

PDP, Starting from where we are in Learning and Teaching terms

Peter Lumsden Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator, Faculty of Science, UCLAN

Even in a modular system, PDP – Personal Development Planning – can form the ‘core’ of any Learning and Teaching strategy. A useful analogy is that while the modules are the bricks of our wall of provision, PDP is the mortar which runs through and holds them together. However, an ongoing challenge is to engage staff. This article reviews the way in which PDP has been introduced and embedded in the Faculty of Science at UCLAN.

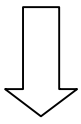
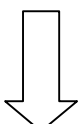
1. Faculty level - strategic

There is no overall Faculty ‘model’, as ‘ownership’ by Departments is critical, but I have identified the following elements to constitute the ‘minimum’ of what PDP ‘involves’, and therefore to feature in Departmental strategies.

- **Self-awareness** – strengths / areas to improve e.g. time management
- **Reflection** – undertake at appropriate junctures, e.g. end of year with personal tutor, built-in as criteria for selected assignments
- **Action planning** – a crucial part of implementing change, and a clear opportunity for discussion with the personal tutor
- **Team / group work** – able to recognise roles within a group and to contribute appropriately. This requires staff to set-up opportunities, and be able to give guidance and feedback on ‘performance’
- **Career planning** – market awareness, applications, presentations, interviews, CV construction

A general model (see below) has been used as a starting point for discussion and development

Fig. 1 General Model for PDP

Level	Theme	Activities
1	{Self awareness {Active learning	* Study skills module, with reflective review assignment and action plan * On-line learning styles questionnaire and feedback * Discussion with personal tutor about personal development and action plan
		
2	{Job awareness {Reflective learning	* Careers workshop during induction week * Feedback/feed forward integrated as part of teaching delivery * Reflection as part of assignments, including fieldwork * Discussion with personal tutor continues to address personal development and how best to compile evidence * End-of-year personal review
		
3	{Career planning {Independent learning	* Careers workshop * Reflection with Personal tutor on end-of-year review and assignment feedback * CV construction

2. Departmental level – designing-in PDP

Bringing an academic background to the post of TLC has given me credibility with staff, and has allowed me to engage with departments. The following model for steps in the process emerged from a meeting in Forensic Science.

- 1) agreement of all staff of value of overall process, and commitment to supporting it.
- 2) the basics – deliver to students essential details of approaches to study, learning styles, personality styles, study skills. A study skills module probably does this most effectively.
- 3) build on reflection through modules. This is where most change is needed, with a need to articulate approaches in the 'learning and teaching strategy' section of module descriptions. We need to consider what the students are doing as well as what the tutor does!
- 4) students actively engage in the process, building their progress file and / or CV.

3. Departmental level – delivery

Having a Departmental as well as Faculty role, I have been able to 'guide' PDP developments within the School of Natural Resources.

Across the School, a level one **study skills** module provides some basic training in / opportunities for self-analysis, and a reflective review assignment with an associated **action**

plan formalises this. The marked assignment is returned to the **personal tutor**, who can use this as the basis for discussion during tutorial meetings. Group-based discussion around written feedback provides a further opportunity for **reflective practice**, and should 'feed-forward' to future assignments. **Career planning** is developed through annual workshops and an on-line careers module, in which CV construction and presenting evidence of personal development features prominently. This generic framework has then been further customised by individual courses, for example Geography, shown below.

Fig. 2 Model for PDP in BA / BSc Geography

Level	Structured Learning Environment →	Feedback →	Reflection →
1 ↓	Academic knowledge of the subject – active learning Writing skills, numeracy, C & IT skills Self-awareness, time management and working with others	Assessment and in seminars On site and following assessment Through Personal Tutor (PT) system	End of module discussion; Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs) Discussion following feedback, completion of assessment cover sheet PT meetings, end of year review
2 ↓	Academic knowledge of the subject – reflective learning, problem solving Interpersonal awareness and contributing to a group Academic research skills, integration of topic areas	Assessment ('feed-forward') and in seminars Group work / peer assessment Fieldwork practical and through PT system	Completing assessment sheet after feedback PT meetings; end of year self-review Built in to some assignments
3 ↓	Academic knowledge of the subject Leading discussions – seminars Group work – adopting roles within a group Independent research and critical evaluation skills	Assessment (feed forward) and in seminars Fieldwork – peer feedback On site and through PT system Dissertation supervisor meetings; assessment	Careers workshop, CV construction Student diaries and reflective reports PT meetings Dissertation

Conclusion

Introducing and embedding PDP is not something that comes naturally to those working in science-based disciplines. However, there is general acceptance of the validity and worth of PDP. If staff are allowed to take ownership of the situation, to treat it as a 'problem' to be solved, creative solutions can arise.