

# Phase 1 PDP Practice Summary



## Background

### Profile of the cohort

The School of Media, Language and Music introduced a common core framework in 2004 to develop criticality and creativity and embed employability and PDP in the curriculum for all students on its BA (Hons) Programmes: Cinema; Commercial Music; Digital Art; Media; Screen Practice:



- ❖ SCQF Level 7 (year 1)  
Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- ❖ SCQF Level 8 (year 2)  
Professional Industry Practice
- ❖ SCQF Level 9 (year 3)  
Research Methods  
Creative Practice  
Work-based Learning
- ❖ SCQF Level 10 (year 4)  
Creative Project  
Research Project: Dissertation

PDP is based in the Effective Learner Framework (ELF) Model (QAA/Universities Scotland). During a week long induction, new students are introduced to the concept of PDP and provided with materials for a reflective log. They are encouraged to complete this log on a regular basis, including career planning and areas for development.

Nineteen full-time Level 7 students mostly between 18-21 were involved in the ISLE Pilot. Studied via the Interpersonal and Communication Skills module (the first module in the common core), the ISLE project was implemented over a period of 3 sessions – 2x1 50 min lectures (introduction to PDP and ePortfolios) and 1x1 hour and 1x2 hour supported labs (introduction to ePortfolios then using Blackboard to design an ePortfolio).

## Intended Outcomes

### What was the main focus of the PDP activity?

A key objective was to evidence and develop PDP and employability skills. PDP is not assessed but assessment of the common core provides this via e.g. forms of writing; presentations; pitching; reflective logs; peer and self assessment; group work; working to a live brief; evidence of research and understanding into the creative industries and the job market; practice applications, CV writing and interviews. Other objectives were to build on Induction input with regard to PDP and to introduce the use of ePortfolios as a means of support; the continued integration of PDP into the curriculum; testing the usefulness of Blackboard as the ePortfolio; the trial of diagnostic testing (one of the tasks of the ISLE

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Project in Paisley); demonstrating the significance and importance of PDP to staff and demonstrating to the students that Paisley is up to date in terms of student support and development!

## The Challenges

Issues encountered the required overcoming

Students did not engage well with the online tutorial about ePortfolios and did not prepare for the second lab which meant they were developing content rather than practice skills in development, design and use of ePortfolios. The Blackboard ePortfolio tool is not intuitive and it takes a while to grasp how it can be used to support PDP. Materials and initial plans had to be revised to suit the systems capabilities.

It would have been useful if there had been a sharing of diagnostic tests between partners rather than develop these from scratch. There was some lack of understanding of what was required in terms of carrying out the pilot i.e. what we were supposed to be testing together with an underestimation of the level of technical support required by the students. We added in a second lab but more was still required.

A major challenge was encouraging buy-in when the activity is not assessed, despite a highly positive, informative lecture on the benefits. Especially in terms of first year (level 7) students.

Finally, selling the project to staff as well as students. This was overcome by input at Staff Away Days and distribution of the ISLE promotional material.

## Established Practice

How existing practice help the process or was changed by it

- ❖ PDP in paper from already existed
- ❖ Reflection and self analysis was already undertaken
- ❖ Some staff were trained in the process
- ❖ Support of the Associate Dean L & T in the implementation process
- ❖ Number of activities was increased
- ❖ Formal input re benefits and value of PDP and portfolio creation was increased
- ❖ Support and training was increased and more closely monitored
- ❖ A Year Tutor system was in place for student support but this is being audited and revised to encompass support for PDP.

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## The ePortfolio Advantage

What PDP value was derived from the use of ePortfolios?

- ❖ Flexibility of creation of portfolio
- ❖ Unlimited storage opportunities
- ❖ Access to a wider variety of materials e.g. video, for self promotion
- ❖ Provision of a choice of tools for portfolio creation
- ❖ As all institutions are required to make PDP available to all students, the School and the students are on the way and issues and challenges can be ironed out prior to full roll-out.

## Key Points for Effective Practice

- ❖ Do not underestimate the time it takes to teach the students to use the tool
- ❖ Provide ongoing technical support as well as guidance in terms of PDP
- ❖ Accept that you cannot get buy-in from every student, however hard you try!
- ❖ Ensure staff buy-in
- ❖ Have an effective student support system in place
- ❖ Consider how you will link up and develop experiences between levels
- ❖ Bear in mind students entering directly into a higher level of a course/programme. They may have used different systems or have very different experiences and requirements.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The practice was effective in terms of making the cohort aware of the value of PDP and employability skills and introducing them to a number of tools to aid them. It was also effective in highlighting the need for support of students and some of the challenges and issues that require to be addressed if PDP and ePortfolio is to continue to be successfully developed in the School. We were fortunate that a good paper based system was already in place as we had a foundation to build on.

## Additional Information

PowerPoint slides of the introductory lecture are available to anyone who is interested.