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About the Presenter:

Title of Paper: **Enabling Culturally Sensitive Career Counselling Through Reflective Practice: A Study of the Use of Reflective Diaries in the Development of Trainee Counselors**

Abstract:

One of the aims of career counselling is to offer clients the opportunity to discuss their futures with professionals who take a client centred, empathic and non judgemental approach. For the professionals concerned, this means having a high level of self awareness in relation to their attitudes and values in order to enable them to be culturally sensitive. Such awareness helps them to stand back from their own thinking and maintain their focus on the client, which is a vital part of maintaining impartiality.

Many career counselling courses include the study of reflective practice to enable students to develop the skills of reflection, giving them the space to challenge their own thinking and develop their practice. Such courses often encourage students to keep a reflective diary as an important part of the reflective process, thereby promoting a deep approach to learning (Moon, 2000).

This workshop focuses on a study of the use of reflective diaries with career counselling students in England. A reflective diary was developed for students on the MA in Career Guidance, which included weekly content on a variety of relevant topics designed to help them to take a reflective approach to their learning and professional development. The content was written in a concise, informal and engaging style, and included practical advice, academic theory from a wide variety of experts on learning, exercises, reading suggestions, as well as a bibliography to point students towards literature that may benefit them further. Underneath the weekly content there was space for students to write some notes and reflections.



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The diary was then evaluated by asking the students to complete anonymous questionnaires at the end of each academic term; three in total. The results were then analysed regarding the ways in which the diary had enhanced their learning about themselves, particularly in relation to culturally sensitive and impartial career counselling.

References:

Moon, J.A., (2000). *Reflection in Learning and Professional Development Theory and Practice*, London: Kogan Page Ltd.