportunity to wish you all a hearty and merry Christmas season and Happy New Year! (*Hugh Joslin, LLN Director*)

Conferences and Events

Just the Tonic - July 08

The Project's first course, Event Design, came to a close in October with a showcase of students' work presented at the Galvanising Shop in Chatham Historic Dockyard. The University of Kent course, drawn from the BA (Hons) Creative Event Production and Design offered at Medway, was led by Paul Gambrell who is currently a senior creative for a leading international brand agency based in London. Paul has vast industry experience including working for many leading companies including Sony, Shell, British Airways, Nike, and Orange.

Among the designs created by the course participants were plans for a fashion show to



Plans for the Tarred Yarn Store

take place in the Dockyard's Tarred Yarn Store.

"Nearly all the students cited career and business benefits as a key motivation for doing the short course" commented Jude Sach, a member of the Tonic Project Team.

Students of this course will join students on other courses offered by Tonic at a networking event to be held on 4th December



Dates for your Diary

26 Nov 08 LLN National Conference York

2 Dec 08 2 pm KMLLN Workshop Embedding Progression Agreements

21 April 09 KMLLN Conference: 2010—is your institution ready? Credit & APEL—a time of challenge and opportunity

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In the Historic Dockyard. This will be an opportunity to celebrate their achievements and share ideas and information with the growing cohort of Tonic students.

For further information about Tonic: Creative Business Project, please see the website at www.creativebusinessproject.com.

KMLLN Engineering Manufacturing and the Built Environment Kingsnorth Power Station 23 May 08

On 23 May 08 representatives of Delphi Diesel Systems, E.on, Aylesford Newsprint, Wates Construction, Denne Construction, Thamesteel, Barwick Construction and others met at Kingsnorth Power Station with members of the KMLLN to discuss the best approaches to creating Higher Apprenticeship opportunities countrywide.

The LLN engaging with employers

Also at the meeting were representatives of the Learning and Skills Council, SEMTA (the national sector skills council for science, engineering and manufacturing technologies), the Gateway Knowledge Alliance and the Kent training consultancy, IPS-International.



Employer Engagement in action!

Geoff Anderson, of the Kent and Medway LLN, said: "Local employers are set to play a central role in addressing the Government's initiative for higher education at work.

"The strong support Kent and Medway employers are showing for this programme is very encouraging and provided a firm foundation for future participation in developing higher level work-related skills for local people."

Bridge to Business

The LLN Bridge to Business project has been running at

the University Centre Folkestone since June. Participants follow an accredited University of Greenwich course as an introduction to setting up a small business which includes preparation for those interested in progressing to business studies programmes at colleges and universities.

Presentation ceremonies for the first four cohorts took place over the summer when learners were presented with Certificates of Attendance by Jennifer Crawford on behalf of the LLN.



*The Nepalese cohort with their
Certificates*

Travel and Tourism Day

"The Big Event Day" was run in March 08 as part of an LLN Project stimulated by the decline in the "take-up" of Level 4 courses within Travel and Tourism.

The project aimed to promote Level 4 opportunities within Travel and Tourism; promote local regeneration projects and raise awareness of potential employment opportunities; promote the benefits of higher level qualifications within the south east; enhance "decision making" by de-mystifying the financial implications of HE and expand on career ideas and opportunities through discussions of "transferable skills" career advice.

Approximately 60 Level 3 and some Level 2 Travel and Tourism students, college tutors and Faculty Heads attended. The majority of students who attended said they felt that The Big Event Day had helped to inform them about their progression opportunities.

KMLLN Progression Talks

Wendy Ellis, Kent and Medway Lifelong Learning Network Co-ordinator for Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) - recently undertook a series of "Progression Talks" to groups of learners from CCCU and Mid Kent

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College studying for the Foundation Degree (FD) in Childhood Studies and FD Child and Youth Studies. Wendy provided information on the range of options and opportunities open to the learners once they had completed their FD study.

Wendy presented the progression opportunities available at both CCCU and the University of Greenwich.

Learners were presented with progression opportunities onto a CCCU BA programme eg BA Professional Studies or BA Hons in Childhood Studies, followed by a teacher training qualification (PGCE or Graduate Teaching Programme in an educational setting) or will undertake the BA programme (as above) alongside the Registered Teacher Programme in an educational setting. Other options such as the BA Hons Primary Education Part-time Progression Route and work-related routes were also considered.

The feedback from the learners was that these informal presentations were useful in clarifying the options for the learners. Learners are able to contact Wendy and access the details as presented and further information on the website at <http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/support/partnerships-widening-participation/lifelong-learning-network/kmlIn-index.asp>

Learner Voice Conference 15 October 08

Held at the Ashford International Hotel, the Learner Voice Conference aimed to raise awareness of the wider range of people entering higher education, with particular focus on the needs of mature and part-time students coming from vocational backgrounds.

Raising awareness of HE for mature and part-time students

Representatives of further and higher education colleges and universities attending the event were able to attend a series of workshops on subjects including foundation degrees and their adaptations to make them appropriate for these student groups; the progression of apprentices to higher education and collaboration between the workplace and university.

There were also a series of keynote speakers at the

conference. Professor Bill Jones, Consultant, previously leader for Higher Education, NIACE, gave an overview of adult learners through history and how higher education institutions today view and handle the increasing intake of mature students.

He said: "Mature students tend to be highly motivated and extremely rewarding to teach. They also tend to do well with a higher proportion of firsts and upper seconds degree classifications. They also have busy lives outside the course and with their life experience and maturity, they are highly valuable as study mentors to young students."



*Keynote Speaker
Professor Bill Jones*

Working mother and mature student Gina Smith spoke about her route into higher education and how she had caught the learning bug, which had led to a brand new career and her role as owner/manager of a nursery in Medway.

June Hopkins, an HE Lecturer, delivered the tutor's perspective on helping mature students to re-enter education.

She said: "Mature students present all sorts of different challenges to those in the mainstream. A tutor needs to know her students and know them well. There is a holistic alliance between the personal life, i.e. work, family, home, money etc, and education. They need to cram a lot into their lives."

Viki Faulkner, Kent and Medway Lifelong Learning Network Manager said, "If higher education wants to increase its recruitment activities to these groups, and to become more flexible in its delivery, then we have to listen to the views of these learners and be better prepared to respond to their needs. Higher education must be fit for purpose and able to meet the demands of all students within it."

Hugh Joslin, Director of the Kent and Medway Lifelong Learning Network, said: "This was an important event which highlighted the changing face of higher education



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intakes. We are increasingly seeing mature students and career changers looking to return to their studies and we must be able to accommodate them”.

“At the Kent and Medway Lifelong Learning Network, we have a strong partnership between colleges and universities in Kent and Medway and this is benefiting vocational students and work-based learners alike”.

“Higher education is changing and becoming more accessible. The Lifelong Learning Network has a vital job in getting that message across to students, to lecturers, to employers and to the employees who can benefit.”

Prizes, garden designs and postgraduate opportunities at the Kent County Show July 08

Hadlow College and the University of Kent were next door neighbours at this year's Kent County Show to spotlight opportunities in the Land Based and Sustainable Futures sector as part of a project funded by KMLLN.

Opportunities in sustainable and small business studies were presented at the show with Hadlow College's stand featuring a children's garden design competition and a model garden presenting simple sustainability ideas for the garden.



Hadlow College Stand

The original idea by Michelle Scott (Project Manager) was brought to the show by two Hadlow Students, Alison White and Susan King who also ran the competition and acted as student ambassadors for the LLN and Hadlow College. The stand was a great success with 100 garden designs entered over the two days and many interested enquiries about the courses. As an extra bonus the stand won the best small trade stand for the show.

Meanwhile next door, KMLLN and the Durrell Institute for Conservation and Ecology (DICE) at the University of Kent were on hand to offer information on postgraduate study in conservation and ecology. UoK's LLN

Co-ordinator Jude Sach and a DICE student ambassador, Hazel Jackson, dealt with a great many enquiries on a broad range of topics. “What is clear is the value of having a student ambassador at events such as this.” commented Jude, “Hazel's knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject is just infectious. She's been a real asset to us during the course of the show.”

Staff Development July 08

In July, Thanet College staff in the Health, Social Care and Public Services section attended a development day which was jointly organised by Aimhigher and the Lifelong Learning Network.

The focus of the day was to start breaking down some of the real and perceived barriers between FE and HE so that progression opportunities for learners could be enhanced. It was also an opportunity for staff to reflect on their own practice and acted as a starting point for taking forward ideas and initiatives related to progression. Colleagues from the University of Kent and Kent County Council attended and the day was expertly facilitated by Catherine Hennessey of Inside Outreach. Here is what some of the staff thought about the day:

“An enjoyable day resulting in myself walking away believing I learnt something and time had been spent well.”

“The day was more helpful than many training courses I have attended”

“Informative and enjoyable- presented quite a lot of info that I was unfamiliar with.”



One of the working groups at the event

Teaching and Training event 17 June 2008

This event, hosted by Hadlow College, was to promote

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teaching and training career opportunities in the land based sector. 35 delegates attended with speakers from Hadlow College, KMLLN, CCCU (a key partner) and learners currently on teaching and training programmes.

There were stands with information on the OU, Hadlow College, LLN and CCCU and workshops run by Hadlow College staff and CCCU.

The Way Forward Annual Conference 25 April 08

KMLLN is ideally placed to deliver progression for Diploma students, young people from further to higher education and for workplace learners, according to Keynote Speaker Kevin Whitston, Head of Widening Participation for HEFCE.

The network is also working closely with an increasing number of employers in Kent and Medway to identify flexible and appropriate training programmes to meet workforce needs.



Dr Margaret Noble and
Keynote Speaker
Kevin Whitston
from HEFCE

Dr Margaret Noble, Chair of the Kent and Medway Lifelong Learning Network, said: "The infrastructure is now in place for KMLLN to deliver. We have identified our key target sectors and we are working with employers and the appropriate Sector Skills Councils.

"Already we are supporting 500 new learners through foundation degrees, bridging programmes and work-based learning initiatives. And many others are benefiting through the agreed credit framework, the approved Lifelong Learning Award and, of course, the advice and information now available across all colleges and universities, as well as through our website and partner organisations."

Other News

Update on KMLLN funded projects 2007-2009

During its second year, the KMLLN approved a total of 39 projects, each being led by a network partner institution and delivered in collaboration with other institutions in Kent and Medway. Of these, 21 are sector-focused, 3 cross-sector, 12 employer engagement pilots and 3 research projects.

**39 projects: 21 sector focused,
3 cross-sector,
12 employer engagement pilots,
3 research projects**

Three of the projects that have now been completed are 'Supporting the Workplace Facilitator', led by Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU); *Certificate in Supporting Children and Young People*, led by Aimhigher Kent and Medway; and *Establishing Progression Routes in Catering and Hospitality*, led by Thanet College.

'Supporting the Workplace Facilitator' aimed to accredit a module of study and provide learning materials to support workplace facilitators in Foundation Degrees offered by the Faculty of Health and Social Care at CCCU. Project activities included the validation of the module at HE Level 2 and 3 with the Faculty's Inter-professional CPD programme, delivery of 2 study days to groups of work-based facilitators, and production of a handbook and e-portfolio. An e-portfolio was considered to be more personal than a website and can be added to more freely than a CD-Rom which can only be updated annually.

The project exceeded its targets with 12 participants enrolling on short courses, 4 transferring credit to higher level awards and 20 enrolling on Foundation Degrees.

In addition, 2 learners progressed between HE levels through progression agreements. The accredited module will be available to students as part of their articulation from FD to BSc.

The training course, e-portfolio and handbook will become self-sustaining as a result of the use in FD provision and the potential sale of the training manual outside of the Kent and Medway partnership.

Certificate in Supporting Children and Young People ('CSCYP') has resulted in the development of an accreditation framework at HE level 1 and Masters level,

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and the development of an assessor and tutor training course, a short induction course for anyone working with children and young people, which has now been validated and accredited as a module in the MA Education framework.

In addition, partnership agreements have been written with CCCU and other parties who wish to deliver the course and gain accreditation for the learners. The course was delivered to 20 members of Aimhigher Learning Mentor and Aimhigher Kent and Medway staff, of whom 12 have registered on the Masters level course. Of the 12 learning mentors registered, 5 are progressing on to either a PGCE or GTP teacher courses. So far 4 learners have registered on the HE level 1 course.

The catering forum set up under '*Establishing Progression Routes in Catering and Hospitality*' has proved an effective mechanism for disseminating and sharing information on a range of issues related to the catering and hospitality sector. The contribution from colleagues at People 1st was particularly valuable in helping to shape the employer engagement research.

The project set out to establish and provide information on clear progression pathways for learners wishing to undertake, or presently undertaking, catering and hospitality courses in Kent and Medway. It also aimed to identify gaps in provision, disseminate materials and information to partner colleges and schools, and establish an Accord between partner organisations. Project funding was used to develop marketing materials and events to raise awareness of progression routes; a further event to promote progression opportunities is to be held in January 2009.

The forum has a remit to ensure longer term sustainability for progression in the catering and hospitably sector and will ultimately be responsible for ensuring the continuity of the progression work established by this project.

For further information about these and other KMLLN funded projects look on the gohigher website.

KMLLN Website Developments

Kent and Medway Lifelong Learning Network have agreed to provide funding to support the development and implementation of the Learning at Work Information Service (LAWIS) for the South East. Building on the Sussex Learning Network's approach to on-line IAG, LAWIS will draw together a range of generic and subject specific material produced by the networks and other agencies and institutions under the umbrella brand of "Learning Opportunities." Its aim is to provide resources which enable users to search and make decisions independently. It directly targets and encourages those who are in work, returning to work or currently studying vocational courses.

Work on developing LAWIS is underway and we are currently working with the team to provide information specific to Kent and Medway. A basic version will be available in January and the enhanced version is planned for May/June 2008.

KMLLN Staffing Updates

KMLLN is pleased to welcome the following new members of staff:

Linda Bishopp - Communications Officer
 Catherine Fletcher - OU Coordinator
 Cheryl Osborn - Strand Manager
 Lindsay Perrin - LLN Contracts Manager
 Helen Thomson - SKC LLN Coordinator

A big thank you and sad farewell to:

Denise Cormack - LLN Coordinator Mid Kent College
 Mel Francis Jones - LLN Coordinator Canterbury College
 Amber Sultan - LLN Coordinator North West Kent College
 Louise Tucker - Sector Coordinator for Culture, Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism and Business, Administration and Finance (leaving at the end of December 2008)

Congratulations to Janey Robertson on her recent marriage and our best wishes to Jude Sach who goes on maternity leave in December 08.

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