The background to PLT

Where have these resources come from?

Between 2005 AND 2010 over 30 FHSC colleagues were involved in projects which support and enhance our thinking about learning and teaching. Through a series of small scale investigations people explored all sorts of aspects of teaching and learning which have a bearing on practice. Studies have ranged from emotional resilience in nursing, through to using personal construct theory as a way of exploring social work identity, from the affect in social work assessment through to the development of foundation degrees. So PBPL has begun to encourage a culture of building up a reservoir of knowledge about our teaching and learning issues. Not that people in the Faculty didn't have that knowledge before but the records of what we do, why we do it and what effect it has have been spread all over the place (course team minutes, official reports, committee papers individual academic papers and quite often only orally disseminated) and are not always generally available.

PBPL's investigation strand seemed an ideal opportunity to begin to develop a resource file of knowledge and expertise in the Faculty around practice-based learning and teaching. But alongside these PBPL resources we started to think about all these nooks and crannies where faculty teaching and learning expertise resides and to try to find a place where we could develop a resource. Over many years course teams and regional colleagues have developed a host of 'proformas', papers, checklists and so on that provide a basis for developing a shared understanding of what teaching and learning is actually about in a practice faculty at an institution devoted to open learning. So we wanted to develop a site which could accommodate these rather different bits and pieces but grouped under specific categories so colleagues could find the resources relevant to their own interests and needs.

In each of our five topic areas we've included stuff which helps you makes sense of the whole topic but you can also pick and choose.

And why do all of this? We think there are four main reasons:

1. To provide a resource for specialised staff development, primarily induction so that, for example, new members of staff have a set of resources they can refer to as they are developing their course development skills
2. To provide a resource for course teams - resources as a basis for discussion about course development
3. To provide an arena for what is fashionably called codification, so that we have what we do well documented. In a sense it is our evidence trail and it will have at least three major uses in this context: as evidence of quality (useful for QAA), transparent account of what we do for external colleagues (in particular employers and for contract reviews and validations) and evidence of data for research purposes
4. In the longer term to provide an arena for the cataloging and sharing of future developments

We hope you enjoy the PLT area and find resources of help to you.

If you produce new work which you feel should be made available on the PLT site then please contact Fiona Barnes at fjh5@tutor.open.ac.uk.

PLT

Practice Learning Topics

Practice-based Professional Learning, CETL

Pam Shakespeare