OLEVI International Conference sees the Alliance push the boundaries of teaching and learning across the globe

OLEVI Alliance comes together for a remarkable day of sharing schools improvement journeys, collaboration and celebration

Wow! What a day it was. The excitement, mixed with a little apprehension around hosting our first OLEVI International Conference, turned to joy and pride as we welcomed over 100 friends and colleagues from schools and organisations from across the world on what would be an amazing day of learning, reflection, collaboration and celebration.

Richard Lockyer, CEO of OLEVI, set the tone of the day by highlighting the importance of the Alliance. Introducing the new OLEVI logo and mission statement, he reinforced: “All those in the Alliance are part of something bigger – a shared vision of growing people and creating an outstanding learning experience for pupils, with a common language, values and goals – a community where all have something to bring to the table.”

He went on to reaffirm how OLEVI works on two levels: “OLEVI is an organisation at the forefront of quality CPD, with a set of programmes dealing with the issues affecting the people in schools, such as improving teaching and learning, developing high-quality leaders and creating a coaching culture. But, importantly, it is also about the people we have grown over the years to be part of that Alliance, who feel they are actually part of something exciting – a movement.

“Today we’re building the Alliance,” Richard continued. “We’re bringing teaching and learning, and coaching, as the two focus areas. But we’re adding into the mix past and present through the case study presentations – What are you proud of; what can you celebrate? What are you doing now? Can we appreciate what we’ve got? Best practice? And looking towards the future – if you’re going to be at the forefront of education, it’s alright saying we’re good now, but that’s not good in four or five years’ time. In essence, the Alliance needs to be able to create high-performing people, anticipate where we’re going in the next few years and prepare for it.”

In support of this, we were honoured to have Peter Matthews OBE, and Sarah Urquhart, founder of The Coaching Clinic, as our two keynote speakers.

Professor Peter Matthews OBE shared his research around the importance and value of creating a culture of CPD to grow teaching practitioners to provide the very best teaching and learning outcomes for their pupils; and, importantly, his research

Not ones to rest on our laurels, we are launching a number of new units and modules that will further support, enhance and expand the professional development offer to our Alliance.

These additions maintain our values and proven approaches and incorporate new research-based learning and innovation, to stay at the forefront of educational thinking and to further develop reflective, deep-thinking, creative practitioners to grow a culture of life-long learning.

Developing the craft of teaching
This autumn term saw the launch of our new Creative Teacher Programme (CTP) and enhanced Outstanding Teacher Programme (OTP). The changes reflect the current need for teachers to design and deliver creative lessons and curriculum as well as engage with evidence-informed pedagogy like feedback and metacognition. Along with this we will be providing our facilitators with additional up-to-date materials known as the CTP and OTP EXTRA Modules.

These short programmes will be released over the course of the year, allowing colleagues to take part in quality professional thinking in areas of outstanding pedagogy beyond the five areas covered in the core programmes. The ‘Modelling’ module was released in...
OLEVI making waves in Scotland

The Professional Learning Academy, North Ayrshire, becomes the first OLEVI Hub in Scotland.

A very dedicated and conscientious team of OLEVI facilitators has just grown in number recently. What makes this team unique is the fact that this is the first team to bring OLEVI programmes to teachers, leaders and classroom assistants in Scotland. The PLA (Professional Learning Academy) supports over fifty schools in North Ayrshire, and reading some of the feedback from the recent Outstanding Teacher Programme leaves us in no doubt as to why it is so highly regarded.

When asked ‘How has the programme benefited you?’, delegates commented:

“Given me more confidence as a leader of learning. Helped me reflect on strengths and weaknesses. Provided a network of supportive, like-minded practitioners.”

“This will not only impact on my own practice, but I will develop the same attitudes and cultures in the whole school staff.”

“I feel much more confident in my teaching and have a different viewpoint on how I can be outstanding in the classroom and in the wider school community.”

When asked ‘How will you use what you have learnt?’, colleagues commented:

“Plan and facilitate opportunities for deeper learning activities. Support colleagues towards more reflective practice.”

“I want to encourage a sharing culture in my school with peers and in class with my pupils.”

“Absolutely more reflective. I have much more confidence in my beliefs. I have more gumption to question, and to say what I feel; I may still not use particularly impressive vocabulary but I stand by what I feel more.”

The danger with many alternative CPD offers is that often the impact is short-lived. However, here we can see the drive for sustainable development, utilising the collaborative and coaching skills enhanced on the programme. So many of the comments in the evaluations referred to taking what was learned and wanting to embed ideas within their schools/departments and classrooms.

It is no wonder Headteachers from the delegate schools have fed back that staff are ‘raving’ about the programme and that interest around future programmes is growing.

It is always an absolute privilege to work with people and organisations who are so committed and passionate about high-quality education and building a collaborative, developmental culture. To the facilitators and delegates in North Ayrshire, welcome to the OLEVI Alliance.
Valuing and investing in staff is key to the success of a new MAT

Adopting OLEVI’s coaching ethos and language of learning saw one newly formed MAT, Sharnbrook Academy Federation, develop a growth culture – taking teaching and learning to new heights.

Why were you drawn to OLEVI?
We were a new MAT of five schools in rural Bedfordshire – two secondary and three primary. It was a time of real transition – Bedfordshire schools have been converting from a 3-tier system to a 2-tier system (lower/middle/upper to primary/secondary). In addition, one of our primaries was a brand new free school.

Our priorities were to ensure that there was a consistent understanding of what fantastic teaching and learning looked like. It was important that this be embedded at all levels, from teaching assistants to senior leaders.

We chose OLEVI over other CPD providers as we were attracted by the cross-phase nature of the programmes, and by the fact that DR ICE provided a consistent language that all staff in our schools could use with one another.

We also liked the fact that OLEVI’s TLC syllabus of programmes provided professional development opportunities for staff at every stage of their career. We were particularly attracted by the idea of ‘role-modelling learning’. We wanted our MAT to have a strong culture of learning, not just for our pupils, but for our staff too.

How did you use the programmes to achieve your goals?
▲ After completing a programme, in Learning 3s, staff were asked to co-plan, teach, observe and feed back to one another, using DR ICE as a framework. They then had to feed back to the whole staff. This allowed opportunities to reflect upon and share best practice – their feedback on this as a CPD exercise was overwhelmingly positive.

▲ TAs were visibly more confident after presenting to their OTAP cohort. The OLEVI models meant that they could converse with teachers about pedagogy in a way they were not able to before, and they presented back to staff at their own schools.

▲ All observations across the MAT now use DR ICE as a scaffold.

▲ Departments at secondary were asked to unpick what DR ICE looks like in each subject area. Examples were then collated into a handbook, and shared with all staff.

▲ Staff meetings routinely revisit a theme from the programmes – e.g. questioning or assessment – so staff can share new thinking and developments.

“We place great value on the improvements in the quality of lessons our pupils experience. Working with OLEVI is an investment in our staff and our children.”

Raised quality of teaching and learning

The MAT has seen marked improvements in quality of lessons

Creation of a CPD culture for all
Growth through the language of DR ICE

Improved teacher recruitment, retention and development
Staff see the CPD offer from the MAT as a strength, and retention is strong because of the value placed upon staff development.

Building leadership capacity and career progression
Half of the 2018 OTP cohort have moved on to leadership posts within MAT schools and one is doing support work for the local authority.

“Research shows that if you want to drive up standards, empowering CPD is the thing that has the biggest impact, and OLEVI offers this in spades.”
The impact
Throughout the day we heard from Alliance members who gave inspiring and thought-provoking presentations. Delegates were told how the OLEVI approach has helped connect and progress schools in the Western Quebec School Board, Canada, which vary in structure from inner-city establishments with 1,000-plus pupils to small rural schools with fewer than 20 pupils. In Qatar, a single partnership with Qatar International School has now spread to a network of participating schools around Doha.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Defence uses the OLEVI programmes, ethos and DR ICE as a cohesive approach to school improvement for its schools across the world, and we heard how in Uganda schools have been able to share outstanding teaching methods through the network of Scholé schools.

Closer to home, we heard from Tuxford Academy, and Cardiff High School, one of our Welsh Hub Schools in the Central South Wales Consortium, who have been credited with making great strides towards developing collaborative networks of schools willing and able to share knowledge, expertise and best practice.

Indeed, the breadth and variety of work in which our models have been adopted and used were truly inspirational. Organisations have moved forward in a way that is right for them.

There was a real buzz in the air, with everyone eager to share their unique journeys, learn of the impact they have experienced and celebrate their successes. And, in true OLEVI spirit, delegates were actively tasked throughout the day to discuss and reflect on what they had heard, and to identify what they could decontextualise and how they could apply it to the benefit of their own school.

The next steps
The conference also saw Damian Mitchelmore, Managing Director of OLEVI, present the next steps in the provision of CPD for the Alliance.

“The adoption of the OLEVI model internationally has provided evidence that it is a system that can travel across borders,” he said.

“Those who have experienced the power of the OLEVI approach in transforming the mind and skill set of colleagues into high-performing people – who not only positively impact their students but also the people and places around them – know the impact it makes.

“Programmes like the OTP and models like DR ICE have tested the passage of time. They have proved to be powerful, no matter the context, in shaping the right kind of teaching professionals. To this end we will be creating a cutting-edge and highly effective Teaching and Learning syllabus that continuously defines and re-defines what outstanding pedagogy and curriculum look like, and consistently and sustainably equips, empowers and enthuses the outstanding teachers, teaching assistants and leaders in learning who create them.

“The provision of programme enhancements and new modules and units will be rolled out to the Alliance over the coming months and will ensure that we remain current and able to fulfil our purpose.”

In his closing address Professor Sir George Berwick, Chairman of OLEVI, remarked, “It is amazing that we have representatives from 36 countries here today. Schools that took our work are now growing it in their own way, using it in a way relevant to them, sharing it and developing new ideas. Communication is really important. People have come together today and are speaking, and, as an organisation, we are building capacity for the future.”

“A very big topic of today’s conversation has been how we get together as a group to accredit high-performing people,” concluded Richard. “There is a strong future for OLEVI in terms of accreditation and being the number one organisation that accredits educational coaches. This is now a huge network with a real sense of international, global work.”

It was a remarkable day, with much collaboration of ideas, sharing ‘Golden Nuggets’ – or fridge magnets as they became known – and a commitment to driving the Alliance forward to ensure every child has the best learning experience. A huge thank you to all those who presented and attended the conference. It was your day. And we look forward to exciting times ahead!

Colleagues, sharing, collaborating and celebrating the Alliance’s impact

Each case study highlighted how, within their own distinct context, the adoption of DR ICE as the ‘language of learning’, and the coaching ethos and growth mindset of the TLC model, had created a culture of continual learning – with a recognised impact on moving staff and pupils forward.