

## Learning conference celebrates achievements of ULRs

*"It really was 'the best yet' in terms of union learning rep (ULR) meetings: interesting, informative, inspiring."* Frances Frakes, Tameside ULR

*"This Conference has inspired me to be more active."* Jackie Roache, Barking and Dagenham ULR

*"All very useful, I couldn't single anything out."* George Dobson, North Yorkshire branch secretary



*What's new: ULRs get up to speed with the latest developments.*

The University of Birmingham was the venue for ATL's second union learning Conference with over 50 ULRs and branch secretaries making the trip to the Midlands in November.

ATL Training Officer, Becky Wright, had planned a packed and varied programme of workshops and briefings, taster sessions, along with the opportunity to celebrate the work of ULRs and their success in supporting learning for members across the country.

ATL President, Andy Ballard, got proceedings underway with the opening address before delegates heard from ATL officers Kate Quigley, Michael Cheetham and Becky who highlighted various opportunities and challenges facing ATL and its growing network of ULRs.

Kate explained how demographic factors would mean that 55% of headteachers were



*Hard at it: ULRs exchange ideas.*

due to retire in the next four years which could well lead to over 12,000 vacancies in maintained schools. Kate emphasised that ULRs were well placed to support those ATL members who will become the headteachers of the future. Michael briefed the Conference on how recent changes in further education, requiring teachers in the sector to complete 30-hours continuing professional development (CPD) every year, were an opportunity for ULRs to engage with more members employed in colleges. Meanwhile, Becky focused on changes affecting ATL's growing support staff membership and how ATL's commitment to high quality CPD and its partnership with Edge Hill University, particularly the Foundation degree programme, offered opportunities for career development.

The remainder of the morning session saw delegates busy attending taster sessions on coaching and mentoring, communication skills and financial literacy delivered by new ATL partners **Gilfillan Associates**, the **Teachers Support Network** and the **Financial Services Authority**.

ATL's partnership with Edge Hill University continues to thrive and both Tim Rutter and Mark Holding opened the afternoon session by bringing delegates up to speed with the latest developments. This was followed by a series of ULR led workshops designed to

highlight good practice and promote discussion, with delegates put through their paces as they tackled mapping and strategic planning, growing your branch learning team, networking to bring learning and organising success and communicating with members.



*Deep in discussion: ULRs plotting a learning revolution!*

The Conference underlined just how far ATL's network of ULRs had come in a relatively short space of time, and Becky was delighted that the Conference had recognised this along with the opportunity to showcase good practice and explore new ideas: "There was a great buzz throughout the day. Delegates were hearing new things and thinking how to implement ideas and new learning in their local branch. It was great to see and meet so many ULRs and branch secretaries who are engaging in learning for members and the opportunities that exist to involve and excite them about ATL locally."

### What's inside?

- Making CPD count for FE members
- Behaviour workshops a big hit for members
- New development opportunity for ULRs
- New database set to transform CPD provision
- Dates for your diary

## Union learning empowers members as North West ULR pulls out the stops

**Union learning continues to go from strength to strength at Wigan branch with an increasing number of members taking advantage of more opportunities to get on and develop their knowledge and skills.**

ULR, Gordon Core, first came to *You Learn's* attention back in the early part of 2006 following his success in supporting local teaching assistants achieve level 2 in literacy and numeracy. This initial foray into union learning proved an encouraging start but merely scratched the surface of a rich seam of learning as a succession of courses, workshops, seminars and events have followed.

Almost three years later, *You Learn* found the primary school deputy headteacher still fully retains the enthusiasm that originally encouraged him to get active to support learning and he is brimming with new ideas to ensure union learning continues to engage members in the branch.

"I can't believe it's been three years but it has certainly been a hugely rewarding three years and when I look back I am surprised how far things have come," said Gordon. "After completing my training in Manchester I wanted to hit the ground running and I think I possibly expected too much too soon. But following the early literacy and numeracy courses, the momentum has steadily gathered pace and I feel that I am now in a much better position to offer my services supporting members than ever before."

Gordon puts some of his success down to establishing links with various providers and building local networks. "I have been able to tap into local authority provision to access various CPD opportunities and the partnership with the local FE college has been really helpful, not just in terms of the literacy and numeracy courses, but also in accessing other provision," explained Gordon.



*Gordon Core, Wigan ULR*

These partnerships, along with Gordon's work on the ground promoting learning, have opened up a range of opportunities for ATL members with all sections of the workforce getting involved. "The modern foreign language courses seemed to strike a chord with members whilst the First Aid training attracted support staff from a number of local schools, all anxious to learn how to effectively treat the cuts and bruises that come with the territory when staff are on playground duty," said Gordon. "ICT was and remains a key learning need, and through working with colleagues in my own and neighbouring schools we have sourced training to improve the ICT skills of support staff, particularly, to ensure that they feel confident using the interactive whiteboards that have recently been installed."

As his school's CPD coordinator, Gordon is well placed to ensure that CPD has a broader focus beyond that influenced by national initiatives. "From the start, I believed that the role of the ULR was one that can give members an effective voice when it comes to CPD, and school INSET opportunities increasingly reflect those needs that have been identified by members," said Gordon. "Recently, there has been specific INSET for Special Educational Needs relating to visual impairment, performance management and behaviour for learning."

Gordon has increasingly made his

presence felt in his branch as he works to raise the profile of union learning. "We agreed at a recent branch meeting to offer a workshop on behaviour management and we had a great response with over 40 people coming out on a Thursday evening," said Gordon. "This type of event is important because it changes the perception of members as they start to see beyond the union as just an 'insurance policy' and begin to realise that their involvement is the key to the provision of first class CPD opportunities."

Looking to the future, Gordon is working with the branch to extend the scope of his activities and he will be looking to give a 'big push' to ICT in 2009, whilst the literacy and numeracy courses will remain a key feature, opening doors for support staff to get on and develop their careers. His efforts have not escaped the attention of other senior figures in his school. "The headteacher recently supported the adoption of a Learning Agreement and the Chair of Governors has responded very positively to this and a vision of CPD which gives more emphasis to professional autonomy," explained Gordon. "I will be making a presentation to the Governing Body in February and hopefully secure official endorsement of the Learning Agreement."

If you would like to get in touch with Gordon, please email him at:

**[gcore@sky.com](mailto:gcore@sky.com)**

# London Wide looks to build on success in 2009

**London Wide enters 2009 in rude health following a year when union learning in Greater London reached another level with more members getting active around learning than ever before.**

Autumn's issue of *You Learn* captured the vibrancy of London Wide, an organisation that brings together ULRs, branch officers, and ATL staff throughout Greater London, and it ended the year on a high when over 50 members turned out in November for a programme of workshops and briefings from specialist providers.

Both the Voice Care Network ([www.voicecare.org](http://www.voicecare.org)) and the Teacher Support Network ([www.teachersupport.info](http://www.teachersupport.info)) were on hand to bring members up to speed with the latest developments to ensure that they were taking the necessary

steps to tackle stress and improve wellbeing, along with a workshop designed to improve communication skills in the classroom and with colleagues.

Voice care provision is now a firmly established source of expertise for members looking to keep their vocal chords in tip top shape whilst the Teacher Support Network offers a comprehensive support service for education staff.

Speaking after the event, Bromley ULR and founder member of London Wide, Diana Manville reflected on the achievements of London Wide: "I'm proud that London Wide has established itself as the hub of union learning in London. We knew we wanted to establish a forum for network building and information sharing. However, it has exceeded all

expectations and now brings together a wide array of ATL members ready to engage with the learning agenda. London Wide is a brilliantly effective way for members to engage with the union. Everyone is welcome and it reflects the learning needs of teachers, college lecturers, students and support staff in both the maintained and independent sector. By modelling best practice examples, members are able to disseminate reliable information and professional advice to their colleagues back in the workplace."

The next London Wide event will be held on **Saturday 21 March** at Trafalgar Events, 8-9 Northumberland Street, London, WC2N 5RD. If you would like to attend, please contact Diana Manville by email at: [dmanville@bromley.atl.org.uk](mailto:dmanville@bromley.atl.org.uk).



## Making CPD count for FE members

FE has had more than its fair share of initiatives and reforms in recent years but the new CPD requirements introduced in September may well turn out to be as much an opportunity as a challenge for ULRs and members.

All full-time teachers working in FE colleges must complete 30-hours CPD per year in order to improve standards of teaching and learning, and retain their license to practice. They will be able to record their CPD with **Reflect**, a new online tool developed by the Institute for Learning, which will enable members to manage their own CPD and log their activities in a personalised learning space. ATL's network of ULRs are well placed to promote learning opportunities to members in FE by highlighting the fact that they can be used towards meeting the mandatory CPD requirements.

ATL members working in FE can also take advantage of our flagship partnership with Edge Hill University to achieve formal accreditation for their CPD undertaken as part of the new requirements. Opportunities exist for members to work towards a Masters degree, largely free of charge, by gaining academic credits for all work-based CPD. Edge Hill University are also developing a new course specifically for FE members, which will be offered during the spring term. If you would like to find out more please email Michael Cheetham at: [mcheetham@atl.org.uk](mailto:mcheetham@atl.org.uk).

## A New Year brings new learning opportunities for members

ATL members in **West Yorkshire** have been brushing up on their **interactive whiteboard skills** by attending courses at Park Lane College and college ULR, Richard Ward, has more ICT training planned during the spring term. Meanwhile Gabrielle Enoch, ULR for **North East Worcester College**, is persuading members to get active by offering a course in **ballroom dancing**. In **Staffordshire**, Debbie Rapley is tackling stress by offering members the opportunity to **improve wellbeing** at John Taylor Secondary School. Managing stress is also a priority for **Torbay** ULR and new branch secretary, William Bertran, with members set to benefit from a workshop on **work-life balance**. Elsewhere, **North East** ULRs will be offering members the opportunity to attend training on **child exploitation and online protection**.

## Behaviour workshops a big hit for members



Listen up: North East members are kept on task.

*"Absolutely fantastic; best course I have ever been on in 12 years of teaching! Very entertaining, as well as being informative."*

*"Brilliant, motivating, positive and inspirational!"*

*"This course is absolutely essential for teachers; those practising and trainees."*

*"It was the most informative, useful and amazing course I have ever attended!"*

**ATL members were quick to snap up places on various Managing challenging behaviour courses during the autumn term with over 150 members packing into venues in Newcastle, Cumbria, Calderdale and Wigan.**

Problems arising from poor behaviour in the classroom are a major source of stress for ATL members and ULRs have responded positively to offer a series of very successful workshops, led by education consultant Jason Bangbala, to enable members to better tackle the problem.

For Calderdale ULR, Anne Dobson, this was the first event she had organised since she completed her ULR training in Sheffield last summer. "I knew that poor behaviour was a problem in my own school just from talking to members and colleagues," said Anne. "As a new ULR I wanted to try and offer members some relevant training which would appeal to members. Our branch secretary, Shelagh Hirst, suggested we could organise something during the evening for all members in the branch and we had a fantastic take up, not just from members in the branch but, from neighbouring areas in West Yorkshire."

Elsewhere, North East ULRs, Debbie Polwarth, Sarah-Louise Nicholson and Susan Coates, were delighted when their Saturday morning workshop at the University of Northumbria was inundated with members wishing to attend. "I was blown away by the response because I thought it would be difficult on a Saturday morning," said Debbie. "I did promote the event in my own school and signed up 10 new members so they could attend either the first event or one we are planning later in the year. Fortunately, it was well worth the effort as those who attended were treated to an absolutely brilliant course!"

## South West ULR ensures members can let their hair down

'Too much work makes Jack a dull boy,' would be a maxim South Gloucestershire ULR, Carolyn Dutton, would wholeheartedly endorse given her commitment to ensuring members in the branch get the opportunity to come along to a range of social events.

Recent events have included a catwalk show and a technology evening, which enabled members to sample a range of the latest gadgets at a local John Lewis store. "We were able to try out Sony's new Reader eBook, we sought advice on buying computers (Christmas is

coming) and we even played the Wii Tennis doubles!" said Carolyn.

Despite her burgeoning reputation for fun and games, Carolyn ensures members' professional needs are effectively represented and recent Voice Care workshops offered to members throughout the branch were all oversubscribed.

Carolyn is always happy to hear from other ULRs so please email her if you would like to get in touch at: [cdutton@avon.atl.org.uk](mailto:cdutton@avon.atl.org.uk).

### New development opportunity for ULRs

ULRs can look forward to an exciting new course developed by ATL's Training department, which will provide an excellent opportunity for ULRs to update their knowledge and skills.

#### ***Being an ATL ULR: Working in your branch***

will take place over three days from **Thursday 25 to Saturday 27 June** in Central London and will cover key topics and themes including: learning and organising, supporting ULRs and negotiating learning agreements.

## New database set to transform CPD provision

A new online database designed by the TDA to promote high quality CPD opportunities promises to be an invaluable resource for ATL ULRs.

The database, which will be piloted for a year, was launched in October 2008 and forms a key plank of a far reaching campaign spearheaded by former London Schools Tsar, Tim Brighouse, to radically improve all aspects of CPD provision for the whole school workforce.

It is the first of its kind in England and will provide a single source of information to schools on professional development provision across the

country. ATL's CPD courses are listed on the database, along with those offered by national and regional providers including local authorities, universities, schools, professional associations and private companies.

ULRs can also take advantage of the database to support members through the school performance management process and those employed in FE who are required to undertake 30-hours mandatory CPD.

The database is designed to be user friendly with a simple search tool enabling users to quickly find opportunities. Users will be able to view

detailed information about specific CPD opportunities, learning outcomes, accreditation opportunities, duration and cost. The database is equipped with intuitive browse filters, which means searches can be refined by region, delivery method, key stage, subject and professional role. All CPD providers are also required to provide information about themselves and their organisation. You can review each provider's supporting statement, which outlines the ways in which they provide, monitor and assess their courses.

You can access the databases by visiting: [www.cpdsearch.tda.gov.uk](http://www.cpdsearch.tda.gov.uk).

### Dates for your diary

If you or one of your colleagues is interested in becoming a ULR, ATL will be offering the following courses to members:

#### **Exeter**

**Thursday 19 and Friday 20 February**; final day, **Friday 27 March**

#### **Leeds**

**Thursday 19 Friday 20 March**; final day, **Friday 24 April**

If you are interested in attending and would like further information, or know of someone who might be, then please email your Learning Organiser:

#### **Northern: Michael Cheetham**

Tel: 07918 195894

Email: [mcheetham@atl.org.uk](mailto:mcheetham@atl.org.uk)

#### **South West/West Midlands: Sandra Berry**

Tel: 07918 196137

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#### **South East/East Midlands: Tim Brooks**

Tel: 07501 229246

Email: [tbrooks@atl.org.uk](mailto:tbrooks@atl.org.uk)

# Learning at Work Week offers more opportunities for ULRs

ULRs will have the ideal opportunity to champion learning in their workplace and branch during Adult Learners' Week, which takes place between the Saturday 9 and Friday 15 May.

This annual campaign promotes all forms of adult learning and ATL's network of ULRs are well placed to mark the occasion by celebrating their achievements and encouraging more members to get active and find out what learning can do for them.

ULRs can submit bids to the TUC for funding to support provision of various learning opportunities to members who might want to learn something new or update their skills.

In recent years, ATL ULRs have pulled out the stops to champion learning on Learning at Work Day, which takes place on the Thursday of Adult Learners' Week. In 2008, Diana Manville (Bromley branch), Hilly Longman (Surrey branch), Bobbie Churchley (Brighton and Hove branch) and Brenda Curran (Oxfordshire branch) were all successful in their bid for funding to offer a broad programme of learning events in their schools on Learning at Work Day. As a result members took advantage of opportunities to sample a foreign language, get to grips with digital cameras, learn new cookery skills, relax using Yoga and much more.

If you would like to find out how Learning at Work Week can give learning a boost in your school or branch, please contact your Learning Organiser.



## ULRs crackdown on bullying and harassment

ATL's network of ULRs are developing new and innovative ideas to engage members in learning by tackling important issues which directly affect health and wellbeing.

Previous issues of *You Learn* have highlighted how an increasing number of members are taking advantage of opportunities to reduce stress, and in this vein, ULRs have been active in recent months targeting bullying and harassment.

Bullying and harassment is a particularly distressing problem and with the growing use of the internet and advancements in mobile phone technology, it is an issue which is no longer only confined to the workplace. During the autumn term, ULRs in Rotherham and Lancashire branches, supported by other branch officers, organised briefings led by Julie Winn who is a partner at Morrish Solicitors and an expert in this particular area. Julie offered members practical advice and guidance to tackle the problem along with an overview of the key legal provisions that are in place to protect members.

More briefings are planned in the spring term with ULRs in Cumbria, Manchester and Tameside inviting Julie to address members on the issue at a series of meetings. If you would like to offer members in your school or branch some practical support on how to effectively address the problem, please contact your Learning Organiser.

ULRs and members can also visit ATL's website which offers comprehensive advice and guidance on bullying and harassment.



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