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professional development framework for e-learning

a guide for advisers and practitioners

**professional
development
framework
for e-learning**

a guide for advisers
and practitioners

Further information
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Contents

The symbol indicates support material for this item is available on the enclosed DVD-ROM.

Acknowledgements

Foreword

In January 2006 LSDA launched its draft publication, *A professional development framework for e-learning* (ePD) for consultation with the post-16 education and training sector. In March 2006 the Learning and Skills Council funded LSN to run a pilot to implement the concepts and functional roles described within the framework, which was completed by April 2007. This publication shares the experiences of staff and their good practice as they used the framework as part of their continuing professional development in e-learning, eCPD. The resulting case studies are reinforced with the outputs from their work and these are available on the enclosed DVD-ROM. The staff involved were using draft material and information that had not yet been fully ratified by government and other parties, namely:

■ a definitive version of the ePD framework and its topics/units

■ on the role of continuing professional development as a mandatory requirement from September 2007

■ a definitive version of the new LLUK teaching standards, leading to the Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) award

■ on the role of the Institute of Learning and mandatory registration with that professional body.

During that period LSN ran a number of regional training events for staff and the presentations and support material are also available on the accompanying DVD-ROM. This publication is designed to give advisers and practitioners ideas and guidance on using eCPD to develop their e-learning skills and pedagogy through CPD either at the organisational or individual level.

Geoff Foot
Programme Manager
e-learning and technology programme, LSN

Introduction

We want to use ICT to build a society where everybody has the opportunity to develop their potential.
(DfES 2005b)

Support for teachers and trainers to continue to develop and improve their practice is crucial to ensuring learners receive effective teaching tailored to their needs.
(DfES 2006)

As advisers or practitioners, you may have different reasons for undertaking professional development in e-learning. You may be improving your e-learning skills as an individual, working towards targets as part of a team, or updating your knowledge base so that you can support others' use of e-learning more effectively.

But what criteria should you use to judge how and when technology should be used in learning? And if you are advising staff in your own or another organisation, is there a flexible and sustainable way of supporting their continuing professional development in e-learning?

Reflective practitioners have for some time felt the need for a framework against which they can evaluate their progress, which is flexible enough to suit different interests and varying levels of experience with technology.

The ePD framework has been developed in response to this need by the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) in consultation with our partners and the post-16 sector as a whole.[1] The development of the framework has been supported by Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) and the Institute for Learning (IfL), enabling it to have sector-wide application. The ePD framework can also be used by teachers, tutors and trainers working towards their Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status or qualifications under the LLUK Teacher Qualifications Framework for the Lifelong Learning Sector – initiatives set to bring a new professionalism into the learning and skills sector.

The next step is to understand how the uniquely flexible approach of the framework can work for you.

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1   Steering Group for the ePD framework: Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), the Institute for Learning (IfL), the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE). Other organisations are the JISC RSCs, the Association for Learning Technology (ALT), 5S, TechDis, Becta and the Association of Learning Providers (ALP).

What are the aims of this guide?

The key questions the guide sets out to answer are:

- What is the ePD framework?
- What are its underpinning principles?
- How can it work in practice?
- What should your next steps be?

The guide introduces the national context in which the framework has been developed and outlines the different ways topics within the framework could provide enhancement for different types of user. It then explains the six-step process that underpins all competence development, before illustrating pathways through the framework with examples drawn from the ePD pilot projects.

You are advised to use the guide in conjunction with the ePD framework to explore in more detail how the framework could add value to your or others' professional development in e-learning.

Who is the publication for?

The ePD framework is applicable to all parts of the sector and to a variety of roles – leaders and strategic policy-makers, advisers, developers and practitioners. However, this guide is intended to be used by **e-learning advisers** or **practitioners** associated with, or working in, further education, adult and community learning, work-based learning providers, offender learning and skills providers.

An **e-learning adviser** is defined here as either a specialist adviser in an external agency, or someone whose role involves the coordination of e-learning and/or staff development within an organisation. The ePD framework divides this role into two:

- an internal adviser (i-adviser) – someone who supports others within the same organisation in their e-learning professional development
- an external adviser (e-adviser) – someone who advises staff in other organisations.

A **practitioner** is normally seen as an established teacher, trainer or tutor, but, given the importance of embedding e-learning skills in the workforce, the term is used here to include teacher trainees or those undertaking professional training for qualified practitioner status in the learning and skills sector.

E-learning professional development matters to all who hold these roles.

ePD framework – background and context

Realising the potential (Foster 2005) raised awareness of the urgent need for a 'qualified, professional and highly committed workforce' for the further education sector.

The reform agenda for initial teacher training, *Equipping our teachers for the future* (DfES 2005a), similarly pointed the way for 'all teachers to commit to lifelong professional development, so that their skills are always up to date as the needs of learners change'.

Support for a specific framework for professional development in e-learning (ePD) has also come from increasing evidence in the last decade that technology can play a vital role in motivating learners and raising the quality of learning and teaching. Reflecting on and updating practice will thus increasingly involve better understanding of how to use e-learning tools and technologies. As a result, funding has been given by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for the development of a sector-wide framework for ePD.

Work on the framework was initiated by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) and has been carried forward by the LSN. The development of the framework was overseen by a steering group, which consisted of the DfES, LLUK, QCA, IfL and representatives from a number of sector organisations, including CEL and NIACE.

The framework is based on the LLUK e-learning and e-leadership standards (pedagogical and leadership) and mapped to the 2007 LLUK professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers so as to facilitate a strategic approach to CPD. In developing the framework, the findings on CPD in *Every step counts* (IfL 2005) and other relevant standards have been taken into account. A draft of the framework was also released for consultation in January 2006 before its publication in 2007.

The ePD framework has evolved out of a background of national requirements for quality improvement and workforce development to bring about more effective and confident uses of e-tools and e-learning in post-16 education and training. Its objectives are to break down the generic term 'e-learning' into topics to guide users towards a reflective analysis of their activities and to establish consistent benchmarks for the effective use of e-learning interventions.

A greater focus on technology will produce real benefits for all.

DfES (2005b)

ePD framework – aims and objectives

The framework aims to equip anyone using e-learning tools and techniques in post-16 education and training with the means of **reflecting on** and **developing further** their understanding of the role of technology in learning and teaching.

Users of the framework will naturally have varying levels of experience. Many will already possess a fair knowledge of e-learning. Others will be new to the skills, terminology and pedagogies associated with this mode of learning. However, the framework is capable of supporting both the experienced user and the newcomer. It achieves this by providing a framework based on nationally available standards that provide the basis for a continuing process of reflection, planning and implementation, analysis and evaluation, whatever the starting point of the user.

It is important to note that the framework is not an accredited scheme. Designed to accommodate different approaches to undertaking ePD, it sets out to encourage and support a culture of continuing professional development, rather than to measure outcomes or prescribe ways of working. This individualised approach means that ePD can become an achievable and integral part of any individual's role.

This guide focuses solely on how the framework can be used by advisers and practitioners, but the framework is designed to be equally applicable to developers, leaders and strategic policy-makers. Just how this initiative can add value to an individual's professional development and enhance the quality of an organisation's provision is summarised here.

The ePD framework can work for individual practitioners by:

- being adaptable – the framework can be applied to small-scale as well as large-scale projects, to individual training needs, or to team targets

- providing a means of updating skills – topics can be revisited at any time to learn how to use new software or tools

- supporting lifelong learning – topics can be used at different stages and in different roles

- offering a national framework – an individual's ePD achievement can be given the same recognition by different organisations

- enabling CPD in other training initiatives to be mapped retrospectively – examples include the Ferl Practitioners' Programme (FPP), e-guides, ITQ training, or any programme of professional development that includes elements of e-learning.

The ePD framework can work for organisations by:

- providing a national framework for professional appraisal and career progression for all staff

- developing the ability of practitioners to plan, implement, review and evaluate their use of e-tools and techniques

- developing the ability of practitioners to critically evaluate the capability of e-tools and techniques and their value to learners

- supporting customised programmes of staff development to suit individual contexts or groups of staff

- supporting the development of specialist skills, such as content development, or VLE management.

For guidance on the use of e-learning by leaders and policy-makers, visit the Centre for Excellence in Leadership website (www.centreforexcellence.org.uk).

ePD framework – how it works

The ePD framework in its entirety covers 20 topics, each with clear criteria for the achievement of competences. Not all of these will be appropriate to all users – Figure 1 (overleaf) illustrates the different ways in which topics will benefit users and suggests that they will select from, rather than work their way through the whole framework.

Topic 1: E-learning fundamentals covers core competences and so will be relevant to all users – because it has direct applicability to all types of role, this topic has been termed **essential**. Depending on the starting point of the individual user, some topics will provide additional core competences. In Figure 1, these are described as **potential core** topics. Other topics develop users' existing skills and knowledge further and so are termed **broadening** topics. Finally, some topics involve the development of specialist skills which could take an individual into a new sphere of operation – these topics are described as **enhancing**. The colour-coding in Figure 1 has been used to differentiate between the different functions topics could perform for practitioners, developers and advisers.

Figure 1 The ePD framework topics [2]

Ref	Topic	Role and function			
		Practitioner	**Developer**	**Internal adviser**	**External adviser**
1	E-learning fundamentals	Essential	Essential	Essential	Essential
2	E-learning: initial/diagnostic assessment induction and guidance	Potential core	Potential core	Broadening	Broadening
3	E-learning: blended learning	Potential core	Potential core	Broadening	Broadening
4	E-learning: using learning environments, platforms and online learning	Potential core	Potential core	Broadening	Broadening
5	E-learning: content (a) choosing and using	Broadening	Potential core	Broadening	Broadening
6	E-learning: content (b) assembling and adapting	Broadening	Potential core	Broadening	Broadening
7	E-learning: assessment, tracking and e-portfolios	Broadening	Potential core	Broadening	Broadening
8	E-learning: supporting learners to use e-learning and technology	Broadening	Potential core	Broadening	Broadening
9	E-learning: online learning, coaching, mentoring and developing peer support	Broadening	Potential core	Broadening	Broadening
10	E-learning: exploring the application of e-tools	Potential core	Potential core	Broadening	Broadening
11	E-learning: undertaking an e-learning development project	Potential core	Broadening	Broadening	Broadening
12	E-learning developer: materials and content	Enhancing	Broadening	Broadening	Broadening
13	E-learning developer: learning platforms	Enhancing	Broadening	Broadening	Broadening
14	E-learning developer: resource acquisition and deployment	Enhancing	Broadening	Broadening	Broadening
15	Leadership: developing a vision and strategy for e-learning	Enhancing	Enhancing	Enhancing	Enhancing
16	Leadership: planning and implementing an e-learning strategy	Enhancing	Enhancing	Enhancing	Enhancing
17	Leadership: embedding and sustaining innovation and development in e-learning	Enhancing	Enhancing	Enhancing	Enhancing
18	Internal adviser (i-adviser): supporting staff development	Enhancing	Enhancing	Potential core	—
19	External adviser (e-adviser): supporting staff in organisations	Enhancing	Enhancing	Enhancing	Potential core
20	External adviser (e-strategist): supporting strategic developments	Enhancing	Enhancing	Enhancing	Enhancing

Key

- Essential
- Potential core
- Broadening (relates to role but offers opportunity to extend experience)
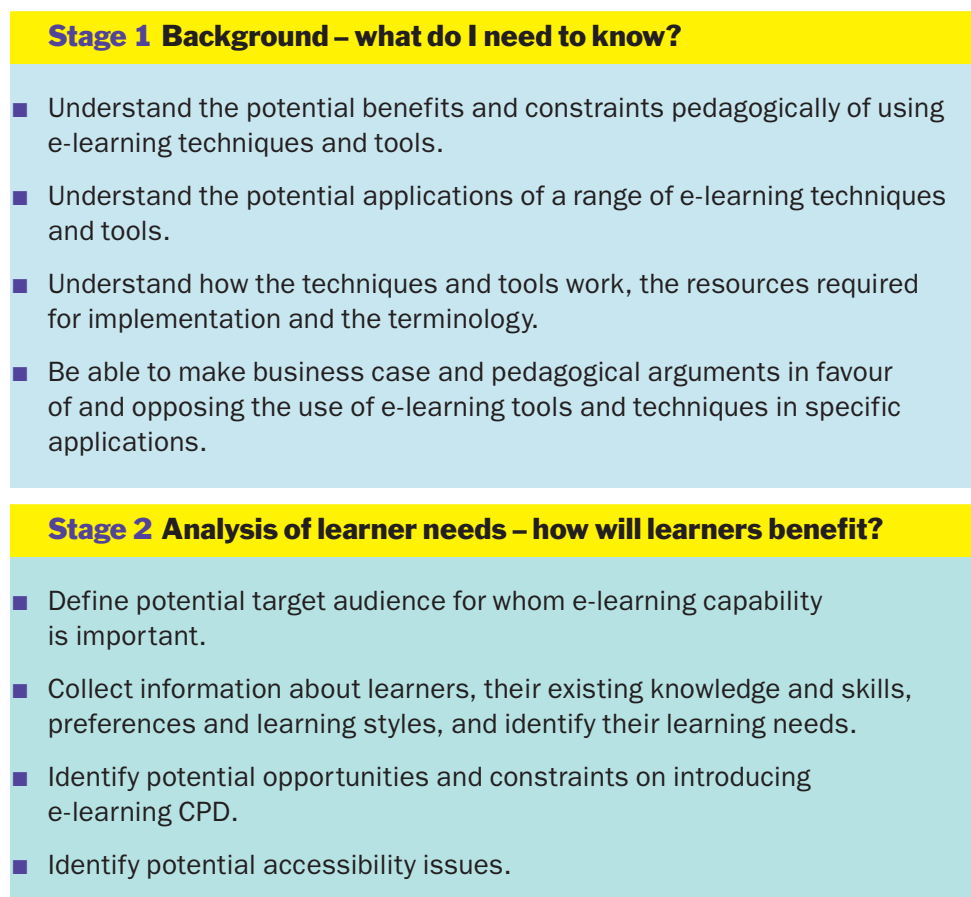- Enhancing (normally outside existing role – potential career development)

2 Based on the diagram in *A professional development framework for e-learning* (LSN 2007a) page 38, appendix 5

It should be noted that the ePD framework is not intended to create parallel strands of qualified teachers, advisers and managers. The competences described in the topics do not duplicate basic competences in these areas – the assumption is that those in e-learning roles are already appropriately qualified to the level at which they are operating in pedagogy and management. The e-practitioner is a teacher, trainer or tutor who simply uses different or additional tools.

The underlying principle is that there is a six-stage approach to the development of e-learning that closely links to the development cycle. This six-stage approach (Figure 2) can be applied to an organisation, a department or an individual and is cyclic and continuous, rather than limited to one completed sequence. On achievement of an e-learning goal, the user will return to the beginning to recommence the process in a continuing spiral of self-improvement.

Understanding this staged approach to improving skills is key to using the ePD framework effectively.

Figure 2   Methodology to underpin all ePD competence development[3]

Stage 1 Background – what do I need to know?

- Understand the potential benefits and constraints pedagogically of using e-learning techniques and tools.

- Understand the potential applications of a range of e-learning techniques and tools.

- Understand how the techniques and tools work, the resources required for implementation and the terminology.

- Be able to make business case and pedagogical arguments in favour of and opposing the use of e-learning tools and techniques in specific applications.

Stage 2 Analysis of learner needs – how will learners benefit?

- Define potential target audience for whom e-learning capability is important.

- Collect information about learners, their existing knowledge and skills, preferences and learning styles, and identify their learning needs.

- Identify potential opportunities and constraints on introducing e-learning CPD.

- Identify potential accessibility issues.

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3 Based on the diagram in *A professional development framework for e-learning* (LSN 2007a) page 18, figure 4.

Stage 3 Self-assessment and upskilling – am I ready for this?

- Review the teaching and learning environment in which you are working and determine where e-learning may have an application and add value.

- Perform a self-assessment to determine what professional knowledge and skills, and/or ICT skills, you require.

- Undertake appropriate professional updating or skills updating in the following areas:
  - □ e-learning to support pedagogical goals
  - □ e-skills and techniques and the use of e-tools
  - □ leadership and management within an e-learning environment
  - □ other skills, including ICT and programme specific skills.

Stage 4 Plan – what do I need to do?

- Determine specific learning outcomes and map to potential delivery methods.

- Develop a plan to address the learning needs that includes an appropriate mix of e-learning with other teaching and learning techniques.

- Identify any additional skills required by self or learners to facilitate the e-learning process.

- Identify the resources needed to deliver programmes that optimise the use of e-learning in the curriculum.

Stage 5 Implement – how do I make this happen?

- Secure the necessary resources.

- Liaise with colleagues and specialists as necessary and provide and negotiate support.

- Monitor and collect information about how learners are responding to the e-learning component and adjust delivery as necessary.

Stage 6 Evaluate and reflect – what have I learnt?

- Establish what learning outcomes are being achieved.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the e-learning professional development process.

- Use the evaluation to inform and improve future practice.

A copy of the ePD framework can be found on the DVD-ROM on the inside back cover.

Six pathways to e-learning professional development

Embedding the framework has been given a boost during 2006/07 by funding from the LSC for a programme of ePD pilot projects in further education and adult and community learning. A list of these projects can be found at the end of this guide, and on the DVD-ROM. The pilots have been supported by a national team of e-learning advisers and they exemplify the ethos underpinning the LSN Q projects[4] – that the best way to acquire e-skills is to learn by doing.

Already inspiring similar work in other parts of the sector, the pilot projects are also acting as pathfinders by illustrating some of the more commonly experienced scenarios for undertaking ePD. The six pathways that follow illustrate sequences of topics that might be used by you, as advisers or practitioners, in such scenarios.

It should be noted that the pathways are based around reasons for undertaking ePD, rather than describing the role you occupy in your organisation. This allows for differences between the e-learning initiative undertaken by you as an individual practitioner and your professional role – for example, you may be an experienced practitioner, but still new to e-learning; as a teacher, you may be involved in content development as well as teach, or you may be aiming to move beyond your current role to take up e-learning advisory responsibilities within your organisation. The framework allows you to pick and mix your topics, and even the criteria you address within those topics, to set your own targets for ePD according to your circumstances, your career aims and objectives.

Please refer to a copy of the ePD framework for details of the topics referred to in each pathway. This can be found on the DVD-ROM on the inside back cover.

Each pathway explored in this guide is illustrated by case studies from selected pilot projects. These show how different combinations of topics have been put together to achieve ePD goals. The case studies then explore the lessons learnt and indicate how the framework has added value to the endeavour. Figure 3 overleaf illustrates the starting points for each pathway.

4   Q projects are e-learning action-based activities using and developing project management skills associated with unit Q in the LLUK e-learning and e-leadership standards.

Figure 3 Six pathways to ePD

1. **I am new to e-learning**	If you are coming new to e-learning, you may be a teacher trainee, or a well-established teacher, tutor or trainer for whom e-learning techniques offer another tool to add to the toolbox. The essential core topic, E-learning fundamentals, will be your starting point, followed by topics relevant to your immediate needs, possibly **topic 10: Exploring the application of e-tools**, or **topic 3: Blended learning**.
2. **I am improving and updating my e-skills**	Technology moves on rapidly. This means that even experienced e-practitioners will need to learn new versions of software or unfamiliar e-tools. If this applies to you, you can use topics in the framework to refresh or update training you completed some time ago.
3. **I am supporting learners**	You may be undertaking ePD because you recognise the potential in e-tools and techniques for supporting learners with specific needs, such as distance learners, those whose attendance is interrupted, who work best with multimedia resources, or who need assistive technologies. Equally, you might adopt this pathway if you work in study support or a learning centre.
4. **I am developing e-content**	You may be a specialist content developer, or be developing content as part of your role as a classroom practitioner. Figure 1 showed how working through the e-learning developer topics could be career-enhancing – but the framework can also add value to the hard work frequently invested by practitioners in creating e-resources for their modules or courses. This kind of activity could be covered by **topic 5: Content (a) choosing and using**, and **topic 6: Content (b) assembling and adapting**.
5. **I am supporting staff in my organisation**	You may be a staff developer, an ILT champion or an e-learning coordinator. Even if you undertake such a role temporarily, using the ePD framework will provide you with a step by step reflective tool with criteria against which you can record your achievements for CPD purposes.
6. **I am advising staff in other organisations**	Advising other organisations on the implementation of e-learning initiatives is a demanding role, which requires you, as an e-adviser, to develop your own knowledge and skills in a variety of areas. You are likely to explore a range of topics in the framework to enable you to advise others fully and effectively.

Pathway 1 I am new to e-learning

Topic 1: E-learning fundamentals introduces the key principles of e-learning so is essential for those who are new to e-learning. You might then need to become familiar with technologies being introduced into your workplace, such as interactive whiteboards or a virtual learning environment (VLE) or other learning platform. In this case, elements of **topics 3** and **10** will prepare you for the effective planning, implementation and evaluation of the learning resources and activities you might use with these technologies.

Topic 1 E-learning fundamentals

Topic 10 Exploring the application of e-tools

Topic 11 Undertaking an e-learning development project

Case study: Doncaster College

General FE/HE College Yorkshire and Humber Region

Doncaster College is a large college of further and higher education with a separate university centre. The college recently moved into a purpose-built new campus offering state of the art facilities called The Hub.

As a result of the move, some 600 staff needed training in the use of new interactive whiteboards. Helen Hanson and Nina Sanderson, e-learning advisers at the college, decided that the ePD framework would be the vehicle for taking staff who were new to this technology through a step by step process of skills development using **topics 1**, **10** and **11**.

During the summer break, staff undertook an ILT skills audit and a staff development programme based on the framework was put together to match their abilities and needs. Forty graduates of the training in SMART boards™ and interactive PowerPoint® were encouraged to cascade their skills on to other colleagues within their schools. Helen and Nina found that those who had been through the training, and had access to a room with a SMART board, were more likely to use these technologies in their practice.

The project also revealed how easy it is to make assumptions that are incorrect. Many practitioners had a greater need of basic ICT skills training than was anticipated, so additional training materials had to be produced. However, those with only a basic level of skill in Microsoft® Word were sometimes quite at home with using other e-tools, such as digital cameras, which can provide an enjoyable way of learning how to use e-learning resources.

How the ePD framework can add value

When taking part in a large-scale project to upskill staff, the framework can provide a valuable starting point. ePD guidance is an important element in staff training as it helps practitioners to identify their skills gaps and gives them a sense of working towards common goals.

Case study: Thanet College

General FE College South East Region

Students on a Certificate of Education course run by Thanet College, in conjunction with Canterbury Christ Church University, are also finding out about e-skills, with the help of a module based on **topic 1: E-learning fundamentals** devised by e-Learning Coordinator, Geoff Rebbeck.

This involves a six-hour session on the principles of e-learning, in which the students explore the tools available in a VLE and create their own activities for peer review. The session finishes with an evaluation exercise in which the students assess their strengths and weaknesses before continuing to experiment online.

By completing the module, the teachers and lecturers of the future are able to experience first hand the principles of e-learning in a classroom setting, before reflecting on their e-learning activities in a virtual chat room. Discussing what went well and what could have been improved helps them gain a better understanding of the pedagogic principles that underpin effective e-learning.

How the ePD framework can add value

The framework can enhance staff development sessions for all staff – knowing that training is mapped to a nationally available framework provides coherence to personal planning and gives everyone increased confidence to acquire the skills needed to be an e-practitioner.

The purpose is to allow students to consider the possibilities in teaching and learning offered through technology. Students need to be able to understand how these activities can be applied to their subject teaching.

Geoff Rebbeck, e-Learning Coordinator, Thanet College, and LSN Regional Coordinator for the South East

If you are new to e-learning

Do:

- Record your achievements against relevant criteria in the framework as you go along

- Work with colleagues to make your e-learning journey more fun.

Don't:

- Keep your achievements to yourself

- Assume that only large-scale developments are worthy of recording against the ePD framework

- Forget that this is about you!

Pathway 2   I am improving and updating my e-skills

Being an e-practitioner means continually monitoring and updating your skills-set – for example, learning how to use new software or e-tools. This can be great fun, especially if you are learning in the company of others, but the process of acquiring skills can be given official recognition by recording your activities against relevant topics in the ePD framework.

This example of a pathway is based on that devised by a practitioner in Salisbury College and includes **topic 11: Undertaking an e-learning development project**.

Topic 1 E-learning fundamentals

Topic 3 Blended learning

Topic 11 Undertaking an e-learning development project

Case study: Salisbury College
General FE College South West Region

Getting formal recognition for upgrading your skills as a classroom practitioner can be a time-consuming process. For Helen Wheelwright, film studies tutor at Salisbury College, the ePD framework has been a boon.

Noticing that the storyboarding skills of learners in her film studies class were hampered by the learner's inability to visualise a sequence of film, Helen decided to give them hands-on experience by trying out their ideas on camera.

To achieve this, Helen needed to undertake further professional training herself. She taught herself to use a digital camcorder and undertook an MA module in digital video production in education, offered by the British Film Institute and the Institute for Education. She then realised that other technologies could be brought into play to help learners understand the process of film-making. 'To introduce them to editing, I usually show them what to do using a computer attached to a data projector and they then have a hands-on session afterwards,' explains Helen, who evaluated the success of her project with the help of a learner survey.

How the ePD framework can add value

Helen has found that mapping her training against **topic 1: E-learning fundamentals**, **topic 3: Blended learning**, and **topic 11: Undertaking an e-learning development project** has enabled her to provide her line manager with evidence of CPD validated by the ePD framework.

If you are improving or updating your e-skills

Do:

- Explore e-learning techniques that help to support reflective practice – for example, building an e-portfolio of evidence, or setting up a blog (web log)
- Make your line manager aware of your work and discuss ways of sharing with others both the successes and the lessons learnt.

Don't:

- Overlook opportunities to map to the framework staff development you have undertaken in your own time
- Assume only large-scale projects can be applied to the ePD framework.

Pathway 3 I am supporting learners

E-learning is a vital tool for personalising learning. If learners have access to online resources in different formats, they can work at their own pace in their preferred way at any time.

There are a number of ways in which your ePD could support learners, perhaps by identifying their learning preferences and seeking out or creating resources in alternative formats. More challenging, but equally valuable, would be to acquire the skills to support learners in online activities, such as discussion forums, or by setting up a wiki (a shared web page that learners can add to or edit). If you are a tutor, learning centre or study support practitioner, a possible combination of ePD topics could be:

Topic 1 E-learning fundamentals

Topic 8 Supporting learners to use e-learning and technology

Topic 9 Online learning, coaching, mentoring and developing peer support

Topic 11 Undertaking an e-learning development project

Case study: Solihull College

General FE College West Midlands Region

Solihull College offers a Business Administration Apprenticeship scheme, which enables young people to study for professional qualifications at the same time as working in the sector.

The use of resources on a VLE makes it possible for apprentices to fit their studies round their work schedule, but learners studying at a distance from their peers and tutors need additional forms of support. A learning module developed by Debbie Hughes, Work-Based Assessor for the Apprenticeship Programme, uses a variety of means to help learners reflect on their learning experiences.

Collaborative technologies such as online conferencing, messaging and use of a wiki are ideal ways of creating a sense of community among dispersed learners and can be used alongside assignments to encourage self-evaluative techniques. Debbie has recognised from experience gained during the first year that learners need structured activities to help them take part effectively in online discussions. Nonetheless, she believes that offering a variety of modes provides a more personalised learning environment. Most business administration apprentices are also practised users of technology, so using up-to-date e-learning techniques can help to meet their expectations of the course.

How the ePD framework can add value

The ePD framework gives practitioners like Debbie a set of criteria to check how effectively they are supporting their learners in using technology. It also offers a flexible mechanism for recording the diverse skills they acquire in the process.

It's an ideal way of proving and documenting what you have done for an appraisal and senior managers gain a better picture of how well practitioners are responding to a college-wide drive to embed e-learning. There's an all-round gain.

Debbie Hughes, Work-Based Assessor, Solihull College

Case study: Craven College

General FE College Yorkshire and Humber Region

Learners at Craven College, Skipton, are benefiting from the Audio Suite, a set of resources to help them learn basic literacy as well as advanced level work in English language and literature.

Gavin Jones, English and music technology tutor, has discovered how sound and video technologies can provide effective ways of bringing learning to life. 24/7 access from the college's VLE means that learners can use these 'speaking' resources when they need to – from college or from home – to understand concepts such as phonetics and sentence construction.

Gavin has involved some of his students in the creation of the Audio Suite. Feedback from those learners has meant that a cycle of planning, implementation and review is always in process to refine and extend the original ideas – some dyslexic learners, for example, reported that it would be helpful for them to have video clips provided alongside the audio files.

How the ePD framework can add value

This innovative project has benefited throughout from the ePD framework. Gavin has especially used **topic 11: Undertaking an e-learning development project** to plan, evaluate and reflect on his work.

Topic 8: Supporting learners to use e-learning and technology has also focused Gavin's attention on how learners use the resources. Not all learners have access to broadband at home, so the design of the resources had to be kept straightforward. As a result, Gavin opted for a basic web page format to help learners find and download the resources they need.

Using the framework helps you to focus on the process by which something is achieved. Reflecting on what you have done, and how you did it, helps the next time you do something similar.

Gavin Jones, English and Music Technology Tutor,
Craven College

Case study: College of West Anglia

General FE College Eastern Region

The College of West Anglia enrols learners from parts of Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, making this one of the largest further education and training providers in the eastern region.

Glen Singleton, Assistant Principal at the College of West Anglia, has set up a project to provide differentiated learning resources for AS and A2 mathematics on the college's VLE in conjunction with the mathematics department and the ILT development team. Before commencing a new topic, learners access resources for self-directed learning from the VLE, which are backed up by short assessments. Results from the assessments inform tutors how to approach subsequent classes, freeing up time for more proactive and personalised ways of teaching.

Being closely linked to a college-wide drive to improve learners' performance, the scheme has helped to establish a culture of CPD among staff. Staff training needs formed an integral part of the project plan from the outset, but positive feedback received from learners has provided the evidence staff needed of the benefits of this approach – 88% of learners surveyed felt that the assessments had helped them and their tutors identify where they needed to focus their efforts. In this way, the project will act as a catalyst for change across the college, showing the wider benefits to be gained from the funding of all e-learning initiatives.

How the ePD framework can add value

The criteria in **topic 11: Undertaking an e-learning development project**, together with evaluation and feedback from staff and users, have been key to ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of the proposal. Learner and staff surveys at the start, midway point and end of the project at the College of West Anglia were an essential element in a continuing cycle of review, evaluation and refinement.

By providing learning opportunities and assessments prior to teaching a topic, it is possible to identify more closely the needs of learners and subsequently provide individualised learning activities to support those needs.

Glen Singleton, Assistant Principal,
College of West Anglia

If you are supporting learners

Do:

- Explore what e-learning can do to improve learners' attainment – it can pay dividends

- Investigate a range of formats and identify the most appropriate for your learners

- Review and adapt your initial ideas in response to learner's feedback, using the framework as a guide.

Don't:

- Forget to involve learners in these initiatives – use learner perception surveys at the start, as the work progresses, and at the conclusion of the project

- Give up on a great idea because it means acquiring new skills yourself – this could form valuable ePD skills development for you.

Pathway 4   I am developing e-content

Most approaches to teaching involve the creation of resources. In e-learning, these will be in electronic format, for example, PowerPoint, Word or Excel files, digital images or movie files. Greater skills will be needed to create interactive and multimedia resources and that is why the specialist e-learning developer topics of the framework are seen as 'broadening' or even 'enhancing' a practitioner's profile.

It is important to remember, however, that you can dictate the level at which you wish to work. The framework offers e-practitioner topics on choosing and using, assembling and adapting content. Many practitioners will use these topics to monitor their progress as they acquire new software skills and come to understand how best to apply them in learning and teaching.

If you are a content developer, a VLE or e-learning coordinator, or a practitioner aiming to create e-resources, your combination of topics might be:

Topic 3 Blended learning

Topic 10 Exploring the application of e-tools

Topic 12 E-learning developer: materials and content

Topic 13 E-learning developer: learning platforms

Topic 14 E-learning developer: resource acquisition and deployment

Case study: The Pershore Group of Colleges
Land-based College West Midlands Region

The senior management team at The Pershore Group of Colleges in Hereford and Worcester have identified the development of interactive resources as key to enhancing learning and teaching. The ILT coordinator, Vaughan Hencher, has taken up the challenge by developing DV8, a project to provide alternative ways of getting to grips with less engaging parts of the curriculum.

An example was health and safety training for 16–19 year olds on a BTEC National Diploma course in Sport (Performance and Excellence). Using mobile technologies alongside the VLE, Vaughan has demonstrated how technologies can effectively complement one another to make this topic easier to learn. MP3 files containing essential facts and figures, for example, can be downloaded onto learners' personal mobile devices, while quizzes and games can be accessed any time, anywhere, via the VLE to reinforce what has been learnt.

Learners of all abilities enjoy having fun while they learn, but these multimedia resources can also support the different approaches they need to take. Flash®, Hot Potatoes™ quizzes, video and audio files have been developed to offer learners at The Pershore Group of Colleges multi-sensory learning experiences to support their different learning preferences.

How the ePD framework can add value

The ePD framework has given Vaughan a clear focus on developing content effectively. He plans to use **topic 3: Blended learning** and **topic 5: Content: choosing and using** when helping staff to acquire skills for their content development, while benchmarking his own work against **topic 12: E-learning developer: materials and content**.

DV8 is about improving learners' ability to learn by deviating from normal modes of delivery. This is a more friendly [and] fun way to learn and encompasses different learning styles.

Vaughan Hencher, ILT Coordinator, The Pershore Group of Colleges

Case study: Richard Huish College

Sixth Form College South West Region

The ILT coordinator at Richard Huish College, Joshua Fitzgerald, is training staff in the use of the college VLE, Moodle, by developing exemplar learning objects and tutorials in Flash.

He has made Moodle the learning platform for all ePD activities so that staff can practise by using the forums for reflective discussions, sharing best practice and building up digital records of their learning journeys in e-portfolios. Working initially with three departments, Joshua plans to engage all staff in the process of making e-resources for themselves.

How the ePD framework can add value

The framework provides a flexible tool staff can use to steer their own pathway through e-learning.

However, Joshua has also run bi-weekly sessions for staff in developing learning objects. These are backed up by self-assessment and target-setting exercises, again located on Moodle.

Both the training activities and the process of creating resources have been mapped to topics in the ePD framework: **topic 1: E-learning fundamentals**; **topic 10: Exploring the application of e-tools**; **topic 13: E-learning developer: learning platforms**; and **topic 14: E-learning developer: resource acquisition and deployment**.

In addition, all e-learning staff development at Richard Huish College will be mapped to the ePD framework, building up a bank of resources for future activities.

The framework helps staff to feel they can participate by following their own natural process of skills development, rather than by jumping through hoops. As they develop skills, the framework can then be used to build up a transferable portfolio of evidence.

Joshua Fitzgerald, ILT Coordinator, Richard Huish College

If you are developing e-content

Do:

- Identify best-fit opportunities – those parts of the curriculum where greater interactivity would make a difference to learners
- Use the framework to monitor and evaluate your own skills acquisition
- Encourage others to do the same.

Don't:

- Keep newly created resources to yourself – content is for sharing!

Pathway 5 **I am supporting staff in my organisation**

As an internal or i-adviser, you will primarily use the framework with others in mind. Your learners are the staff whose needs and abilities must be taken into account when devising a programme. The framework includes a variety of topics from which to select what is appropriate, as the case studies show. However, using the framework to reflect on your own personal development is equally important.

If you are an i-adviser, there is one specialist topic as a starting point. Other topics can then be added according to the needs and interests of the staff you are supporting. The specialist topic is:

Topic 18 Internal adviser (i-adviser) – supporting staff development

Case study: Cheshire County Council Lifelong Learning Services

Adult and Community Learning Organisation

Cheshire County Council Lifelong Learning Service provides a range of courses for adult and community and family learning, including opportunities to gain qualifications in basic skills.

Providing CPD in e-skills for tutors is a vital part of the Service's strategic vision for ILT. Training in Moodle is particularly important if tutors are to develop more flexible and interactive learning experiences for their learners. However, most tutors working for the Service are part time, and many are unable to attend face-to-face sessions.

For Lifelong Learning ILT Officer Paul Kelly, gaining LSN project funding to develop a multimedia CD-ROM was the starting point to providing training in tutors' own home environments at their own pace. The ePD framework played a vital role in clarifying the skills that tutors would need.

How the ePD framework can add value

The Cheshire County Council scheme will provide an ePD record for tutors, using the framework as a benchmark. To obtain their personal record, participants complete a short online assessment within the VLE linked to **topic 4: Using learning environments, platforms and online learning**; **topic 6: Content: assembling and adapting materials**; and **topic 7: Assessment, tracking and portfolios**.

The ePD framework has allowed me to pick out aspects against which to set targets. Having those parameters has made it much easier than starting with a blank piece of paper.

Paul Kelly, Lifelong Learning ILT Officer,
Cheshire County Council

Case study: Leeds College of Building

Specialist FE College Yorkshire and Humber Region

Leeds College of Building is a further education college that specialises in construction. With Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for construction and building services, the college sees continuing professional development for staff as highly important.

Lecturers are frequently drawn from the construction industry and their first step in preparing for their new role is training in the use of the VLE Blackboard®. Christine Byrne, manager of the CoVE, ensures that lecturers receive the right guidance in incorporating online resources effectively into their practice, so that they gain maximum value from the ICT available to them.

A cascade model of staff development ensures that practitioners at Leeds College of Building can disseminate their experience of using the VLE to others in their team. This helps to embed pedagogically sound uses of a learning platform across the college.

How the ePD framework can add value

Using **topic 1: E-learning fundamentals** and **topic 4: Using learning environments, platforms and online learning**, the CoVE team have designed a course that can be delivered through the VLE to induct newly appointed staff. This includes planning teaching sessions using the VLE, designing online quizzes, making use of the automatic marking and reporting facilities, communicating with learners, and setting up group forums on the discussion board.

If you are supporting staff in your organisation

Do:

- Understand the learning needs of your practitioners
- Demonstrate the flexibility and interactivity of e-learning through the pathways to ePD that you provide
- Recognise the richness and variability inherent in staff development activities.

Don't

- Demand more than practitioners can reasonably complete – small achievable projects are often best
- Work through the framework topic by topic – it is not a 'tick box' programme.

Pathway 6 I am advising staff in other organisations

If you are an external or e-adviser, you will find the ePD framework a valuable way of helping organisations to implement more effective continuous professional development (CPD). It is also useful for reflecting on and maintaining your own skills-set.

There is one specialist topic for external advisers. Others can be added to this according to individual needs and interests. The specialist topic is:

Topic 19 External adviser (e-adviser): supporting staff in organisations

Case study: Graciano de Santana Soares

JISC RSC London

Graciano de Santana Soares is an e-learning adviser at the JISC Regional Support Centre for London, who supports organisations in their use of learning technologies. As part of his role, he manages an ILT Health Check, a service that helps college managers identify the progress their organisation has made in embedding technologies in learning.

Graciano believes that he must be a reflective practitioner himself before helping others. He has found the ePD framework a valuable resource when keeping his own personal development up to date, in particular **topic 19: Supporting staff in organisations**, which has been devised for external advisers. He also recommends the framework to the organisations he visits, since it encourages participation in CPD.

How the ePD framework can add value

For those who advise organisations, the ePD framework draws on experience gained from the Q projects, an initiative devised to establish a sustainable and flexible approach to staff development. It offers a framework which is nationally available, with criteria against which practitioners can validate their skills development – an essential tool when encouraging staff to participate in reflective practice.

Getting buy-in to staff development activities can be very difficult, but here we have a framework of criteria, which is available nationally and allows practitioners to work on small, short term projects if they need to as well as larger, cross-organisational initiatives.

Graciano de Santana Soares, e-Learning Adviser,
JISC RSC London

Case study: Angela Wood

NIACE

Angela Wood is a development officer in the ICT and Learning team at NIACE and has played a significant role in the E-Guides training programme for adult and community learning and work-based learning providers.

Angela finds that many organisations are seeing the criteria as supportive and empowering. The framework is now being used, she reports, to validate the production of internal staff development resources, enabling organisations to feel more willing to share their work with others, confident in the knowledge that it has been based on nationally available standards. The framework also integrates readily into different staff development initiatives, an advantage for an adviser working with such diverse organisations.

How the ePD framework can add value

The ePD framework offers valuable strategic back-up to existing national or organisations' own staff development programmes. Its availability will also help to ensure a place for e-learning in all new staff development programmes. However, the framework can nurture smaller projects as well as larger ones.

It needn't be large and scary or aim to get everyone e-literate at once – any initiative can be mapped to the framework – and people enjoy the opportunity of learning by doing and by reflecting on what they have done.

Angela Wood, Development Officer, NIACE

Case study: Steve Smith

LSN

Steve Smith is the national coordinator for the LSN e-learning support network, which promotes use of the ePD framework. Overseeing the pilot ePD projects has given Steve first-hand experience of the impact the framework is already having on practitioners and organisations.

Steve believes the framework's flexibility is a unique advantage – the starting point for individuals is what they or their organisation see as the highest priority. Because the framework is not in itself an accredited scheme, it enables organisations to design staff development programmes that are based on actual need.

How the ePD framework can add value

Assuring the quality of e-learning activities and resources can be a problem. Here, the six-step methodology, which underpins the framework, guides users through a continuing process of reflection, planning, implementation and evaluation before moving on to new aspirations. In this way, the framework helps to ensure that e-learning initiatives do not become an end in themselves, but form part of an ongoing drive for self-improvement.

I always say to people, 'what would you like to do?' and the plan starts from there. The criteria in the framework are based on issues practitioners and advisers have always faced, but cleverly turn these on their head to become criteria against which to check the progress that has been made.

Steve Smith, e-Learning Support Network National Coordinator

If you are advising staff in other organisations

Do:

- Exploit the flexibility of the framework to meet individual needs
- Consider how the framework can develop support services as well as the curriculum
- Help others to find their own unique pathway – that which adds the most value to their practice
- Remain a reflective practitioner yourself by using topics in the framework to update your own skills.

Don't

- Adopt a 'one-size-fits-all' approach – the framework can accommodate a diversity of approaches to staff development in e-learning
- Be swayed into thinking ePD needs a separate system of organisation – it should dovetail as neatly as possible into existing organisational structures and processes.

Next steps

1. Browse through examples in the LSN Q projects of e-learning in action (www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk/ask/users/search.asp) and:

■ identify key areas

■ gather information

■ share with others.

2. Assess your current competence level in ICT and e-skills with the LSN self-assessment tool (www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk/sa) and:

■ identify your ePD needs

■ take a step by step approach

■ discuss with others.

3. Identify relevant staff development events in e-learning (www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk/ask/users/search.asp) and:

■ decide on key areas

■ select opportunities

■ consult your line manager.

4. Refer to the ePD framework. Start with the implementation guides and:

■ record your chosen pathway through the criteria

■ discuss with your colleagues and line manager.

5. Draw up a project plan (www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk):

■ set realistic targets

■ focus on learners' needs

■ negotiate support

■ consider potential constraints

■ look for partnerships with others.

6. Plan for reflection and evaluation:

■ set up surveys with learners

■ consider an ePD diary

■ disseminate outcomes to your team and the wider community via the Ask Butler website (www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk/ask/users/add_example.asp).

Further resources to help you

Associated publications and references

DfES (2005a). *Equipping our teachers for the future: reforming initial teacher training for the learning and skills sector.* London: Department for Education and Skills.

DfES (2005b). *Harnessing technology: transforming learning and children's services.* Annesley: Department for Education and Skills.

DfES (2006). Further education: raising skills, improving life chances. Cm 6768. London: Stationery Office.

Foster, A (2005). *Realising the potential: a review of the future role of further education colleges.* Annesley: Department for Education and Skills.

IfL (2005). *Every step counts: a progress report on the latest IfL CPD project developments.* London: Institute for Learning.

LSN (2007a). *A professional development framework for e-learning*, CIMS 062716RP/02/07/5000, ISBN 1-84572-614-6. London: Learning and Skills Network.

LSN (2007b). *eCPD in action and self-assessment*, CIMS 072810DV. London: Learning and Skills Network.

LSN (2007c). *Putting the Q into quality project management.* London: Learning and Skills Network.

Websites

aclearn
http://excellence.qia.org.uk/ (formerly aclearn.net)

Ferl
http://excellence.qia.org.uk/ (formerly http://ferl.beca.org.uk)

Institute for Learning (IfL)
www.ifl.ac.uk

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK)
www.lluk.org.uk

LSN
www.LSNeducation.org.uk
www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk

NIACE
www.niace.org.uk

NLN
www.nln.ac.uk

Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning
www.qia.org.uk
http://excellence.qia.org.uk/

What's on the DVD-ROM

To get you started on your ePD journey, additional resources can be found on the DVD-ROM attached to the back cover.

ePD framework folder

- A professional development framework for e-learning
- Topics – leadership, training and learning packages for e-learning

IfL forms adapted for eCPD folder

- Where am I? – Proforma
- Professional development plan
- Personal development record

LSN presentations folder

- Briefing – laying the foundations of eCPD
- Embedding eCPD into your organisation
- Quality improvement and self-assessment
- Learning by doing – the project unit
- E-tools
- Engaging learners and providing evidence for eCPD
- Putting the jigsaw together
- CPD_eCPD and evidence
- Completing the jigsaw

Staff development and eCPD folder

- Performance and development review
- Performance management – setting of key goals
- Staff exercise and presentation based on the ePD methodology

eCPD pilot projects

Title	Contact	Organisation
Enhancing the use of interactive whiteboard (WB) technologies on hairdressing	Sam Elmes	Bolton Community College
Information learning technology coordinator	Brian Lambourne	Boston College
Awareness and benefits of our learning platform (LP)	Paul Kelly	Cheshire Life Long Learning Service
E-coaching for eCPD, a Moodle approach	Kevin Carrick	City College Manchester
Online individual learning plans (e-ILP)	Richard Burley	City College Norwich
Audio suite for English	Gavin Jones	Craven College
Staff development delivery support by a learning platform	Maurice Neville	Derbyshire County Council
Enhancing learning through the use of an interactive smartboard	Helen Hanson	Doncaster College
Business e-tools	Eammon O'Donnell	Dunstable College
Mapping resources and develping the use of the VLE	Andrew Robson	Gateshead College
Technical support and quality assurance	Simon Davies	Grimsby Institute for F&H Education
FACE eCPD training	Jacky Elliot	Knowsely FACE
Use and delivery in teaching and learning via the college's VLE	Christine Byrne	Leeds College of Building
What makes a good e-portfolio	Karl Florczak	North Trafford College
DV8	Vaughan Hencher	Pershore Group of Colleges
Use of VLEs to produce active learning for the enhancement of curriculum delivery	Joshua Fitzgerald	Richard Huish College
Teaching staff CPD	Helen Wheelwright	Salisbury College
The business administration hub	Debbie Hughes	Solihull College
Linking blended learning priority projects to e-CPD	Fiona Stevens	Somerset College
Reach for the sky	Dr Jonathan Hills	South Cheshire College
Smart screen web based support for students and staff in hairdressing	Alison Asbury	South Nottingham College
Introducing the Moodle VLE to the college	Simon Anten	St John Rigby College
Using a VLE to provide for assessment-based differentiated and individualised learning actitivites	Glen Singleton	The College of West Anglia
Using some of the less well known activity modules in moodle	Jackie Frood	Varndean College
CPD through ITQ using the eCPD framework	Scott Hallman	Westminster Adult Education

The eCPD project was very helpful in focusing our attention on the staff development necessary, the project was hard work and enjoyable at the same time. All participants who took part evaluated their experience and the consensus was that they enjoyed the learning and were looking forward to using the new skills that they had learnt. Staff were encouraged and motivated through their learning experiences and confidence was increased in their abilities.

Helen Hanson,
Doncaster College

LSN regional coordinators 2006/07

East Midlands Region

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Boston College

Adele Cushing
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Eastern Region

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London Region

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West Midlands Region

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Steve Smith
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E-learning and technology programme

Continuing professional development (CPD) will be mandatory from September 2007 for post-16 teaching staff within the learning and skills sector. This publication shares the experience of such staff within the FE and ACL sectors in using LSN's professional development framework for e-learning for their CPD. The resulting case studies are reinforced with example outputs on a DVD-ROM that staff produced in using the framework.