A collaborative eLearning capacity-building program for clinical educators

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Oral presentation

Theme: *The art of teamwork and collaboration*

Background

There is a growing body of evidence for the effectiveness of eLearning approaches in healthcare education. eLearning is at least as effective as traditional approaches and can be integrated with workplace training and job aids to form an effective blended learning or organisational change strategy. eLearning offers the potential for learning to be personalized to meet learners' goals, and increases learner control over the content, method, time and place of their learning (Cobb, 2004; Cook et al, 2010). eLearning is also potentially a collaborative approach, encouraging co-learning and fostering learners' interactions with their peers (Ruiz, Mintzer & Lepzig, 2006).

This presentation reports on an organizational change initiative undertaken in a large Australian healthcare organisation to develop organizational capacity in eLearning authoring and production.

Initiative
Prior to the initiative, eLearning modules were produced by a central eLearning team on projects championed by senior hospital leadership and in consultation with nursing staff with subject matter expertise. While this approach successfully produced eLearning modules using a rapid prototyping approach to ensure timely project completion, production was limited by the resources and personnel of a small eLearning team.

The capacity building project involved seconding four clinical educators into an intensive 13 week program to build their capacity as eLearning developers. The program addressed three content areas: digital literacy, eLearning and organisational change. In addition, each clinical educator designed and developed a project using eLearning authoring software, and developed multimedia resources such as audio, images and video. The program methodology adopted a reflective and participatory approach whereby the participants researched, led and documented their own learning experiences..

Outcomes
Participants were interviewed and surveyed prior to, at the midpoint and the conclusion of the program. The evaluation data identifies three areas of impact on participants: (1) Technology: all participants reported increased confidence and intention to use technology in their roles; (2) Pedagogy: all participants described a change in their approach as clinical educators from didactic to a learner centred coaching model; and (3) Leadership and organisational change: participants reported a deeper understanding of the importance of collaboration and stakeholder engagement, increased confidence in their effectiveness and willingness to take risks and try different strategies, and a more positive outlook on their role and ability to influence change. Participants identified four approaches they adopted during program that most powerfully impacted on their learning and development: collaboration and teamwork, curiosity and openness to new experiences, valuing creativity, and a proactive and positive mindset.

This project provides evidence for the transformative potential of collaborative eLearning development on clinical educators' confidence and capacity.

References

Cobb S. (2004) Internet continuing education for health care professionals: an integrative review. *The Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions* **24**, 171–180.

Cook D., Levinson A., Garside S., *et al*. (2010) Instructional design variations in Internet-based learning for health profession education: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Academic Medicine* **85**, 909–922.

Ruiz J., Mintzer M. & Leipzig R. (2006) The impact of E-learning in medical education. *Academic Medicine* **81**, 207–212.

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