Workpackage 5.1
Interim report
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Project
Individualised Support for Learning through the use of an Eportfolio (ISLE)

Title
Identification of staff training and development needs

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Executive summary

This interim report will present the findings to date of current practice in using and maintaining an electronic portfolio (ePortfolio) for personal development planning across the tertiary education sector that have implications for staff development. A review of the current literature and a series of staff interviews have consistently identified a number of key issues relating to current and future ePortfolio practice which require serious consideration by institutions within higher and further education within a staff development programme. The terminology used to refer to an ePortfolio is also discussed in an attempt to differentiate between an ePortfolio as a process and an ePortfolio as a software program. Recommendations are made for staff development in current learning and teaching practice that include the use of reflection and "story telling". Additional areas for consider are: assessment; blogging; legal issues and an institution' rationale for use on an eportfolio.

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Introduction

ISLE is a collaborative project run on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) that seeks to improve the student learning experience through the use of personal development planning (PDP) supported by an electronic portfolio (ePortfolio). Partners working on the Project from Scottish Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) aim to identify how to widen participation and improve progression for learners both within and across the sectors in an attempt to improve retention, achievement, learning experience and commitment to lifelong learning. The project focus is on the development of the learning processes that, supported by technology, can be transferred between FE and HE through the development of a personal development plan in a reflective learning environment in the hope that this will facilitate lifelong learning development. The implications of such a change to learning and teaching practice will require staff development within each sector on the applications of PDP and on the use of an ePortfolio tool to support learning development. Work package 5.1 of the ISLE Project seeks specifically to identify staff development required by tutors within FE and HE who will support learners to develop a personal learning plan for lifelong learning using an electronic system.

Workpackage 5.1 of the ISLE project aims to:
- identify staff development needs with regard to ePortfolios;
- identify examples of good practice from within and outwith the ISLE Project;
- develop a set of guidelines for the use of resources, case studies, materials available in a variety of formats for staff developers to use to support institutional staff development initiatives.

Methodology

To obtain the relevant information for this part of the workpackage an extensive literature search began in June 2005 with the aim of retrieving relevant published work on current ePortfolio practice within the tertiary sector. The literature on ePortfolios is extensive although very little evidence of research is available. Therefore, only literature that contributes to models of implementation and to the current practice of using the ePortfolio process for learning development has been selected for this part of the ISLE Project. Key themes identified from the literature informed the development of a semi-structured interview which was used as the basis for 15 taped and transcribed interviews with staff developers (see Appendix i).

Terminology

Terms such as progress file, personal development plan (PDP), portfolio and learning log are commonly used when referring to a process of developing, storing, and maintaining a record of personal work for learning development. In addition, webfolio and electronic portfolio (ePortfolio) are used when referring to an electronic system that supports the development and use of a portfolio although a difference of opinion exists in the literature about the determinants of each. Some authors claim that a webfolio is any system that is accessed through an Internet browser whereas an ePortfolio refers more to the electronic storing and/or accessing of the contents which would include portable storage devices such as CD-ROMs. Ambiguity may be further fuelled as the terminology used throughout the literature does not distinguish between the product and the process. The product which is the program used to support the contents of the ePortfolio is often considered the same as the process of storing or modifying the contents.

For the purpose of this report the term ePortfolio will refer to an electronic system that facilitates learners to record events that are personally significant and allows

these records to be linked, augmented or evidenced by other data sources including personal data held on other institutional systems such as student record systems. It is a personal private learning tool that facilitates self-awareness, promotes reflection and supports personal enrichment through commentary and feedback with selected individuals and/or groups. In addition, it is a tool that will support story telling which can be shared with a diverse audience over which the learner has absolute control. Furthermore, it is a tool that will facilitate storage of personal material that contributes to future personal and professional development.

This interim report will address the issues related to staff development needs by identifying the areas of practice that are central to the use of an ePortfolio for learning and teaching. A summary of the findings to date from the literature and from the interviews conducted with staff developers is provided with suggestions for institutions in their support for tutors in deploying an ePortfolio in order to ease the transition for learners moving from further to higher education.

Section A: Literature review

Overview of the literature review

A search of electronic databases and ejournals using key words such as ePortfolio, electronic portfolio and personal learning plan was conducted. Websites for the Centre for Recording Achievements, the Higher Education Academy and Helen Barrett's personal website were also searched for relevant literature. Fifty articles on the subject of using portfolios, including ePortfolios, for learning and personal development have been collected to date. A selection of articles has been used for this interim report with the search continuing for the final report in 2007 which will include a full bibliography.

Key themes from the literature

The following provides a summary of the key issues identified from the literature review. The themes are presented in a logical sequence for usage with an ePortfolio process.

Reason for use

An ePortfolio system has the potential to fulfil many functions. It can be used as an interactive learning tool providing a forum for learners to engage in dialogue and to exchange personal learning experiences. Barrett (2004b) promotes that this is best achieved by encouraging learners to engage in reflective running commentaries. An ePortfolio system can be used to store and display artefacts as evidence of learning achievements and experiences (Siemens, 2004) which can also be used to support personal and/or professional development (Funk, 2004). Roberts et al's (2005) idea that an ePortfolio should be more than a digital repository used to store files of personal achievements but should also support the development of reflective active documents for lifelong learning is generally well accepted throughout academia (East, 2005; Barrett, 2000). Beetham (n.d.) suggests that an ePortfolio can be used to support both formative and summative assessment although it is not clear if it is the process of developing an ePortfolio or elements within the ePortfolio that should be assessed. Utilising the versatility and extensive capability of an ePortfolio tool to develop deep learning also seems to be in keeping with popular thinking as is the recognition of integrating the ePortfolio process into methods used for learning and teaching (Funk, 2004). However, East (2005) presents the case that unless institutions are fully engaged in the use of portfolios for the development of learning and personal development planning and commit more to the process other than merely making a system available in order to comply with regulatory authorities (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, n.d.) learners and staff are less likely to engage in the process and that a unique opportunity to revolutionise learning will be lost. Siemens (2004) also suggests that if the process of maintaining an ePortfolio is to be effective for learning, the reason for its use must be embedded into the practice of learning and teaching.

Assessment

Using an ePortfolio for formative assessment and/or summative assessment is best discussed by Barrett (2004a) who draws on the distinction between using the portfolio process for the assessment *of* learning as opposed to using the process to support the assessment *for* learning. Barrett (2004a) also presents the case that using portfolios for assessment may have an influence on how learners will perceive the purpose of the portfolio process. She suggests that the purpose for the learners will change from a tool that can support lifelong learning development to a "high stakes" document that will be judged against a set of prescribe learning objectives.

Barrett suggests that learners will perceive a portfolio that is used for assessment purposes as:

> "something that is done to them rather than something they WANT to maintain as a lifelong learning tool." (Barrett 2004a, pp 1)

A sense of logical debate exists within the literature between those who favour using portfolios for assessment as a means of capturing valuable material developed from a process of learning, and those who do not favour assessing portfolios as the process is too personal and would require complex evaluation procedures (Dinek et al, 2005). Dinek et al (2005) suggest that assessing portfolios presents a new challenge as traditional assessment methods will not be valid. Alternative methods engaging the learner in debate and dialogue should be considered although the authors do admit that such a proposed process would be time-consuming.

Reflection

Spalding (1998) promotes the use of reflection for continuing professional development for the Allied Health Care Professions and offers a definition of reflection which:

> "….is a process of examining issues in an attempt to improve and shape activities." (Spalding 1998, pp 379)

There is general agreement throughout the literature that a learning portfolio, in whatever format, should evidence learning activity through the use of reflection (Barrett, 2004a; Roberts, 2005, Bruce, n.d.). Extensive literature on the use of reflection as part of a personal development process for teacher education is available; for example, Barrett (2004b) suggests that the ability for student teachers to reflect on learning is a demonstration of deep learning that supports a constructivist learning approach. Barrett (2004b) supports the use of "digital story telling" adapted from the work of Donald Schön who advocates that stories are products of reflection. She promotes the work of Janice McDrury and Maxime Alterio (2003) entitled, "*Learning through Storytelling in Higher Education*," which outlines the theory of meaningful story telling as an effective learning tool. Yancey and Weiser (1997) also provide an example of how a reflective story can be used in teacher education to help novice teachers draw conclusions on their teaching abilities as they create an account of their teaching experience which is logged and stored for future reference. However, Yancey and Weiser (1997) caution that developing an ePortfolio for teacher education should be well thought out and needs to be integrated into teaching methods.

On personal observation although the reflective process is promoted and supported, there would seem to be a general assumption by the many advocates of reflection that learners already posses the ability to be a reflective learner. An additional assumption is equally made that academic staff are knowledgeable and well skilled in the reflective process. No attention is given throughout the literature on how to support learners develop a reflective process for learning and indeed, very little evidence exists on the value of reflection in developing lifelong learning.

Blogging

The use of blogging, originally known as web logging, as a tool for the development of deep learning is advocated by a number of authors. Williams and Jacobs (2004) cite a number of articles that explore the use of blogs for education and indicate that developing an online journal in the form of blogging can encourage personal reflection and critical and analytical thinking. The very nature of blogging, which has developed from the practice of maintaining a personal journal, is purported to encourage learners to confront and to annotate their own personal opinions, whilst developing their writings. The authors suggest that learners are encouraged to consider how their views may be interpreted by other readers when submitting a blog to the contents of an ePortfolio. Downs (2004) offers a definition of a blog as an electronic posting that is:

> "…informal, sometimes controversial and sometimes deeply personal, no matter what topic…." (Downs 2004, pp 18).

Downs adds that:

> "Blogs are in their purest form, the core of what has come to be called personal publishing." (Downs 2004, pp 18).

However, using the process of blogging for learning will require some serious consideration. Ferdig and Trammel (2004) suggest that dialogue through blogging is a more successful learning tool than asynchronous discussions as blogging is more successful in promoting interaction that is controversial and more effective in developing a good teacher learner relationship by promoting more active learning. However, some express another view and suggest that if blogging is imposed as part of a teaching programme, then the practice ceases to be true blogging as the learners are expected to perform at a certain level and for a specified audience. As Downs (2004) observes, blogging may have some educational benefits but these do not come without an element of risk as blogging may begin as a piece of personal publishing but inevitably ends up as a conversation which must remain unconstrained. However, the risk in the controversial nature of blogging has been known to contravene copyright law and Downs (2004) cites a case when legal action was taken against a university resulting from a student's posting about a fellow student and a teacher.

Web or paper-based

Siemens (2004) recognises that maintaining a record of work in the form of a portfolio is not new and has been central to the work produced by artists. He suggests that maintaining an ePortfolio is a modern day extension of the same practice except an electronic system can offer many additional benefits for learners. Siemens also states that learning is part of life and goes on outside formal education. Therefore, maintaining a record of development can help learners plan for their future learning needs based on previous learning experiences. Love et al (2004) discuss the increased educational capability that is to be gained from using an electronic portfolio as opposed to a paper-based system and compares the range of capabilities of each system. The authors present the case that the diversity presented by an electronic system has the potential to facilitate the development of higher levels of thinking. Gathercoal at al (2002) introduces the concept that the electronic portfolio provides a plethora of interactive learning opportunities which is not as futuristic as may be perceived. The authors bravely suggest that the problem with developing ePortfolios for learning does not lie with the learner but lies with academic institutions and the

academics themselves. Moving to develop an electronic portfolio can be challenging for academics and certainly will require a rethink to curriculum design. Nevertheless, Gathercoal et al (2002) provide an insight to the direct benefits of maintaining an ePortfolio such as eliminating the need for storage space, easier access to the portfolio content, sharing of portfolio content that can be viewed by more than one individual at any one time and overall, ownership for the learner of their own learning space.

Legal issues

Charlesworth and Home (n.d.) present legal issues to be considered when working with Managed Learned Environments which may also be applicable to ePortfolios, such as Ownership and Intellectual Property Rights of the material contained in the ePortfolio, especially if the material is used for course work or for assessment. Maintaining privacy of the data within an ePortfolio, compliance with the Special Education Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) and with Information Management Systems software standards are additional issues to be considered when establishing an ePortfolio system. Charlesworth and Home (n.d.) advise that learners are made aware of copyright law since learners and institutions can be held accountable for bad and in many cases naïve practice.

Recommendations for the implementation of ePortfolios

Barrett (2004) offers guidance on the implementation of an ePortfolio for the purpose of developing learning and suggests that institutions should start small and gradually develop experience. She believes that educational establishments should have a clear vision of how the ePortfolio tool should be used with commitments made towards resourcing staff development. She states that new skills are required in order for staff to support the development of an ePortfolio process and promotes that practice should be developed through early adopters and enthusiasts. Furthermore, she suggests that recognition and allowance should be given to the different attitudes of staff and to the fact that staff members will develop at varying rates.

Siemens (2004) suggests that an ePortfolio process should be integrated into teaching practice and into assessment. He promotes the development of an ePortfolio culture with dialogue, debate and discussion being adopted as common practice and advocates that the institution, at all levels, should be fully supportive of the ePortfolio culture and be active in promoting its use. Finally, Betts and Calabro (2005) provide a list of enablers and inhibitors when implementing ePortfolios. Inhibitors include staff resistance and concerns about their own ability to lead a new initiative. Enablers include senior management buy-in. If senior management are seen to be committed to the use of the ePortfolio process and invest in staff development then staff are more likely to become involved.

Section B: The interviews

Overview of the interviews

A number of staff developers, both nationally and internationally, were identified as having significant experience in developing, implementing and/or using an ePortfolio. A total of fifteen staff developers agreed to be interviewed, twelve from higher education and three from further education, who completed and returned a consent form. To date all fifteen volunteers have been interviewed either by telephone, video conference or by face-to-face interview. Where possible interviews were recorded and a written transcript produced. Two of the twelve recordings were lost due to a faulty recorder. Where interviews were not recorded, notes were taken at the time of the interview. Final analysis of all the transcripts will be conducted using NUD.IST. (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing) although at this point a number of common themes have been identified from the interviews.

The questions used for the interviews were developed from the themes identified in the literature and were sent to each interviewee prior to the interview. Approval for each transcript was sought as each interviewee received a preview of his/her own transcript. The questions used for the interviews can be seen in appendix i.

Key themes from the interviews

The themes will follow the same order as the literature review.

Reason for use

This was the most important issue discussed by all those interviewed; it was felt that the purpose for using the ePortfolio needs to be clear in order for staff and learners to commit to using the process. The issue of "buy-in" was discussed from both the staff and learners perspective. If staff and learners do not understand or believe in the portfolio process then the process will not be used. Some staff developers felt that the only way to encourage student commitment to the portfolio process was to assess the portfolio contents. Others felt that embedding the portfolio into the curriculum was the only way to encourage use whereas a few felt that emphasising the use of the portfolio to aid employment prospects for learner would encourage buy-in. One institution is proposing to encourage staff to use the ePortfolio system for staff appraisal and academic review.

Assessment

Views varied with some staff developers supporting the formative and/or summative evaluation of ePortfolios. Others felt that the ePortfolio should not be assessed at all. The main reason given for assessing the ePortfolio was incentivising learners to use the ePortfolio. Those interviewed felt that if the ePortfolio was assessed then learners would be encouraged to use the system for learning. Otehr respondents stated that once the ePortfolio is linked with an assessment, then the whole emphasis and purpose of the ePortfolio changes from a personal learning space to a record that will be less personal and which will be judged and graded. This led to another area of discussion which was concerned with plagiarism.

Plagiarism

Opinions were mixed regarding plagiarising ePortfolios. Some felt that it made no sense for learners to plagiarise an ePortfolio as the content was personal and developed from an individual perspective. In comparison, others felt that plagiarism could very well occur particularly when learners were providing evidence of learning. One view was that maybe plagiarism should be accepted at a certain level as part of modern day practice.

Reflection

All those interviewed felt that an ability to demonstrate reflection on learning experiences is an essential element of the development of an ePortfolio. However, there was no general consensus on how learners could be made aware of how to use the reflection process. Interpretation on how reflection is used by students differed between institutions. Some have interpreted the process of reflection as a process of looking back at a history of achievements in order to help learners realise their journey of development and as a means to help learners consider where they wanted to get to and what they will need to get there. In some cases an assumption is made that learners will naturally be able to reflect on their learning and that staff will be able to support learners through this process. Some staff developers are aware that academic staff, primarily within the healthcare disciplines, will be better able to guide learners effectively in the use of the reflective process as reflection is firmly embedded in their professional practice. However, it is also recognised that other staff members who are not so familiar with the reflective process, will find the practice challenging and will require some guidance before they can support learners not only to think in a reflective way but also to write reflectively. Some institutions are considering providing training sessions for staff by their staff development units; others are less clear and have no particular plan. The process of introducing learners to the reflective process is not clear for a number of institutions.

Web or paper-based

As the ISLE Project is looking at the use of ePortfolios all the staff developers interviewed were involved in supporting an electronic system although some had previous experience of using a paper-based system. A variety of different electronic models are being used throughout the United Kingdom and in other countries. Some are custom made in-house design, supported by technical staff. Others are programmes that have been bought in from one of the many companies who provide ePortfolio packages. Those who had previously used a paper-based system saw clear advantages in adapting to an electronic system despite the financial implications which had caused some concern and at times, resentment.

Implementation

A number of the staff developers discussed the process of implementing an ePortfolio system within an academic institution. A variety of different ways have been used to implement an ePortfolio as currently there is no template or guidance offered for implementation, despite the requirement for HEIs and FEIs to provide a portfolio for learning by the end of the academic year 2006. Some staff developers have provided hands on sessions to teach staff and learners about the use of a portfolio whereas others have started with enthusiasts and early adopters assisting in the implementation of an ePortfolio. Some staff developers have encouraged embedding the ePortfolio into teaching practice, for example, modules or programmes with the early developers or technical staff being available for support.

Others reported that implementation has been left to individual learners with the emphasis being placed on using the ePortfolio for employability.

Intellectual Property Rights

Answers to this question were all clear and unanimous in that the Intellectual Property Right (IPR) relating to the contents of the ePortfolio was clearly owned by the learner or by the owner of the ePortfolio. Data Protection was also discussed here in relation to storage of material which received a mix of responses. These responses ranged from believing there was no issue to be considered to others who felt that if the contents of the ePortfolio was linked to assessment then elements of the Data Protection Act would have to be considered when archiving work.

Storage and/or transferability of information

Most of those interviewed had thought about this and views varied although no one institution had put any thoughts into practice. Some institutions were planning to store ePortfolios for postgraduate learners and allowing them access through a payment or rental system. Others were considering offering alumni lifetime access to their ePortfolio and allowing them access to update the contents and support when downloading. A few were confident that the contents of the ePortfolio could be downloaded onto a portable storage device allowing the learners to transfer the contents to other systems and hence long-term storage would not be an issue.

Diagnostic testing

Interviewees were asked if they were familiar with the use of diagnostic testing as part of the ePortfolio process. Although the issue of diagnostic testing was not mentioned in the literature, it became apparent in the interviews that diagnostic testing was considered an important feature of an ePortfolio. All those who were interviewed were familiar with the use of diagnostic testing for learning development although once again application of its use varied between institutions, within and across the sector.

Section C: Key issues for staff development

The aim of this research has been to identify staff development needs regarding ePortfolios. The previous two sections have reported key themes that were identified through the literature review and raised in the interviews with staff developers. No clear models, examples of good practice and/or guidelines have emerged regarding staff development in this area to date. Therefore, we suggest that each institution address the following areas in their staff development programme for ePortfolios which have consistently emerged through the literature review and the interviews. Inevitably, the amount, type and focus of the staff development programme provided will reflect the strategic approach of each institution and the resources available. In many cases, it may be appropriate, as Barrett suggests, to focus staff development programmes on a small group of enthusiasts. Then, this group will be used to help in cascading learning throughout the institution.

1. Terminology

Prior to any staff development, it is essential that an institution has clarity and consistency about the terminology to be used surrounding its ePortfolio and that this is reinforced in strategic documentation. It is recommended that the terminology distinguishes between the process of learners developing and maintaining an ePortfolio, for example, using reflective statements and blogs, and the product which is the tool to support that development.

Clarity and use of a common language for staff and learners in both sectors would smooth the transfer of learning between FE and HE and go some way to helping individuals learning and working within the sector understand the difference between the processes and products. However, it is unlikely that this will occur in the short-term and therefore any staff development programme needs to ensure that all tutors have an awareness of the differences and will be able to ease learners' transition from one institution to another.

2. Reason for use

The type, level and purpose of use of the ePortfolio system must be decided by each institution. ePortfolios can be deployed in many different ways from a tool that can be used as a one-stop digital storage archive supporting the creation of cvs and portfolios to one that promotes deep learning through reflection. Staff should be provided with examples of good practice of how the ePortfolio could be used according to the institutional perspective, for example, how blogging could be used to support deep learning. However, it may be a challenge for some staff to support students to freely develop their learning in such an environment without becoming too prescriptive and didactic. If at all possible, staff should be provided with opportunities to use the ePortfolio for themselves to experience this new online environment especially blogging. To assist this, the ePortfolio could be incorporate into the institution's HR procedures, for example, personal planning.

It is also recommended that any staff development outlines the advantages of an ePortfolio over a paper-based system. Some staff may be familiar with a paper-based system and perceive that an ePortfolio is just an online version and miss the added functionality and opportunities within an ePortfolio. Therefore, it is essential that tutors have the possibility of exploring the role of the ePortfolio as both a digital archive and as a tool for promoting lifelong learning.

Many ePortfolios include some kind of diagnostic testing tool but this will not necessarily be familiar to all staff. Again, guidance needs to be provided on its role in promoting learning. Support staff may wish to be involved in this area.

3. Reflection

Although there is little evidence that reflection can promote lifelong learning, there is general agreement that reflection should be used to evidence learning activity in the ePortfolio. Again, an institution needs to clarify the role that reflection will take in its ePortfolio. However, any staff development programme will need to accommodate tutors' present knowledge and attitudes to using reflection in learning and teaching. It cannot be assumed that all staff and learners will automatically possess the ability to be reflective learners and tutors will need guidance on how to support learners think and write in a reflective way. Examples can be drawn from teacher education.

Furthermore, if any institution decides to use blogging and storytelling, staff will need appropriate training. For example, tutors require specific examples of how blogs can stimulate analytical and creative thinking as well as how they can respond to students' blogs. Tutors will also need an overview of the history of blogs and how students may have used them outwith the sector. Guidance should be provide to ensure tutors can prepare students to write for different audiences if the blogs are to be made publicly available or used outwith their own private learning space.

4. Assessment

Serious consideration is required if the contents of an ePortfolio is linked to either formative and/or summative assessment. As presented earlier there are clear arguments for and against the use of assessment which need to be considered by each institution if not by each subject area or even each member of academic staff. It should not be forgotten that the 'true spirit' of maintaining an ePortfolio is to encourage the development of a personal, private learning space. Educators perhaps need to learn to 'let go' of the learning process and accept that not all learning needs to be evaluated or measured. Educators who wish to assess all or part of the ePortfolio process have to be aware that they may influence the content of the portfolio to favour the assessment criteria reducing the opportunity for the learner to develop a personal private learning space. Staff development in relation to assessment may be considerable if it is accepted that standard methods used to assess academic work are inappropriate for the assessment of a personal development portfolio. However, if staff feel it is necessary, in the early stages, to ensure buy-in to the ePortfolio through assessment then they should focus on the work of Barrett (2000) and consider which elements of the ePortfolio could be used to assist the assessment of the process of learning.

5. Legal issues

Clear policies to encourage good practice and procedures when using an ePortfolio tool are required in each sector to reduce infringement of copyright law, of the Data Protection Act and to reduce libellous practice which could increase the risk of legal action. For example, staff and students need guidelines on the use of blogs. Staff also need to make students aware of how their posting may be misinterpreted and the potential consequences. It may be appropriate to remind staff and students of their institution's IT Acceptable Use Policy and provide examples of when a blog may be infringing these.

6. Other areas for consideration

Through the interviews, literature research and our own experience to date, some further areas could be considered in a staff development programme:

6.1 Technical training

Tutors will require some technical training in the use of any ePortfolio system. The challenge for any staff development programme will be to provide adequate and timely technical support with appropriate reference documentation. Also, like many institutions have encountered through their institutional deployment of a VLE, some tutors will focus on the '*how'* of the system rather than the '*why'* of using the system especially if the tutor is already experienced in using a paper-based portfolio.

6.2 The role of support staff

Support staff including careers, disability officers, Information Technology and student support staff all have a vital role to play in the deployment of an ePortfolio. Such staff may wish to provide guidance to tutors on reflection, employability and diagnostic testing in relation to the ePortfolio. The Disability Officer could offer guidance on problems encountered by special needs students using an ePortfolio.

6.3 Storage and transferability

Consideration and plans for the storage, archiving and/or transferability of ePortfolio content is required particularly if learners are transferring within the tertiary sector. Tutors will need to know what students can transfer, how it can be transferred and in what formats.

Conclusion

From the literature review and the interviews conducted with staff developers, it appears there is very little information and/or guidelines on how to provide staff development within tertiary education so that tutors can effectively support learners in the use of an ePortfolio tool for personal development planning. It is hoped that by highlighting relevant themes that have consistently emerged, at this point in the Project, institutions can consider aspects of staff development that best suites their individual needs and begin to put in place plans for staff development.

Finally, if one of the aims of ePortfolios is to smooth the transfer of learning from FE to HE perhaps some common approaches to practice between both sectors needs to be considered, such as a common approach to reflective practice and diagnostic testing. Where this may be too prescriptive as each sector caters for different learning needs, consideration needs to be given to how staff within HE can support learners to continue to develop their personal ePortfolio for learning in higher education and for future lifelong learning.

Appendix i

The staff developers who agreed to be interviewed were provided with the following questions in preparation for their semi-structured interviews:

- Could you provide an overview of your institution's current and planned deployment of ePortfolios?

- What is your institution's perspective of what an ePortfolio is and its role? How did the institution come to this decision? Is this vision linked to any strategies, for example, learning and teaching?

- How is that vision communicated to staff?

- Who will/does provide technical support for the ePortfolio/staff development for the ePortfolio?

- How was this decided?

- What training has been provided for the staff developer?

- For staff developers what do you think will be/are the main issues when supporting tutors using an ePortfolio?

- How is the staff development being planned (if any?) for ePortfolios?

- What areas will you be covering/are you/would you hope to cover in the staff development?

- What materials have you/are you planning to use with tutors? Have you written these or are they purchased for anyone?

- What support are you giving to staff to help encourage students to become involved with the ePortfolio?

- Will you be covering diagnostic testing?

- How will you be evaluating the staff development?

- Has any additional funding been made available for staff development?

- What (if any) incentives are being provided for staff to attend staff development on ePortfolios?

- Storage of learners' data – what happens when the learner leaves?

- Have any issues been raised about intellectual property rights?

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