

## **Case Study: Measuring the Impact of the Scottish Learning Festival**

**Lee Dunn, Alva Academy, Clackmannanshire**

### ***Introduction***

The Scottish Learning Festival is the largest education conference and exhibition of its kind in Scotland. Throughout its ten year history, the event has been extensively evaluated by Learning and Teaching Scotland to ensure that delegates are benefiting from attendance. However, the real success of whether or not attendance is beneficial is in the long term impact that it has on the delegate and their classroom, school and professional practice. This ensures that the event is continuous throughout the year and not simply a two day event which promotes innovative ideas.

### ***Background***

Lee Dunn is Principal Teacher Pupil Support at Alva Academy, Clackmannanshire.

Lee's work within Pupil Support and Pastoral Development has been recognised nationally by both the GTCS and LTS. He has presented at national seminars and events to a variety of audiences.

Amongst several major innovative practices, Lee is responsible for carrying forward the More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) and Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) frameworks within Alva Academy. He sits on several working groups, including the MCMC Schools Group and 16+ Learning Choices Implementation Group and he regularly works with the Local Authority and its partners.

Lee is also responsible for Glow development within his school and he has attended the *Glow* mentor training programme which is delivered by the LTS Glow Team.

Lee has been attending SLF for a number of years to inform his practice and as a result he has developed high expectations of the event; which he says, have always been fulfilled.

### ***Perspective***

Lee feels that teachers can have very narrow perspectives if their view is restricted to only one school and that SLF provides the ideal opportunity to have a *'fresh and unique overview of education.'*

*'I have seen significant change to the Scottish Education system since graduating as a teacher and the future promises to bring ever more intensive and stringent reform to the curriculum and to the learning experiences of our young people.'*

*We all recognise the importance of raising self-esteem, self-belief and self-determination and I believe that this responsible confidence promoted amongst young people brings with it a diverse range of creative and innovative pedagogy which is deployed across Scotland. By sharing ideas, resources and knowledge we can facilitate the growth and development of such practice to an extent where we provide infrastructure which will firmly support A Curriculum For Excellence. The*

*collaboration seen through Glow provides such a forum to work together and SLF is another opportunity to explore new experiences. '*

### **The Benefits**

Lee has recorded some of his professional practice this year and has reflected upon his attendance at SLF 2008 and how it has impacted upon his teaching, his school and his Local Authority.

Attendance at SLF 2008 had a number of positive outcomes for Lee;

- he was made aware of wider uses of CMIS such as the use of Pastoral Notes and Pupil Plans
- he established contact with other teachers delivering the MCMC agenda
- he was motivated to address his own teaching practice
- he revised the school MCMC strategy to incorporate new practice seen at SLF
- he designed and integrated a Vocational Studies course into the school timetable
- he measured the impact that current support has had on pupils within the school
- he has introduced new software to various Faculties within the school
- he has developed a plan of delivery to mentor staff on the use of *Glow*
- he has developed new systems of support and methods to track pupil progress

*'I always feel very excited following attendance at SLF. I go back to school encouraged and motivated and I get to work improving my teaching strategies straightaway. There aren't many opportunities to meet with teachers from early years and secondary, colleges and other areas of education all in the same day.'*

Lee visited a number of seminars, keynotes and spotlights during SLF 2008 and he enjoyed visiting some of the exhibits and showcases within the education village. He has identified other benefits of attending the SLF which include;

- Forging strong relationships with other teachers from across Scotland
- Making links between the classroom and curriculum design
- Improved motivation and aspiration to develop both personal and professional practice
- Sharing good practice and experiences amongst colleagues
- Identifying ongoing and effective CPD
- Generate new provision and opportunities to introduce learning experiences
- Relate everyday learning and teaching to national developments and policy which include A Curriculum For Excellence and Assessment Is For Learning
- Keep up to date with the latest developments in Scottish Education and learn how they may impact upon your own practice
- Access resources and equipment which are promoted by both public and private sector organisations

### ***The Future***

As a reflective practitioner, Lee has already started to identify CPD opportunities which he can pursue next session, *'The Conference Programme arrives on my desk at exactly the right time. As the SLF gets better each year and is based on current themes related to the curriculum and teaching practice, I always use it as a starting point to identify my professional development for the year ahead. I strongly recommend attending SLF and if this is not possible, access the resources and information on the SLF website afterwards as part of your own CPD activities.'*

Lee has already registered as a delegate and is looking forward to attending what is he sure will be another high quality event.

Inspired by other presenters at the 2008 conference, he successfully submitted a seminar proposal for SLF 2009 and will be presenting his seminar on *Supporting Young People through the Journey to Excellence*.