

Summary and outcomes of the workshop on the use of e-learning

Dublin, 10-11 December 2015

Introduction

- 2 major types of online courses:
 - o MOOC – Massive Open Online Course: everybody can freely enter; there is no control on who is doing what
 - o SPOC – Small Private Online Course: these are about assessment and qualification
- Looking at e-learning there is no one size fits all in the type and method used (blended learning)
- Difference between **asynchronous** (everyone at their own time) and **synchronous** learning
 - o For the asynchronous it is important to have focused presentations with videos and to collect feedback from students
 - o Synchronous contains group work (should not exceed 25 persons), live discussions and direct feedback and consolidation

Skills

- **Cognitive:** it is easy to transfer knowledge
- **Affective:** transfer of values and beliefs is harder, but it can be done
- **Motoric:** not easy and more expensive
- **Interpersonal:** through role plays, simulations and gaming

Advantages

- Potential for online learning is the greater access for students (geographically and time wise) and it is very fit for individual learning needs; individual needs and pace of study; It can be done whenever a person has time; Wide range and quality of education; It is a flexible way of learning; E-learning is good to combine with private life – one can follow an individual path
- Good for knowledge transfer; Provides means for an easy evaluation and follow up; Brings better learning than traditional learning; More constant quality in all different training centers; Update at the same time for everyone available; Consistency of message
- Lower costs; is it a saving? Consider that one also has to invest in the quality of the training
- Reduction in travel time; Staff can do it on the spot and does not need to be freed from their work and be sent to training; However it is very important to actually make staff time available;

Challenges

- Major challenges are the promotion of e-learning; Involvement of manager to stimulate staff to use the e-learning; Important also to manage the trainer and to leave no space for different interpretations of the training material; To motivate the staff trainer and get their acceptance they can best be invited in drafting and checking the programs; important to collect feedback from the users; Communication is essential; Important to start step by step and to introduce the e-learning slowly; Having a local contact the follow up is important; Need to promote the e-learning at the place where you want to implement it
- Local management needs to be involved in motivating the staff; E-learning plan has to be made: what do you want and when it can be done?; Managing expectations with regard to technical possibilities
- Motivation and incentives for students: this is equally important as the content; Age is of varying influence: younger people are quicker in finding their way in the program; older students are more confident in providing feedback; e-learning has to be done next to the normal work – what needs to be done that staff give the learning high priority compared to their other tasks?; Small size learning programs are helpful in this regard
- Important to build in interactivity and feedback; One has to take into account that staff often has zero experience with computer based training; The more interactive the more motivated people are
- Costs of online learning are not necessarily lower, especially in the first phase; Large number of students is needed to play break even; Better to negotiate when purchasing support for the e-learning: major price differences between suppliers
- Need for special technology – even more challenging in prisons; Need of good working computer equipment; Build in-house expertise to work independently with the authoring software; Invest in capture technology to being able to produce relevant pictures and videos yourself; As it is so different from class room learning it is advisable to hire an instructional designer with specific e-learning expertise; Need for a local IT contact to deal with computer problems on the spot; Make sure that the required equipment is available; Concerns about IT skills and behavioral change
- Use a simple understandable structure; Built in a timeline that people know where they are in the training program; Limited length of each training module; Time consuming to invent the wheel – consider buying e-learning from public/private sector; e-learning is not a solution for all learning purposes
- Commissioning process: accreditation and acceptance; Approval panel is needed

Conclusions

- Useful tool!
- Make it part of the curriculum and use it with other methods
- Support from the management;
- E-learning is a challenge for the whole organization - create a learning organization;
- New technology is a challenge for developers and users
- Use blended learning
- Liaising with other students is very important
- Evaluation to be done continuously
- Work with approval panel

Workshops

Belgian Prison Service: starting e-learning with no staff and no budget

Northern Ireland:

- Worked with guinea pigs to test the courses and get feedback and acceptance
- Have now 24 e-learning courses (mandatory and non mandatory)

Latvian Probation Service:

- Elearning system moodle – Training management system
- Value of moodle is to have an electronic file of the training activities of staff and individual learning plan and what they achieved in the training

France: developed their own moodle “Violet”

Poland: e-learning is useful as they have similar to France a large number of staff

Jersey: blended learning, the need for students to meet personally

Netherlands:

- Learning graph – 3 stages of development (basic, medium, specialized); 5 goals:
 - o Expertise building
 - o Working effectively
 - o Sharing knowledge
 - o Raising professional standards
 - o Resilience / work energy
- Need to create a learning organization

Norway:

- Made videos with iphones for the learning platform and put them on youtube and linked them to “It’s learning”
 - o Making videos was a non resource project
 - o They had to be easy to upload, short videos
 - o No editing, easy to make and to replace; low cost production
 - o Meant to be time saving for instructors

Ireland: will put their training program on a separate training server that is linked to the intranet but that makes it also possible to connect to from home