



Editorial

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

'May you live in interesting times' has become a bit of a cliché, not least because 'interest' does not seem ever to wane! So it is not surprising that our first issue of 2008 comes at yet another interesting time. Under the auspices of the QAA, an enlarged Progress Files Advisory Group is about to meet to revise the Guidelines on Personal Development Planning for England while similar activities are afoot north of the border. Work to take forward the Burgess agenda on 'Measuring and Recording Student Achievement' is also in the offing. This issue – as ever – reflects the busy-ness of our world, and also reminds us of some of the enduring challenges we face. Thus Shane Sutherland and Alan Paull kick off with an account of how e-Portfolio may, over time, come to play a role in a more personalised HE applications process, which is exactly the point – in a non 'e' world – at which the work of the Recording Achievement and Higher Education Project began way back in 1991. Subsequent contributions, from Louise Frith and Derry Corey and Sue Lea also evoke some recognisable themes; on the importance of capturing outcomes, the ability of student interest to engage staff (a really nice twist on other experience!), on the importance of assessment in signalling that 'this matters' to some students at least, and of how practice might be embedded so that the processes are retained but the labels dispensed with, and feedback from student responses used to inform thinking about learning as an emotional as well as a cognitive activity – an important issue from many from widening participation backgrounds in particular.

Jan Anderson takes some of these elements; diagnostic tools, assessment and extends them in terms of 'graduateness', demonstrating more positive student feedback as a consequence. She is our first ever contributor to include the word 'vomit' in a PDP-UK contribution! Her contribution also nicely chimes with that of Aminda Uddin, with its emphasis from an employer perspective on the value of the PDP process rather than the portfolio as a product. Finally, Gillian Hallam and myself acknowledge both the old and the new via a perspective on e-Portfolio work in Australia. Here we recognise both that e-Portfolio is now a global development and also that familiar challenges and opportunities occur and recur across the

world. Plus – in the news and events section - we feature a really good range of seminar offerings on the issues practitioners themselves have identified as key. Hope to see you at one or more of these in the months ahead.



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Portfolios in Successful HE Admissions: A perspective on the Future?

Shane Sutherland; Pebble Learning and Alan Paull; Project Manager-APS

Context

The PortisHEad Project, led by the University of Wolverhampton, is one of a small group of JISC-funded Higher Education admissions demonstrator projects. Using a case study approach the project set out to implement an extension of the

e-Portfolio Reference Model¹ to enable groups of students from Wolverhampton College and Kingsmead School to use their e-Portfolios to research, prepare and submit Higher Education applications via UCAS, to receive information, advice and guidance (IAG) about their applications from their school or college, to receive feedback from HE admissions staff and to form the starting point for enrolment and induction into an HE institution.

Using the 'thin e-Portfolio model', based on web services² and a Service Oriented Approach³, the project aims to put the learner, via the e-Portfolio, at the centre of the HE application and admissions processes. The primary objectives are:

- to help learners to describe their experiences, skills, understanding and personality in a richer fashion than is currently possible in the 500-word Personal Statement on the UCAS application,
- to allow learners to create differentiated views for each institution to which they are applying, and, through engagement in the process,
- to come to a better understanding of their strengths and aspirations.

Our secondary objectives are to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of e-Portfolios in HE admissions from the perspectives of IAG staff and university admissions and personal tutors. Finally we are keen to discover any technical and business process difficulties associated with this approach, based on creating open source links between the systems, so that our experience could be applied to any e-Portfolio package.

Apply⁴

The students have accounts in PebblePad⁵ which they use to record their experiences, achievements and aspirations. They are able to load UCAS pages for registration directly from their accounts and to undertake the UCAS 'Apply' process from within PebblePad. The Apply process is too complex to replicate and maintain in its entirety in a separate system. However, much of the data that is required by Apply is held within an institution's Student Information

¹ See

http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning_framework/elfref_notts.aspx

² A standardised method for integrating web-based software applications and data sources

³ A systems design perspective that presents data in defined packages for consumption by many applications encouraging re-use of data and process models

⁴ The application system that allows you to apply online for full-time undergraduate courses at universities and colleges in the UK.

⁵ PebblePad: e-Portfolio software produced by Pebble Learning Ltd.

System and shared with PebblePad. It was our hope to be able to use this information to pre-populate the relevant fields in Apply, though the timing and length of the project meant that this service could not be fully deployed. The learner could return to Apply from within a PebblePad session at any point, and a learner could choose to conduct most of the process directly in the UCAS system though we attempted to improve the current processes within PebblePad.

Course discovery

We created an enhanced course search function in PebblePad, which allowed learners to look for courses, read any associated Entry Profiles⁶ and add them to a list maintained in the system. Subsequently, when writing their Personal Statements and their richer webfolios, the Entry Profiles were displayed alongside their draft applications to act as a guide to their design. Learners could quickly and easily change between the Entry Profiles for different courses and institutions and write their Personal Statement accordingly. Once completed, learners could submit their Personal Statement from PebblePad to update Apply. Of course the current process still only allows for a single Personal Statement to be compiled, so a significant aspect of this project was to provide a mechanism for producing webfolio style application e-Portfolios that could be targeted specifically at each audience.

The course search process relied on data from the University, which was provided through a specially created XCRI-CAP⁷ feed. This proved to be a useful test of version 1.0 of XCRI-CAP, which as a result is being extended to cover Entry Profile data explicitly.



⁶ Entry Profiles, produced by Universities inform learners about the skills and qualities required of successful students on the course.

⁷ XCRI-CAP: eXchanging Course Related Information – Course Advertising Profile; see <http://www.xcri.org/>

Webfolio presentations

The process for creating a 'webfolio', as presentation portfolios are described in PebblePad, was already known to the learners. A simple interface was developed which allowed the learners to select any of the institutions they were applying to and to choose from amongst their (potentially) many webfolios and allocate them to that specific institution. Whilst this was relatively straightforward at the interface level, the project did not allow enough time for UCAS to develop a mechanism to permit a live hyperlink between the Personal Statement and the webfolio, which might typically be an additional field to accept a weblink (URL). The temporary solution was to add a single link to the Personal Statement text, building in appropriate business rules to ensure that the statement met UCAS' requirements for length and formatting to enable processing alongside other UCAS applications. The single link acted as a gateway, so that admissions staff in the institutions could gain secure access only to the webfolios intended for them. Whilst this seemed a suitable solution for a pilot project, the process itself was rendered inoperable when a late-summer security review at UCAS caused them to erase a range of characters automatically from the Personal Statement field that included '/' and ':' - essential characters in a URL!



Providing institutions with a more informative portrait of the applicant should help institutions differentiate between students with similar grade profiles, take account of broader experiences and achievements than are represented by academic results and help ensure that the learner is likely to be successful on the course they have applied for. It is in no-one's interest to mis-recruit a learner to an inappropriate course, and the project's work is helping to promote 'holistic assessment' of learners as recommended by the Schwartz report on fair admissions⁸. As well as serving an institutional purpose the learners who worked on this project claimed to have understood more about themselves as a result of representing themselves in a more creative medium than the Personal Statement allows.

Technical objects

Technical outputs of the PortisHEAd project include more detailed and extended business process models of the use e-Portfolios in HE admissions than was possible in earlier JISC projects. We expect that other JISC projects, for example ADoM and DELIA, our sister projects in the JISC Admissions area, will share our early findings and develop more generic models of the processes. We will write a report on the usage of the 'thin e-Portfolio model' and will develop a Service Usage Model for submission to the e-Framework.

Summing up

The project is still underway and is entering an evaluation phase, one aspect of which is of particular interest to us. We will be examining the extent to which the application webfolios can be 'recycled' as introductory webfolios – providing personal tutors with information about their new students and being used as a conduit for pre-course information, support and feedback.

The evaluation of the project will use the report from the JISC scoping study "Mechanisms for assessing the fairness and effectiveness of selection processes in admissions to higher education". We are conscious that there are major issues in the use of e-Portfolios within HE admissions that include access to the technology, resourcing within schools, colleges and in university admissions, the capability of all learners to make use of the new facilities and the extent to which the richer and deeper information about individual learners provided by e-Portfolios can be used across the variety of HE courses now available. While the PortisHEAd Project's case study approach cannot address all of these issues, we will be able to give some practical examples as a guide to future development.

Further Information

The original process design can be viewed here <http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/eportfolio/viewasset.aspx?oid=16701&type=file>

This is a mock-up of the system built into PebblePad. It will give you some errors because it is not tied into a proper user's account but you will see how it is meant to work

<http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/ucas/>

⁸ See <http://www.admissions-review.org.uk/downloads/finalreport.pdf>

This PowerPoint includes a narration describing exactly the process we have followed and has some very useful participant feedback from a workshop at the 2007 CRA Residential

<http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/eportfolio/viewasset.aspx?oid=28741&type=file>

Things to do with a Personal Learning Environment: PDP at the University of Kent

Louise Frith, University of Kent

In the summer of 2006 Kent's Unit for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (UELТ) undertook a campus-wide review of PDP. The outcome of the review was a realisation that although much interesting PDP work was being done (see *PDP UK* issue ten for details), it was not being adequately captured. It was decided that the University needed a tool to help students record and reflect on their learning development and that (UELТ) should support academics in departments to pilot e-Portfolio software (PebblePAD).

The new e-Portfolio software was advertised to academic staff in three main ways:

1. Working with a small group of students (from across the University) to develop a resource bank of example e-Portfolios to show to academics
2. Short presentations of e-Portfolio software and example e-Portfolios at departmental Learning and Teaching Committees
3. Disseminating information to colleagues in Kent's Senior Tutor Network which meets once a term

As a result of this activity a number of pilot projects have been set-up, the pilots are varied and reflect the variety of PDP practice at Kent. All of these pilot projects are being managed by academics in departments and monitored by UELТ. It is hoped that the pilots will demonstrate the educational benefits for the students of reflection on their learning development, add to the repertoire of assessment tools available for use and show students that their non-assessed achievements are valued.

The list that follows has been divided into three groups; e-Portfolios which are assessed, e-Portfolios used for formal feedback and non-assessed e-Portfolios for students to record their own learning development.

Assessed

Work placements and virtual work placements are ideal for portfolio assessment because the student can choose what to select, record and reflect on for their own learning development.

- **The School of Social Work** – Portfolios are a well established assessment tool in Social Work. They enable students to reflect on the practice element of their course. The e-Portfolio, with its collaboration tool, makes reflection on learning a more interactive process between the practice assessor, student and academic tutor.
- **Sports Science** – Stage three Sports Science students have a module called '*Sports Event*'. This module enables students to learn about how to run a sports event. The students are assessed on how they set-up a sports event. This is now being done using an e-Portfolio.

Assessment of skills modules can be a useful way to introduce students to the concept of recording and reflecting on their learning development. It is hoped that if students use a portfolio for a module such as study skills they will maintain it throughout their degree.

- **Law** – The Law department favoured an embedded approach to delivering study skills so it is developing study skills sessions to be delivered in 'chunks' embedded in existing compulsory stage one and two modules the students will show their study skills development by creating an e-Portfolio which will be assessed.
- **Business** – The Business School have set up a new, compulsory skills module (*Business Tools*) for stage one students this will be assessed via an e-Portfolio.

For formal feedback

There are a number of academic courses at Kent where students are expected to keep records of their work and be able to talk about their academic development using examples of their work.

- **Clinical Psychology** – Post graduates on the Clinical Psychology Masters course are using the 'blog' tool to help them to keep a reflective journal of their professional practice.
- **Architecture** – Architecture students develop a portfolio of their design work which they use to review and promote their work. Using the e-Portfolio tool this can now be done in digital format making it much more portable.

For non assessed PDP

All of the students on the programmes below have had an introductory talk on PDP and have been given access to PebblePAD and training on how to use the software. They are self-directing their e-Portfolio development with departmental support and access to central skills advice from UELT.

- School of Physical Science
- Post Graduate Skills Training
- Applied Professional Practice
- Politics and International Relations
- School of Social Policy and Social Science Research
- Health and Social Care
- VALUE (University-wide retention programme)

Initial findings

Although the PebblePAD pilot is still at an early stage, some feedback has been gathered about how students and staff use the software to support PDP.

Courses such as Social Work and Sports Science where portfolio assessment has traditionally been used have had the smoothest transition. They have reported that the teaching and learning process has been enhanced by the greater flexibility of PebblePAD such as; sharing e-Portfolios, collaboration between students, staff and placement mentors and the ability to showcase a variety of student achievements such as video, audio evidence.

Feedback from the department of Architecture has been interesting, as the software was introduced to a handful of students who signed up for extra study skills sessions delivered outside of the department by the Student Learning Advisory Service, which is part of UELT. These design students enjoyed and saw the usefulness of the software; they sent their e-Portfolios to tutors in the Architecture department which triggered staff interest in the software. It is now required that all year one Architecture students submit an online portfolio of their work at the end the first year this is not assessed but it is used in the end of year crit.

Some results have not been so positive it has been extremely hard to get student engagement and staff commitment to a PDP tool when the process is not awarded credits. This has been the case for example in the departments of Physics and Politics and International Relations. UELT is now working closely with these departments to find ways to **tie-in** the e-Portfolio to a particular module to give the process a higher profile for students and staff.

At the moment there is no appetite within the University to make PDP compulsory in every department or to award credits to the process. It is hoped that PebblePAD will enable the University to retain a wide variety of approaches to PDP and at the same time provide students with a tangible **product** in which to record and reflect on their personal, academic and career development.

Embedded PDP: improving students' writing to bridge the gap between 'A' level, Access and APL

Derry Corey and Sue Lea, University College Plymouth St Mark & St John

In 2007 a Learning & Teaching award was funded for a writing project. It was founded on the fact that academics locally and nationally were complaining about students' written work, Kruse (2003), Wray (1995), Lightfoot (2007), Newman (2007). If this continues it is likely to have an adverse effect on their employability as well as becoming a problem for retention rates and future recruitment for the institution.

The college mission is for all students to reach their full potential and this study is the basis of a project aimed at helping them to reach this goal. Furthermore the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy recognises that the student body is becoming more diverse and new approaches are required to meet their needs. It is hoped that this project will help to foster an inclusive and flexible approach to their learning. Its main aim is to make a general improvement to students' written English but also introduces them to the processes of learning through reflection. By effectively working with the package of exercises students will be taken through the various stages of the Kolb Cycle (1984) and assist them to respond to feedback from tutors and peers to improve their performance.

Experience has demonstrated that Personal Development Planning (PDP) is clearly not a priority for most of our year 1 students even though it is introduced to them as a way of improving their learning, helping them to become independent learners and enhancing their employment opportunities. The system is voluntary on the part of the student and even when encouraged by their tutors very few participate in the processes. As firm believers that PDP processes are beneficial to learning, the writing project team agreed to embed exercises from the tool-kit section of the PDP in one module as well as giving them weekly short writing exercises relating to their reading. It was agreed

that PDP, remedial writing and Study Skills were not overtly mentioned but through these exercises they were engaging in them and making some record of their achievements.

In the first week students completed a Self Assessment of their 'on entry' skills in 6 Key Skill Categories and a 'COW' Profile showing Confidence, Opportunities & Worries. Students recorded a summary of their skills audit and identified aspects requiring further practise. This was repeated at the end December. From the reading section there was evidence that their confidence in reading for study had increased from 45% to 81% and ability to select information relevant to their topic from 70% - 100%. With writing in all forms had increased from 44% to 81%. They also felt more confident in explaining new concepts.

COW Profile results were shared in small groups and finally listed on flip charts for whole class discussion. After four weeks the list of 'worries' was re-introduced and students were asked to prioritise 4. Essays, exams, reading and referencing were high, and also understanding and remembering. The most concerns related to their study and life balance and how they managed the tension between work, family and study. Given the recent reports about high drop out rates from university it would appear that there is a considerable amount of work to be done on the emotional side of learning. The emotional aspects of learning are clearly areas which can be addressed using PDP processes. The above results relate to students' perception of their studying and their assignment results may show a different picture. The next stage of the project is to analyse their results and organise focus groups, the results of which may assist us with the induction programme for 2008.

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Personal Development Planning (PDP): Acknowledging skills, graduateness and beyond

**Jan Anderson, Principal Lecturer,
School of Social Sciences and Law,
University of Teesside**

When I first read about PDP I immediately felt it was relevant for, and could make a difference to, the students I work with. The notion that students could be given a mechanism to enable them to recognise not only subject specific knowledge development but also generic skills, self-awareness, personal development and social skills was, I felt, the part of Higher Education (HE) which was missing.

I developed and introduced an assessed embedded, module based approach to PDP in 2004/5 initially for first year students and subsequently with final year students in 2006/7. The model was developed based on research I carried out with final year undergraduates in 2002/3 which revealed that some students had difficulty appreciating their own graduateness and 'struggled' to identify generic skills they had acquired, enhanced or indeed used during their undergraduate studies. The need for a transparent approach to encourage students to value their 'graduateness' as a real entity was therefore the main focus for the development and implementation of PDP.



To enable students to consider their personal skills a self assessed Emotional Intelligence (EI) measure was incorporated into PDP. The measure used was the Emotional Competence Inventory University Edition II (ECI-U) developed by Boyatzis & Goleman (2005). There appears to be a logical, direct link between the four dimensions of EI and the philosophy of this PDP model. The ECI-U is a 63 item inventory designed to allow students to develop an understanding of four dimensions, self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management, thereby assisting students to recognise and value their personal development (self awareness), to develop autonomy (self management) and to

develop their abilities to work well with others (social awareness and relationship management).

The PDP for first year students incorporates formative generic skills tasks with written formative feedback which develops into a summatively assessed reflective portfolio where students present the formative tasks and reflect upon their formative feedback. Students include within the portfolio, personal accounts of academic experiences such as group work, peer review and time management.

For final year students PDP is used as a mechanism to prepare them for their graduate journey. To enable students to develop an understanding of the concept of 'graduateness' and to be more transparent I introduced them to the University's 'core attributes of a graduate' from our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. PDP is embedded as an assessed component of the final year research based dissertation module (10% of 40 credits). Students are required to produce a reflective account of their research experiences, generic skills development and a CV to demonstrate the ability to recognise and value the experiences of both HE study and extra curricular activities (including employment etc).

Student evaluation of the model has been very positive. In the first year of using PDP with first year students (2004/5) I invited them to conduct their own focus groups as a method of evaluation. The findings then enabled me to take on board suggestions for changes/improvements, and to acknowledge areas which were seen as particularly beneficial/relevant to the students therefore enabling them to contribute to the development and enhancement of the model. For third year students (2006/7) I evaluated the process by conducting individual interviews with graduates once they had completed their studies. The findings of these interviews were again very positive, the majority of students felt they have developed a clear understanding of what graduateness meant to them and how the skills they had acquired/developed during their undergraduate studies equipped them for life-long learning.

There is still a long way to go with this model, at the moment I am busy trying to develop an element to integrate employability into the second year undergraduate PDP, an area which currently has no formal mechanisms for support.

My experiences of working with PDP have been a roller coaster ride, I am not quite sure what stage of the ride I am on but I have not vomited, yet!

Boyatzis, R. E. & Goleman, D (2005). The Emotional Competence Inventory University Edition II. London:

Hay Group

Exploring attitudes to PDP and e-Portfolios held by Health and Creative Industries students and professionals

Amina Uddin, PDP Project Manager, Academic Services, Bournemouth University

Personal Development Planning for Cross Institutional Lifelong Learning (PDP4XL2) supports the process of Personal Development Planning (PDP) and the use of e-Portfolios to develop and sustain favourable learner attitudes towards lifelong learning in the Creative Industries (CI) and health care sectors.

The project is led by Bournemouth University (BU) in collaboration with seven partners in the South West. The partners include: Arts Institute at Bournemouth (AIB), Dartington College of Arts (DCA), Open University in the South West (OU), Phosphorix Ltd, Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust, The Media School (BMS), University of Gloucestershire (UoG) and Yeovil College/University Centre Yeovil (UCY).

There are two strands of development:

- 1) The technical strand is looking at the development of one of the tools involved (ioPortal developed by Phosphorix Ltd).
- 2) Investigating the areas of Lifelong Learning and the use of e-Portfolios and PDP through focus groups and case studies.

Attitudes to PDP and lifelong learning

Learners and employers have identified their attitudes to and usage of PDP and e-Portfolios. The learners include students on undergraduate programmes and non-traditional learners seeking guidance on learning opportunities from the SW Lifelong Learning Network. The employers are from the creative industries and health sectors.

Research carried out by one of the partners, Bournemouth University Media School, to "Identify Creative Industry employer views on the value of e-Portfolios and PDP" found that CI employers held highly positive attitudes towards the process of PDP and were keen to see graduates that had undergone successful personal development, in which e-Portfolios may play a part, alongside various other tools.

“As a prospective employer...I think it's very useful to be able to see somebody's e-portfolio... I look to see if they've got a Facebook site...because it does, you know, reflect a little bit of one's personality.”

However, these employers felt that e-Portfolios for PDP were not valuable in their own right and few of them would have the time or the inclination to view one during the recruitment process. Some employers did consider e-Portfolios or PDP potentially more useful in the later stages of recruitment to discriminate between very similar candidates, although performance in interview was deemed the most important factor overall.



Moving forward with the project

The project is currently focusing on a range of pilots using the ioPortal and other e-Portfolio tools that are being used by the partners, including Blackboard, ELGG and PebblePad. The South West Lifelong Learning Network (SWLLN) currently is piloting the ioPortal with the aim of providing feedback on the considerations regarding PDP issues. In particular relating to lifelong learners and learners stories and reflection of their experience of exploration and investigation of the ioPortal to give perspective before and after their exposure to the tool.

Project Outcomes

In the longer term, the outcomes of the project will lead to enhanced opportunities for learners to develop and retain a personal, interoperable, location-independent record of their achievements, to integrate formal records of their qualifications with informal personal records and to retain evidence associated with their PDP to support lifelong learning and movement between institutions and the workplace. In the short term, the outcomes will lead to enhanced regional collaboration and understanding of PDP processes and e-Portfolio structures and of ways in which learner progression between institutions may be supported through PDP.

A conference to disseminate the outcomes of the project is planned for 23rd September 2008.

For more details please contact:

Amina Uddin, PDP Project Manager

auddin@bournemouth.ac.uk

<http://www.bournemouth.ac.uk/asprojects/pdp4x12>

The Australian e-Portfolio symposium: perspectives from another place

Rob Ward, Centre for Recording Achievement and Gillian Hallam, Queensland University of Technology

Rob Ward recently contributed to an e-Portfolio symposium 'down under'. This was a central event within a research project to document e-Portfolio practice in Australian HE, to which CRA is acting as a 'critical friend'. Associate Professor Gillian Hallam is Project Leader for this, the Australian e-Portfolio Project (AeP), which is funded by the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, a body similar to the Higher Education Academy. The AeP project is of short duration, reporting in the summer, but has ambitious aims: to *'investigate ePortfolio practice in the higher education sector in Australia, in order to provide strategic and practical guidance about the use of ePortfolios in academic institutions.'*

Further details of the AeP project can be found at <http://www.eportfolioppractice.qut.edu.au/>. The jottings below reflect some of Rob's thinking about experience on the trip, with some local perspectives added by Gillian.

Part of Rob's presentation, which came at the beginning of the two day Symposium, featured the famous Eliot quotation *'We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.'* And as the experience unfolded, it felt a lot more like that than we might have anticipated. Thus, feedback from participants confirmed that:

About half of the symposium delegates were aware of the use of e-Portfolios, via a range of technical solutions, at their institutions, but only a quarter were actually using e-Portfolios themselves in their teaching activities or for their own professional development. e-Portfolio practice to support the professional development of staff

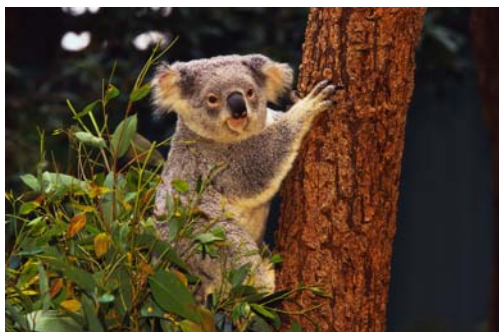
was however seen as an emerging driver for development.

There were strong drivers for the implementation of e-Portfolio with students in terms of improving reflective learning, meeting discipline-specific requirements and/or professional standards. Here the e-Portfolio projects being undertaken by Subject Centres in the UK to support discipline-related practice were of particular interest to many delegates.

Perceptions of success factors were multi-faceted, reinforcing key ideas in the UK that effective implementation is about the people rather than the technology/ies, although Government officials attending the Symposium were very interested in possible technological collaboration, particularly to link employer and HE practice, to build on some collaborative initiatives already in place between JISC and the Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

Over half of symposium attendees who responded reported that they were allocating or planning to allocate course time to e-Portfolio use, reinforcing its location within rather than alongside the curriculum.

As in the UK with the idea of a Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), colleagues in Australia are developing ideas, via proposals for a 'Graduation Statement', to provide a richer institutional picture of graduate achievement.



Work within the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), the host institution for the Symposium, highlighted not only pockets of good practice but also the potential for progressive use across an academic programme, and the relevance of e-Portfolio work across the student lifecycle. The case studies the project is collecting will illuminate some of this, both within QUT and across the country. Over time, the project team aims to use the case studies to establish and support the development of a national 'community of practice' to ensure the sustainability of e-Portfolio practice across the HE sector.

Some of the challenges identified by Symposium delegates also felt familiar, not least because they are about change management. As in the UK, there is a keen awareness of the importance of capturing evidence to present to policy makers of the capacity of e-Portfolio implementation to have a meaningful impact upon learner attainment, on employability, or indeed on both. Employability and workforce development are acknowledged to be of great importance to the new Federal Government in Australia.

As in this country, the issue was raised about how far supporting e-Portfolio work should be a concern of HE, or how students might otherwise be supported in using the many commercial software tools that are available, especially in the area of social networking. There are significant challenges inherent in the latter paradigm; in terms of aggregating information from diverse sources; to ensure, for presentation purposes, that rich pictures are turned into coherent ones, and to consider the risk of multiple online identities that employers and others can search - and which could potentially be viewed negatively (witness the recent debate about the challenge of deleting entries from Facebook and the private/public persona presented in social websites at <http://news.sky.com/skynews/article/0,,30100-1275699,00.html>). Nevertheless, this may bring us back to an old question expressed in a new context; in terms of what a student might expect an institution to provide in the name of e-Portfolio and what expectations the institution may have in respect of the student as to the use of any system.

So, some recognisable pictures, but also new colleagues with whom to debate, research and share. The final report for the AeP project will be produced in the Summer, and we'll aim to keep you in touch with developments. In the meantime, feel free to contact Gillian (g.hallam@qut.edu.au) with any queries you may have about the Australian study.

News and Events:

This month we have merged the PDP UK Network and e-Portfolio mailing list to form the new PDP-and-e-PortfolioUK mailing list.

The CRA Summer seminars: an opportunity to share your challenges and work on strategies and solutions for implementing Personal Development Planning.

The Context:

If you are working towards improving student achievement through PDP, book a place on each of these interactive seminars. Each seminar is highly relevant and is an opportunity for professionals across the country to exchange PDP practices and resources.

If you would like to showcase your work at any of these events, please contact Laura Fletcher at the Centre for Recording Achievement laura@recordingachievement.org

Staff Engagement with Personal Development Planning

The University of Reading

Monday 7th April, 2008, 10:30-15:30

Staff engagement is crucial for effective implementation of PDP and is the bane of many PDP practitioners' lives! The question of the relevance of PDP to learning in the subject curriculum, to life beyond HE, and to the person themselves often arises.

This seminar directly addresses these issues and therefore will be of interest to PDP practitioners and other professionals involved in leading, supporting and developing staff and students within higher education institutions.

With contributions from the Universities of Reading, Chester and Southampton.

PDP Related Practice beyond HE

The Institute of Physics, London

Friday 9th May, 2008, 10:30-15:30

PDP by no means begins and ends in Higher Education. Professional development practices in the workplace such as continuing professional development (CPD) are based on many of the same principles as PDP.

This seminar will identify how CPD and PDP can work together. With contributions from the University of Liverpool and CILIP.

PDP and Web 2.0 Technologies

The University of Bradford

Wednesday 4th June, 2008, 10:30-15:30

With the focus of Web 2.0 in education being very much about engaging in active learning and PDP being about 'learner' ownership, it would appear that PDP and Web 2.0 has the potential for a winning partnership.

This seminar will help you create and encourage a 'PDP Web 2.0 network' for your organisation and beyond. Including contributions from the Universities of Bradford and Leicester.

If you have any news items or events that you wish to publicise in the next issue, please email Laura Fletcher at laura@recordingachievement.org with the details.