

Best practice guide for the design of ePDP tasks

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Pathfinder project



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Approaches to the design of ePDP tasks

This guide aims to provide a series of key considerations and questions to think about when considering implementing or integrating ePDP into the curriculum. It is by no means a definitive set of guidelines but it aims to help shape ideas and identify the potential of ePDP within different curriculum contexts. ePDP can be interpreted as electronic Personal Development Planning. This allows a wide scope for a range of suitable technologies to be tried as ways to enhance PDP activities.¹ It is important to note that there are many references to PDP and not always ePDP. This is because it is important to ensure that PDP is the area you wish to pursue and the 'e' aspect will help you make the most suitable match of task and technology. Ensuring your learners are on the right PDP journey is crucial the 'e' aspect can often make the journey more exciting.

Rationale

Think about how you would define ePDP within the context in which you want to situate the ePDP tasks. Possibly, the most widely used definition of PDP is ' However, here are many discourses around Personal Development Planning, would it be beneficial for you to look at these and see how they feel? It is important to identify your motivations for wanting to integrate ePDP and to think about why you are thinking about ePDP now.

Context

There are a number of questions to ask (and answer) in relation to the context in which ePDP is going to sit. By answering these questions you can better contextualise how ePDP may integrate into your curriculum

- What module/session are you planning to include ePDP activities?
- What are the learning outcomes for this module session?
- Number of learners and their characteristics
- Number of tutors involved and in what capacity?
- What is the module/session mode of delivery?
- Has paper based PDP been an element of this module previously?
- If so, what was it?
- Are you planning to transfer paper based PDP online? If yes, how will the 'e' enhance the PDP experience?
- Are there any current strengths in the paper based version that you would like to transfer online?

Identifying suitable ePDP tasks

It may be the case that you already know what ePDP tasks you wish to carry out but if not; it may be worth starting to look at PDP in a wider way than straight away trying to identify tasks. PDP could be categorised into one of the following areas identified by Ward (2007) Thinking about the broader area of ePDP might help to focus in on tasks that fit within these categories:

- Recording experiences
- Concerning skills
- Concerning values, attitudes, motivations, reasons
- Goal setting
- Planning
- Summarising (for presentation)
- Understanding one's learning

¹ Please note that the author is writing from the experienced practice base of the 'e' in ePDP being eportfolio

Outlined below is an indicative list of PDP activities (Ward, 2007) that might help you identify the actual tasks you may want to undertake

1. Discussing learner's personal situation / experiences
2. Compiling list of experiences or past activities, including employment
3. Reviewing and reflecting on logs
4. Reviewing past written goals and action plans against more recent past experience
5. Reviewing experience in response to guidance
6. Reviewing coursework performance and course experience
7. Reviewing critical incidents
8. Listing achievements / qualifications (with documentation if available)
9. Relating experiences to skills (or vice versa)
10. Reviewing / profiling / auditing skills
11. Reviewing progress in / development of skills
12. Reviewing personal interests
13. Reviewing / reflecting on personal attitudes / values
14. Assembling evidence for skills
15. Assessing own learning style
16. Setting goals for skills development
17. Setting goals related to subject development
18. Setting more general personal / social goals
19. Relating goals to motivations and reasons
20. Originating CV / personal statement / other compilation
21. Revising CV / personal statement / other compilation
22. Originating action plan for the achievement of academic goals
23. Revising action plan for academic goals in the context of feedback / discussion
24. Originating action plan for personal / skills development / goals
25. Revising action plan for personal goals in the context of feedback / discussion
26. Doing exercises alone for skill development
27. Participating in workshops / classes / sessions for skill development
28. Choosing / evaluating suitability of course / module / employment / position
29. Writing application for position / employment / course / programme
30. Writing log (for learning or reflection)
31. Writing individual learning plan
32. Negotiating learning / employment contract

Once you have identified suitable ePDP tasks there are a number of useful questions that you need to ask (and answer) about the logistics of support for integrating ePDP into the curriculum

- Are the activities you have identified suitable to be carried out online? What interactivity will you include to ensure activities do not become 'digital paper'?
- Will the ePDP activities be linked to the assessment outcome of the module? In what way?
- What tools and resources will you need?
- Which technology do you think is most suitable for the tasks you have chosen?
- E.g., eportfolio system, web 2.0 tools, VLE, other, etc
- How do you plan to give feedback? What feedback expectations will you set?
- What support needs will there be?
- What exactly are you going to ask your students to do? How will you present the ePDP tasks?
- What are the potential benefits to both you and your students if you integrate ePDP into your module?
- What are the potential problems and risks associated with integrating ePDP into your module?

Finally, it is important to think ahead wherever possible and think about what the potential benefits and problems or risks to both you and your students might be if you integrate ePDP into your module?

Reference

Ward, R (2007) What might PDP services look like: an attempt at a 'back of an envelope' PDP Reference Model? (Paper still under development)

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