

**Title:**                   **Coaching-led Approaches to PDP and Employability Development**

**Presenter:**       **Tracy Johnson**  
University of Bristol

### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Describe and reflect on their teaching/support approaches to PDP and employability
- Consider how PDP and coaching structures inform each other
- Identify ways in which they might use coaching techniques to support students in developing PDP, employability and career management skills
- Set goals for future discussion and development at their own institution and identify colleagues at HEIs with whom they can share good practice informally.

#### **Session Outline**

This session provides an evaluation of and reflection on PDP teaching techniques used to develop student employability at the University of Bristol that have been informed by coaching frameworks. The presenter is both a higher education lecturer in academic skills & professional development and a qualified personal coach, and has seen some success in the 'rebranding' of PDP as 'self-coaching skills', both in terms of take-up by students and in their application of techniques such as self-assessment, goal setting, action planning and reflective practice. These fundamental PDP processes can be seen to map clearly onto established coaching techniques, including those taught by well-regarded professionals such as Jenny Rogers (2004) and John Whitmore (2002). Specifically, results have been seen most clearly at Bristol where PDP/coaching skills have been taught to and applied by students looking to enhance their employability and professional skills. Bristol carried out a small pilot project examining initial PDP development in its Faculties in 2004, a key finding of which was that students were more inclined to use PDP processes to help them secure employment and develop their professional skills; this has since been borne out by more extensive PDP studies such as Clegg & Bradley (2006). The presentation will therefore focus on two main areas: the overall effect of a new approach to teaching and marketing PDP for employability based on coaching skills and, as an illustrative case study, the restructuring of an accredited Career Management Skills Unit taught in the Faculty of Engineering to develop a more PDP/coaching-informed ethos to employability.

Key issues to be addressed are:

- How do PDP processes and coaching techniques inform each other?
- How do students respond to the 'professionalising' of skills development and PDP?
- How can coaching techniques be used by staff supporting PDP?
- How can 'rebranding' affect PDP take-up?

## **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

The session will be opened with a 20-minute presentation about coaching-led approaches to PDP support and employability development. Questions will be suggested during this presentation for participants to consider. At the end of the presentation, 10 minutes will be used for small-group discussion around some of these questions, or issues raised by participants, followed by feedback and reflection in plenary for 10 minutes. Participants will be encouraged to spend the last 5 minutes of the session setting goals for PDP development in their own areas of teaching and support.

## **References**

Clegg, S. and S. Bradley, (2006) 'Personal Development Planning: practices and processes', *British Educational Research Journal*, 32:1, pp. 57-76.

Rogers, J. (2004) *Coaching Skills: A Handbook*, Berkshire: Open University Press.

Whitmore, J. (2002) *Coaching for Performance: GROWing People, Performance and Purpose*, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.