



Continuing Professional Development *Spotlight*

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Students to get lessons on CPD

Professionals of the future will be introduced to core concepts of CPD while at university, as part of a UK wide initiative to help students plan and reflect upon their learning and development.

Students will be encouraged to take a positive attitude to learning throughout life, by the introduction of Personal Development Planning (PDP) and Progress Files in HE institutions in the UK.

Progress files will consist of two components; a record of an individual's learning and achievement, and an individual's personal records of learning and achievements (PDP) (recommendation of the National Committee of Inquiry in Higher Education: 1997). The implementation process for progress files began in January 1999 and it sought to create a public debate and actively engage the HE system, students, employers and professional bodies in a discussion about what policy should look like (Jackson 1999). The *Guidelines for HE progress files* developed by CVCP (now Universities UK including Universities Scotland), SCOP, QAA and LTSN suggest that The

PDP element should be operational across the whole HE system by 2005/6.

PDP is defined as *a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development.*

The aims for PDP is to help students:

- Become more effective, independent and self-directed learners
- Understand how they are learning and relate their learning to a wider context
- Improve their general skills for study and career management
- Articulate personal goals and evaluate progress towards their achievement
- Encourage a positive attitude towards learning throughout life

The concepts behind PDP are not new; the process of reflecting upon learning is important to consolidate learning and to highlight gaps and deficiencies on learning.

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Students will start to plan their development

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Learning logs, personal development plans and learning portfolios all emphasise the records that are a prod-

uct of reflective learning. The term *Personal Development Planning* is used to emphasise that PDP is an active learning process undertaken by individuals.

The introduction of PDP in HE

will require changes to systems, cultures and practice. The LTSN is now working with academics who have used PDP as part of their

own teaching methods to promote their use in student learning.

For further information on PDP, go to <http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/>

Jackson N J 1999 *Developing a progress file for Higher Education: A discussion paper*. QAA March 1999

Jackson N J 2001 *Personal development planning: what does it mean?* <http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/docs/pdp/What%20is%20PDP%20ver%20June%202000.rtf>

NCIHE 1997 *Higher Education in the Learning Society*. Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education HMSO 2 vols.

By invitation... Spotlight interviews Andrew Gibbons

Hearts and minds of CPD

Andrew Gibbons is an independent Management and Development Consultant, who works with many professional bodies promoting practical approaches to CPD. Spotlight interviewed Andrew on his expert subject: Learning Logs. Contact him via his website at <http://www.andrewgibbons.co.uk>

When did you start keeping a learning log?

I started to keep a hand written record of my learning and development in February of 1987. Since then, to this date, I have written 1126 entries, around 800,000 words in total.

What is the format of your learning log, and how did you

come to use that format?

The format has remained the same since I started, and is an A4 sheet that looks like the example overleaf.

Peter Honey, who I have come to know well over the years, designed this form many years ago, and it is based on sound learning cycle theory – 'do, review, think, plan, action'. For me personally, the 'conclusions' are the most significant element, all of mine start with the word 'that' – an excellent concluding word!

Although I tend to stray beyond the margins, I stick to the format. It's now the norm that I write 700 words or more for an entry – but it used to be less than a quarter of that before I got in the

groove.

A point worth bearing in mind is that every word is written, and I will keep it that way. Somehow it feels more personal, and in any case, I can write a lot faster than I type, which is an important consideration when ideas come thick, fast, and from unexpected angles.

Why did you start keeping a learning log?

Having completed my then IPM qualifications, I was hungry to continue learning and developing, yet had no taste for a 'taught' programme of study. My mentor Sandy, prompted me to start a learning log. The trouble was, al-

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By invitation...

The Learning Log	Date	Number
Significant experience		
What happened?		
Conclusions		
Actions		
When?		

couraging others to accept genuine responsibility for their own development.

What helps you to learn?

Well, I have only my own personal experiences and reflections to work off, so I won't generalise. That said, I do believe learning is a skilled process, that some of us are far better at than others - see my article on nine learning skills. For me, the most important issue is to feel that our development is sufficiently significant to find even a little time, and invest some conscious thinking on what we can do better than say a year ago, and what specifically we each want to get better at in a years' time.

We are of course, considering *learning* here, and development, not passive participation on training courses, that despite the great expense, result in little or no sustained, attributable changes in work behaviours. Strangely, I find working deliberately on my own development really interesting, and I do have a lot of other things to do that keep me busy, believe me. If we aren't driving our own learning, it's a dangerous omission to abdicate that responsibility to someone, or something, else.

How should professionals be encouraged to be self-reflective while learning?

In my view, sanctions don't work - 'record your learning or we (Professional Body) will do this'... So, it's about hearts and minds. Self evidently, taking real responsibility for your own development, is what being a professional is all about. It's no

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Andrew Gibbons' learning log sheet

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though I felt I should drive my own development, I was as now, a helicopter minded, unstructured thinking, extroverted person, so the thought of writing down my everyday learning was an appalling prospect.

That said, why do we write anything down? Surely because we fear forgetting it, and this is true I feel of our learning. There are a lot of naturally reflective people out there, but I am not one, so, I need the structure and discipline my simple learning log provides, to revisit, or to anticipate learning and development.

There is an irony here I believe. Those, like I was fifteen and more years ago, that are not 'the sort of person' who could imagine keeping any sort of learning log are precisely those who stand to gain the most by giving the process a go - but, regrettably, most will never find this out for themselves.

Of course, another reason for keeping a record of my personal learning is that 'helping others to learn' has been how I make a living (sometimes!) all my working life. So I really should set a credible example when en-



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The Professional Associations' Research Network (PARN) is a membership organisation situated at the University of Bristol, with the aim of promoting best practice in the issues facing today's professionals. This is achieved by conducting research and by bringing together nearly one hundred member organisations from a wide variety of professional fields.

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longer enough to call yourself a professional just because you passed some exams decades ago. These days we should expect professional people to take even a little time to reflect upon,

and even record, their personal learning. Why the howls of protest from the 'we haven't time for that' brigade? It all comes back to motivation. We really do find the time for the things we value most. Those with no

time to manage their professional development should question if a half hour a week or so really is impossible to find, and consider how learning professionals are more valued than the learned.

News in brief

LSC to act on fraud

The Learning and Skills Council is to work with colleges and training providers to raise awareness across the sector of the risk of fraud.

A series of seminars is to be arranged across the country highlighting the issues and pointing out the warning signs for providers to look out for.

Almost half of all allegations of fraud investigated by the LSC are reported by 'whistleblowers' working at colleges or with providers.

Of the cases of fraud being handled by the LSC, 51% involve funding overclaims, 24% involve falsifying student numbers and 10% in-

volve breaches of financial regulations. Cases can begin with simple mistakes that escalate with attempts to cover them up.

ILA training providers appeal for compensation

Roger Tuckett presented a letter to the Prime Minister on the 19th March, on behalf of over 1000 ILA training providers. This letter asked the Prime Minister *to look more carefully at the devastation that has been caused by the ILA fiasco.*

ILA providers are angered that the government feel that learning providers chose to participate in the scheme. All funding schemes that were already in place were rolled into the ILA scheme, so existing providers were

given no choice in participating. The scheme provided 80% funding for IT basic skills, causing a skew in the market.

Roger Tuckett asks for immediate action from the government on four points:

1. Improvements in the system for payments to learning providers
2. Acceleration of the timetable for the replacement scheme for ILAs
3. Commissioning of an independent survey to assess the affect of ILA suspension on the learning provider community
4. Address the issue of compensation: is there a contractual remedy or a responsibility under maladministration.

News in brief