Title: **Using a personal learning system to support staff CPD**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

1. Critique short term project research methodology
2. Appraise the challenges and benefits to using an electronic personal learning or ePortfolio system to record and reflect on informal and formal staff CPD.
3. Use this appraisal in their institutional context, either as part of an accredited course or to support staff development more generally through the use of an ePortfolio system.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

Following the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (2006), discussion with colleagues highlighted the value of a using patchwork text approach to assessment (Winter, 2003) and the use of a personal learning system (PLS) became the vehicle for this assessment on our PG Cert in Teaching and Learning in HE. This work grew into a successful bid for a JISC funded project, in which qualitative research is being undertaken into the use of a PLS to support staff development (Rickarby, 2010). This work is built on that undertaken by Chesney and Benson (forthcoming) as part of the Flourish Project (Chesney, 2009). The session will share the rationale for this project and its research findings. The epistemology and methodology of the research will also be discussed, since the reliability of qualitative research rests how the researcher presents and justifies the choices made in the research process (See, for example, Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Colleagues will be invited to discuss the analysis of the data and the issues emerging from it. The efficacy of current policies concerning continuing professional development and the potential benefits of recording and reflecting on CPD activity (See Laycock & Shrives, 2009) using a PLS will be explored. We will provide an opportunity for participants to explore the value of this research and what it means for practice in their own context. We will ask individuals to consider what, if anything, they would change about their approach to research, guidance and the courses and sessions they run, including why they would or would not change their practices. Participants will be able to take away a greater understanding of the achievable benefits of providing a PLS for recording and reflecting on CPD activity and the potential challenges and issues they might encounter.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Outline of Epistemology and Methodology – 5 minutes
Discussion of approach– 10 mins
Initial findings of research– 10 mins
Discussion of general issues - 10 mins
Discussion in relation to own setting– 10 mins

Indicative questions for discussion:

- How can a short term implementation project capture long term culture change?
- Who owns staff CPD?
- Who should be responsible for recording staff CPD?
- How can the findings of the research be applied in different contexts?
- Any practical and technical questions about using an ePortfolio system on an accredited programme or for informal activities

References

Chesney and Benson (forthcoming), *Anything Other than Silence*, Innovations in Education and Teaching International

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Laycock & Shrives, (2009) *Embedding CPD in Higher Education*, SEDA: London

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