Title: **After the postgraduate certificate (PGC): the legacy of PGC peer learning on lecturers' conceptions of professional learning communities**

Presenter: **Martyn Stewart**
Liverpool John Moores University

Abstract:

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

1. Recognise the roles a Postgraduate Certificate in HE Teaching and Learning (PGC) plays in shaping teachers' conceptions of peer learning for professional development
2. Understand the factors that motivate PGC graduates to seek and sustain professional networks
3. Identify strategies for sustaining professional teacher learning communities beyond graduation

Session Outline
Key issues to be addressed are:

Most institutions have introduced and expanded HE teacher education courses or Postgraduate Certificates (PGCs) over the past decade, but there is relatively little evaluation of their full impact. Two recent major evaluations by Prosser *et al* (2006), and Knight (2006) (and then Warnes, 2008) focused largely on the experiences and perceptions of the functions and value of these courses expressed by course participants who were currently enrolled or had very recently graduated. A potential problem with evaluations of PGC courses involving current or recent graduates is that the reflections often relate to conscious recent experience. Both reports stressed that key benefits of PGC courses may become more apparent some time after completion.

This session describes a longer-term evaluation of the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning & Teaching in Higher Education (PGCertLTHE) at Liverpool John Moores University in which graduates who completed over 3 years ago were interviewed to explore their perceptions of the legacy of the programme. The importance of peer support in academic development has long been recognised (e.g. Boud, 1999) and is developed through the LJMU PGC through structured peer learning groups (PLGs) in which all course members work throughout the course. In this session, emphasis will be placed on discussing those findings that highlight the legacy of the PGC in initiating conceptions of professional learning communities and the understandings that subsequently developed from peer learning. In particular, the session will explore development of complex understandings of differing work-group cultures and 'systems knowledge' (building on findings of Knight 2006 and Bishop et al. 2006) and

graduates' motivations for continuing to seek peer support, be they for metacognitive development or more strategic reasons.

After briefly outlining the key research findings, a few illustrative staff stories will be presented to stimulate discussion and encourage sharing of experiences in two key areas, outlined below.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Timing	Activity and purpose	Delegate participation
0 – 5 mins	Brief summary of PGC long-term evaluation research and key findings	
5 – 15 mins	Presentation of staff stories (as series on extended quotes) on perceived legacy of formalised PGC peer learning and complex learning outcomes. Purpose is to illustrate emerging phenomenon, connect to existing theory and serve as prompt for subsequent questions	(Delegates presented with summary quotes on handout)
15 – 25 mins		Exploration with delegates of their experiences of the impact of professional peer learning and effectiveness of differing models of delivery. Facilitated by presenter.
25 – 30 mins	Summary of PGC graduates' motivations for sustaining contacts and building new networks of peer support post PGC graduation.	
30 – 40 mins		Sharing of ideas and experiences of effectiveness of various networking models, and key factors in community sustainability. Facilitated by presenter
40-45 mins	Synthesis of key outcomes. Drawing together outcomes from research and group discussion and framing in the context of theoretical concepts.	

References

Bishop, D., Felstead, A., Fuller, A., Jewson, N., Lee, T. and Unwin, L. (2006) *Connecting Culture and Learning in Organisations: A review of current themes.* Cardiff: Cardiff School of Social Scinces.

Boud, D. (1999) Situating academic development in professional work: using peer learning, *International Journal of Academic Development, 4 (1),* p3-10.

Knight, P.T. (2006) *The Effects of Postgraduate Certificates*, available online at: http://kn.open.ac.uk/public/document.cfm?docid=8640 (Accessed 22nd September 2009)

Prosser, M., Rickinson, M., Bence, V., Hanbury, A. and Kulej, M. (2006) *Formative Evaluation of Accredited Programmes*. York: The Higher Education Academy.

Warnes, M. (2008) *The Effects of Postgraduate Certificates*, Second Report, *Anglia Ruskin University, Networks,* Issue 10