

Title: **Developing one’s career as a professional: enacting your values, enhancing your expertise, and extending your network**

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Abstract:

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

This session is based on the notion that the opportunities that actually arise in one’s own professional setting are a key driver for professional development, provided one takes a proactive stance. We draw on Archer’s (2003) argument that the agency of the individual is realised in how one acts in relation to one’s objective circumstances. We will explore how such perspectives play out in relation to a series of key areas that are relevant to developing one’s career as a developer: namely, one’s underlying commitments, specialist expertise and professional relationships.

Commitments, concerns and values

Archer (2003) argues further that our actions are closely linked to the way that we prioritise our concerns. We thus begin by considering how we each prioritise our own concerns, drawing out also ways in which such priorities are manifested in our professional practice.

Experiences and qualifications to develop specialist expertise

Cowan (2003) suggests that one does not learn from experience simply by engaging in experience. He suggests that we need an active stance towards our experience, as when seeking to engage in active experimentation (which in part involves taking risks and trying new approaches). We will look at a range of current opportunities to gain new experience or expertise, whether internal to an institution or externally (especially when linked to SEDA’s current activities).

Networking as a professional

Gustavsen (2001) contends that capacity for development is determined in large part by the richness of the associated network of relationships. But it is one thing to meet someone casually at a conference, it is another to turn this into an enduring professional connection. We address here how you might extend your network in relation to regular forms of encounter with professional colleagues or specific pieces of work, thus providing a substantive focus for ongoing collaborations (Walsh and Kahn, 2009).

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The facilitators will provide an initial overview of the territory covered by the workshop, with each of the following activities preceded by a short introduction that outlines some of the key underpinning ideas:

- Case-study based discussion in small groups around scenarios drawn from the practice of staff and educational development, designed to highlight the gap between espoused values and values-in-action.
- Small-group discussion based around naturally-occurring artefacts that provide examples of current opportunities to network with professional colleagues.
- Small-group discussion based around naturally-occurring artefacts that provide examples of current opportunities to undertake new experiences or acquire further expertise.

The final two activities will be followed by brief plenary discussion, making connections with both the relevance of self-efficacy in relation to the development of one's career as a professional and the initial discussion on underlying priorities.

References

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- Walsh, L. and Kahn, P.E. (2009) *Collaborative working in higher education*, Routledge, London.