



# L&D News

The latest from the Learning and Development department at BIGGA

## CPD: Personal Learning... What's in a Statement?

This month Stuart Green explains the crucial role of Personal Learning Statements (PLS) within CPD



**The introduction of the new CPD programme offers members a wider variety of opportunities to claim credits either via education, networking or professional activities. The other category is Personal Learning credits.**

Firstly, let's talk about what CPD is and this will help you to understand how Personal Learning Statements (PLS) can help to inform and enhance your development.

### CPD

As part of the reorganisation of the BIGGA CPD Scheme, we investigated and researched other professional bodies' CPD schemes. The main conclusion we drew from this was that there is not one system that is the same. Every organisation has something different to fit

their members and their industry. However, the one core element that was fundamental to all CPD schemes was REFLECTION.

The concept of reflection is not new and we do it all the time, consciously and unconsciously. For example, dreaming is reflection, as our brains seek to make sense of our experiences whilst we are sleeping. What CPD programmes aim to do is formalise the process of reflection so that it can be evidenced.

Reid (1993) identifies the process of reflection in a simple quote:

*"Reflection is a process of reviewing an experience of practice in order to describe, analyse and evaluate and so inform learning about practice"*

Basically, it's a way of thinking about an experience and identifying what was learnt and how it may help you in your personal and pro-

fessional development. Reflection is very personal and will require you to examine what you felt about the experience - it's a fantastic tool for any practitioner to use but it does involve a little work. Initially, it took me a while to get the hang of it during my time as a lecturer. However, PERSEVERE, because once you understand it your skills as a competent and motivated professional will increase significantly.

### Personal Learning

So what is a Personal Learning Statement (PLS)? The PLS is a downloadable document (from the CPD Resources page in the Member's Area of the website) that asks you a series of questions to help you in your reflection. (Fig.1.)

They provide you with the opportunity to identify a significant learn-





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**Contact Details**

 Sami Strutt  
L&D Manager  
[sami@bigga.co.uk](mailto:sami@bigga.co.uk)

 Rachael Duffy  
L&D Executive  
[rachael@bigga.co.uk](mailto:rachael@bigga.co.uk)

 Stuart Green  
L&D Executive  
[stuart@bigga.co.uk](mailto:stuart@bigga.co.uk)

01347 833800 (option 3)  
[www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk)

ing event and are structured so that you may formalise your thoughts about it.

### What can I claim for?

Good question! Pretty much anything that helps you develop the skills you need for your personal and professional development. It can be used to identify transferable skills, such as communication, and people skills from an event or activity that does not fit the designated CPD categories. This may include coaching and organising youth teams or being involved in committees outside of work.

It could also be mentoring a young apprentice, dealing with a challenging issue involving a colleague or how you dealt with an awkward committee member. By formalising your feelings and experiences, it will open up opportunities for personal growth. It may also be used to review your own CPD programme. So you can get credits for gaining credits!

When completing a PLS, there is no right or wrong answer, it's about your personal feelings, conclusions and decisions. However, they should not be seen as easy CPD credits, as a form with minimal input will be of no benefit to you. A PLS should only be used to demonstrate that learning has taken place, that it's had an impact on you and is being used to inform further development of skills and attitude.

You are able to claim up to 15 credits per three-year cycle. You can claim more, but only 15 will be used in any one cycle, the rest will be carried over, but they have a lifespan of three years from the date submitted.

To summarise, here are some general tips for completing a PLS:

- Have you had any experiences that could help you in your professional or personal development?
- Use the form to guide your thoughts and feelings by answering the questions.
- The more information you put down on your form, the more you will be able to drive the benefits of learning.
- Any experience can be used, as long as you can identify that what you learnt is transferable.

Reid B (1993) 'But We're Doing it Already!' Exploring a Response to the Concept of Reflective Practice in Order to Improve its Facilitation, *Nurse Education Today*, 13: 305-309.

Figure 1



### PERSONAL LEARNING STATEMENT

**NAME: STUART GREEN**  
**MEMBERSHIP No:XXXXX**

#### SUMMARY OF WHAT WAS DONE (DON'T DESCRIBE EVERYTHING, BE SELECTIVE)

- *Attended the Learning Technologies exhibition at Olympia - Jan 2014*
- *Met with exhibitors to discuss Learner Management systems and e-learning*
- *Attended Seminars on e-learning*

#### NEW LEARNING

What did I learn that was new to me?

- *There is so much technology available to record and manage learning.*
- *How to manage an e-learning project.*
- *An increased awareness of the size of the accreditation project.*

What insights did this new knowledge give to me?

*That there is technology available to record learning and BIGGA could use that technology to benefit its members. Also the concept of different types of learning, such as, blended, social and virtual*

Did it help me see something in a new light?

*It helped clarify my position in the project and how it would be best to move forward.*

Did it help me understand something that I didn't understand before?

*There are so many varying tools available that it highlighted that the accreditation project needs to be broken down into three distinct projects.*

How do I think this might be useful (in practice, in my studies, in my life)?

*It has identified that for me to gain a clear perspective on a subject I need to be able to review what I have seen, reflect on it and revisit it again with a fresh approach.*

#### PERSONAL REACTION

How did I feel about what was done? (Did it affect me emotionally and if so how?)

*I felt really good. It was very tiring as I had to concentrate a lot to take in everything that I was being told. It felt great to be able to reflect on the event after.*

What did I like or enjoy and why?

*The experience of realisation. That moment of "getting it!" was really a fundamental moment for me.*

What did I dislike and why?

*I didn't like the feeling of not knowing enough when I was speaking to exhibitors. But that soon changed after a few conversations.*

What did I find easy to do or understand and why?

*Talking to people has always been easy for me and I enjoy it. Once the concept of a learner management system was explained, generally, in diagrammatic form, I could grasp the concept of how the system may work for BIGGA.*

What did I find difficult or challenging to do or understand and why?

*There was a lot of IT talk, which can be difficult to comprehend, not being IT trained!*

#### ACTION TO BE TAKEN

Is there any action that I will take as a result of what was done?

*I will review my notes from the event and develop the project plan to break it down into three distinct projects with separate timelines and relationships. I will also seek more advice on the running of the project and will carry out further online research.*

Do I need to plug gaps in my knowledge?

*Yes. However, by carrying out further research I aim to plug these gaps.*

Do I need to investigate or research further training?

*Not at the moment.*



## ROCK AND ROLL FOR GARY

Congratulations to Gary Fraser, Greenkeeper at Rockliffe Hall, who has successfully passed his scholarship in Golf Course Management via the online course offered by Elmwood College.

For information on how you can sign up to courses contact our Learning & Development team on 01347 833800 (option 3) or via the website: [www.bigga.org.uk](http://www.bigga.org.uk)