

Editorial

It is almost a year to the day that I was drafting the first editorial for the journal. Anniversaries can be overlapped but a first anniversary should not go overlooked. I am reminded of a first anniversary some years ago when, together with my eldest son, we had reached the end of the first year of our joint business venture – a small music bar in Leeds. Whilst a successful first year was indeed a cause for celebration it was kept in check by the realisation that, if anything, we needed to re-double our efforts to develop the business in year two. And so with IJHRDPP&R. In many ways it is still very early days. The positioning of the Journal (and see also HRD Forum) is work in progress and we face the challenge in year two of sustaining momentum.

The good news is that this first issue of Volume 2 does just that, with strong contributions both in the main section and in the HRD Forum ... plus two bits of news, which hopefully will help generate both interest in and recognition of the Journal. I am pleased that three contributions reflect, unequivocally, the voice of the HRD practitioner. Mark Cole questions traditional, and still pervasive, notions of ‘training’ in the workplace. The paper generates ideas, drawn from his experience in L&D within the UK’s NHS, about alternative practices and importantly something of a practice agenda for how fellow practitioners might re-think their own work from the perspectives he develops. Gillian Felton and her colleagues, Lisa Banton and Angela Earnshaw, all active organisation development practitioners, provide rich insight into their personal journeys of professional development using soft systems methodology. They subsequently draw these together with an assessment of the value of this particular HRD pathway, together with consideration of implications for OD practice more generally. From OD in the UK public sector we are transported to the United Arab Emirates where Alaa Garad and Fiona Martis highlight interesting developments in HRD at national and local levels, working with the model of business excellence and the investors in people (IIP) framework.

Andreas Wallo provides a more conventional ‘academic’ contribution on leadership practice, drawing on research in two Swedish manufacturing companies. Its positioning in IJHRD, though, is assured by its contribution to HRD research and practice by its nuanced and sensitive insight into learning -oriented leadership practice in the daily work of managers. Corporate universities have been the subject of considerable attention over the years. Yet this interest has produced little by way of empirical research on CUs in practice. Gary Ewer and Darlene Russ-Eft focus on one CU in the USA — Platt University, part of the Platt Electric Supply corporation. Of some note also is that this article is jointly authored from academia and practice; the sort of collaboration that is to be commended and encouraged for subsequent contributions to the Journal.

Whilst a jointly authored article such as that noted above is not necessarily a sufficient condition for a “scholarly practice” article, it is an excellent starting point! Two contributions develop the thinking about what scholarly practice might look like. Jeff Gold explores rigour and relevance in terms of writing for publication. He questions output that seems to serve no other purpose than feeding a “closed incestuous loop” among the writers of management research “who are

simultaneously both the producers and consumers of research outputs”, with judgments of success based on the consumption by other writers who cite such work in their next production rather than engaging with a practice and impact agenda. It is then but a short hop to Jim Stewart and Sally Sambrook’s reflection on the UK’s research assessment exercise, specifically as regards the impact that HRD research can have vs practice. HRD researchers can and do connect with practice. Interestingly, they also suggest that HRD has much wider contribution to connecting theory and practice than that achieved through its own direct research.

And so to the two pieces of Journal News. First I am delighted to announce the launch of a new writer award (see page 97), sponsored by the Journal. Continuing the theme noted above this award is for a new writer of HRD scholarly practice. Again, the potential of joint contributions is highlighted — this time between final year, or recently completed students, pursuing a research project in HRD together with their supervisor. Finally, I note that the Journal is entering the world of social media — albeit with some trepidation! One view of Twitter is that it is simplistic and facile. But, to help connect the Journal to a wider network of HRD professionals I consider it worthwhile. I want to use Twitter to promote and generate interest in the Journal. Follow the Journal using @IJHRDPPR

Dr Rick Holden, Editor in Chief