2025 ICALLD Symposium Programme

The programme comprises seven sessions which will all be facilitated twice*:

1. What are the pressures experienced by Learning Developers/Advisors, and how do they impact on professional identity?
2. Developing a taxonomy of Learning Development job roles.
3. How do mattering and belonging underpin our necessary and ongoing practice as Learning Developers/Advisors?
4. Advancing assessment: Now and into the future.
5. Does accreditation improve our ability to advocate for our roles within our institutions?
6. Tracing the ripples to make waves: The challenge of generating meaningful evidence of our impact
7. How can Learning Developers/Advisors incorporate nature-based practices and interventions to help students boost cognition/learning and wellbeing?

All attendees are encouraged to share answers, experiences, and observations. Facilitators will compile and share key points and outcomes.

View session times and details for your time zones by clicking on:

Block 1:

(best suited for members of **ALDinHE**, **LSAC**, **SAALP**, and **ScotHELD**

Block 2:

(best suited for members of **AALL**, **ATLAANZ**, and **LSAC**)

Block 3:

(best suited for members of **AALL**, **ALDinHE**, **ATLAANZ**, **SAALP**, and **ScotHELD**)

View all **Session Abstracts**.

_____

* All sessions will be facilitated twice so members from all six associations can attend each session at a time that is more sociable (e.g., if you live in New Zealand or Australia, and you would like to join a session facilitated by presenters who are in Canada, the second facilitation (in Block 2) will be at a more suitable time for you than the first facilitation (in Block 1).

Block 1:

- best suited to attend for members of **ALDinHE**, **LSAC**, **SAALP**, and **ScotHELD** (see local times listed)
- all sessions are on **Tuesday 1st April** for all four associations
- use the same link for all five sessions

Session	Times	Presenters	Title	Link
1 (first facilitation)	UTC: 14:00 UK: 15:00 South Africa: 16:00 Halifax: 11:00 Vancouver: 06:00	Alexander Cuthbert, Derek Keenan (ScotHELD)	What are the pressures experienced by Learning Developers, and how do they impact on professional identity?	[Register here](#) to be sent all session links for Blocks 1, 2, and 3.
2 (first facilitation)	UTC: 14:45 UK: 15:45 South Africa: 16:45 Halifax: 11:45 Vancouver: 07:45	Steve Briggs, Ralitsa Kantcheva (ALDinHE)	Developing a taxonomy of Learning Development job roles.	
3 (first facilitation)	UTC:15:30 UK: 16:30 South Africa: 17:30 Halifax: 12:30 Vancouver: 08:30	Lucy McCormick, Clare Brown (ScotHELD)	How do mattering and belonging underpin our necessary and ongoing practice as Learning Developers?	

4 (first facilitation)	UTC: 16:15 UK: 17:15 South Africa: 18:15 Halifax: 13:15 Vancouver: 09:15	Simon Walker, Claire Hughes, Bobbi Moore, Amy Wallington, Declan Doyle, Suzanne Albary, Louise Squire (ALDinHE)	Advancing assessment: Now and into the future.	
5 (first facilitation)	UTC: 17:00 UK: 18:00 South Africa: 19:00 Halifax: 14:00 Vancouver: 10:00	Jill Kovacs, Alyson Young (LSAC)	Does accreditation improve our ability to advocate for our roles within our institutions?	

Block 2:

- best suited to attend for members of **AALL**, **ATLAANZ**, and **LSAC** (see local times listed)
- sessions are on:
    - **Tuesday 1st April** for **LSAC**
    - **Wednesday 2nd April** for **AALL** and **ATLAANZ**
- use the same link for all three sessions

Session	Dates and Times	Presenters	Title	Link
5 (second facilitation)	UTC: 23:00 **(1 April)** Halifax: 20:00 **(1 April)** Vancouver: 16:00 **(1 April)** Auckland: 12:00 **(2 April)** Sydney: 10:00 **(2 April)** Perth: 07:00 **(2 April)**	Jill Kovacs, Alyson Young (LSAC)	Does accreditation improve our ability to advocate for our roles within our institutions?	Register here to be sent all session links for Blocks 1, 2, and 3.
6 (first facilitation)	UTC: 23:45 **(1 April)** Halifax: 20:45 **(1 April)** Vancouver: 16:45 **(1 April)** Auckland: 12:45 **(2 April)** Sydney: 10:45 **(2 April)** Perth: 07:45 **(2 April)**	Rachael Harding, Mark Bassett (ATLAANZ)	Tracing the ripples to make waves: The challenge of generating meaningful evidence of our impact	
7 (first facilitation)	UTC: 00:30 **(2 April)** Halifax: 21:30 **(1 April)**	Kaaryn Cater (ATLAANZ)	How can learning developers/advisors incorporate	

	Vancouver: 17:30 **(1 April)**		nature-based practices and	
	Auckland: 13:30 **(2 April)**		interventions to help students boost	
	Sydney: 11:30 **(2 April)**		cognition/learning and wellbeing?	
	Perth: 08:30 **(2 April)**			

Block 3:

- best suited to attend for members of **AALL**, **ALDinHE**, **ATLAANZ**, **SAALP**, and **ScotHELD** (see local times listed)
- all sessions are on **Wednesday 2nd April** for all five associations
- use the same link for all six sessions

Session	Times	Presenters	Title	Link
7 (second facilitation)	UTC: 5:30 Auckland: 18:30 Sydney: 16:30 Perth: 13:30 UK: 6:30 South Africa: 7:30	Kaaryn Cater (ATLAANZ)	How can learning developers/advisors incorporate nature-based practices and interventions to help students boost cognition/learning and wellbeing?	[Register here](#) to be sent all session links for Blocks 1, 2, and 3.
6 (second facilitation)	UTC: 06:15 Auckland: 19:15 Sydney: 17:15 Perth: 14:15 UK: 07:15 South Africa: 08:15	Rachael Harding, Mark Bassett (ATLAANZ)	Tracing the ripples to make waves: The challenge of generating meaningful evidence of our impact	
1 (second facilitation)	UTC: 07:00 Auckland: 20:00 Sydney: 18:00 Perth: 15:00	Alexander Cuthbert, Derek Keenan (ScotHELD)	What are the pressures experienced by Learning Developers, and how do they impact on professional identity?	

	UK: 08:00		
	South Africa: 09:00		
3 (second facilitation)	UTC: 07:45	Lucy McCormick,	How do mattering and belonging
	Auckland: 20:45	Clare Brown	underpin our necessary and ongoing
	Sydney: 18:45	(ScotHELD)	practice as Learning Developers?
	Perth: 15:45		
	UK: 08:45		
	South Africa: 09:45		
4 (second facilitation)	UTC: 08:30	Simon Walker, Claire	Advancing assessment: Now and
	Auckland: 21:30	Hughes, Bobbi	into the future.
	Sydney: 19:30	Moore, Amy	
	Perth: 16:30	Wallington, Declan	
	UK: 09:30	Doyle, Suzanne	
	South Africa: 10:30	Albary, Louise Squire	
		(ALDinHE)	
2 (second facilitation)	UTC: 09:15	Steve Briggs, Ralitsa	Developing a taxonomy of Learning
	Auckland: 22:15	Kantcheva	Development job roles.
	Sydney: 20:15	(ALDinHE)	
	Perth: 17:15		
	UK: 10:15		
	South Africa: 11:15		

Session Abstracts

Session 1: What are the pressures experienced by Learning Developers/Advisors, and how do they impact on professional identity?

Alexander Cuthbert, Derek Keenan – ScotHELD

Theme:

We recently asked the Scottish LD network (ScotHELD) the following three questions which are of direct relevance to the Symposium's sub-theme 2, specifically provocations 1 and 2, and we will share some of those responses and ask the ICALLD association members for their experiences:

1. What pressures, similar or different, to those outlined (underfunding, pressures to subject teach, and dilution of LD values) have you experienced?
2. Q2. How does where you are currently positioned impact upon what you are asked to?
3. How do we defend LD as a 'third space' within the current HE landscape where you are?

Relevance to ICALLD audience:

The resultant discussion will enable a sharing and exploration of experience regarding professional identities and practice, and hopefully lead to further collaborations.

Background information:

We will contextualise the three questions with our own experiences, research from UK LD, and the comments already gathered from our ScotHELD members.

Activities or questions to explore the focus with delegates:

We will use the three questions cited above.

_____

Session 2: Developing a taxonomy of Learning Development job roles.

Steve Briggs, Ralitsa Kantcheva – ALDinHE

Theme:

> Sub-theme 2: Articulating the roles of learning developers/advisors in education

There would appear to still be a lack of understanding within parts of the higher/tertiary/further education sector in relation to the work of Learning Development practitioners. This was recently discussed by Bickle, Johnson and White (2024) in terms of how learning development could play a central role in the provision of academic support within higher education however it was reported that this is not universally well understood within universities. We suggest that inconsistency across the sector in how the roles of Learning Development practitioners are defined is exacerbating these challenges.

Relevance to ICALLD audience:

In contrast to other professions (such as Librarians (see CILIP, no date) or psychologists (see British Psychological Society, no date)) there is currently no recognised taxonomy of Learning Development (LD) job roles. In practice, this mean that LD practitioners with similar job titles often have quite different roles. This can add to the aforementioned confusion around the nature of Learning Development practice. This 2024-25 ALDinHE funded international research study is seeking to address this through the development of a taxonomy of Academic Language and LD professional roles (as proposed by Briggs, in press).

Background information:

In November 2024, an online questionnaire was sent to Academic Language and Learning Development Practitioners. This was administered with support of the International Consortium of Academic Language and Learning Developers (ICALLD) members. Amongst other topics, the questionnaire addressed the nature of work undertaken by Learning Development practitioners. This included questions related to principle job role responsibilities along with whether practitioners perceived their current role to have a specific academic language or learning development specialism(s). Responses to these questions are informing the development of a taxonomy of Academic Language and LD practitioner roles. Responses will be analysed through a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Activities or questions to explore the focus with delegates:

In this session we will share a preliminary taxonomy of Academic Language and LD roles. We will invite attendees to actively participate in a discussion regarding the comprehensiveness of proposed role categories and challenge them to consider the extent to which these are applicable in different international and institutional contexts. The feedback from this discussion will be used to refine the taxonomy. It is anticipated that the final taxonomy will serve to better articulate the role of Learning Developers per se and make it clearer how those working in this field represent a diversity of specialisms which are collectively 'necessary ongoing elements of learning in higher/tertiary/further education'.

References

Bickle, E., Johnson, I. & White, S. (2024) Learning development should be at the heart of conversations about academic support, *Wonkhe*. Available via: https://wonkhe.com/blogs/learning-development-should-be-at-the-heart-of-conversations-about-academic-support/ (Accessed: 17 December 2024).

Briggs, S. (in press) Redefining the work of learning development practitioners, *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*.

_____

Session 3: How do mattering and belonging underpin our necessary and ongoing practice as Learning Developers/Advisors?

Lucy McCormick, Clare Brown – ScotHELD

Theme:

This session explores the interlinked concepts of mattering (Flett, 2022) and belonging (Hurtado & Carter, 1997), and how they underpin our practice as Learning Developers to make our work a necessary ongoing element of learning in HE. As Learning Developers, we empower students to meet the requirements of the institution, equipping them with the skills, literacies and confidence to 'belong'. Responding to the needs of an ever-diversifying student body also means that we must

demonstrate to students that they matter: we strive to meet students where and how they are, consciously shaping our practice to avoid falling prey to the twin traps of the hidden curriculum and an outdated conception of the implied student. However, this 'mattering' approach often conflicts with the historical practices of both academic and non-academic branches of our institutions. This session invites participants to reflect on and share good practice around balancing belonging and mattering approaches in their roles. It asks how we can empower students with the tools to navigate our institutions, whilst also identifying and advocating for change within them.

References:

Flett, G. L. (2022). An Introduction, Review, and Conceptual Analysis of Mattering as an Essential Construct and an Essential Way of Life. Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment, 40(1), 3-36. https://doi.org/10.1177/07342829211057640

Hurtado S., Carter D. F. (1997). Effects of college transition and perceptions of the campus racial climate on Latino college students' sense of belonging. Sociology of Education, 70, 324-345.

Relevance to ICALLD audience:

Across our institutions, student cohorts are becoming ever more diverse, and we recognise that a sense of belonging is critical to student wellbeing and success. As Learning Developers, we play a key role in equipping students with the tools to navigate university life and meet academic expectations. However, research suggests that the onus is on our institutions to create the conditions for student belonging by first demonstrating that they matter. This shift in perspective challenges institutions to take greater responsibility for meeting students where they are, rather than expecting them to adapt to the opaque norms of the hidden curriculum. Yet, as Learning Developers, we can find that our institutions are slow to change, leaving us in a difficult position: we are tasked with fostering student belonging while working within systems that may resist the very shifts needed to make that belonging possible.

This session will provide a space for ICALLD attendees to unpack this shared challenge, drawing on our collective experiences across international contexts. By sharing practical ways to balance belonging and mattering approaches, we will consider how we can move forward in the best interests of our students.

Background information:

We will adopt a 'flipped' approach, sharing examples of our experience and practice in response to participant-led discussion. Rather than forming the foundation of the discussion, our contributions will complement and build upon the ideas emerging in the room

Activities or questions to explore the focus with delegates:

The session will begin with participants being invited to share their definitions of the terms 'mattering' and 'belonging' using the Menti free-answer function, with answers written over 2 minutes, timed by facilitators and shared simultaneously. Facilitators then draw together participants' answers, signposting to areas of potential interest later in the session and sharing the definitions of belonging and mattering to be used in the next part of the session. This is intended to activate schemata set the parameters for discussion.

The remainder of the session is shaped by four questions. The room is divided into four break-out rooms, with each room invited to focus on one of the four questions below. Participants discuss their allocated question as a group and add their responses to a Padlet, which will be shared after the session. If participants finish early, they are invited to use the Padlet to comment on responses across the four questions.

- In what ways does your work empower students with the tools to belong at your institution?
- In what ways do you advocate for student mattering at your institution?
- How and in what ways does the tension between mattering and belonging show up in your experience?
- How can we improve this going forward?

Facilitators draw together contributions from across the Menti/Padlet by highlighting key points of convergence and divergence; sharing ways in which their own work aligns or diverts from the work shared in the session; and inviting further comments and discussion.

_____

Session 4: Advancing Assessment: Now and into the future.

Simon Walker, Claire Hughes, Bobbi Moore, Amy Wallington, Declan Doyle, Suzanne Albary, Louise Squire – ALDinHE

Theme:

Sub-theme 2: Articulating the roles of learning developers/advisors in education

Provocation 2: What changes are happening now and/or on the horizon that have implications for our work?

Students' views are shifting in how they want to engage in higher education, driven by complex socio-economic landscapes they are operating within (Hughes 2023). This has prompted higher education institutes (HEIs) to re-consider how they support students with diverse ranges of needs and wellbeing issues (Firth et al 2023). Central to this is their experience of assessment and feedback which remains as a point of weakness in their overall university experience. Therefore, it is imperative that HEIs hear their voices around learning development and assessment journeys, especially given the other demands on their time (Neves et al 2024) and work in co-design to build connectiveness (McIntosh and May 2025).

In response, the University of Southampton has developed a 5-year major assessment project to enhance assessment thinking and embrace new ideas across the institution. A set of principles to guide the work with inclusivity, accessibility, and student partnerships at the core of the development. This has included the introduction of an Assessment Consultancy, which provides bespoke individual and whole programme development with a core ethos of student co-design. It also delivers the Southampton Transformative Assessment Redesign with Students (STARS) programme providing an evidential base to support enhancements (CHEP 2025).

This session will aim to set the scene with how the assessment landscape is changing and discussing the challenges around this. The session will then encourage rich discourse around approaches to enhance learning development of assessment and feedback practices drawing from our experience of the Advancing Assessment Project. Focus for discussion will centre around how HEIs can respond to our post-Covid lockdown/emerging GenAI education environment and build on previous innovations. We are keen to draw out identified trends in assessment and feedback including optionality of assessment and cohesive programme development design (Walker 2025).

Relevance to ICALLD audience:

The changing nature of how we should support students and design assessment and feedback practices that are inclusive and accessible is a challenge across the global HE sector. This aims to prompt discussions about how we collective overcome these to ensure accessible and inclusive education for all students.

Background information:

The presenters will seed discussion by sharing recent project findings, led by the Assessment Consultancy.

Activities or questions to explore the focus with delegates:

Q&A session will support and develop participants who are thinking about adopting, or have adopted, similar approaches. The session will end with an interactive activity and discussion about the enhancement challenges institutions are facing in assessment and feedback and ways to create peer support learning development networks within institutions.

_____

Session 5: Does accreditation improve our ability to advocate for our roles within our institutions?

Jill Kovacs, Alyson Young – LSAC

Theme:

Making cases for the role of learning development/advising in changing educational landscapes Sub-theme 2: Articulating the roles of learning developers/advisors in education

Currently, in Nova Scotia, Canada there is not a regulatory body accrediting Learning Strategists/Advisers/Developers, and as a result there are several independent commercial enterprises emerging, such as ADHD Coaching, that claim to support academic skill development. We propose to discuss accreditation standards for Learning Strategists/Advisers/Developers. Does accreditation reify the profession, and does that reification improve our ability to advocate for our roles within our institutions?

Relevance to ICALLD audience:

In an environment of institutional budget cuts, are we clearly defining the Learning Strategist/Adviser/Developer role, and are our roles well understood by budget stakeholders. Are we effectively communicating the value and importance of this role to decision-makers? Can we enhance and clarify our messaging to better demonstrate the value of this work?

Background information:

We plan to do a short PowerPoint to discuss the lack of research on accreditation/credentialing and its impact on role recognition and value.

Activities or questions to explore the focus with delegates:

Do you currently have accreditation standard or a specific credential for Learning Strategist/Adviser/Developer? If yes, how are these standards established and reviewed?

What do you believe are the essential qualities and qualifications of the Learning Strategist/Adviser/Developer role?

Does lack of accreditation result in practice infringements from other disciplines or practitioners?

How are you currently advocating for the role of Learning Strategist/Adviser/Developer within your institution and in the greater community?

_____

Session 6: Tracing the ripples to make waves: The challenge of generating meaningful evidence of our impact

Rachael Harding, Mark Bassett – ATLAANZ

Theme:

We will focus on these provocations:

Provocation 2: What types of evidence are we actually providing of those impacts to institutional leadership?

Provocation 3: What types of evidence should we be providing to leadership instead/as well?

Relevance to ICALLD audience:

We anticipate that the audience will have common experiences and challenges related to this theme. The intention is for discussion around what constitutes evidence when evaluating impact, value, and success. We also intend that delegates will have an opportunity to negotiate a shared set of evidence types that they can select from depending on the strategic goals of their teams.

Background information:

In order to provide a starting point for discussion, we aim to illustrate an overview of current reporting practices in our institution. as well as suggesting other potential activities that could be implemented. We will invite delegates to add further activities.

Activities or questions to explore the focus with delegates:

Provocation 2: What types of evidence are we actually providing of those impacts to institutional leadership?

Provocation 3: What types of evidence should we be providing to leadership instead/as well?

We will look at these questions from multiple perspectives: student, academic & professional staff/ operational/ strategic in order to negotiate a set of evidence types that can be used by learning advisors/developers to demonstrate the impact of our work.

_____

Session 7: How can Learning Developers/Advisors incorporate nature-based practices and interventions to help students boost cognition/learning and wellbeing?

Kaaryn Cater – ATLAANZ

Theme:

Provocation 2: What changes are happening now and/or on the horizon that have implications for our work?

How can learning developers/advisors incorporate nature-based practices and interventions to help students boost cognition/learning and wellbeing?

Who would benefit most from nature-based practices and interventions?

Relevance to ICALLD audience:

Learning developers/advisors have unique opportunities to work closely with students to help build personal and academic resilience. Connection with nature boosts mood and cognition and LDs/LAs can help students to identify how connection with nature can benefit them to be more successful in their study, and to improve mental health and resilience.

Background information:

The session will begin with a Mentimeter collaborative word cloud that poses the question "What are the cognitive and health benefits of connecting with nature?" From there, I will present some literature and evidence, and from there, we will have a general discussion.

Activities or questions to explore the focus with delegates:

Depending on the number of participants we will either have break-out rooms, or collaborate as one group, to come up with suggestions for ways/interventions/resources that learning developers/advisors can add to their practice to help students improve cognition and health through connecting with nature. Participants will have the opportunity to add to a Padlet resource.