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Social networks and informal learning: implications for academic development

For many years, academic developers (also called educational developers or faculty developers) have supported university teachers through formal mechanisms such as workshops and accredited programmes. In many countries, these are now a well-established part of academic development activity.

However, learning is predominantly considered a social process, and academics also learn about their practice in more *informal* social settings, through their social networks and when sharing day-to-day experiences with their colleagues in teaching teams, learning communities, departments, and other professional contexts.

Informal learning can occur in many shapes and formats: in the lunchroom, through peer teaching, through informal mentoring, and the like.

The purpose of this special issue is to highlight how academic development can benefit from including perspectives on social networks and informal learning processes into our current practices.

How might these informal ways of learning inform and influence academic developers' interactions with academics? While there is little published research on this topic in a higher education context, it is clearly a growing area of interest for developers, as we seek new and creative ways to engage and support academics in their own development.

This Special Issue seeks to explore such learning opportunities for university teachers and academic developers.

As with all *IJAD* articles, we have no prescribed methodologies and invite you to find creative ways to address the topic of this Special Issue. All manuscripts will go through *IJAD*'s double-blind review process as normal once they are submitted.

TIMELINE

Manuscripts due **31 July 2014** | Anticipated publication in **early 2015**

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be under consideration for publication elsewhere. A guide for authors, Word template, and other relevant information can be found on *IJAD*'s homepage: www.tandfonline.com/ijad

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