

Live & Learn



Scottish Union Learning News

Autumn 2008

Volume 3

Number 1

STUC Helen Dowie Award

ULR Audrey McJimpsey's hard work pays off

Learning on Your Doorstep

Highlands & Islands ULRs attend Conference

Addressing Everyday Skills

ULRs discuss at an Everyday Skills Event

Online Learning Programme

TUC Education looks at 5 years of online learning



Promoting Learning Activity through SULF

The Scottish Government announced in November 2007 that it would continue the Scottish Union Learning Fund (SULF) and has committed £2.4m over the next three years.

The successful projects for the 7th round of the Scottish Union Learning Fund are:

POA - "POA Scotland Learning Initiative"
BFAWU - "BFAWU - Foundation to Learning"
CWU - "CWU - Learning for Life"
UCATT - "Building Learning - Qualifying the Workforce"
RMT - "All Aboard"

ASLEF - "Proud to Educate - Scotland"
UNITE - "Unite in Learning - Building on Good Practice"
UNISON (Highlands & Islands) - "UNISON - Learning"
UNISON (Lowlands & Uplands) "UNISON - Learning"
FBU - "Recruitment to Retirement & Beyond - Addressing the "Skills for Scotland" needs of all staff"
NUJ - "Digital Convergence Project"
PCS - "Licence to Skill Community Strategy for Growth - Embedding the Learning Agenda"
USDAW - "Integrating & Embedding Lifelong Learning within USDAW"

Sharing Experiences STUC Local Learning Forums

Local Learning Forums give Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) and others who are interested in the union learning agenda a forum where they can meet and discuss the issues they face in the workplace. Scottish Union Learning hopes this will lead to the sharing of good practice and ultimately to cross-union work in local areas.

The ULR is very much part of the union family and we hope to use the forums as a way to connect learning with wider issues in which trade unions are

involved. We work with trades councils, local providers sympathetic to the union cause and external organisations who share our agenda. In this way we can make the link with issues such as union organising, campaigns, school visits, everyday skills provision and many other important initiatives.



Photo by Jennifer Payne



Local Learning Forums in the Lowlands & Uplands

Dates of the next meetings of the Aberdeen, Fife, Tayside, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Lanarkshire Local Learning Forums have been announced.

Aberdeen Local Learning Forum
3rd Sept 2008 - 10.30am to 1.30pm
Venue TBA

Fife Local Learning Forum
17th Sept 2008 - 10.30am to 1.30pm
Adam Smith College

Tayside Union Learning Reps Forum
16th October 2008 - 10.00am to 1.00pm
Venue TBA

Venues and agendas for all forums will be advised nearer the time of the meetings. Please note: you must seek approval from your own union to attend Local Learning Forums.

Glasgow Local Learning Forum
TBA - 10.00am to 12.30pm
STUC Centre

Edinburgh Local Learning Forum
TBA - 10.00am to 12.30pm
Mansfield Traquair Centre

Lanarkshire Local Learning Forum
TBA - 10.00am to 12.30pm
Jimmy Brandon Learning Centre

Local Learning Forums in the Highlands & Islands

Dates of the next three meetings of the Inverness, Caithness, Shetland and Orkney Cross Union ULR Forums have been set.

Inverness Cross Union ULR Forum
7th October 2008 - 11am to 2pm
5th December 2008 - 11am to 2pm
18th March 2009 - 11am to 2pm (Multi Link VC Forum)

Caithness Cross Union ULR Forum
8th October 2008 - 11am to 2pm
4th December 2008 - 11am to 2pm
18th March 2009 - 11am to 2pm (Multi Link VC Forum)

Venues and agendas for all forums will be advised nearer the time of the meetings. Please note: you must seek approval from your own union to attend Local Learning Forums.

Orkney Cross Union ULR Forum
9th October 2008 - 10.30am to 12.30pm
3rd December 2008 - 12noon to 2pm
18th March 2009 - 11am to 2pm (Multi Link VC Forum)

Shetland Cross Union ULR Forum
9th October 2008 - 1pm to 3pm
3rd December 2008 - 2.30pm to 4.30pm
18th March 2009 - 11am to 2pm (Multi Link VC Forum)

Save the Date!

The Scottish Union Learning Conference will be held on 13th November. To book a place, contact your trade union. For more information, email learning@stuc.org.uk.



Awareness Raising STUC Everyday Skills Event

By Wendy Burton, Development Officer - Everyday Skills
Scottish Union Learning

Our annual Everyday Skills Event was held at the Tolbooth in Stirling on 28th February, and was attended by Learning Reps, SULF Project Workers and Trade Union Tutors from all over Scotland. Feedback from delegates has been extremely positive, and the Guest Speakers and Workshop Co-ordinators were very well received.

The original Tolbooth was built in 1689 but was re-built in the early 1700s, with

the jail and court house being added in the early 1800s. Prisoners were held in the tower and hung outside the building, and apparently some of them were buried under the foundations of the present building, which is said to be haunted! The prison was moved in 1875 and today the Tolbooth is one of the major music and performing arts venues in Stirling.

Lifelong Learning Manager Sylvia O'Grady said, "Stirling is an appropriate venue to hold an event on Everyday Skills, given its dedication to lifelong learning. The STUC looks forward to



addressing the skills gap with local partners throughout Scottish regions." Throughout the day there was a variety of presentations. Ian Tasker (STUC Assistant Secretary) spoke about Dyslexia and Workplace Safety; Neil Bell (ULR from PCS) gave an account of his own experience of dyslexia; Lynne Gibbons (Service Manager from Stirling Council's Adult Learning Team) provided an update on Local and National Everyday Skills Provision; and Duncan Carmichael (Literacies Specialist from Stirling Council's Adult Learning Team) gave a presentation on Communicating with Dyslexic Adults.

The workshop themes were:

Numeracy - facilitated by Jim Baxter (ASLEF) and John Slaven (SUL), which explored aspects of workplace numeracy and personal finance;

Dyslexia in the Workplace - facilitated by Ian Tasker (STUC), which considered the issues surrounding employers' responsibilities, reasonable adjustments and the role of trade unions and the STUC in supporting workers with dyslexia;

BBC Learning - facilitated by Catherine Garvie (BBC), which provided an update on RaW and the opportunity for practical experience using a sample of BBC RaW skills resources, in order to show how informal, entertainment driven resources can be used to motivate learners to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

There was a prize draw at the end of the day, and James O'Connell of Unite (T&G Section) won the iPod Shuffle, which was presented to him by Mary Anderson of UNISON, who had travelled from the Shetland Isles.



Photos by Jennifer Payne

Mark Your Calendar!

International Literacy Day

Wednesday 10th September 2008

Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama
Glasgow

Adult Dyslexia Conference

Wednesday 29th October 2008

Stirling Management Centre
University of Stirling

Happy Birthday STUC Youth Conference

By John Slaven
Development Officer
Scottish Union Learning

It was a very happy 70th birthday for the Youth Committee as the 68th Annual STUC Youth Conference was held in Perth over the weekend of 28th - 29th June 2008. The Conference theme was “Unions Work: Empowering Young Workers through Learning”. The Conference focussed on raising awareness of the importance of lifelong learning and how young workers can develop skills to access personal development in the workplace.



The Saturday workshops explored the issues around youth literacies and the growing educational divide within Scottish society. On Sunday, an open debate took place on “Developing Skills - Developing Opportunities”. Panellists Maureen Watt MSP, Minister for Schools and Skills; John Park MSP, Opposition Spokesperson on Skills; Jim Baxter, ASLEF Project Worker; and John Slaven, Scottish Union Learning were quizzed on modern apprenticeships, the lack of teaching posts in Scotland and the stereotypes young people face today.

As it was a special birthday, a booklet was produced to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Youth Conference and



Youth Committee. It highlighted the strong priority the Youth Conference gave to education and learning issues over the years. The second motion ever passed by the Youth Conference in 1941 called for the raising of the school leaving age to 15. During the 1949 Conference, the National Union of Railwaymen called for paid day release for young apprentices. Despite this, the vast majority of young workers were denied access to university. By the 1960's the struggle switched to widening access to higher education. The 1969 Conference supported the establishment of the Open University and even called for grants to allow student to buy television sets to watch OU programmes. The 1982 Youth Conference passed a motion calling for 100 hours paid learning time a year. Interestingly, last year's Congress muted a similar idea (which goes to prove that in some areas the Youth Committee was 30 years ahead of its time).

The 2008 Youth Conference continued the progressive tradition. Scottish Union Learning will work closely with the Youth Committee to ensure that the learning issues which affect young workers are given the profile they deserve.

For the more perceptive, you may have noticed that the Youth Committee is 70 years old but there have only been 68 Conferences. The Conferences in 1939 and 1940 were cancelled as the Government discouraged events which involved the use of the railways that were required for troop and armament traffic. So, now you know.



Highlands & Islands ULR Conference 2008

By Pam Urquhart, Development Officer - Highlands & Islands
Scottish Union Learning

**Thanks to the Highlands & Islands
ULRs who attended the third
STUC Highlands & Islands ULR
Conference, 'Learning on your
Doorstep' at Ross Country FC,
Dingwall on Friday 13th June 2008.**

There was a good geographical spread of delegates with most areas of the Highlands & Islands represented. Feedback from conference delegates was positive overall, with a majority finding the conference very useful. Photographs from the day can be found by visiting <http://www.scottishunionlearning.com/support>.



A total of 63 participants attended from the following unions: RMT, PCS, UNISON, ASLEF, Unite (Amicus), FBU, Unite (T&G), POA, GMB, EIS, USDAW and TSSA.



Photos provided by Oliver Allan, Work Experience pupil from Fortrose Academy



Photo by Trevor Martin

The Glittering Achievements of **ULR Audrey McJimpsey**

By Jennifer Payne, Marketing Officer
Scottish Union Learning

Now in its third year, the recipient of the 2008 STUC Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning is Audrey McJimpsey, a Community Union Learning Representative at RSBi Blindcraft in Springburn, Glasgow.

Audrey received the Award from Prime Minister Gordon Brown MP at the STUC Annual Congress in Inverness in April. Audrey said, "I could not have achieved this award without the support of my union Community and I am very grateful for the support my family and friends



have given to me over the years.” Audrey has been very active within the trade union movement since 1986, and currently supports local initiatives to promote union activity, especially union learning. She represents 100 members in her role as a Learning Rep within RSBI. A large percentage of the workforce is disabled at RSBI Blindcraft and Audrey has encouraged more than 75% of the workers to take up learning opportunities.

Audrey’s 13-year-old son Andrew is planning to showcase his mum’s achievement in his modern studies class at Carlisle High School. Audrey’s husband Billy, a UNISON member, has also taken up a French language course through the Blindcraft Learning Centre.

Speaking after receiving the award from the Prime Minister, Audrey said, “When someone achieves something they never thought they would try and learns something new, it gives me a deep sense of accomplishment and pride. It is an enjoyable experience to help others achieve their potential.”

STUC General Secretary Grahame Smith said, “This award recognises the leading role trade union activists have played in the promotion of lifelong learning in workplaces in all sectors throughout

Scotland. Audrey McJimpsey leads by example and her commitment to helping others gain the confidence to learn within the workplace is an asset to her union and a credit to the trade union-led lifelong learning movement.”

Community General Secretary Michael Leahy OBE said, “Community is proud and honoured that Audrey has won the Helen Dowie Award for Lifelong Learning. Her work as a Union Learning Rep has enhanced the quality of life of many of her fellow union members and work colleagues and it is they that put her forward for the award. Community sees the opportunity for personal development and fulfilment through the provision of education and training opportunities as central to the purpose of our union.”



Photo by Jennifer Payne

from the top: working with the Community SULF Project Workers; collecting the award from the PM; smiling with husband Billy at the STUC Annual Congress.



Photo by Jennifer Payne

Photo by Trevor Martin





Delivering ESOL Learning with the CWU

By Craig Anderson, SULF Project Worker

The first ESOL course to be delivered by the CWU in Scotland is currently underway at the KEY Learning Centre in Edinburgh.

The first 15 learners to attend the course are all employees working for Royal Mail at the Edinburgh Mail Centre. The learners are from a variety of backgrounds ranging from Chinese, African, Polish and from the Indian subcontinent. The learners registered for the course at a recently organised Open Day where various courses were promoted. These courses are to be delivered free of charge by the Workers' Education Association (WEA) onsite in the KEY Learning Centre.

From information gathered by the ESOL Tutor at the Open Day, the local ULRs were able to involve the onsite Dignity & Respect At Work (DRAW) group to assist the WEA in providing

a course to meet the requirements of the learners. The course has been specifically designed to incorporate elements of workplace terminology and abbreviations as an addition to the standard basic ESOL course provided by the WEA.

The ULRs believe this course will continue to be in demand as there are over 40 different nationalities working in the Edinburgh Mail Centre at present.

The course has also opened the eyes of many people to the sometimes complex world of workplace terminology and abbreviations. On a couple of occasions, long serving employees did not know the source of some of the abbreviations commonly used in the workplace. The new employees attending the ESOL course are learning the meanings of acronyms, abbreviations and much more!



Equality Reps are the New Union Reps in the Workplace

The last few years have seen an increase in the amount and complexity of equalities issues at work. That's why unions are building the role of Equality Reps to help make workplaces fairer and more equality aware.

Equality Reps may be experienced workplace reps or new reps who want to take on this new responsibility. TUC Education in Scotland is piloting a new three day training course for Equality Reps to help establish the role and to help Reps get to grips with the equality agenda. Pilots will take place in Glasgow and Edinburgh during September and December 2008.

If you would like further details about the TUC Equality Reps course, please contact:

Stuart Bell
unionlearn

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4th Floor, John Smith House
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Glasgow G2 4RZ

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E: sbell@tuc.org.uk

www.unionlearn.org.uk

Union Reps may need to handle issues such as:

- flexible working
- reasonable adjustments
- equal pay
- bullying and harassment
- discrimination
- equality impact assessments

This course will help you:

- understand the role of the Equality Rep
- find out more about discrimination legislation
- improve equality policies and agreements
- find out about good practice and share success stories
- promote equality in the workplace and the union
- develop tools and techniques for raising equality issues
- keep updated with current legislation
- develop equality networks
- sharpen negotiating skills

Online Learning with TUC Education in Scotland

In 2003 TUC Education developed its online learning strategy. It aimed to ensure that the development of online courses provided by the TUC would be of exemplary quality, highly valued by both learners and affiliated trade unions, and focused, like face-to-face courses provision, on maintaining and developing trade union education.

Five years on, TUC Education has implemented most of the strategic targets and developed a programme of high quality courses for union reps. TUC Education felt the time was right to commission a report into its online learning programme. The intention was to capture trade union representatives' experience of TUC online courses and to explore ways in which the offer could be improved.

To capture the learner experience, 1140 union reps that applied for TUC online courses during 2006-2007 were contacted and asked to complete a questionnaire. In addition, a series of interviews was conducted with a small number of online learners in order to explore issues in more depth and to provide students with the opportunity to

give additional feedback. Of the initial 1140 learners targeted, 260 responded. The report 'TUC Education Online - the Learner's Perspective' is based on the responses received from the 260 participants and was prepared for TUC Education by Brian Corrigan, Stow College and Dr Steven Love, Brunel University.

The survey asked four main questions:

1. Who are our online learners?
2. Why did they choose online?
3. How did they find the online experience?
4. How can we improve the online experience?

The research has shown that for the majority of union reps, online learning has been a positive experience and TUC Education's online programme has established itself as a genuine alternative to classroom-based courses. Demand for online learning is strong and the flexibility and convenience that this form of learning offers is a huge positive for trade union reps.

Quote from survey: 'Online learning is ideal for many people who need the skills for participating effectively in their union.'

Crucially, students (85%) felt that their



development of knowledge and skills was very strong, with 95% stating that the online courses developed their proficiency as union reps and increased their effectiveness in the workplace. The survey showed that attitudes towards the idea of online learning have changed dramatically and in a positive way. Reps value the benefit of an accessible and convenient offer with high quality course materials and effective technical and social support from tutors and fellow learners when needed. Tutors now also see online teaching as complementary to their work in the classroom.

'A good experience and an enjoyable way to learn.'

The learner feedback from the research highlighted a number of areas for improvement. As a result, over the next two years TUC Education aims to increase the range of online courses available to reps. In light of recent developments TUC Education will examine ways to make course material more interactive and stimulating

in order to enhance the learner experience. Intrinsic to the continued success of the online programme, TUC Education will simplify the application process improving communication with applicants to manage expectations. We will also consult with learners and tutors in order to implement refinements to course methodology, a key aspect of which is to explore the opportunities offered by blended learning (a combination of classroom-based and online delivery).

The challenge for TUC Education is to continue to develop its service and ensure that it maintains a high quality, attractive and flexible offer. The research document and the feedback from learners has proved to be invaluable and will help to inform the development of our online programme over the coming years.

If you would like to find out more about 'The Learner's Perspective' please download the following document:
<http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/files/publications/documents/133.pdf>

Proud to Educate with ASLEF

By Jim Baxter, SULF Project Worker

ASLEF took the opportunity to promote and highlight the learning opportunities that are open to all union members in the rail industry at an Open Day held on Saturday 31st May in First ScotRail's Training Academy.

SULF Project Worker Jim Baxter, RMT ULRs Brian Crayford and Colin Rowan, and Paul Mooney from Stow College's Trade Union Education Department organised the day. On what was possibly the warmest day of the year (so far), over 300 people turned up, which highlights the thirst for knowledge within the railway.



ScotRail's learning and development department opened its doors to allow staff and their families to see the many different aspects to the academy firsthand. Everyone was allowed to try the different types of ticket machines, take part in fire fighting, a bit of first aid training, 'try the table top' simulator (that's a 'train set' to you and me) and, most popular of all, the opportunity to experience what it's like to drive a passenger train using their very realistic simulators. It was a very successful day and showed the important role that the union plays in the learning and development of all union members in the railway.

A Study Visit to Germany

A study visit to Germany has given Marketing Officer Jennifer Payne a new outlook on lifelong learning. As part of the Transversal Programme, Jennifer visited Heidelberg to experience the theme "System of Vocational Guidance & Counselling in Germany".

For the week-long study visit in June, Jennifer shared lifelong learning and trade union practices with participants from Bulgaria, France, Sweden, Italy, Turkey and Finland. Germany has a dual system of education, where a student



participates in part-time vocational training combined with part-time study.

Jennifer said, "Although the educational systems and lifelong learning opportunities are different in Germany and Scotland, I took a closer look at how companies, trade unions and public administrations fund and promote individual learning opportunities for workers."



Going Online with ILA Scotland

By ILA Scotland

Did you know that learners can now request an ILA Scotland application pack online?

This is a significant development for ILA Scotland, making the scheme even more accessible to people who are interested in learning something new. Union Learning Representatives are encouraged to offer support by registering their colleagues and members for application packs. This new resource also allows learners to identify the trade union as a source of ILA Scotland information and assistance.

The introduction of the online application request coincides with a number of changes within the ILA Scotland scheme including the removal of the £100 offer and the introduction of the £500 offer for part time higher

Scottish Union Learning is aware of trade union concerns regarding the recent changes to the ILA scheme. We are taking these issues forward at ministerial level through the committee previously known as TUWPLL.

education learners. We understand that the removal of the £100 offer will be a big disappointment; however, learners who already have a £100 account can book courses up until 30th September 2008. If any of your colleagues currently have a £100 account open, why not encourage them to take advantage of the offer and book a course now.



Although the £100 offer will no longer be available to learners, we are pleased to announce that the new ILA500 scheme is available to learners who are interested in studying part-time at college or university. Now people who are 16 or over and living in Scotland can apply for a learner account that will give them up to £500 a year towards a part-time higher education course such as an HNC, HND or a Degree at ILA Scotland approved colleges or universities.

Application packs for learners are available and can be obtained by calling the ILA Scotland helpline free on 0800 100 1090 or by visiting the ILA Scotland website at www.ilascotland.org.uk.

Oops!

In the last edition of this newsletter we accidentally cropped PCS ULR John Livingstone (left centre) from the photo accompanying his article on "Learning & Organising". Here is the original photo... sorry John!

Photo by Alan Wylie



Launching Scottish Union Learning

Over the last few years, the STUC has been working towards the development of a new structure to produce a step change in union led learning in Scotland. The launch of Scottish Union Learning took place on 12th May in the Glasgow City Chambers.

Photo by Alan Wylie



Sally Magnusson hosted the event which was attended by Union Learning Reps, trade union officials, MSPs, Glasgow Councillors and partners. Presentations were made by STUC General Secretary Grahame Smith, Wendy Alexander MSP, Community ULR Audrey McJimpsey and First ScotRail Managing Director Mary Dickson. A short play on the history of trade union led lifelong learning in Scotland was performed by STAG and a video presentation on union learning was also shown. Cabinet Secretary



Photo by Alan Wylie

for Education and Lifelong Learning Fiona Hyslop MSP, UNISON ULR Jeanette McQuiston and Unionlearn Director Liz Smith also made an address at the event.

Scottish Union Learning is run by unions for unions. A Scottish Union Learning Board governs the new structure by agreeing and monitoring its business, operational and financial plans. Accountable to the STUC General Council, the Board consists of 12 appointed union representatives. The Board is supported by a Scottish Union Advisory Group and a Partners Forum.

The General Council has appointed Anne Douglas (Prospect) as the Chairperson. Other Board members are Harry Donaldson (GMB); Joy Dunn (PCS); Jenny Duncan (Young Workers Rep); Fiona Smith (UNISON); Agnes Tolmie (Unite: Amicus Section); Simon Macaulay (EIS); Harry Frew (UCATT); Kevin Lindsay (ASLEF); and Lyndon Peach (Community). STUC General Secretary Grahame Smith is an ex-officio member and the TUC's nominee is Liz Rees, Head of Trade Union Education. The Scottish Government has appointed Rosemary Winter-Scott as an observer to the Board.

Scottish Union Learning

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