

ASEM Forum on Lifelong Learning
Copenhagen, May 2012

ICT's Role for Learning Unlimited
Practice & Professional Learning Environment

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Welcome to PePLE

Learning from practice, supervision and collaborative working is core to social work and social care.

We invite you to use the resources and activities on this site to support your own learning and continuing professional development. You can choose to browse through individually and you can also use them in group work with colleagues. The choice is yours. If you need to provide evidence of learning and professional development for GSCC recognition or other professional frameworks, use your responses to activities as part of your evidence. The workbooks on



Mary Thorpe (Log out)

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Practice and Professional Learning Environment (PePLE)

<http://www.peple.open.ac.uk>

Using Learning Technologies to support social services practice



Who can access PePLE?

- Anyone in a social services workplace. Videos require signing a licence:
 - peple-project@open.ac.uk or m.s.thorpe@open.ac.uk
- Open University staff and students on social work modules
- There is no charge for using PePLE

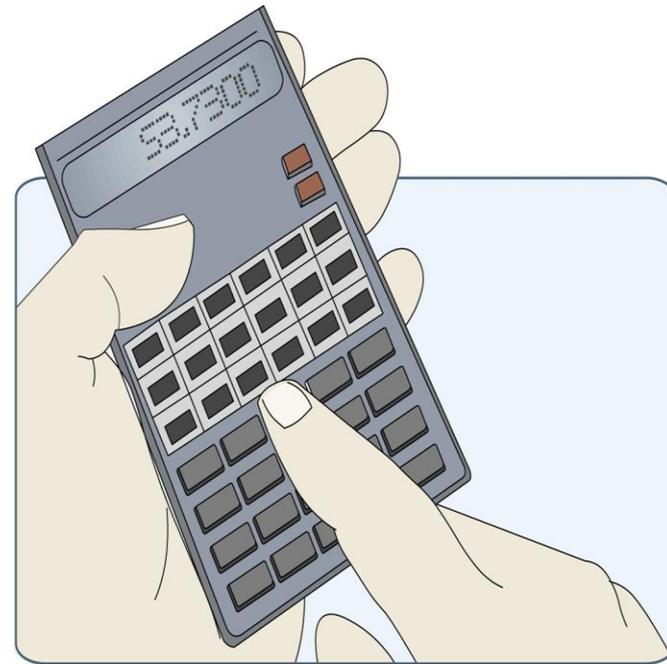
To provide an online learning environment to support accessible 'on the job' learning of social workers and other social services employees

Story Line

- TEL/online and work related learning
- Key ideas/frameworks
- PePLE – the research context
- What users said
- Google Analytics data
- What we conclude about online participation

TEL/online & work-related learning

- Range of kinds of usage of online for work



Context for the research

- Online environment for social workers, therefore

Informal learning

Voluntary learning

- Research questions:

Identify the nature of online participation, relationship with off-line context and implications for conceptualisation of online learning environments to support work-related learning

Key contributions in the literature

- **Technology Acceptance Model** [Davis, 1989]
survey of workplace attitudes towards ICT
identified usefulness & usability as key factors.
- Factors of ease of use and usability also shown to be relevant to OU students on work-related **COURSES**. [Edmunds, Thorpe & Conole, 2011]
- Students also perceived ICT at work to be easier to use and more useful than ICT for course study

Key contributions in the literature [2]

- eLearning for training and transfer to work
- Park and Wentling [2007] study of issues specific to elearning identified learner issues and course design as key
- But – study limited generalisability and need for qualitative research of context emphasised.

Key contributions in the literature [3]

- Lifelong learning/workplace learning
- Billett – co-participation between workers & workplace opportunities [Billett, 2008]
- ‘Relational interdependence between personal and social agency’

Key contributions in the literature [4]

- Learning as participation in social practices
[Wenger, 1998]
- Communities of Practice as sites for learning
- Boundary between practices can be places that stimulate learning.

ICT shown to enable learning across the boundary between study and work. Students study while at work, hear about other workplaces from other students, reflect on the relevance of study for work and vice versa, use similar technologies in both places etc. [Thorpe & Edmunds, 2011]



What will I find on PePLE?

- **Short video clips** that tell practice stories e.g. from the OU/BBC series 'Someone to Watch Over Me'
- **Activities** based on video clips to stimulate reflection on key issues in social work practice and supervision
- **Supervision** activities and resources to support supervisors and supervisees use **supervision** effectively
- **Knowledge4Practice** - Short guides and case studies to develop knowledge and skills in evidence informed practice
- **Workbooks** to record work on activities as evidence of CPD
- **Forums** where you can share your experiences and reflect on practice with other people who use the site
- **Links to resources** e.g. OpenLearn and standards e.g. Codes of Practice



The Open University

Ways of using PePLE: ideas from Scotland

- In supervision – and for new supervisors
- Newly qualified Social Workers (singly and in groups)
- To support learning of foster carers
- Provide evidence to support ongoing CPD
- Mentoring new workers
- To support a change of culture – towards more evidence informed practice
- Practice learning of social work students
- To link workers and share good practice across geographical, specialism and agency boundaries

Data about PePLE users & usage

- Interviewed users – most were practice educators with support roles for front line social workers
- Evaluated interface and content at workshops
- Analysed Google data on usage

Videos generate real engagement & learning

I just think it brings a discussion to life really...a point where you can actually observe. It's very powerful observing people's body language and how they communicate....actually seeing it live on a video I think has much more meaning'

PePLE: Social Work

Practice and Professional Learning Environment

Videos > **A baby at risk** > Concern for expected baby

Concern for expected baby

Social Worker Jo is talking to Kim and Adam about when their baby is born and the concerns social services have about Kim's history of alcohol abuse. Jo talks in her car about what the difficulty, particularly for Adam, of what she is asking of them. If Kim does start to drink again, Adam needs to tell Social Services. Kim gives her views on the situation.



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The focus on social work practice core values

The video clips are good if you can adapt them and ...focus on practice, on social work practice, on social work core values. Was there an element of dignity and respect given to the service user...Was the person acting as an advocate and encouraging the person to be independent? All these things you could use.

PePLE: Social Work

Practice and Professional Learning Environment

Videos > Nadia's story > Nadia's story

Nadia's story

Nadia, Mel and Leroy in the kitchen. Leroy has not seen Nadia for a while and Leroy expresses his concerns. They discuss Nadia's situation and what they might do about it. Leroy says that if she won't work with him there are steps they can take - what would Nadia like them to do? Leroy has a string of concerns over her behaviour



Relevance to immediate practice needs – working knowledge

...my student is learning about...bipolar [disorder], what can I quickly find out?...students will mention stuff and I think 'oh right I've got to quickly find out about that before next week' and I'll use the internet rather than the library...because you're not looking for an in-depth knowledge, you're looking for a working knowledge.



I've also...got new responsibilities for working with qualified social workers that I think a lot of the materials are going to be really helpful for them as well... I think the opportunities to record your learning and have somewhere to store that information on PePLE is really valuable...to have somewhere to keep it and somewhere they can dip in and dip out of it...get into the way of it so hopefully they'll then maintain that approach to their learning as their professional development progresses.

Recording your learning for CPD

Reminding yourself about social work practice
– not just case work management

And I think...the bit about supervision on the PePLE site is really quite helpful in the early stages of being in that role but also...as a reminder...it has reminded me of the purpose of supervision and that it's more than simply...talking about somebody's case work...because you lose sight given the stress of the day to day work of what your role is.....

Your website actually links in to other website...folk are quite attracted by the fact it takes less time to access information through...I was selling that to the newly qualified workers because time is the main issue for all staff really...how long is it going to take me to find this piece of information, and I found your site really easy to navigate around...

Time constraints for using ICT for work – highly pressured

I have my Netbook with me here which has got all my bookmarks open.;...I use websites for policy quite a lot...I've got training games...I click about very quickly, being a part-timer with different jobs...I don't have lots of time...so if I can't find something very quickly I tend to be off and on somewhere else.

Usage of PePLE

- Google analytics – 15 months to mid 2011



4175 visits 47% from new visitors 53% returning visitors
Average time on site 7.17mins, 10.42 mins for returning visitors

Usage of PePLE (2)

Top Content

1 May 2010 - 29 Jul 2011



584 pages were viewed a total of 31,941 times

Returning visitors made 73% of page views

Returning visitors made 10.58 page views on average

Content popularity

- **Videos and Knowledge for Practice similar with 1375 page views and approx 40secs average time per page**
- **The least popular was ‘Exploring online resources’ with 852 page views**
- **Forums had few contributors inspite of efforts to generate participation**

Comparison with OU OpenLearn site

- Over first 18 months, 3 million unique visitors: 2.5% registered
- During first six months of 2008, 82% of visitors visited once only although percentage visiting more than once increased to 35% by year end
- Only 3.5% of visitors spend more than 30 minutes on the site, visiting more than 20 pages

University College London CIBER report

Main characteristics of digital information seeking behaviours in virtual libraries:

Horizontal 'skimming activity, where people view just one or two pages from an academic site and then 'bounce' out perhaps never to return...around 60% of e-journal users view no more than 3 pages and a majority (up to 65%) never return.....

The average times that users spend on e-book and e-journal sites are...four and eight mins respectively...users 'power browse' horizontally through titles, contents pages and abstracts going for quick wins.It almost seems that they go online to avoid reading in the traditional sense.

(UCL, 2008, p.10)

conclusions

- Usability is necessary but not sufficient condition for use; Usefulness/relevance to local practice necessary too
- Extreme time pressures drive short bursts of 'search and find' activity
- Offline roles and contexts drive online participation
- Processes of recognition of relevance to local practice drives perceived value
- Video of practice scenarios seen as giving a focus on practice, which is distinctive & counter weight to managing case loads

Online participation is a hybrid activity – reflecting offline roles & activity plus online relevance

- The design of the online environment is only part of the story; building connections to offline work context is crucial – local facilitators, recording activities, newsletters
- Relevance to a local practice is crucial
- Users need skills of recognition of relevance, ability to make links and connections across sites and diverse resources
- A model of ‘socio-technical interaction network’ [Kling, McKim & King, 2003) fits this hybridity. Also Hrastinski, 2008

Online Participation

‘It becomes clear that new technological developments will not wash away the issues of sustainability and integration into a social world.’

Kling, McKim & King, 2003, p63

‘Participation....a complex process combining doing, communicating, thinking, feeling and belonging, which occurs both online and offline.’

Hrastinsky, 2008, p1761

<http://iet.open.ac.uk/people/m.s.thorpe>

<http://people.open.ac.uk>

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