

## **Leadership in Learning/ Collaborative Learning in Guinness Learning Centre**

60 Participants attended the two-day E.C.L.O/ Brewing Skillnet conference. 27 papers were presented over two days (**papers available on [www.eclo.org](http://www.eclo.org)**)

### **Collaborative Learning**

The Irish Skillnets case study was presented by Máire Hunt (CEO Skillnets Ltd). [www.skillnets.com](http://www.skillnets.com) followed by an Australian case study presented by Lindsey Ryan, Director at the University of South Australia ([lindsay.ryan@unisa.edu.au](mailto:lindsay.ryan@unisa.edu.au))

### **Accreditation- Recognising the learned worker**

Ray Coughlan (Cork Institute of Technology - [rcoughlan@cit.ie](mailto:rcoughlan@cit.ie) ) described new models and methods for higher education - workplace partnership in design, delivery, support and evaluation of accredited programmes which meet both industry and academic standards.

### **Using Television to interact with learners**

#### **From Read Write Now to Village Green - a television approach to basic skills learning and it's implications for the design and delivery in the workplace.**

Like many European countries Ireland has a significant problem in the levels of functional literacy in the population. AV Edge has produced 48 half-hour TV programmes to teach the basic skills of reading and writing for Irish adults. These programmes are broadcast in primetime slots on the number one national channel RTE1. The Read Write Now project is an initiative of the National Development Plan and the other partners consist of NALA (National Adult Literacy Association), the Department of Education and Science and the broadcaster RTE.

In the most recent series of Read Write Now the programmes have included a "Learning to Learn" strand that has proved very popular with adult audiences. Many of the programmes have dealt with basic skills issues in the workplace. Read Write Now exceeded all expectations in terms of audience and achievement of meaningful learning goals.

AV Edge has now developed a DVD based product to enable basic skills to be taught in the workplace. Because the learning points also focus on English reading and writing the company is also developing a version for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). The key innovations are the proximity of Learning-to-Learn and motivational elements within a basic skills course and the use of primarily television techniques to deliver e learning experiences.

Leo Casey made a presentation featuring clips from many of the elements of the TV series and demonstrated the multimedia products and pointed to the implications for workplace learning.

Further info: Leo Casey, [leo@av-edge.com](mailto:leo@av-edge.com); [www.av-edge.com](http://www.av-edge.com);

## Broadband for Business

"Broadband for Business" is an innovative programme partly funded by the European Social Fund aiming to provide rurally located small and medium organisations with learning skills using broadband technology.

Using foreign language learning as a model, this pilot programme gives learners the opportunity to experiment with innovative technologies and methods for implementation. The presenters demonstrated an aspect of this innovative learning programme by giving the audience a practical experience of the techniques involved and the learning challenges facing small and medium organisations. Contact: *Rita Mascia* [rita.mascia@luton.ac.uk](mailto:rita.mascia@luton.ac.uk) and *Anthony Forth* [anthony.forth@luton.ac.uk](mailto:anthony.forth@luton.ac.uk) - University of Luton, UK.

## Learning Questionnaires

- A new measurement device called the **KnowledgeWorx Contributions Tool™** is used to assess your learners' abilities to make innovations and contributions to the success of your company. For more information, contact *Jozéfa Fawcett* <http://kworx.co.uk/>
- Squarewise (NL) demonstrated a Learning Organisation Scan by which organisations can evaluate their degree of learning, pinpoint the aspects within the organisation that need improvement and rank themselves to others. Contact: *Ellen Mensink* - [mensink@squarewise.com](mailto:mensink@squarewise.com)

## Mentoring/ Coaching

Mentoring at Janssen Pharmaceutica (Belgium) *Hilde Willems* ([hwillems@janbe.jnj.com](mailto:hwillems@janbe.jnj.com)) first checked our understanding of who had what role and responsibility in a mentoring relationship. She then described how mentoring has been used to create right environment for women to achieve highest potential.

Coaching Paper by People Development Coaches from DSM (formerly Roche Vitamins UK) and *Joe Lafferty* of LifeTree, Scotland : [joe.lafferty@lifetree.co.uk](mailto:joe.lafferty@lifetree.co.uk)  
They used the World Café model for generative learning during the presentations. (Strongly recommend you visit [www.theworldcafe.com](http://www.theworldcafe.com))

- Brief introduction to Café methodology
- Conversations round two or three questions related to the chosen topic - to explore learning, experience, insights from the stories people share
- Give presentation on the topic

- A follow up Café Conversation on topics that emerge from the presentation.

The outcome was a dynamic learning conversation - with the delegates sharing learning and reflecting collectively on their own experience and the experience of DSM.

## Organisational Learning

- Prof *Stephen Foster* (Maastricht School of Management, NL - [foster@msm.nl](mailto:foster@msm.nl)) with co-speaker Silvio De Bono (Malta - [silvio@ideamalta.com](mailto:silvio@ideamalta.com)) argued for multiple intelligences to be measured and for companies to publish their intellectual capital value. Key manufacturing staff can be as valuable to company as Board members.
- Corporate memory was getting shorter in some organisations.
- European multinationals trying to work in China must understand culture of working in China.

## e-learning in SMEs

*Barry Nyhan* (CEDEFOP, Greece) - [bn@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:bn@cedefop.eu.int) Case studies undertaken in five countries illustrated the lack of success with present e-learning approaches in SMEs. In most of the cases studied, e-learning did not have an impact across the organisation. It tended to be restricted to a small percentage of the workforce (white collar workers) who used e-learning programmes to learn outside of working time. The main conclusion of the study is that the effective implementation of e-learning in SMEs is dependent on the existence of a sound underlying organisational learning culture. The learning culture most suited to SMEs is an informal learning one in which learning is integrated with work activities.

E-learning must support this process. This means that instead of seeing e-learning as a 'stand alone' process in which learning *is delivered*, it is preferable to talk about how *e-resources*, that are used for everyday work and business activities, can also be used for learning. To implement this approach SMEs need support from regional based 'umbrella' training or consultancy bodies. Regional-based learning networks can thus be established.

*During the discussion it was noted that CD-ROMs designed for user to rapidly access very short bytes of information were more likely to be used than those describing concepts.*

*Hülya Öztel's* paper (De Montfort University, UK) focused on enhancing levels of technology transfer to SMEs. The study focused on each partnership's learning capability. She concluded that a pre-requisite to partnership learning is social learning that leads to the formation of a clearly recognised policy network. For more info, email [hocor@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:hocor@dmu.ac.uk)

## Conference methodologies

Helping Top Executives and Entrepreneurs

*Ulrich Schweiker* (Switzerland) posed the question "Who is the person responsible for having the wrong person making wrong decisions?" Entrepreneurs have a necessity to learn however they are reluctant to avail of traditional training. Who are the right people for them to learn from? It is difficult for them to find discussion partners.

"The Deidesheimer Kreis"<sup>®</sup> has initiated a new learning format for directors, top executives, and entrepreneurs - a peer learning concept acceptable for this special audience. Contact: [ulrich.schweiker@cbs-group.com](mailto:ulrich.schweiker@cbs-group.com)

Exchange Methodology: Innovation with a Hybrid Large Group Method (NHS, UK)

Exchange is an alternative to traditional conference formats. It helps individuals, teams and communities connect for peer to peer inspiration and knowledge development in as little as a half day for 300-600 people. This approach draws a range of traditions and concepts including Appreciative Inquiry, Open Space, traditional academic conference, trade fair, Knowledge Management and conversation. Contact: Philip Hadridge, [philip\\_hadridge@doh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:philip_hadridge@doh.gsi.gov.uk) and Caroline Corrigan, [caroline.corrigan@doh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.corrigan@doh.gsi.gov.uk)

## Visualisation

Mary Morrissey (Ireland) used a visualisation and relaxation technique at the start of the conference. It is a guiding intervention more common within Psychotherapy than in business, which provides an opportunity to compliment the traditional leadership approaches to problem/challenge solving. It is another way to access the creative and alternative solutions that are within the individual in the workforce and may not always be accessible. It helps to access fresh ideas in people who already have expertise and knowledge and likely to make breakthrough changes. Visualisation involves the addition of imagination, which resides in the right side of the brain and is accessed using colourful drawings. It incorporates levels of awareness below consciousness. Contact: [Mary\\_Morrissey@hse.ie](mailto:Mary_Morrissey@hse.ie)

## Becoming a Learning Company

- *Dr Daniel Belet* (France) proposed a model to facilitate the learning organisation development process within main stream organisations. He showed the necessary actions required. This methodology can greatly help executives who are open to these approaches but who fear the hurdles of its practical implementation. For detail read his book entitled "Becoming a true learning company". (*It may be in French*). Contact: [drbelet@imagnet.fr](mailto:drbelet@imagnet.fr)
- *Prof Dealtry* was unable to attend but circulated a paper "The Savvy Learner". The learning organisation is a beautiful concept; however, success in releasing its full potential in the reality of an organisation depends upon a rare breed of management. He describes the developmental theory and leadership competencies that have evolved to systemically nurture organisational learning capabilities. He defined the challenges that organisations

have to overcome in effectively managing new knowledge and new learning to sustain competitive advantage in their business sectors. He described how the Corporate University or Corporate Academy is rapidly becoming the Strategic Management Agency for success in comprehensively managing the learning organisation.

[www.corporateuniversity.org.uk](http://www.corporateuniversity.org.uk); [prof.dealtry@dial.pipex.com](mailto:prof.dealtry@dial.pipex.com)

- **Colin Coulson-Thomas drew from projects undertaken for leading companies to reveal how some corporate entrepreneurs are boosting revenues by significantly improving the performance of existing activities through using practical knowledge-based job-support tools. Colin Coulson-Thomas is author of 'Developing a Corporate Learning Strategy', 'The Future of the Organisation', 'Shaping Things to Come', 'Transforming the Company' and 'The Knowledge Entrepreneur'. [colinct@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:colinct@tiscali.co.uk)**
- **Rudi Page promoted "The Corporate Academy Protocol Framework Model" which connects the cultural knowledge of practitioners with the development of diversity practices within Learning, Management Skills and Entrepreneurship. It is a tool that captures the dynamics of cultural differences and social responsibility. Its primary focus is on an integrative framework that builds on Learning Management Skills and Entrepreneurship to bring about coherence in diverse learning communities. It is a practical medium for cultural understanding. [info@statecraft.net](mailto:info@statecraft.net)**
- Many managers don't do what they have learnt in management courses unless they can use it immediately realising and reflecting on the advantage of doing things differently. *Hans Werner-Franz's* training concept integrates training with organisation development projects (processes and structures) led by the trainees, and individual attitudinal changes using the training days intensely for feedback and exchange on the progress of the projects. The training is based on Hans Werner-Franz's learning organisation approach of leadership by social construction instead of persuasion or coercion. All instruments used tend to install simple routines of analysing and planning work as a context of co-operation and competence building. [franz@sfs-dortmund.de](mailto:franz@sfs-dortmund.de)
- Learning at work is rarely formal, often cultural and frequently not codified. Many organisations make no formal arrangements for learning to take place, yet they rely heavily on the implicit, informal and occasional learning of their employees. In the arena of informal learning it is the learner who takes control over what to learn, how to learn and when (and assesses whether they have learned it). *Anita Pickerden* asked participants "How can we use this tendency towards informal learning to enhance the design of a formal work based training programme?" [anitapickerden@aol.com](mailto:anitapickerden@aol.com)
- A global IT services company wanted to reposition themselves in the market following a major rebranding and restructuring. There was a strategic imperative to accelerate learning and knowledge sharing across the organisation, with

particular focus on leading through transition creating a consultative approach in customer relationships. The company created a highly intensive development programme for their 200+ key influencers with DIEU. The programme mixed 'the oil and water' of very different learning methods to optimise the learning benefits and the business impact - in a minimum of time. Contact: *Inger Buus* [ibu@dieu.com](mailto:ibu@dieu.com) or *Gitte Nielsen* [gn.ioa@cbs.dk](mailto:gn.ioa@cbs.dk)

## The most theoretically challenging presentation was on Social Semiotic Learning by Angela Nobre. [Anobre@esce.ips.pt](mailto:Anobre@esce.ips.pt)

- Misfit of theory- many issues escape rational theory -can be helped by inter-disciplinary approach and can be helped through drawing from philosophy
- Learning is a life process/ learning is interpreting
- She used the metaphor of when you look through the windows of a house; you get different but complimentary perspectives. We need means of exploring the blurred corners.
- *"More important than what other people do for us is what we do with what people do for us." Sartre*

## Reflection

60 Participants at the two day European Consortium of Learning Organisations/ Brewing Skillnets conference <http://www.eclo.org/> have scattered.

Before they left they reflected on what the conference had meant to them:

### Positive

- Diverse views and perspectives (often opposite), stimulated and helped me clarify my thinking
- To what extent do we collude with the prevailing mental models, closed thinking or to what extent do we challenge these mental models and help "open up" the system
- Why are we looking for certainty and "the answer" rather than living more in the question
- How many of our questions are actually statements of our own mental models rather than springing from curiosity or real openness to learn personally

### Negative

- Are the Irish becoming complacent? Attendance from Ireland was less than expected. Communications can be blamed: postal dispute, email spam issues, poor marketing. Emerging trend of being bombarded with information and losing curiosity. Are we losing appetite for being at the leading edge, challenging boundaries and exploring big picture?

## Reaction sheet

(On a scale from 1-5 where 1 = Strongly Disagree and a 5 = Strongly Agree)

The presenters put across some new interesting ideas	4.6
There was enough time for discussion	4.2
There was a good environment for learning	4.6
My questions were answered in a way that helped me to learn	4.2
I am satisfied that I can apply what I learned to my job	4.2
The location/venue was suitable	4.6
The conference materials were adequate	4.2
The pre-course information was adequate	4.1
Overall the conference was beneficial to me	4.7