'Using learning logs for CPD'

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Summary of Eventbrite workshop: Ten minute overview then forty more of question and answer

0.55   I have billed this this as 'Using learning logs for CPD' – it's really, about self-directed learning.

1.10   My learning log journey started, and continues, because I am not a naturally reflective learner.

2.15   My CPD sources: Reading, Networking, Internet, especially videos, Podcast conversations and this.

4.30   My 'Incidental Learning Log' is an A4 sheet with 5 sections in which I record short learning captures.

4.40   In the last two years I recognise many learning incidents don't require the 'full' learning log treatment.

5.55   Next slide – this is my Learning Log, started in February 1987 and in the same format as I use today.

6.25   I write the heading, the 'Significant experience' last reflecting what I have written, I don't write 'to' this.

6.55   Next is 'What happened?' a brief, summary of what I feel happened to trigger learning thoughts.

7.10   'What happened?' could be reflections on a future experience, happening now, or a retrospective.

7.20   The most important element of this for me, is 'Conclusions', as this is where I am 'forced' to reflect.

7.40   My best conclusions start with the word 'that', which is a great way to force a conclusion statement.

8.10   What makes my log more than a learning diary is the 'Actions' and When?' sections.

8.25   'When' can be a 'when I next do this' type, or 'by the end of the week, month' sort of 'When'.

8.45   I try to force myself to be specific: What I will precisely do and when to push behavioural applications.

8.55   After 1902 (currently) learning log entries I have seen the same actions appear a lot of times!

9.20   There are good reasons (which we may explore later), that I have hand written all 1.3 million words.

9.40   I often overflow 'Conclusions' into 'What happened' – the more conclusions for me, the better.

10.10   I confine myself to typically 5 or 6 actions per log, and each carries at least one 'When' note.

10.45   Yes it's become quite a beast – over 34 years, of nibbling at it, at a rate of around two entries a week.

11.00   I use all three forms or reflection: Reflecting, before, in, and after action – it's not all retrospective.

11.45   The problem with over-use of reflection after action is that you can't influence or change anything.

12.05   I believe that reflecting in advance is the most powerful, as it helps prepare for learning 'in action'.

12.45   I am strange, I am unusual, I wish I wasn't, as I believe all professionals should do this in some way.

13.10   Questions: How has your learning log evolved, how much time does it take, what links to CIPD CPD?

14.10   I now write in more detail, it has got easier, it only takes 40 minutes a week, that can surely be found.

14.30   It took me some years before I developed the courage to reflect on things that didn't go so well.

15.15   We find time for the things we value most…I don't watch Emmerdale!

15.50   Until employers push people to be self-directed learners, understandably, this will not be a priority.

16.25   Within CIPD, number one on the Code of Practice is an explicit statement of expectation on CPD.

16.50   There is a trade-off between maintain professional body numbers and subs, and making CPD hard.

17.00   Question: What have you gained from keeping a learning log? I think it's made me more self-aware.

17.30   It has helped me confront my embedded learning preferences, I am not a naturally reflective person.

17.45   I need this structure to force me to do what others who possess skills I don't have, do naturally.

17.55   The very people who least like the idea of this are those that would gain the most from giving it a go.

19.00   Question: Do you plan your learning with clear intentions or are you a more transactional learner?

19.40   I used to be so concerned about missing a 'significant experience' that I wrote it up right away.

19.45   Moving on from a post it to remind myself, I am now comfortable with reflecting before writing up.

19.55   There is a value in immediacy, the proximity to an event, a different value enriches via reflection.

20.25   Capturing learning from real life is like catching drips standing under a waterfall with a colander.

21.00   Some 'significant experiences' are evident 'in the moment', others are reflected on many years later.

21.50   Questions: Do you read them back, and how has this process has helped you as a professional?

22.35   I don't ever read entries back - I believe the process of making learning explicit means it has sunk in.

23.30   I have 35 Februaries that can be reviewed, I feel sometimes I should, but I see no value in doing that.

24.00   One benefit is that it is my capital 'U' USP, this has brought me work for which I have clear credibility.

24.40   I see a distinction between certification and qualification, I feel 'qualification' is a continuous process.

24.50   Professional Body membership doesn't make you one - there are too many 'passive professionals'.

25.30   For me, the learning *starts* with certification, I feel a lot feel that's where it *ends.*

26.10   Questions: What would you do differently, the biggest challenge, advice for someone new to this?

26.35   Let's be sensible, these days, it makes a lot of sense to type it up, and use technology to the full.

27.10   One reason I have chosen to continue to hand-write these is that I don't unhelpfully revisit and edit.

28.20   The greatest challenge is for me, sticking at it – this is still not a natural thing to do all these years.

28.35   Don't think for a minute that just because I've done this 34 years that it is easy or doesn't take effort.

28.45   Naturally reflective people need not do this – for two years my wise Mentor nagged me gently to start.

29.30   What advice to a starter on this journey? See value, and don't expect tangible returns too soon.

30.00   Recording learning should be seen as an engaging, energising experience, not a chore.

32.00   It's hard to get learners, in the workplace and within academia to appreciate the value of reflection.

32.25   Questions: How can we encourage reflection on practice, what specific value from writing thoughts?

33.30   For me, CPD is too often in reality, BCA: Begrudging Course Attendance.

33.55   So-called CPD schemes that are input-oriented and points driven are for me rubbish!

34.10   Real CPD is about doing this as a result of acquiring knowledge – not knowledge acquisition only.

36.20   Thirty years ago I thought I could change whole organisations – I now only work with individuals.

36.45   Keeping a documented learning log isn't the only, and may not be the 'best' way to record learning.

37.05   'We' can be more innovative on this, I have for instance recorded learning conversations for a year.

38.20   If people can be led towards reflecting on practice and recording learning a little, that can develop.

38.35   If people do anything at all, we can build on that rather than overwhelm them with too much too soon.

39.55   Question: Why should a Chief Executive I ask their very busy managers to start reflecting on things?

40.10   Question: What is the return on investment from this – a process most learning professionals avoid?

41.10   If we cannot engage positively with people at the top of any unit, no-one will feel it's a part of their job.

41.30   In 39 years, I have worked with <u>two</u> real leaders, who genuinely modelled the way and set the tone.

42.00   If the top person is at best passively disinterested, if that's the best you can get – work on its parts.

42.35   When we set explicit, documented financially measured expectations of learning, these can happen.

43.30   Learning is a unique, specific, contextual journey, we apply the 'hard measures' method to this.

44.00   We should make explicit, supported, challenging financially measured expectations of learners.

44.50   Question: What tips for people whose motivation to stick with this difficult process when desire dips?

45.45   We need the desire to learn, and a realisation that this will be challenging, and rewards come later.

46.20   If you have sufficient desire, the obstacles and barriers, lack of support, whatever, can be overcome.

47.05   A genuine, differentiating history of driving your own learning *should* be valued by an employer – is it?

47.35   Surely people who don't seek expensive, non needs-focused away-from-work events are of value.

48.55   I will put a 'Goody bag' together of videos, slides, blogs, diagnostics and more to add value for you.

49.45   When first introduced to the process of learning logs someone called the process as a learning *slog*.

50.10   Learning as a skilled process has been written about for many decades – we must work on that skill.

50.30   Learning is a learned behaviour, which some do better than others – it is the fundamental, meta-skill.

51.05   A learning log should be seen as a 'Victory log' that captures positives and successes.

52.30   Forms of reflection or formats for capturing these should not be imposed, they should be learner-led.

53.40   A major benefit from being an active learner is that you 'discover' new ideas, models and much more.

54.10   When we create curiosity in others, active learners have more value than passive 'professionals'.