Welcome …

The Centre for **Recording Achievement**

PDP-UK Newsletter

Editorial

Rob Ward, Director, the Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA)

This issue features an even bigger perspective on Personal Development Planning (PDP) than usual, courtesy of Miho Taguma from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), while Bill Leivers and Fiona Henry remind us once again that our interest in PDP is not confined to the Higher Education (HE) sector. For many readers however the 2005/6 academic year represents the sector agreed date for the implementation of the PDP element of the Progress File, and this edition features contributions from the newly designated 'University of Chester', from Queen Mary, University of London and from the University of Hull on how PDP is being taken up by institutions.

One key to this is that we see the year as 'the end of the beginning' rather than 'the beginning of the end'. The results of the work of Peter Rivers and Roy Seden remind us of the challenges we still have to face. We're at 'base camp', still learning how to develop quality PDP processes and activities which truly engage students – and staff.

Last year the CRA and the Higher Education Academy collaborated on a series of four regionally based workshops under the heading 'Progress Files, are we achieving our goals', and a working paper which contains a summary of the progress reported and issues raised by participants will be available shortly. Our new partnership with the Higher Education Academy (see page 8) will be directed to supporting further work in this area – and others. More on this in the near future. It will of course, also need to connect to the bigger picture in terms of UK Higher Education (HE), and we now have two consultation documents to respond to from the 'Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Steering Group'. These

are on the future of the degree classification system and the development of a national credit framework for England respectively. Both can have implications for our work, especially given the emphasis in the former on *'the representation of wider learning and achievement'* and the role of such information in assisting *'students in evaluating, representing and communicating their own learning and achievements'*. So these are documents to read and respond to; they can be downloaded from:

http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/consultations/universitiesuk/ (accessed 05/10/05)

And if we can get a debate going on the mailbase that would be even better!

Pulling it all together

One of the new features we will be seeking to develop this year is a summary of key issues raised through debate and discussion within the network. So to follow up the recent correspondence on Data Protection in respect of online PDP, Anna Home has agreed to provide a short contribution for the next Newsletter. For those who don't know, Anna is a Research Associate in the School of Law at the University of Bristol, and has been working with Andrew Charlesworth on the JISC Study to explore the legal and records management issues relating to the concept of the Lifelong Learner Record. If you can't wait for the next issue of PDP-UK, you can make a start at:

http://www.jisc.ac.uk/uploaded_documents/Legal_Aspects_FAQ.pdf (accessed 03/10/05)

e-Portfolio and its implications – from an electronic recording system to a policy tool to locate the mission of traditional education and training in a wider policy perspective

Miho Taguma, Associate Expert, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
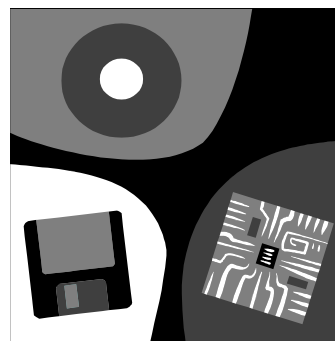
1. What is 'e-portfolio' and how is it used today?

The increasing use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in daily life (school, work, households, public domains, and so on) means that it is also transforming education and training in various ways, ranging from teaching/learning, administration, and research, to social networking. One developmental example is the 'e-portfolio'. e-Portfolios are often discussed – as an emerging trend and as a potential tool to further develop the knowledge of society/the economy – at forums covering subjects such as practising e-learning, promoting lifelong learning, recognising non-formal and informal learning, making the transition from formal education to the world of work, recognising ubiquitous learning, developing human resources, managing human capital assets, developing future learning mechanisms, and so on.

2. e-Learning and e-portfolio – national developments and the need for an international synthesis

The OECD e-learning case studies report[1] identified the use of e-portfolios in tertiary education as an emerging trend. Growth has initially been led by countries in the West. Canada is one of the most active nations to push the e-portfolio initiative. In the USA, within the framework of the Educause National Learning Infrastructure Initiative (NLII), e-portfolio-related projects have been launched[2], and in the UK, government policy has now incorporated e-portfolio into its e-learning strategy: The DfES has stated that by 2005/6, all students in higher education should have access to an electronic portfolio[3]. In Wales, the progressive e-learning policy has already decided that each Welsh citizen should have the opportunity of using an e-portfolio. Related UK research and development activities are supported by the Centre for Recording Achievement[4] and (for example) the Centre for Educational Technology Interoperability Standards (CETIS).[5] In the Asia/Pacific region, Australia is taking a lead in developing e-portfolios[6], and the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) is taking the lead on the use of e-portfolios in the field of vocational education and to support employability. It has provided funding of $200,000 to develop and trial a website for e-portfolios to enable students to record their academic, vocational and employability skills in order to support job applications, career planning, and entry into further education and training[7]. At a regional level, there is a consortium-led initiative – 'Europortfolio' – the European Consortium for the Digital Portfolio. Developments are also supported to some extent by the Europass initiative[8]. At the international level the 'e-portfolio 2010' is advocated, aiming that every citizen should have an e-portfolio by 2010[9].

Despite the fact that the growing phenomenon of e-portfolios is surfacing at the international level, definitions, aims and actual practices of e-portfolio development and use are not always the same

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[1] OECD (2005) E-learning in tertiary education: where do we stand? The case studies include 19 tertiary education institutions from 13 countries: The case studies institutions are: Aoyama Gakuin University (Japan), Asian Institute of Technology (Thailand), Carnegie Mellon University (US), Kyoto University (Japan), Monash University (Australia), Multimedia Kontor Hamburg (Germany), University of British Columbia (Canada), University of California Irvine (US), University of Paris X-Nanterre (France), University of Sao Paolo (Brazil), University of Zurich (Switzerland), FernUniversität Hagen (Germany), Open Polytechnic of New Zealand (New Zealand), UK Open University (UK), Open University of Catalunya (Spain), Virtual University of Tec de Monterrey (Mexico), University of California Los Angeles Extension (US), University of South Australia (Australia), and University of Maryland University College (US).

[2] http://www.educause.edu/ElectronicPortfolios/2600 (accessed 27/09/05)

[3] http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/e-strategy/docs/e-strategy.pdf (accessed 27/0/05)

[4] http://www.recordingachievement.org/ (accessed 27/09/05)

[5] http://www.cetis.ac.uk/ (accessed 27/09/05)

[6] http://www.e-portfolio.editaustralia.com.au/ (accessed 27/09/05)

[7] http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/career_development/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/Vocational_Education_in_Schools/default.htm (accessed 28/09/05)

[8] http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/europass/index_en.html (accessed 27/09/05)

[9] http://www.ep2010.org/ (accessed 27/09/05)

within each country[10]. To develop the global compatibility of e-portfolios, there is a need for an international mapping exercise to identify a range of current policies and related practices, examining policy/programme objectives, and to identify key issues from the wide range of particular developments.

3. e-Portfolio in a wider setting: linking e-portfolio and recognition of non-formal and informal learning and credit transfer system – a way to value lifelong and 'life-wide' learning

As far as educational and training policy-making is concerned, the implications of e-portfolio can be enormous. e-Portfolio can be the means of widening the mission of the formal education and training sector and, subsequently, of transforming the established concept of education from 'terminal education' to 'lifelong and life-wide learning', which is suited to 21st century knowledge, economies and open societies. Here, the key issues – alongside e-portfolio development – are: *recognition of non-formal and informal learning* and *a credit accumulation and transfer system*. If learning is seen only as the
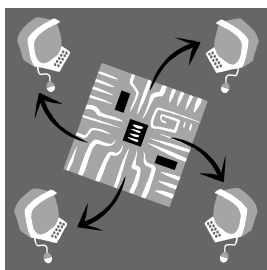
outcome of formal teaching, most of what is learnt is not recognised. From a policy point of view, for a nation to develop human capital for economic and social benefits, this wider recognition of learning is clearly a way forward. From the point of view of an individual, the recognition of such learning may be sufficient in itself for some: for others, the recognition needs to be formalised by being incorporated into formal qualifications by means of credit accumulation and transfer.

By recognising the non-formal and informal, individuals are given more flexible learning pathways into formal education or into better working opportunities: they may undertake further study, re-engage with and complete a qualification, change their field of study, change jobs, get promoted, or continue to retain their post despite competition from others. For organisations, such formalisation may help to facilitate:

- the stock-taking of learning outcomes;
- the better matching of skill demands and those available in the workplace;

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[10] E.g. the issue was raised at the World Bank IFC e-Forum on November 18, 2004

- the optimal use of human resources;
- the identification of skills shortages, and
- the development of 'Learning Organisations'.

From the viewpoint of a society, the recognition of such learning may facilitate development of human and social capital of the region and contribute to the development of 'Learning Cities/Regions'. Therefore, the outcome of the whole process – recognition of non-formal and informal learning and credit accumulation and transfer – brings benefits to the individual as well as to the society.

e-Portfolio can enhance mobility between the world of education and the world of work by making learning outcomes visible and portable. Firstly, e-portfolio can open up the means of making transparent the process of recognising non-formal and informal learning. Secondly, it can be used as a system to accumulate and transfer learning outcomes as credits/units. These two institutional and technical arrangements have the potential to promote a smoother transition from the world of education to the world of work and vice versa.

4. Policy issues

Policy making needs a long-term and future-oriented vision in order to ensure policy-relevance and timeliness. By the time the use of e-portfolio becomes widespread, it will no longer be considered an innovation in and of itself but could be a means of introducing change to existing social institutions. The Education and Training Policy Division at OECD is proposing to study the institutional and technical arrangements for 'recognition of non-formal and informal learning and credit accumulation and transfer.' 'Shared responsibilities' is a way forward for advancing institutional and technical arrangements. Key policy issues surrounding shared responsibilities, especially along the growing importance of social partners, are:

- Governance and social and economic benefits.
- Who should be responsible for such recognition arrangements?
- Who should pay and who will benefit?
- What kinds of benefits?
- What kinds of risks emerge from such recognition?

To thoroughly understand such issues, sub-themes that will be looked at are:

- The role of governments.
- Assessment methods.
- Links to the qualifications framework.
- Costs and financing.
- Equity and social cohesion.
- Links to the labour market.
- Personal and social development.

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Apart from the thematic analysis, the impact analysis of contextual factors is essential to understand the stakeholder behaviour as well as the evolution of institutional and technical arrangements. Three contextual factors have been selected for analysis: 'demographic change, internationalisation, and the new information and communication technologies'. e-Portfolio developments are closely linked to the impact of the new ICT as they have established new qualifications to recognise a new set of skills[11], modularising learning (for example, 'learning objects' in e-learning), innovating a way of recording and accumulating the individual's learning assets and enhancing the learning process through e-portfolio, etc.

Many research questions relevant to policy makers are evolving. However, there is no systemic data collection on the impact of the new ICT on recognition of non-formal and informal learning and credit transfer. The input from all the stakeholders is a key to the success of the activity and, therefore, the expertise of the CRA and PDP UK Newsletter communities will be much appreciated! Please let us know if you know of – or plan to carry out:

- research focusing on such issues as incentives and disincentives of the stakeholders for the use of e-portfolio;
- evidence of the use of e-portfolio linking to the labour market;
- evidence of effects (economic, social, educational, psychological, etc) of the use of e-portfolio in lifelong learning.

If you have any information regarding the above activities, please email Gail Young – gail@recordingachievement.org

e-Progress File developments at Loughborough College

Bill Leivers (Project Director) and Fiona Henry (Project Manager), Loughborough College

Loughborough College has been recognised as a 'Centre of best practice for tutoring and the use of Progress File in Further Education (FE)' since 1997. In 2003, it was successful in becoming the lead institution for a JISC-funded project that formed part of the 'Managed Learning Environments (MLEs) for lifelong learning programme'. The overall aim of the project was to explore the use of learner profiles developed in FE through Progress File, how they can be developed electronically, and how they can be effectively transferred to the HE Personal Development Profile.

The college formed a partnership with Loughborough University and the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) Vocational College. The Project team developed an electronic Progress File for FE learners.

Specific 'themes' were implicit within the project aim:

- **Interoperability** – electronic transfer of student information from the electronic Progress File at Loughborough College to the electronic PDP model used at Loughborough University (Recording Academic, Professional and Individual Development - RAPID).
- **Interactivity** – linking data held in the college's Management Information System and the learner's electronic Individual Learning Plan.
- **Accessibility** – using ground-breaking IMS ACCLIP[1] standards to ensure that all learners can configure their display to suit their needs. The needs of visually impaired learners were especially taken into account with the introduction of 'Access Keys' which allows 'JAWS'[2] users to navigate the site easier.
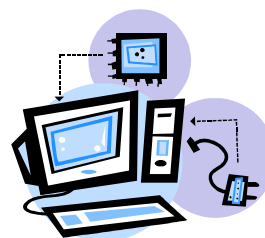
At the beginning of the project, an in-depth investigation was undertaken into the current teaching and learning processes inherent in the use of Progress File at Loughborough College and the RNIB Vocational College between September 2003 and May 2004. This investigation included direct evaluations with staff and students and observations of tutorial sessions. Student evaluation outcomes were generally very positive (overall 90% satisfaction rating), particularly with regard to ease of use and having the action planning engine built into the system. Informed by this investigation, the tutorial process was refined and paper-based guidance materials for Progress Tutors and students were produced.

Between May 2004 and September 2005, an electronic Progress File, based on the Department

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[11] e.g. certificates issued by industries such as Microsoft and Cisco, European and International Computer Driving Licence, etc.

[1] See http://www.cetis.ac.uk/members/accessibility/index
[2] Screen reading software which accesses today's popular applications for individuals who are blind or vision impaired.

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for Education and Skills (DfES) model web-based 'Widening Horizon's Progress File' model, was developed ready for piloting. The Project team was granted permission to modify this software by special permission.

A pilot was undertaken between September 2004 and July 2005 with 100 FE and HE learners at Loughborough College, including Sport Foundation Degree learners who intended to progress to Loughborough University. The pilot was evaluated and interoperability successfully tested between the Loughborough College e-Progress File and the Loughborough University e-PDP system – RAPID. In the evaluation of the project, both staff and students provided positive feedback and students welcomed the use of e-Progress File to assist them in their personal development.

Towards the end of the project both the Project Director and Project Manager had undertaken dissemination activities, attending over 20 demonstration workshops at local and national meetings/conferences. This revealed a great interest from other post-16 FE institutions and schools for different variants of the e-Progress File suitable for different groups of learners.

We are involved with other projects funded by other sources, and by June 2005 the Project Team had developed a fully functioning variant of the e-Progress File suitable for Key Stage 3 students in schools. During September and October, other variants – suitable for Key Stage 4 students and Adult and HE learners – will also be in place. These variants have been developed with the valuable support of the Leicestershire Vocational Support Agency and key Progress File practitioners in ten Leicestershire schools. The pilots in these ten schools will be evaluated throughout the year and if successful, may become the basis of a county-wide system.

Finally, we are participating in the CAMEL (Collaborative Approaches to the Management of e-Learning) project funded by JISC where we, along with another FE college and two universities, are working together to establish good practice across the sectors. For further details please visit our website at: http://www.loucoll.ac.uk/projects/PROJECTS.HTM (accessed 20/09/05)

Reviewing progress at Chester

Dr Judith Done, Chair, Progress File Steering Group, University of Chester

It was a request, earlier this year, to produce a formal report for the Institution's Learning and Teaching Committee which prompted me to consider what has been achieved in PDP/ Progress Files here at Chester, and what new challenges are facing us. The Committee wanted to know how, as an institution, we were matching up to the urging of the Progress File Implementation Group to 'nurture and promote the Progress File and to monitor implementation across the system' (PFIG 2000). In this short article I hope to share our key achievements, challenges and future plans.

Chester has had a 'progress file' since 1994, when a paper-based version entitled the P3 was devised, initially as a student project. Via a brief transition as a floppy disc, the 'progress file' was installed on the institutional intranet, known as IBIS, in 2001, and the following year, students' module results began to be inputted directly into the 'progress file' by Registry Services. A defining moment occurred following a CRA conference, when, in the true spirit of review, reflection and action planning, three of us devised a proposal for a cross-institutional steering group to take matters forward. This group, which I chair, began in early 2002 as an ad-hoc group of enthusiasts and now has a formal place and reporting line in the Committee structure – and continues to be effective and creative. (One of the first decisions of the group was to scrap the rather impenetrable P3 for the much more logical Progress File – so that is why you will see initial capitals for the rest of this article!) A Policy Statement for PDP/PF, prepared by Peter Woodhead (then Academic Secretary and an active member of the Steering group), was adopted by the institution in May 2004.

Since early 2002, developments of the Progress File have continued in two interrelated areas. First, technical development and evolution has built on user feedback to become a strong and versatile framework for PDP. Because it is intranet-based it is accessible to everyone who can log into the system – full-time, part-time and distance learning students, and all members of staff, both academic and support. Recent developments have:

- enabled users to share chosen sections with staff members selected from a drop-down list, for example student with personal tutor or careers adviser;
- improved the facility for downloading the contents on leaving the institution;

- enabled supporting documents and other evidence to be attached more easily to create an e-portfolio;
- introduced the capacity to create a CV from selected entries.

Secondly, much attention has been paid to the extent to which the Progress File is being used, and for what purposes. The technical development has been excellent, thanks to the commitment and enthusiasm of our Communications and IT Services department. The number of 'hits' indicates that usage is growing year-on-year. There is a danger, however, of the Progress File being seen as an end in itself and not, more properly, as a framework which underpins a process. Fortunately, there are some excellent examples of initiatives – in subjects and programmes – in which students learn, implement the process of reflection and review, and use the technology of the Progress File for recording and sharing.

The next phase of development will be to explore ways in which the Progress File can be used more extensively to capture PDP within academic programmes, in order to identify and disseminate good practice.

Promoting opportunities for skills and personal development

Graham Thomas, Head of Skills and Employability, Queen Mary, University of London

A co-ordinated effort has been underway at Queen Mary, University of London, to ensure that those undergraduates registering for the 2005–06 academic session have access to the resources and support they need to plan their own personal development while they study.

Building on previous work within the University, and supported through the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF–2), a new project on Key Skills and Employability has been established that includes a Skills and Employability Project Advisory Group (SEPAG). Membership of the group includes senior academic and non-academic staff, as well as representatives of higher education establishments, the Higher Education Academy, and several Queen Mary alumni who are generously sharing their expertise to inform the development of the work and to help build closer links with employers.

The project brings together staff from Educational and Staff Development, the Careers Service, Corporate Affairs, Innovation and Enterprise, the Learning Development Unit, and Queen Mary Students' Union to work across the various Schools and Departments at Queen Mary. The aim is to highlight the wide ranging opportunities that exist at Queen Mary for undergraduates to enhance their employability. This will be achieved by increasing the visibility of existing activities and by developing and promoting new initiatives. In addition, work has been ongoing with Schools and Departments to develop appropriate systems of support so that students can also log their own personal development as well as monitor their academic progress. In this respect a range of approaches is being established, many of which are being delivered through the personal tutoring system or embedded directly within individual course units.

To help support the promotion of PDP, specific outputs from the project include a brochure that is being distributed to all new undergraduate students and academic and support staff. In addition, a new website called 'Mind the Gap'[1] http://www.mindthegap.qmul.ac.uk – accessed 21/09/05) has also been designed and is being promoted using posters and business cards for distribution at the start of the academic session. This website aims to improve Queen Mary staff and students' understanding of what key skills and employability are, why they are important, and how they can be developed. All the important themes are represented as lines on a map, with stops giving detail on specific topics. The site also provides access to the Queen Mary personal development planner, a generic tool that is based on materials produced as part of the Keynote Project (undertaken by Nottingham Trent University, the London Institute and the University of Leeds).

An important focus for the next few months will be to obtain feedback from undergraduates about their awareness, understanding and engagement with these initiatives, the results of which will be reported in future issues of the newsletter.

For further details please contact:

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[1] 'Mind the Gap' used by permission of Transport for London

HULL – The PDP-friendly University?

Ian White, Centre for Learning Development, University of Hull

If you go to The University of Hull's website (http://www.hull.ac.uk/ - access 05/10/05) you'll discover that it's the friendliest university in the UK. At least, that's the verdict of 'Friends Reunited'. Apparently, Hull graduates keep in touch with each other the most. There certainly seems to be something convivial and supportive lingering in the East Yorkshire air that ought to inspire PDP.

When I arrived at the university's Centre for Learning Development in September 2004, I found that like some other universities of similar size and history, the practice in PDP resembled a patchwork quilt in need of assembly. Each subject area had its own foursquare pattern, in most cases quite pleasing to the eye; but in some areas the needlework was still in its early stages and there was uncertainty about how to proceed in the absence of a larger design. As it fell to our Centre to help with the stitching together of patterns, the first task was to lay out the variety for view and to see if we could derive an institutional policy from it.
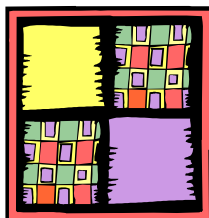
What we came up with was called a framework but the textile metaphor, with its soft edges, more adequately describes how academic staff regarded it. The process was by the usual means of forming a working group of the university's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee, and by March 2005 we had a policy and an outline implementation plan that was approved for the whole university by June 2005 – better late than never was part of the mood.

Because Hull had come later than most to the policy party, despite the good practice at departmental level, we were able to benefit from experiences elsewhere. We wanted to ensure that the patchwork quilt did not turn into a monochrome blanket from which no one would derive comfort. So it's no surprise that the agreed design aligned with many findings from case studies elsewhere in the sector and well-documented by the CRA. The eventual highlights for departments are:

- no one size fits all;
- provide and support a PDP entitlement but decide, too, how much is a

requirement – and make sure you declare it to all;
- choose your own comfort level of online support but don't expect to stay there: plan for the advent of *e-portfolios* and the rising expectations of students;
- don't overburden personal supervisors (Hull's name for personal tutors): give them realistic time resources and/or move progress reviews into the formal curriculum;
- do remember to talk to each other, especially across departments, and plan from the start to evaluate as you go.

The downside of bringing everything together only a few months before the full PDP start date is that there is some impatience to get all the embroidery finished right now. Of course, we're not dealing with a quilt but with relations between tutors and students, and the patterns of their interaction move and swirl with the times. In the midst of all this change, there's one thread to hold on to: that deserved spirit of friendliness. I hope that you won't need to join 'Friends Reunited' to see if we've retained it.

Personal Development Planning: How can we encourage students to participate?

Peter Rivers and Roy Seden, University of Derby

Some interesting findings have emerged from a recent pilot study carried out at the University of Derby during 2004/5. They shed light on the challenges that may be faced by many Universities. A series of focus groups comprising a mixture of students and academic staff showed that a culture shift is likely to be essential if Personal Development Planning (PDP) is to be successfully implemented. A synopsis of the main findings follows.

Concepts, Purpose and Value

Those not familiar with the concept of PDP may need to be challenged to participate.

> 'I don't think about personal development . . . It doesn't involve me . . . My work involves what I have to do to get the job done . . .'
>
> (Retired mature research student)

There are subtle differences to be understood between personal development on the one hand and professional development on the other that are likely to be important for mature students:

> 'I was aware of the pilot . . . and my first response was . . . Oh my God, not another load of professional development . . . then I began to realise that PDP was separate from

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professional development . . . the two "things" are extremely closely linked.'

(Research Student)

For some, PDP provides an opportunity to create a framework within which their natural reflexivity can be recognised and harnessed.

'It will be very interesting to see if I have developed and achieved my development'.

(Research Student)

In contrast, younger people are likely to be positive about the benefits conferred by PDP in improving their employability.

'[PDP is useful] . . . when we go for interviews . . . so . . . that is how it was before . . . but you've done **this** (student's emphasis) to improve **this** skill . . . And we've taken **this** opportunity or training to do **this** skill . . .'

(Further Education Student)

Ownership and Motivation

Students may not engage in PDP without there being tangible incentives, such as the award of academic credit.

'There is more incentive if it's assessed … because it goes towards your degree classification.'

(Further Education Student)

Those familiar with professional, as opposed to personal, development planning considered it undesirable that PDP should be a solitary personal exercise and that some of its value may be lost without formal tutor support. However, those who are less accustomed to reflexivity and those who, paradoxically, are well acquainted with personal reflection through professional development planning, may prefer PDP to be voluntary. Unless students believe in PDP, very little benefit will be derived from it. One staff member suggested students may end up:

'jumping through hoops without really buying into it.'

Another member of staff also considered that responsibility for PDP should be that of the student:

'From a teaching perspective … I'm quite strong in the feeling that ownership has to come from the student and that I'm a facilitator.'

(Academic Staff)

Finally, some students might feel culturally disadvantaged when it comes to the process of internal reflection.

'As a cultural thing . . . if you have a Chinese student in front of you . . . they have very little

experience of this type of approach.'

(Academic Staff)

Conclusion

Evidence from this pilot study suggests it would be beneficial to view the whole PDP process as being supported by a partnership between academics and students.

There is a danger that students may not engage if they perceive disinterest among teaching staff. In that regard, consideration might be given to there being a more supportive role from Careers Development Centres. Careers advisers could help to develop PDP by holding seminars that would encourage the ownership that is required if it is to be successfully integrated into lifelong learning.

News & Events

New partnership to support Personal Development Planning for UK Students

As you may already have seen, the Higher Education Academy and the Centre for Recording Achievement have entered a three-year partnership agreement to boost support for higher education institutions in the areas of personal development planning (PDP) and e-portfolio. Over the next three years the CRA will:

- operate as a Centre of Professional Expertise in the field of representing, recording and communicating student learning and achievement and related aspects;
- maintain its independence as a cross-sector networking body, but be designated an Associate Centre of the Higher Education Academy.

This will provide additional capacity and expertise in:

- maintaining a UK-wide networking structure – that's PDP-UK! - and a programme of activities to assist communication and the exchange of ideas and practices on PDP and e-portfolio. Full details will be circulated to PDP-UK members as we develop the programme;
- identifying particular development needs of institutions to inform their planning for the implementation of PDP/e-portfolio;
- providing a consultancy service to address specific development needs and interests of individual institutions in the area of PDP and related activities;
- supporting a programme of research and development on the effects of different approaches to PDP and e-portfolio, to

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inform the sector about which practices are likely to be most effective;
- contributing to the development of e-portfolio approaches to support the professional development and recognition of higher education staff.

PDP for postgraduate researchers: What is happening within the sector?

Melissa Shaw, University of Central Lancashire

A report on the UK GRAD Fourth Annual Conference: 'Building on UK Achievements within the context of Bologna', held in London on 14 September 2005.

The focus of this conference was '. . . how the UK PhD fits within an increasingly international market place and a broader European agenda'. Several speakers and participants at the Conference mentioned that the UK leads the rest of Europe in developing researcher skills, emphasising that ' . . . as practice continues to develop, we need to evaluate the effectiveness of this provision and . . . to share practice for the benefit of the UK sector as a whole'.

Speakers at the conference included representatives from the European Universities Association, Eurodoc, the Research Careers Committee, and a former member of the Postgraduate Training Board of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

Workshop sessions covered a wide range of issues, including:

- European as well as national developments and projects;
- implementation of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice on postgraduate research programmes – which has a clear focus on the role and benefits of PDP processes for postgraduate researchers (see www.qaa.ac.uk in the 'academic infrastructure', and then 'code of practice' section) (accessed 21/09/05);
- developing academic researchers as professionals;
- research careers.

I was invited to lead a workshop on '**PDP for postgraduate researchers: what is happening within the sector?**'

In the workshop we considered some common issues, challenges and developments as reported in submissions to the database of examples of institutional PDP practice for postgraduate researchers (PGRs).

Key discussion points within the workshop included the:

- integration of PDP processes with other aspects of the PGR experience/ institutional processes in order to lead on to Continuing Professional Development (CPD), lifelong learning and the development of 'professional researchers;'
- evolution of PDP practice in the light of experience, including the challenge of when/how to change and enhance practice, particularly for web-based or electronic systems to support PDP, without risking confusion for users;
- importance of developing PDP for PGRs as a forward-looking process, focused on future action informed by reflection, rather than a recording process focussed on the past.

Participants were encouraged to:

- **access the UK GRAD 'PDP database'** – to be found at www.grad.ac.uk (accessed 21/09/05) – click on 'on-line resources' in the menu) to register and view examples of developing practice, submitted by a dozen Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (over 300 individuals are registered to view examples in the database);
- **submit** details of their own developing practice within their institutions (more than 100 individuals have registered so as to be able to submit an outline of their practice);
- **download** the report '**A national review of emerging practice on the use of Personal Development Planning for postgraduate researchers',** produced by UK GRAD, the CRA and the National Postgraduate Committee in 2004;
- look out for a **2005 update** report on the developing database of practice, to be published by UK GRAD in the coming weeks, and available from the UK GRAD website.

For more information on the Conference, please see www.grad.ac.uk (accessed 21/09/05)

the uk GRAD programme

Developing Personal and Professional Practice: personal development planning and Foundation degrees

Bournemouth University
28 October 2005

This practitioner-focused event will provide an opportunity to explore current practice and future directions for PDP within Foundation degree (Fd) programmes. It will include presentations by practitioners who are currently designing or developing PDP processes in their Fds as well as opportunities to discuss the value of PDP in general and of incorporating this in Fds.

This meeting is organised jointly by Foundation Degree Forward (fdf) who are providing the funding, the Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA) and the Bournemouth University. If you would like more information, please contact Peter Beaney at p.w.beaney@fdf.ac.uk or Judi Ash at j.l.ash@fdf.ac.uk to book a place.

Places are strictly limited to a maximum of thirty participants so early booking is advisable. There is no charge for the event.

Making Personal Development Planning Work

Physical Sciences Centre Professional Development Workshop

Date: Wednesday 26 October 2005
Time: 10.30am - 4pm
Venue: Hotel Russell, Russell Square, London

Workshop Overview
The National Inquiry in Higher Education (Dearing Report 1997) recommended that UK higher education should develop and introduce Progress Files by the 2005/6 academic year. Progress Files will consist of a transcript of a student's achievement and a Personal Development Plan (PDP). If you are still trying to understand the process of introducing PDP for your students, what systems are available and how you might make them work in practice then this workshop will be of interest to you. It will also be of interest to any academic within a science-related discipline interested in finding out more about PDPs and anyone with a responsibility for developing or implementing the Progress Files or PDP.

The general aim of this workshop is to help academics in the sciences to explore the most effective ways of implementing PDP with their own students and making them operate successfully. There will be an opportunity to hear about several PDP models which have already

been developed and successfully implemented with undergraduates.

Further information, programme details and online registration can be found on our website under the events section at: http://www.physsci.heacademy.ac.uk/Events/EventList.aspx (accessed 05/10/05)

There is no registration fee for this workshop for those working in UK Higher Education and lunch and refreshments will be provided.

'Progress Files, Personal Development Planning and e-Portfolio: getting beyond policy: dialogues for effective development'

CRA National Residential Event

Dates: 15 & 16 November 2005

2005/6 is the sector agreed date for the implementation of Personal Development Planning within Higher Education. Beyond this, we have work on Individual Learning Plans and Progress Files in the changing 14-19 curriculum, the recognition of e-portfolio and the 'personalisation' of learning in the DfES e-Strategy and the role accorded to Individualised Learning Plans in the development of Lifelong Learning Networks.

With support from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), this Residential Seminar will provide an eclectic mix of presentation and discussion, keeping delegates bang up-to-date with new developments and allowing full opportunities for discussion and participation.

For further information or to register, please see: http://www.recordingachievement.org/news_and_events/events.asp?sid=89 (accessed 03/10/05)

Implementing Personal Development Planning – challenges and opportunities

Dates: 11 & 30 November 2005
Venue: Sheffield

The Higher Education Academy's Subject Centre for Social Policy and Social Work (SWAP) is hosting 2 workshops on PDP aimed specifically at those concerned with implementation on social work and social policy programmes and/or working with staff delivering these programmes.

For more details and booking information go to http://www.swap.ac.uk/events/events.asp

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