Advocating a Holistic Approach to Continuing Professional Development Provision for Practitioners and Providers

By:

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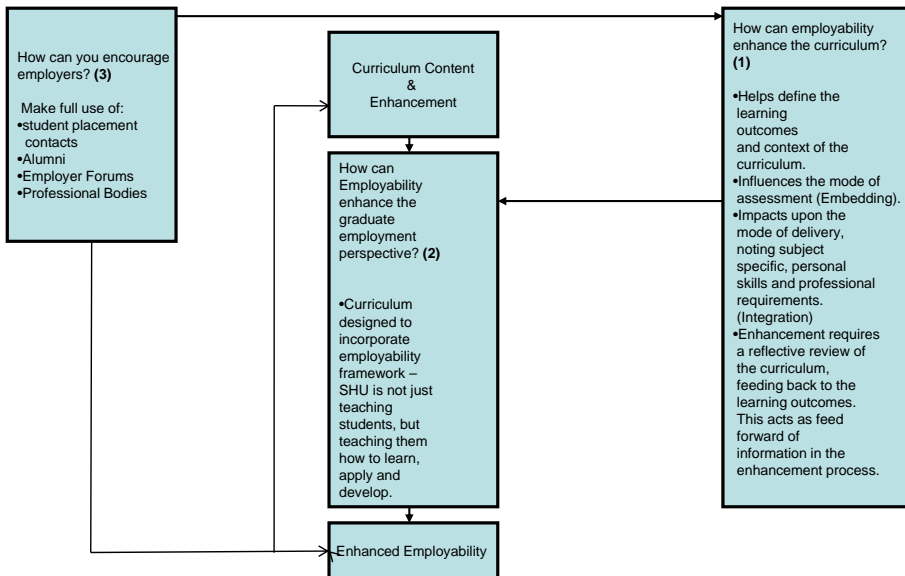**Mr. Neil Hanney**

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SHARPENS YOUR THINKING

Introduction

- This paper explores the interrelationship between Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Life Long Learning (LLL), Work Life Balance (WLB) and the linking key concept of Employability, with a view to developing a holistic approach to CPD provision.

- The process has valid transferability for other subject specific disciplines and professional bodies.

- CPD has been defined as *"The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills, and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties through a practitioners working life"* (RICS 1993).

Watson (2006) Employability Entering the Curriculum

How can you encourage employers? **(3)**

Make full use of:
- student placement contacts
- Alumni
- Employer Forums
- Professional Bodies

Curriculum Content & Enhancement

How can Employability enhance the graduate employment perspective? **(2)**

- Curriculum designed to incorporate employability framework – SHU is not just teaching students, but teaching them how to learn, apply and develop.

How can employability enhance the curriculum? **(1)**

- Helps define the learning outcomes and context of the curriculum.
- Influences the mode of assessment (Embedding).
- Impacts upon the mode of delivery, noting subject specific, personal skills and professional requirements. (Integration)
- Enhancement requires a reflective review of the curriculum, feeding back to the learning outcomes. This acts as feed forward of information in the enhancement process.

Enhanced Employability

The Mixed Complexities of CPD

- The focus now being placed on CPD is forcing both Higher Education and Professional Institutions to re-examine their methodologies for developing and delivering CPD programmes.

- If CPD is to be genuinely continuous, then the traditional approaches currently adopted by many universities must change.

- Within Higher Education Institutions, the key client group is no longer 18 - 25 year olds, it is in fact moving towards a more mature and experienced people set, wishing to enhance their existing qualifications to meet changing circumstances and future needs.

- Therefore CPD can be extended to encompass the concept of "Work Based Learning".

- Thus it is imperative that the complex issue of CPD does incorporate the "Work Based Learning" concept.

- The challenge seems to be one of meeting the needs of industry in terms of identifiable benefits and flexibility of learning while yet ensuring academic quality.

Work Life Balance Issues

- The concept of Work Life Balance impinges upon a practitioners working life and hence is also an integral part of CPD. Work Life Balance is not about trying to schedule an equal number of hours for each of an individuals working and social activities.

- It is however, about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work.

- After all CPD is usually undertaken as an "Add-On" activity to a normal employees workload. If an employee does not obtain time to unwind they are very unlikely to be able to maintain a sustained out-put at work.

Life long Learning Issues

- Life Long Learning can be defined as all learning activities undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic and social and/or employment – related perspective.

- Life Long Learning is about acquiring and updating all kinds of abilities, interests, knowledge and qualifications.

- Life Long Learning is also about providing second chances to update basic skills and offering learning opportunities at more advanced levels.

Employability Issues

- A further concept requiring noting within the paper and one which forms part of the total holistic approach to CPD delivery is the key concept of "Employability".

- Defining Employability 'Employability' refers to a range of potential work activities and these include:

➢ Paid/self employment
➢ Creative/artistic work
➢ Work in/for the community

## Employability Issues (continued)

- SHU's approach is distinctive because it concentrates on 'integrating and embedding' a coherent set of curriculum features within all its awards.

- Integration: bringing together all features (e.g. through a vehicle such as student placement and/or the utilisation of case studies) so that students are better able to make the relevant connections between curriculum and application.

- Embedding: having learning outcomes with relevant learning and teaching methods and assessment, which are all aligned, presenting a truly holistic approach.

- It is vital to have a valid curriculum designed with an input from all relevant sources, and linking learning outcomes to appropriate methods of assessment. The teaching methods should enable the material to be delivered and tested, hence the utilisation of a 'teaching vehicle' such as a case study.

Holistic Approach

- A critical aspect of this paper is the advocation of a holistic strategy when trying to address the CPD agenda for professional practitioners, rather than a more randomised approach that tends to be the preferred strategy adopted by most CPD providers.

- Having described Work Based Learning, Work Life Balance, Life Long Learning and Employability the following provides an integrated practical application in the form of a case study. It is based on the Association of Building Engineering (ABE) and Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) UK.
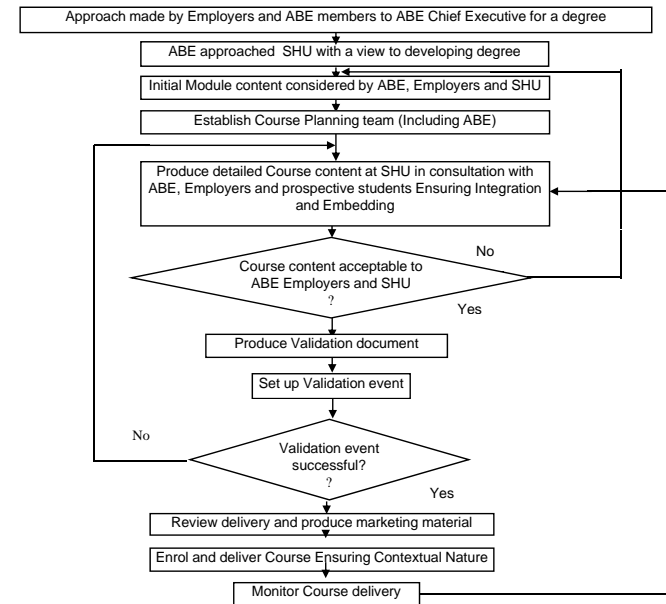

Linking Employability, LLL, CPD and Work Life Balance.
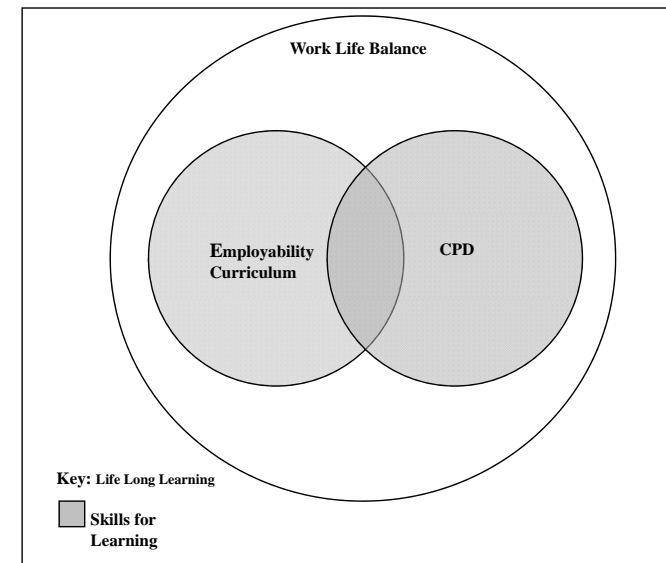
Programme Structure

- The programme structure was designed to be delivered in a flexible manner so as to meet the CPD requirements of the professional market place. From research conducted by Le Roux et al (2004) the "…benefits gained through implementation of CPD as a life long learning professional life style and an established organisational policy by practitioners operating in the built environment were identified as:
  - ➤ [the] achievement of success in professional practice;
  - ➤ [having] quality assurance in the provision of professional services
  - ➤ contribution to "client delight" and
  - ➤ contribution to sustained income generation."

Developmental Process of case study

Thank you.

Any questions?