

Blossom Project Interviews

Engagement

Sarah Chesney – Cumbria University

We've engaged staff in the process through a number of methods; we've run a series of workshops on all campuses where we've invited any member of staff to come along and have a look at the eportfolio and a trial of it. If they then want to book the Flourish team for a team training day, they can do that and then we'll go along and actually help a team start to think about using an e-portfolio for their CPD.

We've also piloted it with our own department and encouraged other departments to do that with specific activities such as appraisal, and in actual fact this year the faculty of education are now actively encouraging all members of staff to use the e-portfolio system to support the appraisal process and we're doing a number of support sessions for the faculty to help them get going with that.

Neil Curren- Bradford University

Some of the other incentives have included a specific staff development opportunity; an elearning retreat at a special location off campus where teams of staff can actually experiment with using the e-portfolio and support one another at a two day event. And these have been quite effective. In addition to that we've also given some small amounts of funding to people who want to use the e-portfolio for areas away from the 5 key areas that are outlined by flourish. For instance, quite a few people are interested in using the e-portfolio to support their research or to, as a method of communicating, to support the peer observation process. And they've used this small amount of funding to then actually carry out these activities, and we've asked them to record all of this in a blog within the system and we've used this as a way of reporting back to the project manager (myself) and so we're sort of gathering evidence at the same time as to how effective this has been.

Susi Peacock – Queen Margaret University

Staff have found out about the e-portfolio in a number of ways. The first one is that the CAP has organised a number of workshops, summer schools raising awareness events and usually what we will do is focus on a key element of the e-portfolio. So introduce the e-portfolio as this big system and then we'll say "well if you're interested in moving the paper based portfolio online, here's the webfolio." "If you're interested in encouraging your students to reflect, here's the blog". "If you want your students to think more about action planning, here's some stuff about pdp and here's the action planning tool." So that they can focus on specific areas but they've also got an overview of what e-portfolios are, and particularly how they are related to pdp. But you can't, it's difficult, I can't just say to them PDP, because they just can't get excited about that, but if I talk to them about, "look here is a really nice tool, if your students are going to be interested in this and this how we could do it and this is how you can mark it online. Oh! and there's pdp here, you can sort of sneak it in.

So they learn about it like that, we also get other members of staff to talk about how they are using it, which is always more effective than mean because staff will listen to staff, and we also get externals in as well, who have used e-portfolios. We've had Shane Sutherland here numerous times and we have user groups as well so I have some key early adopters, they will come to our user group meetings too.

For students, we normally go in and help the staff at the beginning so that the staff can introduce it to the students, but we also introduce it to our PhD students to support pdp - so it's a slightly different way that they get to know about it. And then for admin staff, what I've done is I've run a number of sessions about how you can use the e-portfolio for your pdp, and that's all voluntary.

David Eddy – Sheffield Hallam University

In terms of involving staff in the process and utilising it for their CPD, it's been very straightforward for me actually, I've been quite lucky in that I'm kind of pebblepad lead within our faculty and because our course team do a lot of distance learning anyway, there's a natural inclination towards this kind of approach to documenting and evidencing learning using the eportfolio so essentially all I really had to do was show them some examples of how we might do it and ask if they wanted to participate and they were very keen to get involved from that point of view.

I also think the other thing that's involved staff more in the process and driven them to get involved was the fact that the levels of student activity in terms of using the e-portfolio and actually seeing the kinds of thing that they produce and the quality of the portfolios that they submitted, had actually been a bit of a driver as well- almost embarrassing the staff to come up with something that is as good as what the students are doing.

One of things that we've tried to do, to engage staff is to advertise it and that's through various committees various workshops that we've run and by advertising on our internal website. In terms of where we've got qualifications using it for CPD, it's been the tutors that have recommended to staff that they use the e-portfolio system to help them with the development of their accreditation. So that's particularly the NVQ kind of stuff. Otherwise it's really working with individuals who have an interest or want to find out about it to learn more, we can do that on a one to one or training sessions.

I've been very fortunate in that staff have been very positive and engaging with e-portfolios and again i think that this is because of the amount of elearning and distance learning that we deliver. so it's a good fit in terms of the staff. different ways in which we've been encouraging staff to use it have involved things like team meetings for example- staff meetings are not always perhaps the most riveting and exciting things to attend, so to try and make these more reflective and make sure that what we do at team meeting is discuss things that we need to resolve rather than just impart information. we have for example created team webfolios where information that needs disseminating to staff, people can just look at the webfolio before the meeting and not have to sit through and listen to that being narrated and we can just focus on any action points that need to be developed subsequently/ staff have also started to think about using pebblepad as a means of presenting when they're running workshops, either with students or for external audiences that kind of thing as well and staff have actually used it to present at conferences which has been quite interesting to see. so there's lots of different ways in which staff are starting to think about developing and using e-portfolios.

Phil Vincent – York St. Johns

In order to engage staff in the process of using an e-portfolio we hope to expose them to it at induction, as early on as possible in their time at the university create, try and create clear links between career planning, promotion opportunities for them to record their CPD also link it to the current policies and procedures for example we have a policy in place where they have to

annually cvs we have to share attendance at conferences and events and tie it in with a formulae approach for funding for staff development activities thereby where if staff don't come back perhaps reflect on their CPD activity, then perhaps the faculty isn't awarded as much money the following year for staff development budget.