

Blossom Project Interviews

Training

Phil Vincent – York St. John

Current training and support has been centered around how staff use it with students, given that we are currently a pilot phase I think moving forward, the level of training will be more based around why staff should use it to record their CPD, how it links to current policies and procedures and how they can get the most of out it. I think most staff find it quite intuitive, it hasn't been that resource intensive in terms of my time training and delivering session or workshops. Staff I've found have comfortably found their way around the system quite easily.

Susi Peacock – Queen Margaret

Support for staff is usually in groups either at programme level, subject area or when we have general workshops and when we have some schools, we go into some school etc. often people come to a session, maybe two sessions and then start to think about how they may want to use it and it's quite common for us to have a follow up session by when we'll be saying to people, OK you're interested in the webfolio have you thought about x y and z, have you thought about releasing a template to the students so that they can use that with feedback in each of the sections about what they should be putting in there. If they're talking about using the blog tool often we'll be sort of saying to them OK you're going to introduce a blog tool, what do you want them to put in the blog tool, because students don't know necessarily what to put in it. And it's very easy to say, well just go away and write about your key learning outcomes from this week, it just really doesn't grab students' imaginations. and then often we will get into sessions with staff, particularly at the beginning so our radiography lecturer who has got proformas and a webfolio which is formative and summative assessment we would typically go in with her for the first session to make her students comfortable but also to provide her with support for that session.

Neil Carrant - Bradford

We give a one hour introductory session to the system and then after that it's really up to the members of staff to use it as they see fit. Because most of our stuff is related to qualification of some sort there's usually a tutor involved, so the first line of support to a staff member putting together a portfolio of evidence would be that tutor and then if that's not possible to solve it, then they would come to us for central support. But we also operate email support one to one email support, so people who I know, who know me, who came to the training are quite welcome to email me if there's any issues, so we can send them help that way as well.

Sarah Chesney - Cumbria

With regard to training and support generally, I'd say that people have found the software quite easy to use and after a, say a 2 hour workshop can get going provided they go back to their pc or workstation and get going straight away. They do tend to forget what they've learnt at the workshop if they haven't got a good reason to apply it to an activity they're currently undertaking. So we've found that support has been, has been in that respect kept to a minimum. However where we have needed to put in a lot of support is where the actual activity is a high

risk activity so for instance on the PGC we're asking them to compile a portfolio electronically and then submit it electronically and this has been quite a new experience for quite a lot of the students who perhaps weren't that comfortable with using computers in the first place. And we have needed to invest quite a lot of support in that for them. It's come at certain stages which are, shouldn't be a surprise to everybody, they've needed support say, two or 3 days before they're due to hand in their assignment electronically and there've been quite a number of panic phone calls they haven't allowed themselves the time to learn how to compile the portfolio appropriately with relevant links to evidence and so have then suddenly needed a lot of support in the last 2 or three days. We're hoping to gradually to provide to the right support for that, so we're now laying on support session prior to the, in the week before the submission date and we do try and make ourselves very available, for say the day of submission to answer queries and be supportive in that way. Other than that, I would say that because it's quite an easy system to use, it does allow for people to explore and try it out in quite an original way. One of the down sides of that is for instance in appraisal, when you're asking people to perhaps produce an appraisal document in your e-portfolio that is a lot more personalised than would, say a word template be. This means then, that the line manager has difficulty actually accepting or adjusting to this new way of submission of appraisal, so sometimes it's actually needed to be for the assessor or the receiver of the appraisal and so we've found that there are points of need that have surprised us, such as when someone chooses to do their appraisal using the e-portfolio they're quite comfortable with it, but their line manager hasn't been and their line manager has needed the support.

David Eddy – Sheffield Hallam

In terms of training and support after the initial training day that pebblepad provided for us, myself and a colleague have led or supported enabling staff to utilise pebblepad, that's involved probably the equivalent of another study day two half days and subsequent to that when we've had new members of the team who've come on board we've done one to one sessions with them to introduce them to pebblepad. Other than that we've not really had to do a great deal because most of the team are very IT savvy in terms of both their clinical and education activities. I guess part of the reason that we've not needed to do too much in the way of training and support is that we've created a lot of proformas and templates that people can pick up and use and adapt and so on and so that's helped minimise the amount of work that they have to do for themselves finding out how you can do x, y and z.

I think perhaps the most time consuming thing in terms of staff training was in use of assessment gateways and getting staff confident in the use of that and also posting samples of work to a gateway that we created for external examiner. That's I guess the bits that have been the most complicated in terms of training, but it's been very straight forward. But again I'm lucky with the group and the nature of the individuals and what they work on more than anyway, because they are very focused on e-learning and that kind of thing so this comes naturally to them.