

Working with students to develop e-Portfolio as an integrated learning environment



Commenced: 2005

What is it?

This project aims to develop Personal Development Plans (PDP) as an integral part of the staff and student experience at Level 4 (L4). Its specific objectives are to compile a report of current arrangements for PDP, student and staff evaluation of L4 PDP activities and models of good practice elsewhere. Also, to design a model for PDP at L4 for implementation in 2006/7 to be embedded in the module 'Social Science Foundations', which will be the hub of an integrated approach to student support and academic development across a range of degree routes at L4.

What is involved?

The project involves 3 main areas of work:

Evaluation of L4 PDP on the Applied Social Science Programme

The current model requires students to complete a personal (academic) development plan as part of their Semester 2 assessment for the L4 skills support module.

The views of students have been gained through various means including interviews, focus groups and a commissioned report. The evidence from these reveals that students have development needs on transition to higher education that are not being fully met by current provision.

A particularly striking finding is that students feel that they need a much more personalised relationship with tutors and other students in order to accomplish the transition to higher education successfully and that this kind of relationship is not generally made in the first year.

Assessment of PDP Models

PDP principles and models from within and outside Sheffield Hallam have been assessed and this has led to a number of debates about whether the PDP should be assessed or not? If it is not assessed, should it be supervised and monitored by tutors? Should the PDP be hard copy or electronic?

Design a model for PDP at L4

After investigation of the options available to use with students on the L4 course in order to engage them with the PDP process, decisions need to be made on which options would be best suited for the students, and implemented.

Why is the project important to the CETL and the University?

The project is important because it will:

- Draw upon a range of media and technologies to provide an integrated learning experience for students which will encourage feelings of identity and belonging and promote effective and autonomous learning.
- Impact positively on student recruitment, retention and satisfaction.
- Provide a model that can be drawn upon across the University.
- Provide a focus for intra- and cross-institutional collaboration in the areas of PDP, ePDP and ePortfolio.

What do you hope the project will achieve?

- Involvement of all L4 tutors and modules in PDP and skills support.
- Involvement of students in revising the PDP model and in designing a tutor PDP template.
- Increased involvement of students in designing learning activities to meet their needs.
- Embedding a team-based and cross-module approach to student skills development.
- Increasingly reflective, self-motivated and autonomous learners.
- Enhanced tutor insights into how students learn.
- Demonstration of how subject benchmark statements and generic skills are reflected in module and course design.
- Cross-institutional action research and project work .



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Future Developments

We hope to extend our work on PDP, ePDP and ePortfolios to shape the LTA strategy of the Applied Social Science Programme and to work within the University and beyond to develop models of good practice in this area (see below).

Links

Here is a link to the website we have prepared as part of our submission to be a member of The National Coalition on Electronic Portfolio Research in the US:

<http://extra.shu.ac.uk/eportfolios>

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