

U-Net Newsletter

Issue 5, April 2009

<http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/unet>

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Diary Dates

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri
April			1	2	3
	6	7	8	9	10
	13	14	15	16	17
	20	21	22	23	24
2009	27	28	29	30	

22nd April, Hitting Our Target - 22,000 ULRs
29th & 30th April, U-Net Partners' Meeting

Support

Could centres please use the support e-mail and telephone number as a first line helpdesk. Email unet@tuc.org.uk Tel 0191 227 5580



Karl's Bit

As you will know the Ofsted inspection report places U-Net among the best providers in the country, awarding a Grade 2 for all aspects of learning provision. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the network for their ongoing hard work and dedication which helped us achieve such an impressive grade.

The report reflects the commitment of the network and highlights the benefits of union learning and how it can actually change lives. Learners made some great comments about learning centres and staff were praised for their support and encouragement. As we all know the learner is central to what we do so it's

great to hear the positive impact learning has on people's lives.

Following on from the inspection there has been a lot of work taking place in planning how we move forward and improve further. The Partners' meeting this month will focus on the inspection, what we learnt and how we can make improvements for the future. With this in mind, it's essential that a representative from each learning centre in the network attends the meeting to input on future developments. If you have not already booked your place, please contact Liz Noble enoble@tuc.org.uk

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns or questions about the inspection or anything else.

Thank you to all of you for your continuing support.

If there are any topics you'd like to see in future newsletters please contact enoble@tuc.org.uk



Karl Schofield, U-Net
Strategic Coordinator

Excalibur – Ofsted Good Practice Database

On the subject of inspection, if you haven't already used the Ofsted Good Practice Database, it might be worth checking it out. You'll find hundreds of good practice examples drawn from inspections in colleges, workplaces and adult learning centres throughout England, and also some very useful information on the following:

- Beyond Satisfactory

- Building Better Practice
- Learner-Centred Self-Assessment
- Actions for Quality Improvement
- Ofsted Survey Reports
- Discussion tools

Please go to:

<http://excellence.qia.org.uk/page.aspx?o=goodpracticdatabase>

A Case Study: Learning Pays at Hatfield

Hatfield Learning Centre is located at Moorland Open Prison three miles from HMP Moorland and HMP Lindholme and seven miles from Doncaster Prison. They have an IT suite with full internet access; private rooms are available for one to one interviews and classroom provision. They offer nationally recognized qualifications in Maths, English, ECDL*, CLAIT, and NVQs in IT and Customer Service.

As well as offering formal training, the centre also operates on a drop-in basis for all staff.

Many of the POA members attending the learning centre are Prison Service instructors, who have been told that they will require teaching qualifications to continue their work. In the case of Mark Gyte, a horticultural instructor at Moorland Open Prison, it was the centre staff themselves who alerted him to this new rule, and he was able to work with them to add a teaching award to the three levels of IT NVQ* he had already achieved with them. In his case the support of the centre staff gave him the

confidence to continue this necessary learning.

They were similarly able to help Glyn Quinn, who was already on an ECDL course with the centre when the new rule was announced. He was able to enrol on a Certificate in Education course that the centre ran in partnership with Park Lane College, and was proud to graduate in the Great Hall at Leeds University last year.

Glyn has stayed with the centre and is now enrolled on a Diploma in Education. He is just one of the Prison Service staff who will be able to continue their employment because of the support of the union learning centre. Both Mark and Glyn were very impressed with the relaxed and comfortable environment and friendliness of the dedicated staff, as was Karl Parker, who wrote to the staff:

'I would like to pass on my thanks for all your help and support through all the courses I have done over the last 18 months. At first I thought I had bitten off more than I could chew with the Cert Ed course but with all your help and support I made it through. I have now decided to go on to the second year and do the Diploma in Education.

Again I would like to thank you for helping me with both Level 2 Maths and English and I am sure that now I have signed up for ICT, I will get the same help and support.

All these courses have been invaluable to me in recent times as they have got me back into a learning frame of mind and have even helped me get a substantial pay rise at work.

I would recommend your facilities to anybody wanting to get back into adult education or just to do a course in their spare time.'

Sharing Good Practice

Prior to inspection lots of work took place behind the scenes researching and writing case studies which made up part of the U-Net gold file for inspection. As you know case studies are a great way to promote what we do and share good practice within the network but they also proved to be an extremely useful tool in



evidencing what we do to governing bodies such as Ofsted. The case studies we presented to the inspectors helped to

evidence criteria against the CIF (Common Inspection Framework). With this in mind we must continue to identify and report on good practice within the network and shout about the great work we do and the impact union learning has on people's lives!

Liz Noble will be accompanying U-Net Regional Support Officers on visits over the coming months with a view to reporting back on centre activity and assisting with the writing of case studies. Please contact Liz if you have any ideas you think could be explored enoble@tuc.org.uk

Learning in the Workplace

As you know Adult Learners' Week is a great way of promoting the benefits of learning at work.

This year the week-long campaign runs from Saturday 9th – Friday 15th May.

As part of Adult Learners' Week, on 14th May, National Learning at Work



Day will take place on the theme of 'Skilled for Success'. The Day is about workplaces making a public commitment to learning and skills by holding events and activities for their employees.

You can now order your Event in a Box which provides a complete kit of materials to support your Adult Learners' Week events and activities.

For further information, recourses and ideas on how to get involved go to:

<http://www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk/cfl/WorkplaceLearning/laeday/index.asp>

Please let us know what you have planned for the week!

BBC raw: skills for everyday life

The new raw campaign and website has now launched!

raw money is one of the first topic areas to go live. You will find our website at

www.bbc.co.uk/raw . Read on to find out more about raw.

How RaW has changed?

RaW has now changed to raw: skills for everyday life.

The website has been redesigned to create a user friendly, video-rich resource offering practical advice, inspiring activities and real life experiences to empower adults to take the next steps towards tackling their skills needs. We have launched with raw money (financial capability) and raw computers (basic ICT*). Over time, the site will grow to cover a range of topics such as numeracy and employability skills as it continues to reach adults with basic skills needs. If you work in the literacy sector, look out for new reading and writing resources which will be available on the raw website later in the year.

What's on the website now

raw money is a great way to pick up tips and tools for managing your money better and on a range of money subjects that affect us all and features expert advice from BBC presenters Dominic Littlewood and Jasmine Birtles. Other subject areas include raw computers, a presenter led guide to using computers and the internet, suitable for absolute beginners. The website and resources have been designed to be appealing and accessible to a wide range of adults, including those with poor literacy and numeracy skills. Beyond the website, raw is running free, hands-on, raw money workshops in workplaces across the UK throughout March, April and May. Workshops will cover a variety of themes

such as planning for retirement, credit and borrowing, money and kids and practical budgeting. The workshops are available to download and customise, along with other resources from bbc.co.uk/raw/partners. If you would like to find out more about these workplace workshops please contact the raw team at raw@bbc.co.uk.

Useful Links

New Quick Reads 2009

Have you ordered the new Quick Reads from Niace?

The latest set of books has some great reads including:

- **Dragons' Den: Your Road to Success by the Dragons' Den Team**

The Dragons' Den team tell their personal stories of success and failure and reveal the secrets that took them from nothing to the very top. This is the perfect book for anyone wanting to know how to make the most of their lives

- **101 Ways to Get Your Child to Read by Patience Thomson**

How can you get your child reading if they can't, or won't read? This is an accessible, friendly and valuable book for all parents by an author with thirty years of experience teaching reading and publishing books for reluctant readers.

<http://www.niace.org.uk/quickreads/user/about.php>