**Individual CPD Report no.1**

**Reflection on my own personal and professional practice and development**

Reflecting on the last 12 months of my personal and professional practice and development has shown me that change is a constant in this current climate. I completed my CMI accredited Diploma in Leadership and Management and am now a Chartered Manager – a designation I hold with some pride. This has enabled me to affirm my existing skills and knowledge as a manager and learn new and interesting insights into that role. In particular I enjoyed learning more about aspects and methods of leadership. As any learner I particularly found the personalised project of more interest as it enabled me to put into practice what I had learned and enabled me to express my opinions on current management practices.

The CMI course was hard work especially as it was all done on line with no real group support. It has reaffirmed for me that to be really successful (and enjoyable) any online learning has to be undertaken alongside some form of support group – a tutor alone is not enough. I have joined more online groups via such online communities as LinkedIn and others in order to maintain my knowledge of current developments, discussions and enable me to express opinions. However this is tempered by the fact that naturally comments made online are public (usually) and remain there potentially for years! I have seen some opinions expressed which, whilst may be the heartfelt view of the individual, may have been better toned down or more thoroughly explained. Research shows that many employers use these sites to examine views expressed, as well as social media to gain a view of how the individual displays them. In turn individuals may be focussing their social media to enable them to put forward best possible expertise and views – as with any such forum caveat emptor when reading!

The development of communities through online learning is an area which is of considerable interest to me and one that I am exploring further with a colleague. I still enjoy undertaking research as a form of transformative learning which through critical questioning of my own values, beliefs and expectations allows me to ‘experience a deep shift in perspective which leads (*me)* to a new way of being in the world’ (Wilcox 2009, p.124)). Engaging with others in this process is vital and allows the ‘reviewing *(of)* our long-held assumptions’ (ibid p.124) to take place. I have published a research paper on the value of education and continue to be a member of a Research Committee to widen my understanding of being part of the research community and to support colleagues in that context. My reading enables me to experience wide opinions of policy and underpinning research which informs my own style and policy interests.

This year I have been supporting those without education, training or employment (NEETs) through the development of Traineeship models. I worked hard to develop these models which I presented to the Advisory Board which I initiated and then chaired and was delighted that it was met with approval. The relationship building that I had undertaken in my previous role served me in good stead.

As part of the work on Traineeships I developed, in conjunction with a couple of colleagues, a range of employability modules which have now been incorporated into the various Traineeship models. One member of the small team I worked with is in the HR section and she wanted to work with me to develop a series of questions using the employability modules for employers to use during their Apprenticeship interviews. The rationale for this was that the employers were asking very random questions and she felt that using the material we had developed questions, tailored to the specific employer, and could be developed. This work was fully completed after I left, however colleagues have fed back that it has been very successful.

Change appears to be a constant at the moment with universities having to look at ways to bring in income in ways that would not have been thought of in the past. Managing change is certainly a challenge and not all organisations are able to cope. There is far less state subsidy available and we are moving towards less regulation so that organisations need to develop self-supporting strategies requiring greater emphasis on raising income. It seems that this has been on-going for some time as Hussey in 1998 wrote ‘The environment in which organizations operate has become ever more turbulent, forcing organizations to adapt and modify themselves in order to continue to survive and prosper’(7). The individual has to be more flexible and responsive to change which can be very unsettling and not all organisations are prepared to provide support to those affected. Individuals need to be resilient and adaptable in their approaches to their professional lives. Indeed this has prompted me to write a new paper on the subject of resilience on which a good deal has been produced. In particular I believe there is an emphasis on individuals becoming resilient when it should be the whole organisation and management structure that needs to comply with resilient measures. Most of these measures require nothing more than good, sound people management practices rather than requiring whole new bases of theory.

Through my last employer I have been given support through Penna which has been very beneficial. In the past I taught women returners to prepare CVs and apply for jobs but times have changed and I realised after a Penna workshop how out of date my own CV was. Other colleagues who have experienced such changes in the past have also been of real support which has helped. In last year’s report I referred to the comment made by Dr Runcie that we were becoming a society of portfolio professionals and it made me realise that there is a danger in this. It is perhaps the way that most of us have to be in order to survive, but the concern I have is that if we follow this path we become generalists who can undertake many roles but are in danger of failing to secure roles due to the lack of specialism. This does mean that demonstrating CPD each year to ensure you can show you are up to date and have the skills required is now a necessity. I have therefore begun to think what it is I want to do for the rest of my career.

Following my third year I can say I am still enjoying the role of tutor on an online course which continues to broaden my understanding of how people learn using a variety of on-line tools and what the limitations can be of that form of learning.

In June I was fortunate to shadow a course review which I thoroughly enjoyed. I will be undertaking a review in September and the opportunity to shadow such a positive one has certainly provided me with the confidence to proceed.

My CPD plans for the next year are to hopefully successfully submit an article on the online course, continue with my role as an online tutor, continue to mentor & develop colleagues through educational change processes and complete the project management course I am currently undertaking. I will also continue to co author White papers and am even considering writing a book – this will enable me to gain profile and ensure I maintain an up to date view of current challenges.

References:

Hussey. D., (1998) *how to be better at …managing change* London, Kogan Page Limited

Wilcox, S. Transformative educational development scholarship: beginning with ourselves in *International Journal for Academic Development* Vol. 14, No. 2, June 2009, 123-132