



## SWAP Funded Projects 2005-06

### **Integration of Practice Learning and Personal Development Planning in Social Work Education: Critical Reflection on Key Issues**

#### **Summary**

The use of Personal Development Plans (PDP) stems from the Dearing Report, which recommended that HE institutions develop a means by which students can monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development. This SWAP-funded project enabled the evaluation of an innovative model of PDP as tool to integrate college and work based learning via a collaborative personal tutoring system delivered jointly by college and employer based staff. The model utilises learning agreements and personal development plans to further integrate college and work based learning and facilitate a student led learning process. The evaluation consisted of audits of PDP documentation, questionnaires, focus group. From the analysis of this data, some of the key findings are that:

- This model of PDP can facilitate transfer and integration of learning across college and practice sites.
- The framework, documentation, and tools used for PDP must balance structure against an overly bureaucratic approach.
- PDP can support student learning and student self management of learning whilst also being integrated into assessment.
- Reflective writing is perceived by students to facilitate critical, reflective thinking skills.

#### **Implications for Learning, Teaching and Assessment in Discipline**

PDP can provide an effective pedagogical tool for the integration of college and practice based learning. PDP has potential to develop students' abilities to identify their own learning needs, appropriate ways of meeting those learning needs and reviewing and evaluating their achievement. This facilitates a more student led and student driven approach to learning, thereby enhancing the individual's understanding and ability to support their own continuous professional development. A longitudinal study would need to be undertaken to ascertain whether such a PDP process has a longer term impact beyond the period of qualifying training.

When introducing PDP and work-based learning into courses, care must be taken in devising appropriate quality control systems. The convening of a Practice Assessment Panel helps to ensure consistent approaches to teaching, learning and assessment across all settings.

Jacqueline Lee, Head of Centre for Social Work, Cardiff School of Health Sciences and Peter Redding & Nicola Poole, Quality Enhancement Centre, Learning & Teaching Support Unit, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, Colchester Avenue, Cardiff CF23 9XR. Email [jlee@uwic.ac.uk](mailto:jlee@uwic.ac.uk), [predding@uwic.ac.uk](mailto:predding@uwic.ac.uk)

In 2005 SWAP funded eight projects in social policy and social work education designed to promote the use of effective learning, teaching and assessment activities; to encourage the development and sharing of innovative approaches and to raise awareness of the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of educational methods.

For further copies of this document and for information on this and other funded projects go to <http://www.swap.ac.uk/about/projects05.asp>

Contact Social Policy and Social Work Subject Centre (SWAP), Higher Education Academy  
School of Social Sciences, University of Southampton, Southampton, SO17



**Social Policy  
and Social Work  
(SWAP)**

The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Social Policy and Social Work (SWAP)  
University of Southampton School of Social Sciences  
Southampton  
SO17 1BJ



Printed on recycled paper