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Personal Development Planning in Practice

A series of case studies

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Editors:
Charles Juwah, Lorraine Stefani, Jenny Westwood, Craig Gray, Jan Drysdale

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FOREWORD

Lorraine Stefani

Chair, PDP in HE Group Scotland

In December 1999, a consultation seminar on the forthcoming guidelines on Progress Files was jointly organised by the QAA in HE and the Personal Development Planning in Higher Education (Scotland) Group. The seminar, hosted at the University of Strathclyde attracted Higher Education policy makers, senior administrators, academic and related staff involved with teaching and the support of learning. While most Higher Education Institutions already provide graduating students with a transcript of attainment, albeit in different formats, not all HEIs have well formulated policies and practices relating to the provision of Personal Development Planning opportunities integrated into programmes of study. A clear outcome of the consultation seminar was the need to provide for policy makers and practitioners, models of Personal Development Planning which have already been embedded within academic programmes of study and other learning pathways.

In response to this stated need, the PDP in HE (Scotland) Group commissioned practitioners across the Scottish Higher Education sector to provide individual Case Studies, highlighting good practice in providing, implementing and supporting Personal Development Planning opportunities for learners.

These Case Studies reflect the variety of potential contexts for PDP, including work-based learning contracts, disciplinary based processes linking learning with personal and professional development, credit bearing modules, web-based and paper-based recording formats.

Common features of the Case Studies include emphasis on reflection, key skills, professional and disciplinary based skills. Almost all of the Case Studies address the complex issue of assessment of personal development planning, with many successful initiatives focusing on learning, development and formative feedback as well as the support required to underpin aspects of PDP. On the other hand, there are successful examples of credit bearing modules, credt being awarded on the basis of the processes of reflecting on learning and linking learning with personal development.

While this series of Case Studies provides only a snapshot of the variety of initiatives already embedded in programmes of study, all of them sit well with the QAA Guidelines relating to the Personal Development Planning aspect of Progress Files. Also, a Case Study from the SQA has been showcased here to highlight the move towards a seamless transition for learners moving through different sectors of the Scottish Education system with respect to Personal Development Planning opportunities.

These Case Studies are premised on the systems, processes and ethos of the Scottish Higher Education system, but they are clearly relevant to HEIs throughout the UK and beyond. It is for this reason that the PDP in HE (Scotland) Group has worked in collaboration with QAA to provide these models of good practice from across the HE sector. We hope that all relevant HE staff can build upon these case studies, adapting and remodelling them where appropriate to fit particular learning contexts but always bearing in mind that the personal/individual benefits derived from engaging in the process of PDP are generally more crucial than the framework or procedures used for recording PDP, whether utilising traditional paper based systems or the increasingly popular electronic media including the world wide web.

WHO SHOULD USE THESE CASE STUDIES?

These case studies demonstrate the use of PDP in a variety of contexts in higher education. They should be of interest to individuals in a range of roles within and outwith the sector. For example:

- Policy makers and senior managers in higher education will gain insights into how PDP works and will be able to make informed judgements about how the process can be supported;
- Discipline-based lecturers and tutors will find examples of PDP integrated into specific disciplines;
- Tutors supporting work-based learning will find examples of PDP used in work-based learning;
- There are examples drawn from educational and careers guidance contexts;
- Some case studies feature the use of IT for those interested in making greater use of IT in supporting learning;
- Students will gain an increased awareness of the importance of reflection and becoming a self-directed learner;
- Employers will see how students are encouraged to develop these skills which will be essential to them in continuing professional development in their future careers;
- Reflective practitioners, regardless of discipline, profession or vocation will find different approaches to the process of PDP.

With the emphasis on lifelong learning for the twenty first century these case studies should have something to offer a very wide audience.

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GUIDE TO TOPICS COVERED IN THE CASE STUDIES

	CASE STUDIES											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Academic Content												
Learning Outcome	x			x				x			x	x
Performance Criteria	x						x					
Process - Skills Development												
Key Skills	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Subject specific Skills	x				x		x	x			x	x
Professional Skills Development	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Assessment												
Formative		x	x		x		x		x	x	x	x
Summative	x	x			x				x	x		
Credit-Rated/ Bearing	x		x		x		x	x	x	x		
Reflective Practice	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Feedback Loop	x		x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x

PLANS FOR ACTION, TIME FOR REFLECTION:
an experiment with time, action and personal development

Paul Maharg

University of Strathclyde

Summary

This paper describes the implementation of a student development planning document or action plan for law students in the department of Law and Public Administration, Glasgow Caledonian University. First, the theoretical background to the implementation is described, followed by a description of the plan itself; and then the initial feedback obtained, via action research, from students who used the plan. Finally, some key points and resource issues are highlighted.

- learning outcomes
- performance criteria
- subject-specific skills
- performance skills development
- professional skills development
- reflective loop
- feedback loop
- summative assessment
- credit bearing

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Context to the Action Plan: pre-existing counselling arrangements and documentation

Recently in the department of Law and Public Administration, there existed a system of counselling or advice which is a variant of what exists in other departments in the university and probably in other institutions as well. Under this system, students were assigned to staff in their first year, and there was a requirement for staff and students to meet each other at least once during this first year, and preferably more than once. In subsequent years of their academic career, students were allocated an academic counsellor in the department, but there was no requirement to meet with him or her.

In the department, counselling sessions tended on the whole to be occasions in which staff gave advice on a range of matters to do with academic affairs — student option choices, attendance at seminars, etc. Students learned that their advisor was there to be contacted should they have any problems at home which could affect their academic work, and should they encounter problems in their academic work in the university. On occasion, students would consult with their counsellors regarding these matters, and it was then there was the possibility that the sessions could take on more of the sense of real 'counselling', rather than discussions of options and the like.

In one form or another, this system is prevalent in many universities; but the term 'counselling' draws attention to some drawbacks in it where it exists in the form described above. In the first place, 'counselling' is not strictly descriptive of the content of such meetings. Moreover, staff are not trained in counselling or advising techniques; and if students come to them with major domestic or personal problems they are generally referred to counselling services elsewhere within the university. Secondly, such counselling regimes tend on the whole to be reactive only. Counselling academics act when they become aware of their students' problems, and students come to see their counsellors only when they encounter problems, and are seeking short- or longer-term solutions that require the help of a member of staff. Moreover, some students are sometimes reluctant to come forward unless in extremis because of the presence of the power relationships that inevitably exist between staff and students. Seldom is there any emphasis on the proactive role of a counsellor, mainly because of the definition of the role. Third, the role of the counsellor is strictly bounded within the curriculum. It does not feed directly into the normal teaching of staff or the learning of students.

The reactive nature of the counselling session was mirrored in the documentation with which academic counsellors logged the sessions in the department of Law and Public Administration. This was an A4 sheet with a number of boxes in which staff recorded the interview with a student. Normally, in real counselling environments, what documentation there is tends to be either primarily administrative in nature, or for the use of the practitioner in reflective notes. However, the academic counselling documentation logged student problems, identified and agreed via staff-student contact. The next year, a new counsellor was appointed, and a new log begun. But with each passing year, the opportunity was lost to build up a portrait of the student from year to year, not merely for staff, but primarily for the student. Such a portrait could have been an important 'process' document which charted progress in interpersonal contexts such as group-work and the like. Normally this is difficult to assess across years, particularly because modular systems can render it difficult to track the assessment of interpersonal activities across the curriculum.

Kept systematically, the content of the log described above was composed of private notes for the counsellor. It was not descriptive of, or intended to describe, students' understanding of skills and knowledge acquisition, and their understanding of details that may cast light upon why they felt or did things. Above all, it was a list of problems, defalcations, failures; and as such, could be described as a pessimistic document. This arose from the reactive and trouble-shooting nature of the academic counselling in which staff and students played out their roles.

But it also, and inevitably, arises from an epistemological view of what constitutes educational knowledge, events and interactions. For the most part in higher education, these take place in what one might regard as formal educational settings — seminar rooms, lecture theatres, libraries or laboratories - and not in one-to-one counselling sessions. Formal educational settings inevitably constrain the nature of the learning undertaken by students because they appropriate it to physical spaces within the university, and to specific forms of interaction between students and students, and students and staff. Such constraints are always present within any learning environment, and their effects have long been recognised by educationalists, such as Dearden (1976), p12, and Carr & Kemmis (1986), pp112-13. However many of the recent innovations in teaching, learning and assessment have had the effect of introducing new forms of learning - groupwork, collaborative learning, learning contracts, online learning, for example - that re-define types of interactions and events used in learning.

Personal development planning is one such form of learning. It is a form at least part of whose roots can be traced to the literature of student-staff interaction. As a recent study shows, students tend to see lecturers as potential sources of help, not only with academic problems, but for help with personal problems (Grayson, Clarke & Miller, 1998). This creates expectations which, if not met, tend to reduce the quality of the learning environment. As Grayson et al put it, '[w]e would speculate that there will be an increasing mismatch between what students expect and want (in terms of support from tutors) and what tutors are in practice able to offer'.

A third of the students were still unclear about the purpose of the Plan, so clearly this needed to be clarified. The point about registration is more problematic. As administrative procedures then stood in Caledonian, it would have been very difficult to have transferred Registration information to the Plan, even for such a small group of students. However it is not impossible to mark up electronic text on a form (whether typed or scanned) and to transfer it electronically from one form to another, and such a procedure would certainly help students to draft their Plan. For a good example of how this might be planned within a web environment, see
http://www.scit.wlv.ac.uk/university/roa/roa.html
This Plan, developed at the University of Wolverhampton, is generic, and does not seem to be linked to specific programmes of study or disciplines; but gives a sense of the type of interactivity which is possible online.

Description of the Action Plan

The Action Plan is a modest example of an instrument that was designed to:

- Enable students to integrate social, personal and academic domains
- Chart the development and integration of skills across modules
- Facilitate the adoption of a new role for staff in advice situations.

These three together may appear ambitious and far-reaching aims for such a relatively simple idea, and document, but it was an underlying principle of the document that none of these three can be achieved to any great extent without taking into account the other two. The key characteristics underlying the aims were those of interaction and integration, both of these arising from a study of the educational literature in the field of student development instruments. In the next section I shall describe the educational background to this, and the models upon which the Action Plan was based.

Function and Use

The document is thirteen pages long at present, and consists for the most part in sections that the student fills out before meeting with the counsellor. Some of the sections are filled out during the counselling session, while others are filled later.

Part A consists of an analysis of acquired abilities, skills and achievements, as defined by a statement of:

- academic achievements
- work experience
- interests
- personal qualities
- health

Part B is given over to an analysis of educational and career aims, as defined by statement of:

- occupational goals
- personal transferable skills
- how the university could help attain/improve the above two statements

Part C consists of an analysis of personal targets and means of achieving them by:

- brainstorm (individual)
- priority list (with counsellor)
- updates throughout the year

In contrast to previous counselling documentation which lay in staff filing cabinets, students exercised their right to the information in the Plan by having physical possession of it, if they wished. They gave it into staff safe-keeping only if they want to, and if staff wanted to copy it, they require student permission, though staff would make their own notes too. In this way I hoped to signal to students that this was not just an administrative document, but a valuable and above all a personal document.

Students were asked to update the information as and when it changed. The information they logged in the Plan was then fed into a number of modules at key points in the curriculum. Reference was made to it in a level one Legal Skills module, in the writing skills unit, which was developed in a level two module. Further on in the curriculum, in a third level module called Clinical Legal Skills, it was planned that students would have used the information in their Plans to construct CVs directed at areas of employment they had outlined in their Plans, and covering letters which identified the key elements in their personal and employment experience which were relevant to the simulated job application. To an extent this already happened as an activity in the Legal Writing Skills unit, where it is used as an example of the importance of transforming writer-centred ideas and feelings into reader-based prose which deals with audience expectations and needs. The Action Plan, though, would have allowed students the space to think about how the academic curriculum, together with their employment record and their social life, was interacting to create their future. In the process, students' potential for marketing their skills and knowledge would have been enhanced.

In one sense the Plan helped students considerably to write reader-centred CVs. In such documents, activities tend to be snapshots, lacking in context and experiential resonance. Since the Plan is cumulative over the period of undergraduate study, the inclusion of its historical dimension was designed to add depth to the activity of producing the CV. Moreover, the Action Plan is one method of presenting a portrait of students across the curriculum. Most modules the students took were one semester in length, and in the thick of assessments and assignments, students could find it difficult to give serious thought to progress in personal skills and personal goals except as a marginalised activity, in between more foregrounded activities in the curriculum such as module assessments.

Beyond self-marketing, though, I found that the Plan functioned as a script for the interview with students in which I could explore the issues that arose. Discourse theory teaches us how people shift in their narratives from episodes or isolated events to the perception of these events as instances of a general pattern, to script formulations, consisting of what that pattern might be composed (Schank, R.c & Abelson, R.,1977, and Nelson, K.,1986). Script details are created within repeated and situated accounts of experience. In the Plan, these were first narrativised then reformulated in interviews. Such dialogic reformulations serve two useful purposes. First they strengthen the trust and integrity between staff and students. Second, they signal the importance of the interpersonal context of learning to students, and the links between academic and personal skills, between social and intellectual learning.

Resource Implications

The key resource implications are as follows:

For Staff:

Curriculum development

The Action Plan was designed to work within a context in which it would be embedded within a coherent skills-based structure in the curriculum. This is crucial to its success. However there are resource implications in the amount of time needed to map out the implementation of the Plan within the curriculum, and to persuade colleagues of its usefulness. On its own, the Plan is barely worth the effort of implementation: its success is crucially dependent on its integration in the curriculum.

Staff time and development opportunities

The use of the Plan with students requires staff to read the Plan in advance of their interviews with students, and to spend more time discussing it with students than they might otherwise do. This also raises the question of training. While use of the Plan does not amount to a counselling event, it does require staff to be aware of best practice in discussing the interface of personal and academic with students.

For Students:

Time to complete the Plan

As will be evident below, students did feel that completing the Plan was time-consuming.

Purpose of Plan

Students need to be clear about the purpose of the Plan and the way in which it will be used in the curriculum. This needs to be clarified for them in course documentation, andemphasised by staff in specific modules.

Student Feedback

The Action Plan was piloted with one group of first year students (12 in number), and qualitative feedback was obtained from them, and their answers coded using a coding frame. Students used it throughout one year, and the Plan was used in level one and two Legal Skills classes.

Students were asked first of all what they did not like about the Plan. Their responses were as follows:

- *Quite a lot to fill in (5)*
- *Gave all this information before when I registered (4)*
- *Not sure why I need to give all this information (4).*

Students were then asked to comment on what they liked about the Plan:

- Helped me to talk about what I wanted to do [later in life] (7)
- Made me realise how I wasnít prepared for university and how I could be more prepared (5)
- Helped me review previous employment (3)

I was surprised that few students thought the Plan helped them to review previous employment, particularly as this formed quite an important part of many of the discussions. It may be that for students, much part-time and holiday employment is short-term, and does not deserve much analysis in their eyes. Just over half the students, however did feel that the Plan helped to clarify future plans, and to think about the gaps between university and school or further education and personal life.

Next, they were asked to comment on how the Plan had helped them to reflect on their university experience to date:

- Helped me to talk to [my counsellor] about my experience of school and university (7)
- Helped me assess strengths and weaknesses in my studying (3)
- Don't see the relevance of it (2)

Here again, the Plan had had a significant effect. Students felt that the Plan had facilitated the discussion about academic context, while a few commented on the helpfulness of the skills-based elements of the discussion. In the context of a report on client interviewing skills in the level two legal skills module, one mature student commented on the Plan as follows:

"I didn't realise it at the time when I was filling out the form but it [ie the Plan] does help you think about your career and what you want to do. I found the interviewing [unit in the module] let me know what it was like for lawyers and I liked it. When I looked back at the Action Plan I found thatís what I wanted to do and what I thought I was good at."

Conclusion and Future Developments

This feedback comes from a very small sample, and clearly more research requires to be carried out. Even from this small sample, however, we can say that the Plan was a qualified success, and that there are some interim conclusions that can be drawn about future use of the Plan:

- for students, the Plan is an unusual approach to skills-based learning, and therefore requires careful introduction so that they can appreciate its long-term advantages over the short-term effort of completing it
- it would be helpful if there were some form of administrative integration between centralised registration records and the Plan
- the Plan can be useful in departmental interpersonal initiatives
- most students saw it as a way of understanding and communicating their past.
- The Plan may require redrafting to help them see it more clearly as a tool to plan their future.
- Staff development would have been essential if it the Plan were to become more than a pilot project. Staff self-image, for example, plays a role in the construction of the counselling role. Inevitably, staff bring unconscious attitudes and values to the counselling session, all of which affect the quality of the academic counsellor's presence and, for students, the quality of the outcomes from the counselling interview. It would also be fair to say that not all staff may be easy with the concept of the counsellor, although everyone accepts that a caring role is essential (Brayne, 1998). If personal development planning is to succeed at a personal level among staff, therefore, there will be a need for staff development planning.

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This is a version of a paper given at a COSHEP seminar on Personal Development Planning in Higher Education (Scotland) in November 1997 at University of Abertay, Dundee, while the author was a member of staff in the Department of Law and Public Administration, Glasgow Caledonian University.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING WITH SUPPORT NETWORK TEAM VOLUNTEERS

Colin Mason, Sally Collier & Catriona Baxter
University of St Andrews

- performance criteria
- professional skills development
- reflective loop
- formative assessment
- summative assessment

Summary

The University of St Andrews has a strong system of student welfare support. Part of the Welfare set up is a volunteer force of about 25 students that form the SupNet (support Network) team. These students are supported in keeping a Personal Development Profile (PDP) issued as they commence training for work in the post. Students and staff involved in the SupNet team are committed to the formative process as well as the recording activity. Students principally use the opportunities afforded by the SupNet work for self-development. Neither the process nor the record are assessed formally as part of any academic programme. Staff view the process as an integral part of ongoing monitoring of the training of students in their SupNet role and use the record, with permission, in providing personal references for future employers.

Dr Colin Mason is Head of Staff Development at the University of St Andrews. He has long been committed to enhancing student skills in the area of personal and professional development planning and is reknown for helping individuals and groups develop and use such tools as concept mapping.

Sally Collier, supported by Catriona Baxter, is Student Adviser within the Welfare team of Student Support Services at St Andrews, encouraging and supporting students to participate in the SupNet initiative.

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Context

The University of St Andrews has an integrated central Unit of support for students, the Student Support Service. The Student Support Service currently consists of four sub-sections including Welfare, Chaplain and Welfare, Financial, Academic. Welfare is normally the first point of contact and deals with everything related to routine advice, welfare counselling, special needs, overseas students, child-care, contraceptive clinic, and accommodation disputes in the private sector. The Mission and aims of Student Support Service are in Box 1.

In addition, a volunteer team of 25 students called the SupNet (Support Network), who are trained in welfare and counselling issues, can be called upon by the staff to befriend a student and give assistance in helping someone settle down in our student community. The SupNet also run a number of self-help groups and networks for, amongst others, M.E. or depression sufferers, students with eating disorders, and ethnic minority students.

The students recruited to the SupNet team are encouraged to develop their own PDP record. This is a paper-based system for recording the development of a range of generic (or core / key skills) through opportunities provided by the work involved in supporting other students and liaising with both the student and other communities in St Andrews. Support and Guidance for the process is co-ordinated via Sally Collier, Student Advisor. In addition, the Head of Welfare, Chris Lusk (Assistant Hebdomadar, Welfare) supported by the Department Secretary, Maggie Winton, give advice and provide references for students based upon copies of information held in a photocopy of the completed PDP record. An anonymised example of a reference based upon PDP information is provided in Box 2.

Description

The PDP in HE paperwork supports the process of recording examples of where personal development opportunities have arisen and have been seized by students. An extensive document is supplied to students. The "Guidelines on Preparing a Personal Development Profile", contains a range of different information; a self-assessment Transferable Core Skills (TCS) questionnaire; Skills development recording sheets; and references to study skills and personal development resources such as texts and organisations including the Careers Advisory Service at St Andrews. The students record the acquisition of skills in a Personal Development Profile issued when they commence training for work in the post (See Box 3).

The paper-based nature of the record facilitates student control of the recording process in a very flexible and personal manner. The record is very much the property of the student. However, when the record has been completed and students leave the University a copy is lodged in the Welfare office for staff to refer to when they are required to write references (Box 2 below). An example of a completed Skills Development Sheet is supplied in Box 4.

The type of paper-based system utilised is fairly simple and easy for students working in the SupNet team to commence recording their experiences. It provides a refined 'tick-box' type of record. The staff involved in the PDP scheme are not entirely happy (see also Evaluation) with this approach. Initial student reaction to this type of record is very favourable. However, as the students develop and become more involved emotionally in the work of the SupNet team they occasionally fail to complete the recording process, favouring instead, to experience the moment, grow and develop from it. Retrospective completion of the PDP record often occurs much later in such circumstances.

Box 1 Mission Statement and Aims of St Andrews Student Support Service

Mission

This office of the Student Support Service aims to offer a comprehensive, readily accessible and responsive service in order to promote the academic, physical, emotional and spiritual well being of all individuals within our student community. The service aims to enable and support students of the University of St. Andrews and to offer advice and guidance in relation to:

- Accommodation
- Finance
- Academic Issues
- Personal and Relationship Issues
- Disabilities and Special Needs
- International Students
- Ethnic Minority Students
- Health and Medical Issues
- LGBT Students

These services will be provided by professionally trained staff and counsellors and, where appropriate, student volunteers within our strict confidential guidelines. Services will be offered on an individual and mutually supportive basis, dependent on need.

The Student Support Service strives to promote equality and will not discriminate against individuals or groups on the grounds of race, culture, social class, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability. We aspire to create a climate in which equality of all persons and openness to critical consideration of all ideas are encouraged, within the context that divergent points of view are essential for meaningful interaction to occur.

The Student Support Service is dedicated to developing and sustaining an environment which encourages optimum human development.

Aims

- To provide support, both emotional and practical, to students in order to free them from concerns, which may distract them from realising their education potential.
- To often be the first port of call for more than 5000 students and 1700 staff.
- To provide crisis management alongside identifying student welfare needs and to realise the development of resources in response to demand.
- To organise internal support strategies for individual students; to link in with external agencies to develop their services with consideration of the needs of our students.'

These aims are achieved through the work of a dedicated group of staff and volunteer students. All staff are professionally qualified and receive regular updating on their training. Needless to say, the service is completely confidential, both externally and internally through other departments in the University itself.

Box 2 Anonymised Reference

From: The Office of the Assistant Hebdomadar (Welfare)

[SupNetters Name]

Thank you for your letter of [date] in which you are requesting me to provide a reference for [Name], a task I am more than happy to do.

[Name] has worked for me for almost four years in the capacity of a SupNet (student support volunteer) member. As such, she has taken part in extensive training on issues such as counselling skills, mental health issues, drug and alcohol awareness and is fully first aid trained. She has been involved in organising welfare publicity, managing small self-help groups, helping run our Freshers' orientation, and is a valued team leader in our crisis management team administering first aid etc. during Raisin Weekend (an annual student-run festival).

Within our department for the past two years, [Name] has been involved in managing the Eating Disorder network and group. In this capacity, she has worked tirelessly, both in running the group and dealing on a one-to-one basis, usually out of hours, with students who are often in crisis. I have constantly been impressed with the calm dedication that [Name] brings to this work, while researching and building up our information resources. Her commitment and trustworthy approach has been commented upon by many professional contacts (Wardens, local GPs etc.).

[Name] has also been an active member of the Student Voluntary Service, the Hall Representative on the Students Representative Council, an instructor for the University Lifesaving Club, and has been a University Ambassador for two years.

As part of her learning while carrying out these tasks, [Name] has completed a Personal Development Profile (PDP), a copy of which she will supply to you upon request. This identifies the categories of areas which she has given thought to developing throughout her time with us.

By examining this Profile, you will note that [Name] has experience in giving structured presentations in public, organising team members and leading projects with creativity and motivation. She has used self-reflection on a continuous basis to analyse her motives, aims and targets, and she has had to account to us for her decisions - with much success.

[Name's] practical, written communication and analytical skills have developed considerably throughout her time with us, as you will see from her PDP. Her interpersonal skills - very much in evidence at the start of her employment - have been used over and over again, encouraging her already natural rapport with people. The timing of the dates in the PDP will emphasise her ability to keep to deadlines with serious commitment once targets are identified.

The self-reflective element of the PDP has identified some areas where [Name] would wish to develop further, *eg* when making public presentations, her verbal and written work is excellent but she requires further experience in the use of technological visual aids such as Powerpoint. [Name's] enthusiasm and adaptability would make the opportunity to learn the only requirement here.

[Name] presents as ever cheerful, co-operative and eager to help whenever possible. All in all, I find her to be one of the most reliable people on our team - when [Name] says she will take on a project, we know it will be properly addressed with a quiet confidence. I trust this is sufficient information for your purposes. However, if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.
Yours sincerely,

Chris Lusk
Assistant Hebdomadar (Welfare)

Box 3 Self-assessment and Transferable Core Skills

SELF ASSESSMENT

The central focus of these exercises is self-assessment. Self-assessment will help you to become aware of your strengths and weaknesses in relation to the transferable core skills (TCS). It is only of real value if you are willing to be totally honest with yourself.

Self-assessment is quite a difficult process but like other skills it gets easier with practice.

Before assessing ***reflect****. Think back on your performance, previous events and remember feedback from others.*

Where am I now?

This is the question you will ask yourself once you have completed the self-assessment exercises. If you complete these exercises honestly you will have an accurate picture of your present level of skills and capabilities.

Where do I want to be?

When you assess yourself remember to think whom you are comparing yourself against. Someone you admire? Your present student group, your wider social group or the people in the company where you last worked? Remember this is your personal property, it is therefore up to you how you achieve the goals you set for yourself once you have decided where you want to go.

How do I get there?

Having assessed your present position you may want to plan where you go from here, or simply log and record the work you undertake during your time here.

One note of caution: remember if setting a plan to **make goals realistic and achievable.**

The following exercises are to help you measure your performance in TCS. The figures () in Exercise 1 relate to these different skills, providing a measure of your current ability.

Transferable Core Skills

Transferable core skills are those skills you can develop as a student and transfer into the world of work. Broadly these skills fall into 10 categories:

Presentation Skills.
The ability to give a structured presentation to an audience utilising effectively audio/visual aids and successfully demonstrating the ability to build up a rapport with an audience.

Analytical Skills.
The ability to collect, collate, analyse, adapt and classify data and to be able to use your results effectively.

Creative Thinking.
The ability to develop strategies. to solve complex problems requiring initiative, imagination and flexibility.

Team Work.
The ability to work with others effectively; to exchange ideas as well as giving and receiving feedback.

Time Management.
The ability to keep to schedules, to structure your own time and to prioritise your workload. The ability to complete work to a deadline.

Communication (written and verbal).
The ability to express ideas and be understood through a variety of communication media, including public speaking, talking in small groups or one to one, presentations, letter writing, reports and telephone.

Leadership.
The ability to organise, motivate and lead others, to take decisions and to listen to all relevant opinions before reaching a decision. The ability to accept and handle responsibility well. The leader effectively pulls a team together to give it direction and purpose. A good leader enables the group to work through differences and become high performing, well able to do more work than a group of individuals on their own.

Interpersonal Relationship.
The ability to listen and react to the needs of others. The ability to initiate relationships and to build up a rapport with a variety of people.

Practical skills.
The ability to operate machinery safely, to be computer and numerically literate as well as showing competence in managing own financial affairs.

Self Reflection.
Last but by no means least, the ability to reflect on your experiences and learn from them is a skill, which will benefit you greatly throughout your life.

TCS are very important in work and in life. During your time at St Andrews you will be given chances to develop and practice some of these skills. It is vital that you are aware of their importance and make the most of the opportunities provided.

Box 4 Skills Development Sheet

Keeping track of your progress and the skills you develop will help you when completing a job application or compiling a CV.

TITLE OR PROJECT **Running an event**

Date **March 1997**

Main Purpose/ Specific Challenge

Organising a concert in the Student Union

Main activities engaged in:

Organising and booking bands
Liasing with agents etc
Setting up equipment, recruiting and organising staff & volunteers Making sure publicity has gone out
Organising ticket sales

Time Commitment:

Several days and evening of the event

Skills you felt were involved - assessment:

Practical skills **Communication**
Organisation **Working with others**
Technical activity **Desk top skills**
Motivating volunteers

Resource Implications

The scheme is supported by 3 members of the team in Welfare. The PDP record is issued at the time of briefing SupNet recruits. One member of the team briefs students on the use of the PDP and provides individual support as necessary to assist in completing the PDP record. The Head of Welfare uses the completed PDPs to assist in the compilation of specific references for those students participating in SupNet activities

Student Assessment / Feedback Issues

The PDP process and not the record, or its completion, is considered the most important feature. Consequently students are continuously engaged in self-assessment of their own skill development. However, staff in Welfare do provide informal tutor assessment and provide feedback as necessary on students' development in SupNet work, which by its nature is oriented for providing opportunities for the development of personal and interpersonal skills. The PDP process or the PDP record are not formally assessed as part of any credit-bearing component of a module or other part of the Universityís degree programmes.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the use, the strengths and weaknesses of the current system is carried out informally by staff in Welfare involved in co-ordinating the SupNet team. The staff members involved in the SupNet team are strongly supportive of the processes involved in PDP. One view is that despite the 'simplistic' tick-box approach of parts of the record this permits new recruits to the SupNet team to engage quickly with the ideas behind identifying and recording skill-development opportunities. As the students develop more confidence in their roles they become more involved in the satisfaction gained in helping other students and less in the recording process. Because eventually students do still appreciate the importance of completing the record so that others (staff) can extract information for use in compilation of personal references, the students consequently engage in deeper or at least delayed reflection on their learning from these experiences. However, the importance of even this belated recording sometimes only becomes apparent to students when staff seek information from them in order to be able to comment on the acquisition or development of specific skills and abilities, when references are requested.

The team do not feel that they could support more than the few students engaged in voluntary SupNet work in this PDP process. The work of the SupNet team provides an initial focus for students to engage in identifying skill development opportunities. These provide a framework with which they are familiar and allow students more easily to identify such learning opportunities in both their formal academic degree programme studies as well as in other social activities.

Key Advice / Other Benefits / Future Developments

- Identify key groups of students (pilots, and preferably involving small numbers) for whom targeted support in engaging in the PDP process can be provided.
- Identify staff who are committed to and skilled in providing opportunities for students to develop key personal and interpersonal skills in the work they do with students.
- Provide (or possibly engage students in developing) supporting 'paper work' to enable students to engage in the recording process. However, acknowledge that recording should not be seen as an end in itself and allow students 'space' to evolve their own way of recognising their growth and development. This may not always translate into written records.
- Both the process, if closely monitored by committed, observant staff, and the written record may be useful for staff to refer to in writing references if students are prepared to provide open access to their confidential PDP experiences and written record.
- Electronic support in implementing the current system is both used currently and can be further developed. For example, template text and database fields are used to produce mail-merged letters of support or confidential references for students. An electronic version of the paper-based PDP guidance and recording forms could be used or further refined to permit electronic recording.

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THE OPEN UNIVERSITY'S PORTFOLIO APPROACH TO PERSONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Paddy Maher

Open University in Scotland

Summary

A Portfolio Approach to Personal and Career Development is an Open University pack of learning materials aimed at anyone who wants to undertake a structured process of self-assessment and self-development. The pack and an associated 15 point course were part of the Open University's contribution to the Employment Departmentís Enterprise in Higher Education (EHE) Initiative. Curriculum development was backed by regional OU programmes to involve employers and OU staff in supporting studentsí personal and career development. This paper summarises the development of the Personal and Career Development materials and their learning outcomes, the strategy for assessment and accreditation and the experiences of learners.

- process skills development
- professional skills development
- reflective loop
- feedback loop
- formative assessment
- summative assessment
- credit rating

Dr Paddy Maher was a lecturer in genetics at Aberdeen when he started to tutor for the Open University. A growing interest and involvement in adult learning led him to join the OU full-time in 1982. In 1990 he became the Director of the Enterprise in Higher Education Project, which produced the OU's Personal and Career Development materials and course. He is now an Assistant Director in the OU in Scotland, responsible for Quality and Course Presentation.

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Context

The Employment Department's Enterprise in Higher Education (EHE) initiative is widely regarded as having had a major impact on teaching and learning in higher education in the 1990s. Its emphasis on active learning and the development of transferable skills appealed, albeit after initial suspicion, to many of those who felt that higher education had become too reliant on the transfer of subject-based knowledge and its regurgitation for assessment. EHE offered encouragement, and funding, to re-emphasise the holistic role of higher education: the development of reflective, self aware and self critical learners, who would carry those characteristics with them throughout life. The fact that some employers sought graduates with similar characteristics - though often expressed in the language of skills - was an incentive, as was the growing awareness of the continuum of learning across higher education and work. This was acknowledged by the Employment Department in describing the central aim of the initiative: "*EHE enables Higher Education Institutions to help students become lifelong learners and be better prepared for their future working lives.*"

For many Open University students, the prospect of improving their current working lives was a key motivation for study. EHE offered the prospect of enhancing the links between OU study and employment, and providing a structured process that would help students to identify and attain their personal and career objectives. An Open University proposal was awarded a five-year EHE contract in 1990. The University was to produce self-assessment and self-development materials, a portfolio to record achievements, an enhanced staff development programme, and national and regional partnerships with employers. The University's distinctive nature gave it the opportunity to extend EHE to a wide constituency. The OU is the largest UK provider of opportunities for part-time degree level studies; its students come from all walks of life and every locality; its Associate Lecturers are drawn from across the education and training spectrum.

Description

A set of Personal and Career Development learning materials were produced by an OU course team and developmentally tested with large groups of volunteer students. Their feedback underpinned a substantially revised version: 'A Portfolio Approach to Personal and Career Development' (code E530). The pack was based on the learning cycle in Figure 1 and designed to develop the process skills of learning and adapting to change in the learner's chosen field of study.

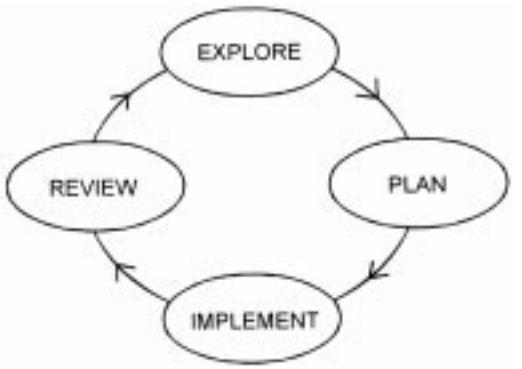

Figure 1: The learning cycle

The materials aimed to enable learners to:

- recognise and value past and present achievements
- assess strengths and weaknesses
- produce an individual development plan
- put into operation one aspect of the plan through a work-based project
- reflect on their experience and performance
- build a personal portfolio to record learning achievements.

The first three aims involved self-assessment leading to action planning. To aid self-assessment, students were encouraged to use the level descriptors of the NCVQ Core Skills framework. The fourth aim involved a practical project in the workplace of an employer or voluntary organisation, or in a community setting. The project was to be a direct outcome of the earlier stages, allowing learners to implement one aspect of their development plan. The final section of the pack on reviewing progress asked learners to reflect on their experience and draw conclusions about their performance that would in turn influence future practice.

Throughout the pack the learner was offered a range of activities related to specific learning outcomes. The output from these activities formed the basis of the portfolio, which individuals could continue to build after initial study of the material. To make the pack relevant to any learner it was left to individual students to identify the particular area of development they wished to pursue. Since each person's personal and career development will follow an individual path, the teaching material could not anticipate the knowledge and specialist skills that each person would require. What it could do was provide a framework and assessment strategy that could be used by individuals at different stages in their personal and career development. Pack users seeking tutorial support and/or accreditation could sign up for a tutored and assessed version, the 'Personal and Career Development' course (code E730). This led to an Open University certificate, credit rated at 15 Level 1 points and countable towards the BA/BSc degree.

'Personal and Career Development' broke new ground in the University. It involved work-based learning and portfolio production, was examined by assignment rather than a three-hour examination, and introduced many people to OU study for the first time. It was concerned with process rather than content, and took the individual learner as its subject. As one student wrote: '*In my other OU assignments, if I am unsure of a fact, I look it up in a reference book. With E730, however, the answer lies within myself.*'

Student Assessment / Feedback Issues

The programme was built on the premise that students should be able to have their work assessed and gain recognition from the University. However, that left open difficult questions of what was to be assessed, how and by whom, and what form recognition should take. There was lively debate on these issues ranging from those who saw no place for assessment in a personal and career development programme to those who wanted employers to take the leading role. Employer representatives were strongly in favour of assessment and urged the OU to show that it valued the process by offering recognition as degree-level credit.

Assessment and credit, the determinants of so many other features of a learning programme, faced the course team with its most difficult questions. As the course team chair wrote:

"*The appropriateness of assessment in this area of personal development is open to question. Technically it is not easy. The systems available are geared towards the assessment of knowledge through written work, and are not ideally suited to this new purpose. Failure is problematic and could be more acutely felt than on a more traditional academic course. However,.... the development of that combination of skills, knowledge and personal qualities that constitute capability is central to the purposes of higher education. If we are serious about this purpose, we must also be serious about finding ways of giving credit for it within higher education courses.*"

The team's solution was a 15 point course, with written assignments based on the stages of the learning cycle. Tutors verified that students had undertaken project work and marked assignments. Employers did not have a formal assessment role, but students were expected to present evidence of a negotiated learning contract and of outcomes from projects: employers, as project supervisors or mentors, had important role in supplying or verifying such evidence. The course was eventually positioned at Level 1. Definition of 'level' is not an exact science and some time was spent on trying to find appropriate criteria. It could be argued that the process would be valuable at any stage of a degree, with the level being set by assessment. An attractive model - adopted in the Open University's MEng (see below) - is an 'entry' course at Level 1 linked by portfolio to a reflective review at Level 3 of learning achieved during undergraduate study.

The course was one of the first in the University not to require attendance at an examination. A formal examination was inappropriate so the examinable component was a double-marked assignment that built on two previous formative assignments, and incorporated a project report and reflective review. Students were assessed on their ability to demonstrate that they had operated the developmental process of explore, plan, implement and review: evidence was required of the use of those skills necessary to complete the cycle.

In general terms, they are the skills of self-assessment, leading to critical self-awareness; of context assessment leading to an awareness of external constraints and opportunities; of realistic planning leading to a clear definition of achievable goals; of implementing plans and monitoring progress; of reviewing progress and learning from experience. They are skills that are needed for the successful completion of a range of tasks, whatever the setting, and are transferable in that they can be developed and refined as they are used and re-used in different contexts.

Resource Implications

Creating the 'Personal and Career Development' learning materials to OU standards was a costly business but over 6000 copies of the pack were sold over the five year project period and it remains in the Universityís catalogue. The assessed and tutored course introduced innovative educational practices but conformed to standard OU administrative arrangements to remain cost effective and affordable. It reached the end of its planned life in 1999 and has not been remade. At its peak it attracted over 300 students in a year, but did not have the mass market of other OU courses.

One factor that militated against mass participation was the 15 point credit rating when credit in the OU degree was accumulated in multiples of 30 points. In plotting their study paths, students are influenced not only by course content. Time available for study, the quickest or prescribed route to the desired qualification, and the credit rating of the course are all factors in course choice, especially when most OU students pay their own course fees. Moves to upgrade the course to 30 points were not successful: in considering the proportion of a 360 credit Honours degree that could be devoted to a generic course of this nature, it was decided that one twelfth was too much. However, a rewritten E730 was subsequently incorporated in the 480 point MEng degree as a compulsory 'Personal and Professional Development' course at Level 1. This is coupled with another 15 point course 'Key Skills in Professional Engineering' at Level 3.

Evaluation

Here are two views about EHE and 'Personal and Career Development' from students:

"The fact that EHE is not geared towards any academic discipline means that it is useful for people working in any field, it is non-exclusive. The analytical and planning skills acquired do not vanish when the final tutor-marked assignment is posted. They stay with you. I find I am using these skills without any conscious reference to my course work. EHE helped me so much that I would find it difficult to unlearn these habits." (Student - North Region)

"..the system of self-analysis that EHE promotes has already made me more aware of abilities or skills that can be transferred to a working environment, and as such is already increasing confidence in my own abilities." (Student - West Midlands Region)

External sources also expressed positive views about the potential of the materials:

"…recording achievement could be supported by materials such as these which could help to fill some of the gaps experienced by other institutions in developing students' understanding of the purpose of recording achievement and action planning and in providing examples of exercises which could be used by tutors" (Bull and Otter, 1994).

Such comments were backed up by the more extensive evaluation that was built into the various stages of EHE. About 2000 OU students completed a survey questionnaire on their reactions to the planned EHE programme; the pilot pack and course were extensively evaluated and revised in the light of feedback; and the attitudes of employers of students were surveyed. Monitoring of the take-up of the materials revealed a remarkable range of uses by individuals and groups. Evaluation reports were catalogued and discussed in the ëend of projectí review.

Key Advice / Other Benefits/ Future Developments

The Open University has undergone considerable change in the past ten years. EHE was one of many factors which drove the process and its specific contribution is hard to extricate. But items on the EHE agenda, such as transferable skills and portfolios, which would have been unfamiliar to most OU staff ten years ago, are now part of a shared language; and many innovative features, such as portfolio-based learning for HE staff, are firmly embedded.

Some early lessons were that initial publicity placed too much emphasis on career development leading some students to expect a quick 'vocational fix'. For a few students the process of reflecting on personal experiences was distressing and tutors were concerned at the counselling issues, which this raised. Both these problems were ameliorated by rewriting materials - though the latter cannot be totally removed from an open course about personal development.
A welcome outcome was the increased opportunity for people from a range of previously underrepresented constituencies to sample HE and come away with a positive experience because of the underlying themes of raising self-confidence and valuing learning whatever the context in which it occurs.

It is arguable that 'Personal and Career Development' was an idea that had not yet met its time in the early 90s. Now that Dearing has refuelled interest in personal development planning, high quality learning materials coupled with a successful assessment strategy should be a valuable resource for development in the 00s.

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Personal and Professional Capabilities Within the Curriculum: Case Studies from the University of the Highlands and Islands Project

Linda Wheeler

The University of Highlands & Islands Project

Summary

Students embarking on a course of study within the University of the Highlands and Islands Project will find themselves in a learning environment that values the development of skills and capabilities beyond the mechanical acquisition of knowledge. A key objective for degree development teams has been to bring about a transition from traditional, often passive, styles of education to a more active style of learning. As a means of helping to prepare students, not just for the world of work but also potentially to enhance their contribution to society, the opportunity to acquire personal and professional capabilities (PPCs) is embedded into the curriculum.

- learning outcomes
- process skills development
- professional skills development
- reflective practice
- feedback loop

Linda Wheeler works in the Department of Communication at Moray College. She is Course Leader for Fine Art, Diploma in Fine Education. She has long been committed to enhancing student learning by embedding transferable skills and attributes into curriculum design, delivery support and assessment.

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Context

The personal and professional capabilities have been designed to increase personal effectiveness, improve employability and foster the habit of lifelong learning. There are twenty-four capabilities grouped into five separate categories:

- Managing and developing oneself
- Critical and creative thinking
- Presentation
- Working with others
- Dealing with value

All UHIP degree programmes integrate the personal and professional capabilities within the learning experience, helping students to take responsibility for their own progress and development. This shift towards what has been described as education for capability links well with the national initiative for Personal Development Planning in Higher Education. Recording achievement, particularly in the area of transferable capabilities, is in line with the recommendations arising from the Dearing Report, which found that:

"The single most important capacity employers seek in those with higher education qualifications is intellectual capabilities of a high order."

Students graduating from UHI courses will take with them a transcript of capability that will make explicit to potential employers the added value derived from their course of studies. Harvey and Knight (1996), emphasise the transformative potential of graduates, stating that:

"Employers want graduates who not only add value but are likely to take the organisation forward in the face of continuous and rapid change."

Empirical research on the outcomes of Alverno Collegeís ability-based curriculum, conducted by Mentkowski and Associates (2000), and by Mentkowski and Doherty (1984) indicates both the durability and life enhancing aspects of this approach to learning. Earwaker (1992) sums up the advantages:

"Thus, educational programmes which successfully develop key personal skills and qualities in students may serve three purposes at once: they may help students towards a more mature and fulfilling adult life; help them towards a more skilful and sophisticated student learning experience in higher education; and enhance their prospects in the job market."

Description and Student Feedback

The following case studies are examples from a pilot scheme that requires Fine Art students to assess and record their own PPCs. Undergraduates of this UHI course maintain a personal logbook, monitor progress and relate this to their achievement of the twenty-four capabilities. Their experiences have been used to inform the further development of levels of capability and personal profiling.

Introducing students to the idea of keeping a logbook that they will use to record their development of personal and professional capabilities requires initial guidance and ongoing support. At first, many have problems getting the hang of reflecting on their own performance, identifying achievements and discovering means for improvement. There is a tendency to use the logbook as a diary, describing rather than analysing and evaluating. It is only through active engagement that the reflective approach brings about a change in learning patterns.

Case Study 1

Jane is a bright and lively older woman who decided to change her life. She had always felt that she wanted to exploit her innate creativity and, now that her family is almost grown, she has given up a successful career in nursing in order to study Fine Art. She is full of enthusiasm and extremely conscientious, a model student, in fact. Her early logbook entries tend to demonstrate a surface approach to learning, along with an engaging humility.

Painting

"The aim is to develop a range of techniques and to be able to plan and manage time by meeting deadlines etc. and also to be able to evaluate work using appropriate vocabulary, and so on. We have to maintain a glossary of useful words, artists, styles, etc. I hope to achieve my goals by using all media either in homework, sketchbooks or whenever possible. I will practise at home until I feel comfortable with the different techniques and media."

"I thoroughly enjoyed the painting module. I found using all the different painting media in class very helpful. I had not used acrylic paint since school - some years ago. Although I had done a little watercolour painting, I was self-taught and so my technique was poor. I had never used oil paint before and enjoyed the challenge, but found the subject - life painting, difficult. Also difficult to me is mixing colours and finding the right mixture, for example, skin colour."

"I think I have met my own aims for the painting module. Since starting the course, I am much more observant generally, but particularly of colours, shadow, light and dark. I constantly find things I would like to draw, paint or photograph. In fact, I canít walk down the street now without wanting to stop and take a closer look at something."

In her summing up at the end of the first semester, Jane has become less hesitant and much more self-assured. She is clearly benefiting from using the logbook to identify her progress and achievement of PPCs.

"I think I have met my objectives by exploring opportunities, setting my own targets and planning my own work. I have gathered material and worked through difficulties. I feel I can think more creatively now, by gathering information, analysing and putting it back together again. I have enjoyed working with other students, listening, observing and contributing when required. I consider values and standard setting important and feel I have achieved my aims through having met every deadline and being absent on only two unavoidable occasions during the first semester."

Case Study 2

Michael is a reticent and quiet young man who began studying on the Fine Art course directly from Sixth Year Studies at school. Personal and professional capabilities were not a part of his first year experience but are integral to the new degree, which he transferred to at the beginning of his second year. Along with his peer group, he started using a logbook to record his own achievement of the PPCs in relation to his negotiated work plan. The following extracts demonstrate his increasing recognition of the potential value this record has for his own development.

Level 2: Presentation

"We had to present our work to the first year group and give a rationale for what weíre doing and how we intend to progress in the future. I organised my thoughts in my head as I felt that I might get too panicky if I wrote them down."

"When it came to the presentation, I felt a lot more confident than I expected to. I think this is because I am able to draw on the experience I gained last year. Speaking to the current first year, I am aware of what it's like for them. As a second year student, I'm a lot more comfortable with my surroundings and social networks and this seems to give me greater authority."

"During my presentation I concentrated on speaking in a clear tone and getting my message across in a way that my audience would understand. During the feedback session, I took notes, jotting down the ideas and opinions of lecturers and fellow students so that I would be able to reflect on them later."

Later in the semester the students were required to prepare for a presentation of their work by videoconference to a group of students in another institution. The two student groups, although studying within the same discipline, had not met face-to-face and so their first encounter was through video link.

Preparation for Video Presentation

"Whilst I was making my practical preparations, I was taking notes that I intend to revise later to help me with my speech. In trying to explain my work, I've found my PPC Logbook very helpful, as I have been able to refer to earlier experiences and the ways I overcame difficulties when making my paintings. This was a good aid to my memory and helped me to fill out my explanation of my work in a more interesting way for my audience."

"Because it was my own work that I was talking about, I didn't need to take notes with me. Even so, I was nervous and at one point in my talk there was a long pause while I panicked about what to say next. However, I went through my notes in my head and managed to get back on track. At the end of my presentation I was quite pleased. I felt that I had made myself more audible and that I had spoken more clearly than usual. The presentations we've made to the first years and to our own year group have helped with my confidence in speaking out."

"The feedback from the audience in Inverness was good and encourages me to continue with photography as a medium instead of painting. On reflection, if I had to present work by video again, I would change some of the methods of display. I noticed, for instance that the light was glancing off some of the laminated surfaces when I was using the object camera. I'd need to experiment more with the lighting. I was also aware that the people in Inverness were having difficulty in appreciating our work because of poor image quality at their end. On the whole, I think it would have been a more successful exercise if we had presented our work in person."

Case Study 3

Jenny is a mature student in the same group as Michael. She manages her studies alongside the responsibilities of a young family and the need to travel a considerable distance to attend classes. Although highly articulate, Jenny began the second year with surprisingly little sense of her own abilities. Her logbook is full of self-questioning in the initial stages but demonstrates increasing confidence as the year progresses.

Many of her early logbook entries indicate a struggle to establish a creative identity and the need to inject her work with meaning:

"I still need to develop my skills"; "I want to have a better understanding"; "Striving to decide on a direction and content. I must analyse what I am trying to say through my work"; "I am really struggling to hold everything together, especially as I am so slow in working."

For many of the students, one of the most challenging modules in their course is Contemporary Technology, which is largely, though not entirely, computer based. Along with more traditional Fine Art disciplines such as painting or photography, computer generated imaging has great potential as an expressive medium. Jenny encountered difficulties along the way but became an enthusiastic proponent of technologically mediated work.

"I have decided to hang in there with my computer work as I do get a buzz out of it. So I have decided to keep going as best I can and work on my computer at home through the Easter break."

"On looking through my computer work to date there is a definite theme that has been developing over this semester. Looking at it alongside my other work it certainly does tie in with an overall theme that has evolved quite naturally. I am now attempting to define exactly what it is I am trying to say."

"As I am also making final preparations for my contextual presentation it is forcing me to deal with what I am trying to express in my work. Basically, it is all inspired from capturing moments of discovery when visiting places which are of significance to me in a 'spiritual' way. I have always been aware of and been stirred by the cycle of seasons in my environment and subconsciously wanted to capture details of those components that go to make up the landscape, examine them in an almost microscopic way and then enhance their beauty, form and shape."

"This is where I find the computer really exciting as one can manipulate the images - not dramatically - but enough to put them into an abstracted format, hence the 'microscopic' viewpoint. Then itís possible to rearrange colour, light, shadow etc. as necessary to develop a more lyrical representation or dimension."

"I wish to continue my Contemporary Technology studies as I can see great possibilities in helping me with printmaking and developing my imagery further. It also allows me to have fun and get good results in a relatively short space of time, as opposed to my Mixed Media, which is more physically demanding. Thus I also have variety in my approach. Despite the tight time frame in fitting this semester together, I'm glad that I have persevered with this medium, which I find I really enjoy."

Evaluation and Resource Implications

Many of the Fine Art students were initially sceptical about the value of PPCs; they were also resistant to the idea of keeping a logbook and saw it as a necessary chore rather than an aid to learning. However, as the year progressed they began to appreciate the benefits of reflective practice. Most now make regular entries as a matter of course. MacFarlane (1997), presenting a paper to the Learning Environments and Technology Working Group of the UHIP, described how people learn thus:

"Learning is an interactive and dynamic process, in which imagination drives action in exploring and interacting with an environment. It requires a dialogue between imagination and experience."

Keeping a logbook or reflective journal is a means to facilitate this kind of dialogue. For the UHI students, it is early to do more than note their positive response, but reference to Boyatzis et al (1995), for instance, is very encouraging. They followed two successive student groups from entry to graduation to measure the effectiveness of a value-added intention in programmes of study. They reported that:

"The students graduating - have significantly greater capability than they did when they entered. They have greater capability both in their own eyes and as seen by others observing them."

The benefits to graduates and potential employers are clear but there are, of course, resource implications. In the short term, UHIP acknowledges that a programme of staff development is of considerable importance to ensure an understanding of and commitment to this initiative. In the long term, a strategy for evaluation and refinement will be vital.

In conclusion, at the end of this pilot year student evaluation forms included many positive comments as can be seen from the following few examples:

"*Had a positive and stimulating experience"; "each week was inspiring"; "learnt to work as part of a team"; "overcame a lot of fears and dislikes"; "improved my self-confidence"; "I am instilled with a sense of professionalism."*

A framework that facilitates the development of personal capability through self-assessment is one that has to be commended. As well as demonstrably increasing confidence and self-awareness, it provides a structure for career planning and enhances the appetite for future participation in learning.

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KEEPING A REFLECTIVE JOURNAL: REFLECTIONS OF A MATURE STUDENT

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Summary

Reflective journals are used increasingly in Higher Education. Examples from an unstructured journal kept by the author in her role as a new Mechanical Engineering student raise issues of what ìoughtî to be in journals, how emotional effects should be dealt with and how the subjective nature of reflection may cause problems for assessment.

- learning outcomes
- process skills development
- subject-specific skills
- professional skills development
- reflective practice
- feedback loop
- formative assessment
- summative assessment
- credit bearing

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Context

Many educational institutions are promoting the use of learning journals as a support for personal or professional development (see for example Moon, 1999; Brockbank and McGill, 1998). I was originally encouraged to keep a learning journal by the Open University as part of a Masters in Education programme, though the nature of this was not constrained in any way. Because I found journal-keeping beneficial, I decided to use it in a PhD study of how students acquire academic discourse, acting as my own guinea pig as a new student. The process was a pragmatic one not based on any theoretical perspective, but my study coincided with an increase in the literature about reflection and I also became aware of its role as an academic discourse in its own right. Reflective writing has an additional benefit in that it encourages student (or staff) writing and is akin to the freewriting (Elbow 1981) that is useful for unlocking the creative process.

Description

After completing an HNC in Mechanical Engineering at a Further Education college, I have a learning journal of around 50,000 words. It contains a mixture of facts and information, 'to do' lists and reflections on what I did. Unpacking some examples of the reflections now that I have completed the course may help to underpin the benefits and potential problems of journal writing. In the examples below, I provide the reflections as they actually appeared in the journal and then an analysis of these reflections. The analysis includes observations of other peopleís use of reflective writing as a process of personal development planning.

Example 1: First Reflection

9/9/97
Immediate observations
Problems with transposition, when 2-stage. Had to think about what was happening. Was going to substitute real numbers to check but felt under pressure to come up with answer.
Other students also struggled with this and were happy to say so.
Solution - to provide answers that could be used in substitution - one student commented that this didn't help understand transposition...
To my surprise, would like some visual models to help understanding - want to see what's going on.
When struggling, everything suddenly becomes a mass of letters & numbers and the only thing to do is write down for later. However, I didn't really find this session too difficult (despite arriving an hour late because of misinformation)
Some dangers: go for easy strategies to get by; number crunching without thinking.

The main impression is that I am no different from the majority of students entering a new subject who are obsessed with the question: "will I be able to cope with the workload?" The issue that interests me in looking back, though, is what I chose to notice. The memory of the discomfort at arriving an hour late is now very strong; I am surprised that I have not made more mention of this, nor of my fellow students. What a student notices at the time of reflection will depend on a number of factors: what made the strongest impression at the time, even if that changed in retrospect; what they feel they 'ought' to be noticing. I have been asked by a student on a professional course what she ought to be writing in her journal and I replied by asking whose "ought" this was. The answer to this question will be determined by the requirements of the course. If the reflective journal is to be assessed, then what goes into it needs to meet the criteria for assessment and these should be made very clear by the course documentation. If it is purely a personal document, then the student may need to be helped to define her own 'ought'. Many first reflections are then likely to be rather self-conscious - reflection will itself be characterised by the question: "will I be able to do this?"

Example 2: Reflection and Emotional Issues

My aunt had just had a stroke and my HNC class took me away from my worries for a time. I wrote this on the train immediately after the class, however, and the underlying emotional state re-emerged.

17/2/98
Time went quickly again and I got absorbed in the work - forgetting that was worried (about Janet) and this returned to me very strongly afterwards.
Possibly related (but not entirely sure) is a general feeling of inadequacy both about the HNC & the PhD. I found I'd forgotten much of the basic method for the assignment though it came back partly through looking for examples of the method and partly through reasoning (though that's still rather fuzzy). I began to feel that I may be rather stupid/slow on the uptake and that I've been able to get away with a lot because of having the right attitude, background, family connections etc. (Something I've often thought before.)

These worries about the 'halo effect' occur occasionally in the journal and are again very typical of a student coming to grips with a new subject. The journal clearly shows that concerns about my own abilities arise at times when I am tired, overloaded with other work or worried about something. In the case above, I rapidly recovered my natural optimism as my aunt made a full recovery and as I began to relax a little.

I did not really recognise the effects of a negative state of mind until it was pointed out to me by members of staff at the University of Glasgow to whom I made a presentation. They suggested that I sounded quite negative about my experiences and that a discourse analysis of my journal might be quite revealing. The observation was useful because it alerted me to the dangers of negative thinking. It did not prevent negative reflections arising - nor should it have - but it did provide an increased awareness of the emotional side of learning. This highlights one of the potential concerns about reflection, however. As Boud and Walker (1998) point out, reflection cannot really be constrained and its encouragement many bring out a number of negative emotions in students which their teachers may be ill-equipped to deal with.

Several years ago, when I worked at another university, I piloted a document that was designed to encourage reflection and personal development planning in 2nd year undergraduates. One question which was intended to stimulate thoughts about working practices that had been unsuccessful and possible changes to make for the next academic year, elicited the response: "I'll not allow myself to be used for sex next year." This response was unexpected, one I was not trained to deal with, and the circumstances of the pilot made it difficult to react to it anyway. Yet I felt some support should be available to this student. The example highlights the difficulties of the boundaries between personal planning and the evidence required or requested by the institution.

Example 3: Reflection-in-action

14/10/98 5.30 am
Will now spend at least an hour going over Mechanics, considering the question: where are the gaps in my knowledge?...
Questions
1. What does second moment of area actually mean?
2. Is d both distance (perpendicular) from NA and diameter, depending on circumstances?
7.30 am
have spent a lot of time on question 1 opposite and am not very far on. I think I've/we've been happy just to manipulate the figures - basically transposition and substitution - without following what's happening. To a certain extent perhaps this is necessary as we don't have the necessary calculus to really follow the concepts. I've also had to remind myself that these forces - direct stress and shear stress - have been described before. Looking it up in other books is dangerous because of the letters used.

The questions helped me to focus my learning, the results of which are not really recorded in the journal. The reflection at the end considers why I have a problem and also provides me with advice that I can look back over earlier notes. In this case, when I looked over earlier notes I discovered that I had been happily using the notion of 'second moment of area' the previous year without any concern about what it meant.

Sometimes the process of reflection-in-action was not immediately useful. I spent some time agonising over the meanings of enthalpy, heat and temperature which proved good grounding for a much longer reflection on entropy I worked through a year later. The benefits of reflection may not therefore be immediately apparent. There is a cumulative effect, which is why reflection is useful as a personal development tool but this does make it difficult to assess.

Resource Implications

At first glance, there are few resource requirements for keeping a personal reflective journal. The student needs a book and a pen - or whatever method of recording that suits them. (For some students, for instance, a dictaphone might suit their learning preferences.) The analysis above suggests that there may be a hidden resource issue in the need to support students with what emerges in their reflections. I do not have support formally built into my reflective practices, but I use colleagues, supervisors and reading to help me to make sense of what has emerged. A seventeen year old student without such a support structure might end up using the journal to reinforce negative beliefs.

The principal resource requirement, then, should be staff time allocated to explaining, monitoring and supporting the reflective process in students. In professional courses such as nursing or teacher education there may be a protocol to follow for reflections on practice and there will be associated printing costs.

Student Assessment/Feedback Issues

If I had thought my learning journal was definitely going to be assessed, then I would have undoubtedly written it in a different way. I would probably have tried to select incidents and reflections that showed me in the best possible light. While accepting that this could have had a positive effect, avoiding some of the dangers of reinforcing negative impressions, my main concern about assessing journals is that some of the benefits of reflection might be lost because of self-censorship or window-dressing. There are other concerns. There are major difficulties in ensuring validity and reliability in assessment of learning journals. While acknowledging this, Moon (1999: 92-93) says this is actually a reason for developing appropriate means of assessment. She claims that a system of assessment is needed because: it shows that reflection is thought to be worthwhile by staff; criteria will help teachers to help students; students will not undertake tasks that are not assessed; and if development of the reflective practitioner is what is wanted, then criteria for assessing that development should be explicitly stated.

Moon's arguments are powerful if reflective practice is to be taken seriously in whatever outcomes and processes are being used (and she makes a point of distinguishing between the two in relation to assessment). Perhaps my concerns about the effects of assessment can be overcome by empathetic feedback and assessment as exemplified by John Cowan (1998: 135). He records his difficulties in understanding one journal and his response to the student's comment: "I don't expect the first page meant anything to you -but it means a lot to me." This example encapsulates the difficulties of assessment, but Cowan's integrity in dealing with this difficulty and in finding other ways to authenticate the student's claims shows an understanding that we might not be able to guarantee in all teachers, especially those starting out with this method. Cowan has kept his own reflective learning journal and subjected it to both self and peer assessment; I believe that a teacher who has not had experience of doing this will find the processes of assessment and feedback very difficult.

Evaluation

It is difficult for me to evaluate my own process of writing a journal because of its intensely subjective nature. However, in a sense, I am constantly evaluating the reflections as I try to use them. Cowan (1998:41) makes the distinction between analytical and evaluative reflection. Analytical reflection is looking at "how should I do it?" and evaluative at "how well do I do it?" The same questions can be asked of the reflective process itself.

Key Advice

The analysis above raises the following questions. My advice to staff is not to proceed until the answers can be provided.

- Is there anything that the student's journal 'ought' to contain?
- Is there anything it ought not to contain?
- Should the journal have a specific structure and if so will this be provided for the student?
- Are you going to assess either the journal or a separate document based on the journal?
- How will you address the emotional aspects of writing a journal?
- Would it be appropriate to offer reassurances about confidentiality with respect to the journal?
- Have you made all the above clear to the students?
- Have you completed a journal - or the equivalent reflective document - yourself?

Conclusion

Some students might benefit from keeping an unstructured reflective journal, as I have. By getting into a regular habit of writing for few minutes without stopping, I have both a useful record of my own reflections and a way in to the more formal writing I am expected to do as a student and an academic. The process must, however, be set up properly for students who have never done it before.

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DEVELOPMENT OF A WORK BASED MANAGEMENT QUALIFICATION

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Summary

The Certificate in Management (Work Based Learning) is a programme offered by the Centre for Training and Development, Dept of Learning and Educational Development at Glasgow Caledonian University. The Certificate is a post graduate, work based management development programme based on a set of management skills which seek to provide the link between the continuing professional development of individual managers, and the development of their employing organisations. The Certificate aims to offer a flexible, work based learning route allowing students to enrol at any point during the academic year, subject to minimum student cohort numbers. The Certificate carries 60 SM credits and is awarded on the successful submission and assessment of a folio of evidence together with a successful viva voce interview.

- process skills development
- professional skills development
- formative assessment
- reflective practice Summary

Alison Nimmo is a lecturer within Caledonian Open Campus Learning at Glasgow Caledonian University. She is programme leader for the Certificate in Management Work Based Learning and is currently exploring the provision of work based learning at under graduate level. She is also involved in the delivery of Learning Contracts within the University which constitute an additional work based learning route which offers added flexibility through the negotiation of programme content to meet the needs of individuals and their employers

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Context

One of the internal issues which challenge the competitiveness of many organisations, is that many of those who find themselves in management positions have received little if any training in management. There is also the added difficulty that many of the courses currently on offer are not suitably structured to allow those already in employment the flexibility to marry their professional interests with the challenges facing them in their work context. Employers in many sectors, including the Small/Medium Enterprise (SME) sector, have traditionally been unwilling, and in many cases unable, to release their staff to attend classes and tutorials. In particular they have not necessarily seen the long-term gain to their competitiveness and sustainability through offering short term support for staff wishing to attend a university course to upskill in either generic or specific skills.

Addressing the continuing professional development of employees through work based learning can, however, offer an achievable win-win solution by improving current and future practice of individual managers, in line with the evolving needs of the workplace.

Work based learning refers to the opportunities to learn which emerge from participation in the activities of the workplace. Specifically it is the achievement of planned learning outcomes derived from the experience of performing a work role or function.

Description

Aims of the Certificate in Management Work Based Learning Programme

The programme is organised into four sections:

- Managing Self and Others
- Managing Operations
- Managing Resources
- Managing Information

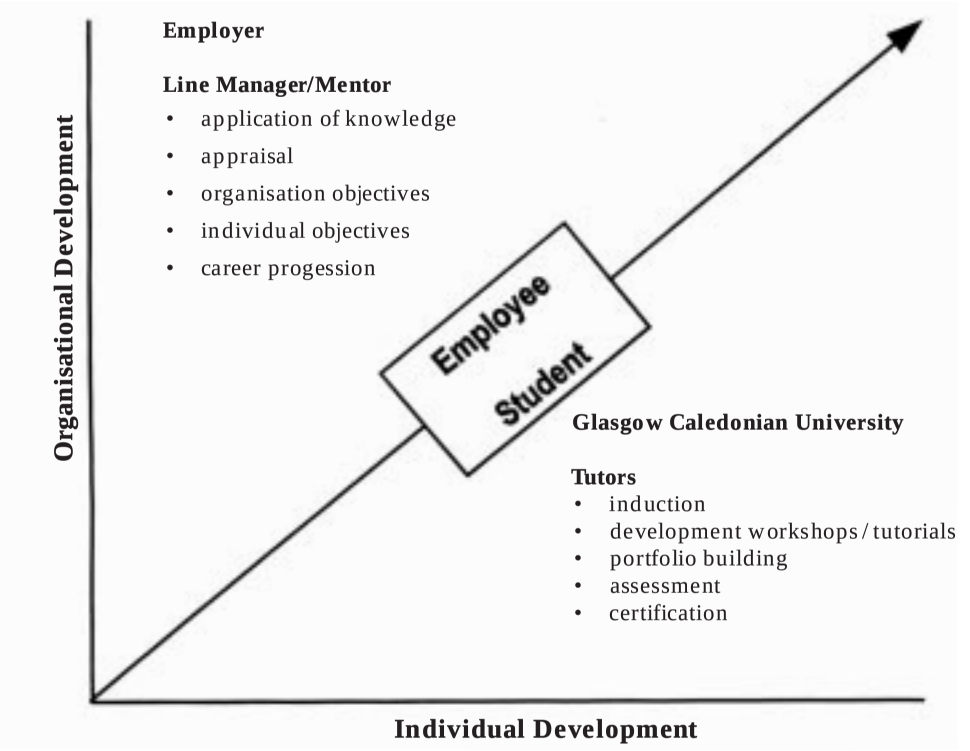
The programme aims to:

- Address individual CPD issues through the development of a suite of key skills in management which are applicable in a range of contexts
- Provide opportunities to demonstrate management competence with a considerable degree of autonomy, initiative, creativity and innovation
- Offer opportunities to demonstrate that students understand their own development needs, can take steps to address these needs and match them to the requirements of the Certificate programme.

The programme is an important means of supporting two of the University's key strategic aims:

- to widen and increase access to high quality, flexible, vocational higher education
- to work together with professional bodies, employers and others in education to support students gain nationally recognised qualifications, enhancing their skills and enhancing their careers.

Continued Professional Development through Work Based Learning Model



Recruitment and Selection

To date student cohorts have been drawn from the voluntary and the public sectors in the Glasgow area. Liaison with local employers had identified a number of middle managers that wished to upskill in the area of management development. These employers agreed to provide a level of financial support to cover student fees, and signed a Memorandum of Agreement confirming ongoing support and guidance would be offered to students, normally from the direct line manager. Selection criteria are flexible allowing entry to those with no prior educational qualification but with sufficient management experience and responsibilities.
Induction was carried out by University staff and included the provision of an induction folio outlining the requirements of the programme and providing a means to begin the process of evidence collation. All students were registered with the University and entered on to centralised student record systems.
A learning agreement was issued to all students to clarify the roles of tutors and the responsibility on students for their own learning. This documentation is essential in stressing the degree of development expected of students, securing the 'buy-in' of employers to the process and ensuring the proposed CPD is clearly linked to the requirements of a post graduate award.

Induction and Training Workshops

Initial induction focuses on clarifying the responsibilities of University tutors and assessors in supporting the developmental process. The requirements of the Certificate programme are explored and types of evidence, both direct and indirect that are acceptable for assessment are identified. Techniques such as mindmapping are used to help students explore their current responsibilities and skills as an initial training needs analysis exercise. It is essential that students view the programme as a developmental process in terms of gaining new management skills and knowledge rather than a process which merely documents their existing skills. Areas where evidence will be difficult to produce are considered in detail and individual plans for addressing these are explored. This is a learner-focussed process and will involve consideration of options such as job rotation, work shadowing and job enrichment. The role of the workplace mentor in securing these becomes crucial at this stage. This is essential in ensuring that students are offered a ëscaffoldedí learning experience which both supports their individual needs and in turn is responsive to the internal environmental demands of the employer organisation.

In addition a number of workshops (minimum four) are offered to students. These are based on the requirements of the Certificate programme and afford opportunities to reflect on current practice in the light of input from tutors from the University or the mentor from the employer organisation. Workshops also offer the added stimulation of mixing with other students and, as the cohorts are naturally heterogeneous, gives rise to a greater level of creativity and learning that offered through single employer focused training.

Portfolio Building

'The folio' is the term referring to the claim for learning for each student and is presented together with a collection of suitable pieces of evidence that evidence that learning. Guidelines on how to structure the portfolio are provided, although there is a degree of flexibility. As a minimum the following are included in a folio:

- Brief CV and job description to introduce the candidate to the assessor
- Organisational chart and overview to highlight the areas of work likely to be encountered by the student submitting the claim
- Evidence matrix
- Commentary / storyboard which explicitly identifies how the requirements of the Certificate programme have been met from work based experiences
- Collection of evidence to satisfy all requirements

The folio approach is perhaps the most flexible of all assessment tools - students can make their own interpretations of the programme requirements and relate this to their work based experiences and the CPD they have undergone as a result.

Assessment

Assessing CPD in management through work based learning is a challenging task for assessors. Folios of evidence vary enormously and the task is to ensure that all evidence is acceptable. Criteria used include:

- Valid - evidence demonstrates the knowledge and skills stated in each competence
- Sufficient - demonstrating the breadth and depth of learning,
- Authentic - truly relates to the studentís own experience, and
- Current - the majority of the evidence should have been produced during the course of the programme, but again there is flexibility to allow relevant evidence to be considered which relates to a period of up to two years beyond this.

Where evidence is presented which the student has not directly produced themselves, this takes the form of indirect evidence, for example witness testimony. Indirect evidence can not comprise the sole evidence submitted for any given competence. However indirect evidence can play an important role in corroborating a studentís claim for learning in areas related to managing others.

Assessment to date suggests that the major challenge to work based students evidencing CPD lies in **selecting** evidence that meets the above criteria, particularly their ability to demonstrate the breadth and depth of their learning. For example a folio comprising mainly of copies of minutes of meetings can contain information relating to much tacit learning by the student. The successful student will however require to make their learning sufficiently explicit through *eg* the production of a variety of complementary evidence such as development plans, appraisal forms, project budgets.

CPD should enable the student to develop from single loop learning - reflecting on action taken and reviewing outcomes (Kolb), to perhaps an ability to question the actual underlying management processes they as managers have assumed to be necessary. For example from initially considering actions taken to obtain and evaluate information, the student progresses to a consideration of whether this information is required and the necessity of the role served by the evaluation process. This would represent double loop learning (Agyris) and can lead into skill development in the management of change.

Viva Voce

The viva interview is the second stage of assessment and is used to check the rigour of the theoretical content of the presented folio of evidence. Based on our experience is often a source of anxiety amongst students. It is vital that students respond to questions in a manner that demonstrates their own development and learning, rather than focussing on procedures and systems used in their organisation. Techniques such as role play and simulation have been used successfully to coach students to answer questions in the first person. For example, "I use the company's appraisal system to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of my staff. From this I build up an individual training plan to address these and I try and link this to the overall strategic objectives of the company".

Following a successful viva, students are recommended for the award and provided with progression opportunities to continue their CPD. Alternatively, remedial action is required from the student prior to resubmission.

Resources

Although there is less of a requirement on tutors to provide classroom inputs than traditionally taught courses, the resource implications can be significant. Fundamental to maintaining these at a minimum is to ensure the full commitment of both employers and students to ensure student retention. This can involve regular meetings with representatives of the employer organisation and intermediary tutors. Being based in the workplace, students need support in maintaining their motivation to develop their skills. For example, where little support or mentoring is provided in the workplace, the student may require additional support from University based staff. Regular communication with students is therefore recommended to maintain this. As a result of the highly flexible nature of work based learning and the work commitments of students, computer mediated communication is becoming increasingly common and indeed desirable during the operation of the programme.

Assessors must also build in 1-2 days of time to assess individual portfolios and another half day to undertake the viva interview. As with any post graduate level award a percentage of students will require to undertake redrafting or provide additional evidence to satisfy assessment criteria and again, this has time and resource implications for tutors. The variable levels of support must be borne in mind when setting appropriate levels of student fees.

Where the nature of a student's workplace role does not allow for opportunities to produce evidence in a particular development area, then alternative methods of assessment will require to be selected. For example, at Glasgow Caledonian University students may have access to online tutoring packages in specific areas of management.

We have not adopted a mass recruitment practice to date, preferring to bring on small cohorts of 20-30 students. Employer interest suggests that there will be an increasing demand for such provision and the University is responding by designing a range of work based awards including the Learning Contract. There are strategic decisions to be taken about resource allocation. If work based learning is to move closer to mainstream provision, then obviously this may require a shift from other less successful forms of current provision.

Evaluation

Feedback to date indicates that students find the process of demonstrating their professional development through a work based folio approach to be extremely challenging and *"definitely not a soft option!"*. However the process itself has added hidden benefits in terms of *"making me think through the variety of skills which I should be using in my day to day job as a manager in the voluntary sector. In the end through the reflective process structured by the competency framework I discovered that I actually had skills I never knew I had!"*.

As employers change their psychological contracts to offer employability rather than job security, many students felt that gaining an HE qualification which demonstrated their commitment to CPD, was proof that they possessed a range of transferable skills to future employers.

Similarly employers have found participation in this CPD linked to a Higher Education qualification to improve employee motivation in skill development and a tangible benefit in enabling them to measure the effectiveness of their own managers. In addition the support they offer to their employees to continue their CPD has provided a way of underpinning their approach to quality standards, such as Investors in People which focuses on making clear links between the organisation's overall business strategy and how individual training and development requirements are determined.

Learning Points

Student Guidance:

The very flexibility of the folios can however make the assessment process laborious and place more demands on the assessor than the student. It is vital therefore that students are clear about the expected content from the outset through the submission process. Guidance must be offered at induction and throughout the programme. Points to note include:

- **Focus on quality not quantity** - select evidence which clearly demonstrates the skills and knowledge linked to each competence

- **Adopt a structured approach to the folio** - at GCU we resorted to supplying the induction folder which contains standardised layout sheets for the various compulsory parts of the folio and a master evidence matrix to match overall evidence against competences.

- **Provide opportunities for peer assessment** - similar to distance learning. There is clearly a risk that students feel isolated and lose motivation in pursuing their professional development. Interim workshops with small groups of students allow cross fertilisation of ideas and create higher levels of creativity and student motivation. Such opportunities also allow for some form of interim assessment to be conducted by University staff to ensure that students are approaching the task in an appropriate manner, and thus avoid a learning drift scenario where the work based experiences dominate rather than the professional development and learning underpinning these.

Assessor Guidance:

In assessing CPD in areas such as management development, we would offer the following advice to those involved in the assessment process:

- Allow sufficient time to assess folios. Students have a difficulty in unpacking their working environments in a concise manner and assessors must build in sufficient time to 'get to know' the employer organisation and the student role as their employee.
- Allow sufficient time for the viva interview as this often involves 'going through' the folio in some detail in additional to posing questions related to underpinning knowledge and skills.
- Make use of cross-assessment to establish benchmarks.
- Build strong links with your External Assessor and keep them aware of student's progress, and subject matter provided at workshops/tutorials. Ensure that a selection of folios at different levels of achievement is available, and use the experience of the External Assessor to gather benchmarking information.

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REFLECTIVE PORTFOLIOS FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING

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Napier University

Summary

Napier University offers a range of work-based learning and personal development modules. This hospitality and tourism management module focuses on empowering students to take responsibility for their own work-based learning and to evaluate and self assess their performance and learning outcomes. The module is based on individual learning plans, setting personal learning objectives, the completion of a reflective learning portfolio and critical self-awareness and self-assessment. This paper summarises the development of the module and highlights the key issues of delivery and assessment.

- learning outcomes
- performance criteria
- process skills development
- subject specific skills
- professional skills development
- formative assessment
- summative assessment
- reflective practice
- feedback loop
- credit bearing

Jennifer Graham is a Teaching Fellow of Napier University, working within the School of Marketing and Tourism. Her main areas of interest are developing studentsí employability skills and attributes, personal development planning and reflection skills. This involves her in working with students with learning portfolios, work-based learning, live projects, peer and self-assessment, and team and group-work activities.

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Context

Employers are looking for graduates with a range of other attributes in addition to a degree; at the same time placement is increasingly being perceived as part of career progression by students and employers. For many undergraduates learning through work experience can be the initial preparation and grounding to meet these needs. The value and importance of work based learning has been emphasised in the Dearing report (1997), CVCP and current Government funded projects highlight key issues and benefits.

Graduates will need to develop a profile of skills, abilities and personal attributes that suit them to work in the organisation of the future. Harvey and Moon (1997) state that these personal attributes are seen as playing an important role in the ability of graduates to fit into the work culture, do the job, develop ideas, take initiative and responsibility and ultimately help organisations deal with change.

Napier University has a strong emphasis on work based learning and has been at the forefront of many new initiatives. The development of employability skills and reflection are a key part of Napier University's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (1999).

All Napier Business School students have the opportunity to complete a work based learning module, in which programmes use the highly regarded learning contract model. This model has been developed to enable a focus for more reflective practice and the recording of reflective learning and personal development for hospitality and tourism students.

The importance of work based learning has been well documented in recent years. Experience of work is not enough in itself. It is the learning that comes from it that is important. This leads to interrelated areas that are crucial to work experience. It is within this framework described by Harvey, Gaell and Moon (1998) that the module for Hospitality and Tourism students has been developed.

Description

All Hospitality and Tourism Management students complete the second year 30 credit Supervised Work Experience Module (25% of the yearís credits). Each year it is an integral and assessed element of the programme for over a hundred students. This module has been developed over several years and now focuses on reflective learning.
The aims of the module are to:

- Empower the student to take responsibility for their own learning
- Relate academic content of the course to real situations in industry
- Provide for the student's personal growth and development
- Provide the student with the opportunity to make a more informed choice when selecting a career.

Students with substantial, relevant work experience may, at the start of the module, take the route of Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning and prepare a reflective portfolio based on this experience.

Prior to commencing the twenty four week placement in April the students attend two series of workshops. The first, in the autumn, enables the student to assess their current position and future career goals, research job opportunities and prepare for interviews.

Preparation for employment includes:

- Identifying personal strengths and weaknesses
- Developing the ability to present personal achievement
- Preparation of a CV
- Simulation and practice interview skills
- The focus is on self-assessment and the students are encouraged to explore different opportunities based upon their prior experience and future aspirations.

The second set of lectures and workshops prior to placement enables the student to prepare for and plan their learning for the workplace, to compile a reflective learning portfolio and self assess.

Planning for work based learning includes:

- Preparation of a job profile and a review of cultural implications
- Planning and writing objectives for a learning plan
- Development of assertiveness and negotiation skills for the workplace
- Writing of a reflective learning portfolio
- Reflective practices and self-assessment

The learning plan is made up of three categories of specific, measurable, achievable and time framed (SMART) objectives. The first section reflects what the student intends to learn from carrying out the job. In the second, course related objectives, they must plan to explore the bigger picture within the organisation and should relate theory to practice and learning from a more holistic viewpoint. The third category enables the student to select areas for their personal development. The learning plan indicates the methods and resources that the student needs to achieve each objective and the evidence that will be used to prove the achievement in the reflective learning portfolio which is submitted at the end of the placement. The student is required to discuss their plan with the employer
at the commencement of the placement and make any necessary changes throughout. The evidence may include, for example, critical incidents, case study, commentary on documentary evidence along with a reflective statement on the achievement of each objective.

The workshops are constructed so that students reflect on their performance each week using different tools and techniques to build up confidence and the ability to write reflectively on their learning and the achievement of their objectives in their portfolio.

In their portfolio the student can show both learning and reflection on the acquisition of technical skills and knowledge and their personal development.

Resource Implications

The module operates with one academic member of staff (who has other teaching commitments) and one part time placement co-ordinator.
Good communication with employers and with students is vital at all stages of the placement. Excellent collaboration with industry and a database of regular quality placement providers built up over several years aids in the delivery of the module. In addition one off placements must be facilitated to meet particular student needs.
The total time-tabled contact for students is twenty-eight hours, including preparation, planning and feedback. In addition, each student is expected to have a short structured individual interview and attend an employers forum.

Student Assessment / Feedback Issues

- The assessment is in four parts
- Learning plan 30%
- Industrial assessorís report 20%
- Reflective learning portfolio 30%
- Critical self assessment 20%

The plan and the portfolio are marked by the tutor. The students self-assess their performance in the workplace and their portfolio. They are able to compare the marks that they award with those of the employer for performance in the workplace and with the tutor's mark for the portfolio. This self-assessment develops good reflective skills and is a means of giving excellent feedback. It is a key tool to self awareness and future personal development planning.

Feedback on this module is extremely positive from both students and employers. Companies actively recruit each year and many continue to employ our students in a part time capacity as well as graduates.

A selection of quotes that students made in their reflection on their placement when asked to sum up what they had learnt about themselves:

" I learned about self-motivation and dedication - discovered strengths, both mentally and physically, I did not know I had"

"More confident and willing to try new things and ability to adapt to new situations and surroundings"

"I am extremely pleased with the placement module and what I learnt. It allowed me to gain new skills, boosted my confidence greatly and will help with my future career"

"On reflection It was the most successful part of my time in University so far and encouraged me to do better this term"

"I think I have gained a lot of confidence through my placement, I now have a lot more direction and suddenly the prospect of management does not seem so far away"

"It built up my confidence and I feel it was an extremely rewarding experience in so many ways - would I do it again? Yes !"

"I enjoyed working and I can cope in most situations. I enjoyed working in a team"

"For me this placement has been about personal and career advancement"

"The best module on the course!"

"This placement = personal improvement"

Evaluation

This module is validated by Napier University and evaluated through departmental / university quality standards. In addition feedback is sought informally and formally from students and employers, and also comparisons are made with other national work based models.

Key Advice / Benefits

Structuring the preparation and feedback sessions is very important to develop skills for personal reflection, both prior to the commencement of the work experience and before the self-assessment.

By facilitating the compilation of individual learning plans and objectives, the students in essence are enabled to write their own assessment, thus taking responsibility for their personal development and the advancement of core technical skills and knowledge during work experience.

The development of a reflective portfolio shows the student what they have achieved and learnt over a period of time and acts as a positive motivator, albeit time consuming and hard to complete while in full time employment!

Future Developments

It is envisaged that this module will move to a higher percentage of self-assessment. Also, proposals are being considered to develop a similar scheme to accredit part time work within the subject specific discipline.

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The National Centre for Work Experience,
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REFLECTION IN WORK-BASED LEARNING FOR UNDERGRADUATES

Melissa Highton
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Summary

Napier University offers a range of personal development modules providing students with structures through which to plan, evaluate and reflect upon the skills they are developing outside the University. Three modules cater for different kinds of work experience: volunteering in the community, working as a classroom assistant in a school and making the most of part-time term-time paid work. Each module is based on the completion of a reflective diary, setting personal goals and plans and a range of reflective tasks, helping learners to recognise and value core skills and take control of their own learning through the development of critical self-awareness. The development of these modules over seven years has produced a range of successful learning materials that support and encourage reflection and skills development in context. Feedback from students indicates that they find these modules enjoyable and valuable.

- learning outcomes
- process skills development
- subject skills development
- professional skills development
- reflective practice
- feedback loop
- formative assessment
- summative assessment
- credit bearing

As part of the Lifelong Learning team at Napier University, Melissa's role is to investigate and develop opportunities for students to gain academic credit for the learning achieved through activities they become involved in alongside their other studies. She specialises in developing learning materials designed to encourage self-reflection in relation to key transferable skills in the world of work.

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Context

Napier University has a strong track record in developing transferable skills amongst its students within their course structure. Since the success of the Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative (EHE) at Napier the development of 'employability skills' and reflection have become a key part of the University's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. The 'Volunteering in the Community' module was first run at Napier in 1993. Its success paved the way for the 'Student Tutoring in Schools' module in 1996 and 'Working and Learning' in 1998. Our thinking in developing these modules has been supported by a range of publications dealing with assessment, the value of student work experience, and service learning. The importance of work based learning in the curriculum has been underlined by recommendations in the 1997 Dearing Report and guidelines from the Quality Assurance Agency.

Each of these modules is offered at level 2 for 15 credits and all are based on the central premise that students learn essential skills through work experience and that credit should be given for evidence of that learning. Research indicates that students are more motivated and focussed, and their learning is more effective, if they have had experience which shows them the relevance of their learning to the world in which they are going to operate after graduation. Work experience in higher education plays an important role in this. While many Napier students undertake subject related placements as part of their course, many more gain the largest part of their work experience through their term time and summer jobs or through volunteering activity in the local community. This type of work based learning is most effective if it has been absorbed, reflected on and consolidated. By recording the outcomes of learning in terms of reflection, students demonstrate that it has taken place, to employers, academics or others. Although the development of generic skills is a priority for education at all levels, they are best (and sometimes can only be) developed in a context: communication skills must involve communication about something, interpersonal skills should be tested with a range of people, and teamwork is very different inside the University and out. (McNair, 2000)

In an uncertain and unpredictable world (economy and society) individuals need to be flexible, autonomous, and able to manage their own learning to meet changing circumstances. If students can reflect on their strengths, weaknesses and reactions in different situations we can begin to develop autonomous learners.

Description

The modules are available to students on any degree course and places are allocated on a first come first served basis. Throughout the semester the students work hard, attending their place of work (paid or unpaid) weekly and capturing their learning and reflection in a personal log book. The log book contains a variety of written tasks and diary sheets to be completed. Each diary sheet asks students to record successes and achievements, problems encountered, areas to improve and skills or personal qualities utilised. And written tasks prompt students to analyse their experience using different view points and constructs. Working towards both personal development and work-related learning outcomes students attend workshops at the beginning, middle and end of the semester where they are encouraged to integrate theory and self evaluation into their learning.

The rest of the time, they keep in contact with their tutor and other students via an online conferencing learning environment. At the end of the semester they submit their written work and give an oral presentation.

Student Assessment

Students are assessed on their achievement of the learning outcomes. They are not assessed on how well they perform at work: how good a student tutor, barperson or youth worker they are per se, but on how well they can describe, analyse, reflect upon and articulate their experience. Marks are allocated for participation in online discussion groups, learning log entries and oral presentation .

Student Feedback

Student feedback on these modules is overwhelmingly positive. Although some struggle with the 'unusualness' of the modules and the flexible format...

"It made a difference not having to sit in a classroom/lecture theatre and be taught it."

"I would say that the module contains around the same amount of work but it is a different type of work compared to the other modules I study."

...98% say they would recommend the experience to other students.

"Yes, it is something different to do and a great experience if enjoyed or not. I would because it certainly makes you look at your skills and develop new ones which are valuable throughout life."

"Yes- I think it is beneficial, particularly because I have become more aware of my skills and this will help me when I apply for a full time job. I think this module itself would also look quite good on my CV."

Asked to summarise what they have learned, students say:

"I feel that the time spent on this module has given me a great opportunity to look at the aspects not only of my job, but has helped me develop in areas of my personal and academic life.'...I also believe that this module is excellent for students who are not completing their degree by doing a placement year, like myself. It has boosted my confidence and helped my personal development."
-A business studies student who worked as a part time youth worker.

"I worked part time for over two years in a bicycle shop and although it has little to do with journalism I feel the job was beneficial to my personal development. As a journalist it is important, when interviewing people, to make them feel comfortable and to communicate well. My time working in a retail environment, I believe, improved my ability to deal with people considerably."
-A journalism student who worked at a sales assistant.

"Working gives you self confidence and enhances your capabilities and strengths in certain skills. I feel that I have transferred what I have learned from one job to another taking my skills and adapting them to my new job."
-A marketing management student who worked as a sales advisor.

"Being a student tutor has helped my confidence in both communicating with new people in various circumstances and from various backgrounds and also it has helped me to be more competent in taking charge of a group and then knowing what to do when something doesn't go as planned."
-A computing students who worked as a PE coach.

"To summarise what I learned from the student tutoring module I embarked upon, I would have to say that, most of all, working as part of a team with a class teacher required vast amounts of energy to sustain the enthusiasm of a class which could be very easily distracted. As well as learning how to communicate accurately effectively, work practically and constantly re-evaluate myself I had to be organised and manage every minute in the classroom effectively. Overall, the key word for this module is EFFECTIVE."
-A music student who tutored a drama class.

"When at university, I undertook a module which involved volunteering in Edinburgh Prison Visitor Centre. As a result of my experience of volunteering, I managed to gain and develop numerous skills that will be invaluable to me. For example, I developed various people skills, such as displaying elements of warmth and care and I developed useful communication and leadership skills. Furthermore, it gave me practice in dealing with difficult situations and it undoubtedly enhanced my confidence - all of which will be beneficial to in what ever career I apply for."
-Social sciences student on the Volunteering in the Community module

"*Student tutoring has developed my 'people skills' and enabled me to become an advanced communicator. It has also taught me the importance of clear planning, structured organisation and the usefulness of evaluation."*
-Biological sciences student working with a 5th year class

Resource Implications

The Student Tutoring and Volunteering modules are run by two members of staff equivalent to 1.0FTE. The modules have been developed in partnership with schools and community groups and rely for these placements on goodwill generated by effective, successful student volunteers. The Working and Learning module was developed with the sponsorship of a BT University Development Award. Each module has had high start up costs in terms of development of learning materials but now run fairly smoothly.

Evaluation

Each of these modules is accredited by Napier University and evaluated through departmental quality standards, in addition feedback is gathered from students as to their perceptions of the learning experience. The modules have high pass rates and are often oversubscribed.

As pioneering examples of reflective learning modules, each has been written up as an example of good practice in relation to accreditation of reflection and skills development and in relation to the teaching of active citizenship in higher education.

Key Advice

Advice to other practitioners searching for ways to integrate reflection with experience would be to make the most of the holistic student experience to identify where skills are being developed and practised. The reality of studentsí part time work is such that reflection and planning are assigned low priority unless they are integrated with another part of student life.

Increasingly the pressures of working while studying deter students from becoming involved in volunteering while they are at university, modules which support volunteering such as these offer a real opportunity to students to integrate this kind of experience into their timetable and thereby widen access to these valuable learning opportunities. Many students describe their experience of volunteering as the best thing they did at university. Personal reflection is always easier to stimulate if students feel positive about their experience

The Dearing Report recommended that:
'all institutions should, over the medium term, identify opportunities to increase the extent to which programmes help students to become familiar with work, and help them to reflect on such experience'. The reality is that not every course can include a sandwich placement. When so many of our students work while they study their jobs provide a valuable source of material for reflection.

Future Developments

In 1998 Napier University Quality and Standards committee made a commitment to offer all students accredited work experience while at university. Plans are currently underway to widen access to these work based learning modules. Interest has also been expressed by schools and FE colleges in using these modules to build on work experience gained before entering higher education.

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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS, THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Lynda Ali
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Summary

Personal Development Planning has been offered to students in some of the departments of the Arts Faculty of the University of Edinburgh for a number of years. We became concerned that the students were not making full use of the process - one reason being the method of delivery of the materials. The QAA Code on Careers Education, Information and Guidance and the introduction of Progress Files has enabled the Careers Service and the Arts Faculty to work together on a project to integrate career skills into the curriculum, and to explore ways of embedding personal development planning.

- process skills development
- professional skills development
- reflective practice
- feedback loop
- formative assessment
- summative assessment
- credit bearing

Lynda Ali is Senior Careers Adviser at the University of Edinburgh. She has specialist responsibility for the departments of Arabic, Divinity, History, Persian, Politics and Modern History. She has a strong commitment to the development of the personal and career planning skills of students and in Progress Files within HE.

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Context

Personal and Career Development Records (PCDR) were first introduced in the University of Edinburgh as part of the Careers Service's contribution to the Enterprise in Higher Education project. They were linked to a central programme of careers activities for all students and to specific departmental activities. It is a common experience of careers advisers to encounter students ñ from all disciplines - who lack motivation in both academic and personal terms often because they do not have any clear vocational direction. Our experience, shared by academic colleagues, is that students who have developed clear aims are most likely to derive full benefit from both academic and extra-curricular activities. Our thesis was that benefit could only be derived from enterprise activities if students' learning would be enhanced, if they understood the value of the skills, competencies and knowledge in the context of their career planning.

All this is particularly relevant to students in the Faculty of Arts since experience suggests that while Arts students are amongst the most able, many do not have as much confidence as they should in what they have to offer to employers. Many seem to lack confidence in their transferable skills and the knowledge and understanding gained from their academic and other experiences. For a significant minority this leads to a reluctance to approach decision making, missed opportunities and unrealistic expectations.

The first PCDRs were piloted in five departments in 1993 and over the following years were developed over a wider range of departments across the university. Within the Arts Faculty they were introduced in the departments of History, Scottish History, English Language, English Literature, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, School of European Languages, and the School of Asian studies. We realised at an early stage that for students to view the PCDR as relevant to them the content had to include material related to their subject of study. Nevertheless, we developed a common core of materials and worksheets for the Faculty which could easily be focussed on the needs of particular departments.

- First destination information
- Skills developed in the study of.....
- Skills developed through extra curricular and vacation experiences
- Career opportunities using the subject of.....
- For language courses - preparation for the year abroad and analysis of the experience gained
- Strategy in career planning
- Development of a C.V.

The focus was on enabling each student to take control of his/her personal, academic and career development, thus enhancing the individualís motivation to take advantage of the development opportunities available within the department, centrally within the university and outside. The initial materials were written by both careers advisers and academic colleagues and the PCDRs were introduced to students at the beginning of their penultimate year, or for language students, prior to their year abroad. The cost of the printing of the PCDRs was borne by the departments.

Alongside the PCDR developments, the Careers Service has developed a successful central programme of skills and taster courses, covering a broad range of employment related skills - e.g. negotiating, teamwork, leadership and insight into a range of job areas, both public and private sectors. Less well developed have been the careers activities within departments. Work pressures on staff, time-tabling difficulties and the higher proportion of students working during term time has resulted in limited development of programmes designed to take students through the process of career planning and personal development intended by the PCDR. It has become evident that most students will not engage in the process at an early stage without the support of such activities. This has reaffirmed our belief that it is the process which is central to the personal development learning. The recording of activities can help, but it is the process of reflection on experiences which motivates the student to learn and to seek additional relevant experiences.

Description of Career Skills in the Curriculum in the Faculty of Arts.

Over the last two years, it has become clear that the Dearing recommendations relating to 'career provision' within the curriculum would be adopted by the QAA in the Code of Practice for Careers Information, Education and Guidance (CEIG) currently under consultation. This means that institutions will be required to produce evidence that career related student skills are integrated into the curriculum. The Progress File developments are also related to these skills. The University of Edinburgh Strategic Plan for 2000 - 2004 states that there will be 'support for the development of curricula to meet contemporary needs *eg* in areas such as students' personal transferable skills and career planning skills'.

While a great deal of innovative career skills related work has taken place within the Faculty of Arts, little of it could be described as 'integrated' within the curriculum. In response to the above, funding has been made available - approximately two thirds from university sources and the remainder from contributions from employers - for a two year project within the Faculty of Arts that is designed to explore the development of student skills integrated within the curriculum and sensitive to the requirements of each course and the Faculty. The project will draw on the expertise of academic staff, careers advisers and employers to enable students to gain the maximum benefit from opportunities to develop skills of use to them throughout their working lives.

The funding is paying for a half time seconded member of academic staff and an additional careers adviser for the two years of the project. The academic secondee is key to the development of appropriate links with colleagues in academic departments and in facilitating the more explicit development and recording of student skills, working closely with careers advisers, employers and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Centre (TLA).

One of the main strengths of the project is that it is rooted in the Arts faculty - the Project Management Group is chaired by a Vice Dean of the faculty and includes academic members of staff, careers advisers and employers.

The objectives of the two-year project, starting in February 2000 are to:

- develop a strategy aimed at implementing the Dearing recommendations on integrating a careers input into the curriculum within the Faculty of Arts
- use the existing PCDR as a basis, develop a Progress File appropriate for use throughout the Faculty that can also be linked with transcripts and explicit statements of skills developed through courses
- identify appropriate ways to involve employers in activities and in the development of materials in support of career planning activities within the Faculty
- use existing good practice as a basis, develop a package of supporting activities to be time-tabled as part of the curriculum and to complement the existing curriculum, covering such topics as career planning / management, developing occupational awareness, practical application / interview skills, relating transferable skills development to personal and career development
- investigate the potential (identifying costs and benefits) of preparing students to seek and benefit from work experiences; developing curricula to include unpaid placements, project work and work-related case studies; and providing support for links with employers, especially where there are few direct links to the course subject; developing work experience opportunities (or proxies) on a Faculty or Departmental basis (and linking with central University-wide programmes)
- review the contributions to the above of academic staff and professional careers staff and any structures needed to support these (*eg*, Joint Liaison Group to help develop partnership, spread good practice, monitor liaison, manage Quality Assurance of careers provision)
- review the balance of departmental, Faculty and cross-university 'careers' activities
- review academic staff development and training in the light of the above
- review the resources needed to sustain the programme of activities after the pilot project

All this will mean that the PCDR will be embedded in the process which the students will undertake. It will not stand alone and should not be viewed by students or academics as an 'end' product in itself. The pattern of delivery for each department will vary in terms of timing and method of delivery, depending on the culture and needs of students in each department. The success of the project depends on the co-operation and participation of academic staff, careers advisers and employers working together. In particular, success depends on breaking down academic barriers. We have, therefore, spent the early months of the project in forming close links, formal and informal, with the academic departments. We are offering academic colleagues the opportunity to try for themselves some of the central programme of activities available to students - to try assessment tests, to experience an assessment centre, to explore a computer aided guidance system or to attend a workshop on applications and interviews. An academic / employer forum is to be established to begin to bridge the different cultures. One outcome of this will be a more formal session with employer input for academics on writing references for students and graduates.

We will explore new ways of delivery of the PCDR - including electronic delivery - but linked to the programme of activities in the departments. Currently it is presented as a ring bound booklet with references to our Careers Service Guide. One disadvantage of this format is that it suggests that career planning can be completed at one go, and that it is separate from the academic learning process. For one department we plan to experiment with unpicking the elements within the PCDR and to present them over a period of time in a loose-leaf format linked to specific activities within the department. In another department we plan to link the PCDR to a work related placement - in preparation and debriefing for the experience.

Resource Implications

For the duration of the project we have the additional careers adviser and the seconded academic based in the careers service, with limited attached funds for materials. PCDRs (since the completion of Enterprise in Higher Education) have been funded by the individual departments. The increasing financial pressures on departments make electronic delivery of PCDR materials an appealing option for departments - although it is recognised that this will place the financial burden of printing on the individual student.

Evaluation

Departmental programmes and materials will be evaluated through feedback from students and academics. Six monthly reports will be prepared for the Steering Group and a final report will recommend a strategy for continuation and development.

ENCOURAGING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING THROUGH PROJECT MANAGEMENT LOGBOOKS

Lorraine A.J. Stefani
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Summary

For students, the concepts of independent learning and personal development planning can seem nebulous and not necessarily amenable to simple translations articulated in the abstract. Rather, it is necessary to provide a framework for linking learning with personal development over which students themselves have a level of control. In the context of a postgraduate Environmental Studies Diploma / MSc programme offered at the University of Strathclyde, Personal and Professional Development Workshops were contextualised within the disciplinary based programme to promote a sense of ownership with respect to the learning outcomes and criteria for excellence associated with a group based Special Studies Project. This was achieved through the development of Project Management Logbooks which are presented on a web-site-alongside a Special Studies project report.

- process skills development
- professional skills development
- reflective practice
- feedback loop
- formative assessment
- summative assessment
- credit bearing

Dr Lorraine Stefani is a Reader at the Centre for Academic Practice, University of Strathclyde. One of her key interest is developing tools to support students in developing an understanding of reflection on learning and personaldevelopment planning. She has published widely on a variety of teaching and learning topics and is best known for her innovative work on assessment of student learning.

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Context

Energy Systems and the Environment is a postgraduate programme offered by the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Strathclyde leading to the award of Diploma or MSc. The course is primarily concerned with the design and operation of the systems that control the environment in which people live and work and comprises three key parts. Part A is the Foundation Studies Section which addresses the principles, concepts and issues which underpin all energy systems; Part B is the Special Studies Section during which students undertake a group based design project normally within an industrial test bed or in association with a design or energy management organisation. Part C involves students in preparing an individual thesis on one of a range of important environmental themes.

The department responsible for the Energy Systems and the Environment postgraduate programme has a partnership arrangement with the Centre for Academic Practice whereby members of CAP staff facilitate a series of Personal and Professional Development workshops with the students. The intention of these workshops is to support students in making the link between learning and continuous professional development, to support the students in their understanding of the complexities of group work, recognising both the task and process aspects of group work and to enable the students to reflect on their progress through the development of a Project Management Logbook
(http://www.strath.ac.uk/Departments/ESRU/)
The transferability of this personal and professional development process to other disciplines has been shown through its introduction into a computer aided design programme offered by the Department of Architecture.

Description

The personal and professional development workshops with the students pursuing the Postgraduate Energy Systems and the Environment course, facilitated by staff from the Centre for Academic Practice were initially intended to support students in the development of a Learning Journal. What was particularly problematic about this initially was that the language of reflection was alien to many students including the engineering students. Persuading learners of the importance of reflection and the importance of personal and professional development is not a task for the faint hearted.

While a number of different protocols were developed to support students in reflecting on their learning within the context of the Special Studies project the most successful of these, which has now been embedded within the course, is that of presenting the student groups with a task which gives them a starting point for reflection on their group project and encouraging the use of information and communication technologies for the presentation of their project outcomes in parallel with the presentation of their reflections in the form of a Project Management Log. Instead of presenting a paper based dissertation, students now present their work on a web-site. Drawing on the Kolb experiential learning cycle, as the basis for the Project Management Log the students were presented with the following task relating to the management and planning of their Special Studies Project:

1. Working in groups of four, prepare a brief for your group project assignment. Include in this brief the project title, a description of the project, the deadline for the completion of the project and what resources will be needed.

2. Define the processes by which you as a group will carry out this project, eg. delegation of the tasks, skills required for completion, levels of commitment required from team members, what potential difficulties you perceive with the project, time management *etc.*

3. Having defined your project and what skills resources etc will be required to successfully complete the project, as a group write how both the task and the processes in your assignment should be assessed and evaluated. In other words what are your criteria for excellence in this project?

The student groups were asked to present their project plan and use this as the basis for their Logbook. Basic HTML authoring workshops were incorporated into the course as part of the series of Professional Development Workshops. The design of the web pages was left up to the creativity of the students themselves but with some general guidelines presented by the facilitator. The aim of encouraging the groups to develop their project plan was to give them more of a sense of ownership over the project goals and a self-defined tool for self appraisal (Stefani 1999).

The success of this strategy for promoting reflection on learning by clearly linking the process to student defined learning goals can best be shown by presenting an example of the work carried out by the student groups and some of the comments made by a class representative presenting the work of his group at a conference entitled Student Wellbeing hosted at the University of Glasgow (1998).

Student Response to Personal and Professional Development

For their Special Studies Project, one group of students chose the project title **Energy Management Accounting for a Sustainable World.** In response to the project management task outlined above the group presented their plan as follows:

Project Description

- Energy Management is considered to be a key element of the overall management structure, encompassing energy related problems quite efficiently.

- The Energy Management function nowadays is mainly cost related without paying too much attention to Environmental Issues, therefore

- Energy Management should include a more environmental based approach Concepts such as Embodied Energy and Environmental Impact should be integrated to the cost evaluation of Energy management Systems

- These factors should be taken into account in the decision making of Energy Management for the future leading, therefore to a more sustainable world. So the objectives of this project are:
  - To examine the concept of embodied energy
  - To identify the significance of embodied energy associated with the energy management function and integrate it into daily management practice
  - To evaluate the environmental impact of energy management implementation
  - To combine the above factors into a life cycle assessment (LCA)

Deadline for project 15 April 1999

Resources required for the project

Information Resources	Relevant Case Studies
Literature review	Internet Resources
Interviews with Energy Managers	

Project Processes

Tasks:

1. Identify the consideration of todayís Energy Manager concerning issues of environmental impact and embodied energy through contacts with them
2. Data collection and analysis
3. Develop a calculation procedure for CO2 emissions and embodied energy
4. Assessment and evaluation of the developed method through case studies
5. Create web site for the project

Skills Required

Research skills	Data Analysis skills
Goal setting	Planning work
Delegation of the tasks	Time management
Team work	Communication skills
Co-operative behaviour	Commitment to the final goal
IT Skills	Presentation skills

Potential Difficulties

Insufficient information	Availability of data
Lack of experience	Software development

Time Management

Task 1 Week 1-4
Task 2 Week 3-5
Task 3 Week 4-10
Task 4 Week 3-12
Task 5 Week 4-12

Task Assessment and Evaluation

1. Make successful contact with Energy Managers and gain adequate information for the project. Correlate data obtained with the project objectives
2. Information retrieval from sources such as libraries, internet, organisations, etc. Analysis of the data through computational methods. Compare with existing methods.
3. Using IT skills a software web tool will be produced
4. Testing the tool under real conditions (case study) and evaluation of its credibility
5. A user friendly web site will be produced to demonstrate the developed software. Test the clarity of the web site with friends and colleagues.

Criteria for excellence

Commitment to the final goal	Effective team work
Comprehensive outcome	Useful to the target group.
Ability to fulfil each task in the predetermined time limits	Allocation of time to specific task

The reason for presenting this student project management plan is not to focus on the detail of the Special Studies Project but rather to highlight the extent to which the students acknowledged in their terms the pedagogical principles inherent in effective group work and task management *eg*, co-operative learning, the importance of a time management plan, the skills inherent in group task and process, ownership of the project goals and personal development planning.

The student groups used this project management plan as the basis for their web site and maintained the Project Log throughout the 12 weeks of the project. The linkage between the management plan and how the project was progressed can best be seen by viewing the Web site of this group (see below). In the final group appraisal the comments made by the group (see website) on their progress and success in achieving their own goals link very closely with the criteria for excellence which they presented at the outset of their project. While it cannot be proven that the project management task presented to the students did in itself fulfil its purpose in promoting reflection it is clear that the students feel a very strong sense of ownership over their work and the value of it.
(http: / / www.strath.ac.uk / Departments / ESRU / projects / EandE / 98-99 / energy_management / index.htm.)

Assessment Issues

The primary reasons for encouraging the student groups to develop and maintain a Project Management Logbook were to promote reflection on current attainment, to enhance learning and to create a link between learning and continuous professional development. However, such goals do not lend themselves to pragmatic and objective summative assessment, rather the Project Management Logbook was intended as a tool for formative self, peer and tutor appraisal. It was clear from student evaluation of the course that many of the groups valued the tool for these very reasons. In evaluation questionnaires many students stated that keeping a Logbook had been beneficial in terms of preparing a curriculum vitae and in making presentations during interviews. Students who did not complete the Logbook or make any attempt to keep their reflections up to date expressed disappointment in themselves because they had recognised too late that the Logbook was intended for their benefit, not for the benefit of their tutors.

Despite the apparent personal gains from developing a tool for self-appraisal, students did not initially value formative assessment over summative assessment, raising the question for the course team of whether to introduce summative assessment for the Logbook or whether to maintain the status quo, highlighting the benefits of the Logbook as articulated by students themselves and allowing free choice. The use of an electronic framework for presentation of the Logbook and Project report solved the assessment problem for the staff. A web-site is very visible, very public and as part of the programme involved employers peer groups and staff viewing the student output, this did more than any other form of persuasion to convince students that they had control and ownership of their own learning and that it was up to them to capitalise on this through presentation and discussion of their work and opportunities to highlight their own skills development and project management abilities.

Student Feedback and Evaluation

Student responses to the concept of reflection on learning and personal and professional development workshops being embedded within a disciplinary context were monitored via a qualitative evaluation questionnaire. Over 80% of students responded positively and constructively but perhaps the best indication of the student response can be gleaned from some of the comments made by a class representative for the Environmental Studies Programme during a conference presentation:

"Within the experience of the course, containing representatives from 7 countries and 6 different degrees, there was found to be no foundations in place for reflective learning and personal development planning although we could see the point of it."

"Our initial exposure to Dr.____highlighted another difference between engineering and the CAP. We were expecting to be lectured to rather than participating in an education. Once this had been overcome we began to understand the evolution, in our eyes, of Dr. ____ from lecturer into an initiator and facilitator. It soon became apparent that this concept of reflective learning would be more useful if integrated at an earlier stage of the course. It also begged the question; If continuous professional/personal development requires reflective learning as a part of attaining Chartered status why is it not integrated into Undergraduate degrees ?....."

"The use of a common web mounted document for the team allowed everyone access to the same data, from anywhere, at any time of day, but in order to maintain some continuity a common format was adopted. It soon became obvious to us that the use of the common log led itself to other functions, such as a memo pad, planner and audit trail. While the reflective log is of use for team working it really comes into its own on a personal level."

"To this end I have applied this technique in learning to glide and sail and in other aspects of my personal and professional life. So the application of these two tools, the reflective log and web based documentation, has lead to a broadening of scope in self-learning to encompass all aspects of life long learning (Guerra, 1998)".

Resource Implications

The primary resourcing of the Professional Development Workshops was staff time, in particular the time spent by staff from the Centre for Academic Practice working in partnership with disciplinary based staff. While the development of this project occurred over a period of four years, it is now embedded within the postgraduate Diploma programme but is facilitated by departmental staff. The project has also been incorporated within an Architecture course where again, it was easy to work in partnership with disciplinary based staff to pass on the process.

Future Developments

Feedback from staff and students involved in this project has created the impetus for the introduction of Project Management Logbooks into other courses both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and across a range of different subjects. In addition to projects such as this embedded within disciplines at the University of Strathclyde ambitious planning is underway to make much more use of communication and information technologies to provide electronic frameworks for students to take ownership of their personal development planning supported through the personal tutor system.

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A PORTABLE DOCUMENT FOR LIFELONG LEARNING: PILOTING A WEB-BASED PDP TOOL FOR THE ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DESIGN COMMUNITY

Jenny Ure, Julian Malins & Charles Juwah

The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

- learning outcomes
- process skills development
- subject-specific skills
- professional skills development
- formative assessment
- reflective skills
- feedback loop

Summary

Increasingly, professional and organizational competitiveness depends on constant professional updating of skills and knowledge. The emergence of the concept of lifelong learning requires a framework to:

- support the continuous cycle of action, reflection and planning that underpins progression across different institutions and organizations
- integrate teaching, learning and assessment processes around learner's needs
- record and evidence the outcomes across institutions

This case study looks at the further development and evaluation of an on-line personal and professional development profile - a portable document for lifelong learning that would serve multiple purposes across academic and professional contexts.

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Context

Creating and sustaining a coherent development plan across work and study in different contexts requires a portable and generic framework that is readily accessible and easily adapted. The constant throughout the process is the learner's own professional development profile around which planning, resources and support can be built either independently or in collaboration with a tutor, mentor or peer. This initiative is intended to support teaching and learning in a networked community of artists and designers in the Faculty of Design and for use in other postgraduate courses such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Tertiary Level Teaching (PGCTLT) at the Robert Gordon University.

The Teaching and Learning Context

Students are increasingly exhorted to be independent learners, but the skills required to do this can often only be absorbed from observation and discussion with more experienced others (Vygotsky, 1980). This element is increasingly lacking in the resource based approaches being adopted, and in the declining opportunities for individual or tutorial feedback.

Peer assisted support, profiling and personal development portfolios are increasingly being introduced in Universities as a means of informing and supporting students' learning where the traditional mechanisms have been eroded.

Biggs (1999) provides a very clear overview of the ways in which profiling, action planning and reflection tools can be used to support this process at different stages in the experiential learning cycle.

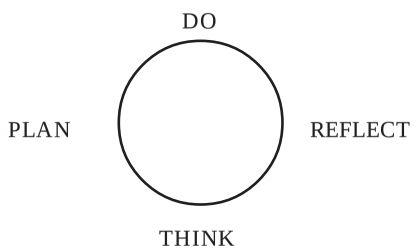

Fig. 1 *Kolb's experiential learning Cycle. Adapted from Biggs,* (1999)

Access to a coherent, progressive curriculum does not necessarily ensure access to coherent, progressive learning experience. Current resource based systems cannot easily identify or meet studentsí personal or cognitive needs in ways which can effectively raise performance unless feedback and support are built in. The needs expressed most strongly by students in a number of studies identify constructive and specific feedback and support as crucial in secondary (Ure, 1998), and in undergraduate contexts. Resource based systems designed to widen access may penalise those students from non-professional backgrounds who cannot derive this kind of support for learning from their own immediate peers.

The Art and Design Teaching and Learning Context

The Centre for Research in Art and Design in the School has been a pioneer in the development of the use of networked media to support teaching and learning which is visual, collaborative, reflective and practice-based. (See http://www.rgu.ac.uk/criad/)

The nature of collaborative multimedia-based disciplines, (academic, professional and commercial), has forced a particularly early engagement with the use of networked technologies in the curriculum.

The potential of networked technology to support higher cognitive skills was central to both the web-based Research Masters course, and the **studio**-space virtual learning environment projects in which the profiling tool is one element.

The Professional Development Profiling Tool (PDP) is one of a number of 'cognitive tools' (Jonassen, 1996), which can be used as a pivot for constructive dialogue between tutors and students.

It also offers more cost-effective integration of a number of educational and organisational processes:

- integrating the teaching, learning, reflection, assessment and recording processes more accessibly and transparently on a portable web-based document
- integrating the teaching, reflection, feedback, support, assessment and evaluation processes around individual needs

The web-based Professional Development Profiling (PDP) tool prototype described here is one of a number of generic, customizable tools being used to integrate and support learning as part of a CAL project at Grays School.

It is currently part of a collaborative, virtual learning environment called 'studio-space' that supports a network of artist and designers in the academic and professional community. (See http://www.studiospace.net.)

Description of the Profiling Tool

The profiling tool has four different interfaces for users, and is linked to a database that stores the information on assessed criteria, resources, marks, and layouts behind the scenes.

Re-usable and Inter-operable Resources

The profiling tool is linked to a knowledge-base which allows non-technical users to 'drop in' resources that are automatically re-formatted so that these can be shared across the network of users. Any user with access to the Internet should be able to access these, or add more. This can be used for images and sound as well as text.

Interfaces

- Profile of Professional Skills
- Action Plan
- Reflection Loop
- Record of Achievement / Portfolio

Screenshots
The examples overleaf are screenshots from the use of this tool with web-based artists and designers on a Research Masters course.
(The MRes url is http://www.rgu.ac.uk/mres/)

This web-page is used by web-based students and/or tutors to identify strengths and weaknesses in an assessed area before and after a task as a basis for supporting progression through feedback, support and discussion.

It also provides a basis for formative and summative evaluation for other purposes:

- recording of skills for prospective employers
- accreditation of learning or experience for entry to courses
- planning of professional development plan
- evaluation of course delivery

Learning outcomes or specific professional skills, competencies and qualities can be typed in here as a focus for evaluating learning around assessed criteria.
The boxed section can be used for generic rating or can be easily adapted for use with the specific numerical assessment system used by different institutions.

Profile Template

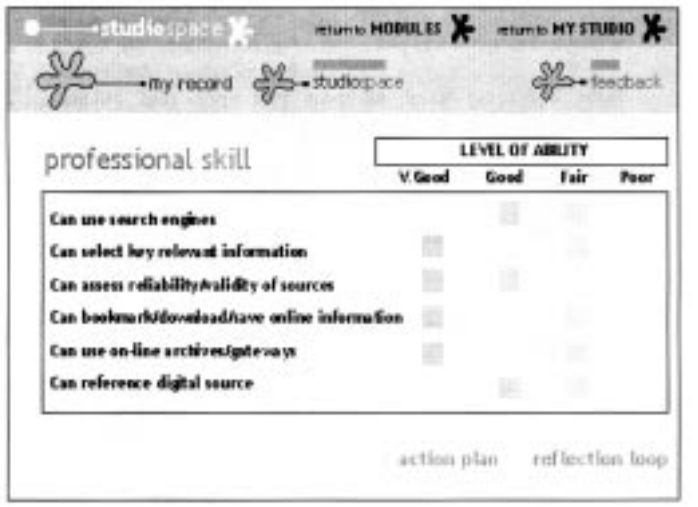

Figure 2. *Profile of Professional Skills*

Action Planning Template

Figure 3. *The action plan*

This interface provides opportunities for staff, students and colleagues to:

- exchange feedback in relation to key targets
- identify strengths, weaknesses, gaps
- draw up action plans / learning contracts / targets
- identify criteria, resources and strategies for achieving these
- identify / author / link to resources simply in the database in any medium
- audit courses, resources, learning or teaching in relation to users' needs.

The argument for cost-effectiveness comes from the targeting of individual needs in increasingly rare staff / student tutorials.

A shared interface his has the potential to provide the scaffolding for:

- identifying gaps and negotiating a route-map for progression
- ensuring that staff and students work from the same premises / aim for the same goals
- exchanging information on strategy and resources in relation to individual needs
- enhancing motivation, reflective learning and relevance in relation to individual needs
- the exchange of feedback about what is required and how it can be achieved.

Reflection Template

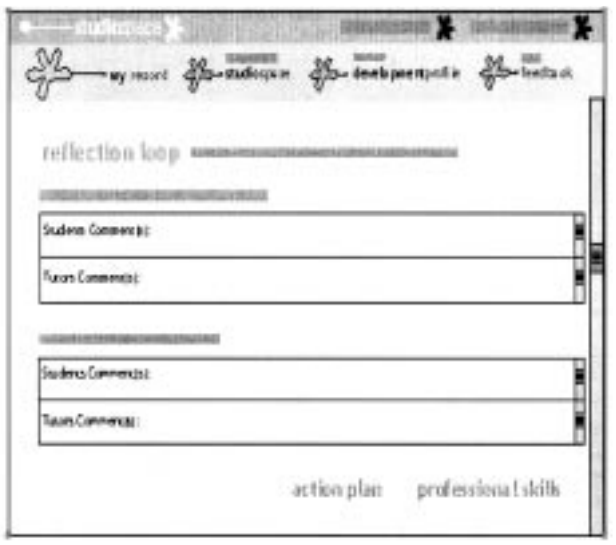

Figure 4: *The Reflection Loop*

Previous research on effective teaching and learning underlines the importance of the feedback / dialogue / reflection processes (Schon,1990; Kolb,1983) to support progression in learning. At a time when lifelong learning - academic, professional or organisational - is a pre-requisite for survival in an increasingly competitive market.

This template also links to a set of questions adapted from materials developed by Phil Race (Race, 2000).

Portfolio / Record of Achievement

Layer four is the Portfolio / Record of Achievement, which like the other interfaces, is linked to the database/knowledge-base. These separate 'pages' can be accessed on-line, selected and downloaded to make up a Record of Achievement (RoA) with an attached portfolio of work. The portfolio of images can be drawn directly from the on-line 'gallery' used by the student when the link has been scripted in.

As this is currently an integral part of the 'studio-space' virtual learning environment it is not yet available as a 'stand-alone' page, however it is intended that an RoA template for generic use be developed for the next cycle of evaluation by customising the interface.

Evaluation

The tool is being piloted in a range of undergraduate and postgraduate contexts with national and international partners over the next few months for reporting at different stages between September and January. It is part of a number of tools being evaluated as part of the whole learning environment as an iterative cycle of feedback and re-modelling, within an action research paradigm.

Postgraduate

The tool has been piloted with postgraduate students on the web-based Research Masters Course in Art and Design, http://www.rgu.ac.uk/mres, as a basis for reviewing, planning and accrediting their progression, and also as a basis for reviewing and planning the course around their needs. The evaluation for this group was started in August with observation and interviews of four students using the system.

This received a positive response regarding the capacity of the system, and a number of suggestions for improving the navigation, which was too cumbersome. The main criticism of the profiling tool was the fact that it was used excessively on the course and led to 'overkill'. Profiling initiatives in schools have also been guilty of this and the iterative process of embedding this in course work is now being reviewed following the next 'cycle'

Undergraduate (UK)

Undergraduate students in Robert Gordon University and Glasgow School of Art will pilot use of the profiling tool over September / October for one collaborative module of the Design for Industry course, with a report on the evaluation of this to be completed later in the year. This is later than originally planned due to changes on both the course and in the implementation of the system. Again, the profiling tool will be only one of the tools tested in the system.

Undergraduate (European)

Socrates partners in six other countries are being asked to participate in a collaborative European pilot module also starting later this year, using the profiling tool. This will be part of an international module to profile core skills relating to study and work in a European context, and geared to the art and design context. (This is likely to be a longer process, going beyond the end of the research project as a school initiative.)

Staff Development

Staff completing the new PGCTLT qualification at the University by portfolio will be evaluating a customised version of the profiling tool when this is over the next year, to assess its value in a more cross disciplinary professional development context.

Conclusion

The fragmented nature of discourse in current modular, distributed learning contexts lacks the iterative feedback loops that existed in the traditional tutorial contexts of education in previous generations.

There is a need to recreate these in other shared spaces. Technology can provide the loop, but people must have the scaffolding to provide the feedback. In increasingly distributed learning / collaborative working environments networked innovations are increasingly being piloted as a means of bridging this gap. (McMahon, 1997)

Networked technologies can be leveraged to support this generative and collaborative process via web-based tools more effectively than has been the case in the first generation of CAL-based materials.

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PROGRESS FILES DEVELOPMENTS IN SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT

Fiona Forrest & Tracy Walker
Scottish Qualifications Authority

- learning outcomes
- process skills development
- subject-specific skills
- professional skills development
- formative assessment
- reflective skills
- feedback loop

Summary

The National Record of Achievement (NRA), launched in 1991, was judged as effective with school pupils as a tool to help them summarise and articulate their achievements and aspirations. It also provided a structure around which to plan for the future. All young people were entitled to leave school with an NRA and most schools encouraged and provided guidance for its use. It had become increasingly apparent that the NRA could also be a useful tool to support individuals beyond school in personal, academic and vocational areas of their lives. Consultation following the Dearing Review of 16-19 qualifications in England and Wales recognised this, and it was recommended that the NRA should be reviewed, restructured and re-launched to support individuals throughout lifelong learning. It was to be given a new name -the Progress File.

Fiona Forrest has worked for considerable time for the Scottish Qualifications Authority and is currently National Development Officer, Progress Files at SQA. She works with a wide variety of groups across all sectors of education, training & development and employment.

Tracy Walker has been administrative assistant for the project for a number of years.

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Context: Replacing the National Record of Achievement

The NRA was reviewed during the winter of 1996 and a report of the review was published in January 1997. The report recommended that a new National Record of Achievement should be a system for people of all ages - from secondary school onwards - to record their achievements, analyse and record their progress, and to plan their future. It should be the source from which they could draw information for applications for jobs, training, college or university places as well as for career development interviews, appraisals and other opportunities.

An implementation plan was drawn up in 1997 with a pilot to trial new materials and approaches, with a new name - the Progress File. The evaluation of these was used to support the development of the revised format and new guidance materials designed to support individuals at all stages of their learning.

Introduction to New Progress File Materials

Redrafting and rewriting following the pilot project led to the production of new Progress File guidance resource material, as follows:

'Getting Started'	S1 and S2 pupils
'Moving On'	S3 and S4 pupils
'Exploring Pathways'	S5 and S6 pupils
'Widening Horizons'	Post 16 clients: Skillseekers, Modern Apprenticeships, New Deal participants and Further Education students
'Broadening Horizons'	Adult returners and adult employees

All of these materials were written to support individuals in the processes of self assessment, reviewing performance and action planning. Activities provide support in core skill development, education for work, preparation for transition and target setting. Each set of materials comes in the form of a booklet and is designed to link to previous and subsequent materials, thus supporting the concept of lifelong learning and progression for all.

In addition a case and presenter set were being produced to support individuals in both storing this information for easy reference and presenting summaries of information for selection purposes.

Progress File and the National Record of Achievement

Key characteristics of the Progress File are:

- that it is flexible, workaday and capable of lifelong use
  with a focus on:
  - the continuous development of skills
  - the lifelong use of processes such as recording and reviewing achievement, target setting, action planning and self-presentation
  - student ownership and personal responsibility for its use.

- that it provides guidance for student users showing them how to:
  - check their progress
  - set goals and targets for learning, personal and career development
  - develop, recognise and record core and other skills
  - record qualifications, credits and awards
  - use the outcomes of reviewing and recording activities to make applications and to write CVs and personal statements for specific purposes.

Evidence shows that these processes and skills:

- are as crucial to success in personal, social and community life as they are to success in learning and at work
- can be developed at any stage in life
- can be developed whether or not individuals are in education, training or employment.

Used constructively, Progress File will help students to develop the skills and attitudes they need to become successful and enthusiastic lifelong learners who can plan and manage their own development.

Why Should Young People Use Progress File?

To Help Improve Their Own Learning and Performance

Progress File improves young peopleís ability to plan and manage their learning by giving them experience of and practice in:

- developing and using essential learning skills and processes
- gathering, analysing and using evidence of learning taking place in and out of school and college
- identifying strengths, weaknesses and areas for development
- setting goals
- setting targets for development
- monitoring progress towards targets and goals.

To Help with Personal Development

Progress File encourages young people to think about what they have achieved so far, set goals for the future and targets to help them reach their goals. This in turn helps them to:

- gain a realistic picture of themselves and their potential
- build up confidence and self-esteem
- take responsibility for what they do
- seek and make good use of guidance and advice at appropriate times
- gain access to opportunities.

To Help with Career Planning

Using Progress File encourages young people to get into the habit of planning ahead, considering alternatives and basing decisions on up-to-date information and evidence. It helps them to:

- be self-aware
- make effective decisions
- explore the opportunities open to them
- access and use advice and guidance
- implement their career plans.

To Help with Self-presentation

Using Progress File gives young people the confidence they need to present themselves well. It helps them identify and provide evidence of their learning, skills, abilities and qualities. It also gives them practice in:

- gathering, sifting, sorting, analysing, managing and using information and evidence
- presenting it in ways that are fit for purpose.

Guidance Resource Booklets

The resource booklets ‘Getting Started’, ‘Moving On’, ‘Exploring Pathways’, ‘Widening Horizons’ and ‘Broadening Horizons’ are the core of Progress File.

Design Principles

Student Use

The guidance booklets are for people using Progress File rather than those supporting them.

The notes give users:

- advice on things to think about
- tips on what to do
- real-life examples of what other people have done
- blank sheets to copy and use

Different Versions for Different Audiences

Each version has been designed to offer coherence and progression for individuals as they move through different stages of education, training and employment.

Each booklet:

- use the same terminology
- covers the same processes
- uses different contexts, language and examples
- is progressive
- is also available in an IT format.

Flexible Use

People who are unfamiliar with the processes involved in using Progress File are likely to work through the guidance, one section at a time.

More experienced students will probably dip in and out, choosing to work on sections that are appropriate to their needs at a given time.

Other Support
The guidance booklets are not intended to replace all the other support that is available. The text encourages users to make full use of any help they are offered and prompts them to seek help when necessary.

The Booklets Themselves
Five versions of the guidance booklets are available. Each of these was written with help from:

- pupils, students, adult learners and employees
- staff in schools, colleges, careers services, local education authorities, training and enterprise councils, employers, and training organisations.

Getting Started
This introduces users to the cyclical processes of self assessment, reviewing and target setting and gives pupils opportunities to practice and become skilled in them.

Moving On
This reinforces the messages presented in Getting Started and includes sections on career planning and making applications. It highlights the importance of keeping personal records about attainment in Core Skills and Education for Work experiences, as well as qualifications, credits and awards achieved.

Exploring Pathways
This contains generic materials suitable for all students such as study skills, time management and life skills. In addition it contains a menu of activities to support students' transition into further education, higher education, training or employment.

Widening Horizons
This reinforces the previous messages but is designed for use by young adults (16-19 year olds). It contains sections on career planning and making applications that cover continuing education, training, entry to work and higher education. It contains examples from learners aged 16+ in full and part-time education.

Broadening Horizons
This version has been produced as a starting point for development work to be undertaken in the contexts of employment and training. Its content is broadly the same as that of Progress File Publications

Progress File and Guidance Activities

Similarities
Progress File and guidance activities are similar in four main ways.

1. A Shared Purpose
Both help students to develop the skills and attitudes they need to:
become lifelong learners, willing to update their knowledge and upgrade their skills in response to a changing environment; and
plan and manage their learning, personal and career development throughout life.

2. Support for Students
Both are more effective when students have access to and can make use of appropriate support.

3. Similar Processes
Both involve similar processes. For example:

- reviewing and recording achievements, skills and qualities
- goal setting
- decision making
- target setting and action planning
- using information for different purposes, including self-presentation
- dealing with change
- engaging in dialogue with others
- negotiating

4. Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes
Both help students to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to plan and manage their learning, personal and career development throughout life.

Adding Value

Progress File Adds Value to Guidance Activities
Progress File adds value to guidance activities by increasing a student's ability to benefit from them. It does this by:

- helping students to have self-confidence and self-esteem
- helping students to understand and use the processes involved so they can take an active part in guidance sessions

- helping students to recognise how their strengths and achievements relate to different opportunities
- enabling students to give detailed information about their learning, personal and career development to people running guidance sessions. This makes it easier to identify guidance needs and to tailor activities to meet those needs. Guidance sessions can be structured around the records produced through Progress File
- enhancing students' skills so they can:
  - recognise when they need to seek guidance
  - identify appropriate people to ask for guidance
  - make effective use of the information, advice and guidance they receive.

Guidance Activities Add Value to Progress File

Guidance activities add value to Progress File by increasing an student's ability to:

- benefit from the processes of reviewing and recording achievement, goal setting and action planning
- use personal information for a variety of purposes including self-development and self-presentation.

Many students have experiences in their past that they would prefer to forget. These could include family problems, financial problems, homelessness, academic failure, social difficulties, health problems and unemployment.

Experiences like this may be more common among adults, but there are many young people who find it difficult to look positively at their experiences. Guidance can help such young people to:

- overcome emotional barriers to recognising achievements and potential
- understand feelings that act as a barrier to progress
- gain new perspectives on previous experiences that lead to changes in behaviour, a readiness to move on and an ability to use personal information for self-development and self-presentation.

Goals and targets

Following a consultation exercise with education authorities implementation goals and targets have been set since 1998, including extensive training opportunities across Scotland.

Who to Contact

The Progress File Development Section can be contacted at SQA.

Fiona Forrest	National Development Officer	0141 242 2188
Tracy Walker	Project Support Officer	0141 242 2301

Progress File Publications

Newsletters

NRA In Progress - Issue 1
NRA / Progress File Developments Projects Newsletter (March 1998)

NRA In Progress - Issue 2
NRA / Progress File Developments Projects Newsletter (June 1998)

NRA In Progress - Issue 3
NRA / Progress File Developments Projects Newsletter (November 1998)

NRA In Progress - Issue 4
NRA / Progress File Developments Projects Newsletter (April 1999)

NRA In Progress - Issue 5
NRA / Progress File Developments Projects Newsletter (November 1999)

NRA In Progress - Issue 6
NRA / Progress File Developments Projects Newsletter (May 2000)

Pilot Projects

Making the Link - Supporting Lifelong Learning in the Community
A resource to support action planning, personal development and recording achievement in the community

Pilot Project for Progress File - Schools Case Study Report
Recording achievement and action planning in schools

Pilot Project for Progress File - Further Education Case Study Report
Recording achievement and action planning in further education

Pilot Project for Progress File - Community Based Adult Learning Contexts Case Study
Recording achievement and action planning in adult and continuing education

Pilot Project for Progress File - Training, Providers and Employers Case Study
Recording achievement and action planning in training placements and in employment

Pupil Material

Progress File - Getting Started Resource
Schools S1 / S2

Progress File - Moving On Resource
Schools S3 / S4

Progress File - Exploring Pathways Resource
Schools S5 / S6

Getting Started Support Materials
Special Educational Needs

Moving On Support Materials
Special Educational Needs

Post School Material

Progress File and New Deal
Recording achievement and action planning in Progress File and New Deal (Guidelines for Advisers)

Progress File - Widening Horizons Resource
Post School - 16-19 year olds, Skillseekers, Modern Apprenticeships

Progress File - Broadening Horizons Resource
Adult employees, adult returners

Widening Horizons Support Materials
Special Training Needs

Teacher / Tutor Guides

Getting Started and Moving On Teacher Guide

Exploring Pathways Teacher Guide

Widening Horizons Teacher Guide

Additional Resources

Staff Training Resource Pack
Information for introducing staff to Progress File

Guidelines for Careers Advisers
Bulletin explaining Progress File resources

It's Great to be me!
Pack to tackle disaffection

Broadening Horizons Facilitator Pack
Complementary set of materials for adults

Leaflets

Information for Pupils
Information for Teachers
Information for Parents
Information for Students
Information for Lecturers
Information for Trainees
Information for Trainers
Information for Employees
Information for Employers
Information for Adults
Information for Tutors working with Adults

PDP
Personal Development Planning in Higher Education (Scotland)

Organisations Involved in the Network:

University of Aberdeen, University of Abertay, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, Napier University, University of Paisley, Queen Margaret University College, The Robert Gordon University, University of St Andrews, The University of Strathclyde, UHI Millennium Institute, The Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education, Scottish Executive

Aims

- To enhance the quality of the higher education experience through the process of personal development planning.
- To encourage lifelong learning and reflection.
- To enable the learner to make appropriate life and career choices.

Process

Personal development planning:

- integrates personal development with academic activity
- incorporates self assessment, reflection and action planning for lifelong learning
- is voluntary
- enables learners to take control of their own learning through the development of critical self awareness
- helps learners to recognise and value core skills (these include communication, problem solving, and personal and interpersonal skills)
- is process driven
- is tailored by each institution to meet the needs of its learners
- builds on the processes developed through the progress file
- facilitates continuing personal and professional development.

Support Strategy

The Personal Development Planning in Higher Education (Scotland) Network seeks to:

- influence higher education policy makers
- maintain and enhance quality standards through dissemination of good practice and the development of common principles
- create a broad base of experience by welcoming all higher education institutions in Scotland raise awareness in student organisations, employers, employer organisations, professional bodies, local enterprise groups and staff in higher education, and gain their support
- involve learners in the design and implementation of the personal development planning process.