

All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care Fellowship Report.

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Visit Location: Dexler (Information Solutions) Melbourne, Australia.

Date: April 2015.

About Dexler

Online Learning Australia, owned by Dexler Education (Australia), is part of the Dexler group that provides learning consulting, designs and develops online training, education apps and bespoke courses. They aim to empower organisations to provide a wide range of online training to employees while meeting both cultural and legal compliance obligations in the areas of occupational health and safety, equal opportunities and discrimination, trade practices and privacy.

Overview of aims and purpose of visit

My overall aim and purpose of the visit was to gain an understanding of what is involved in developing e-learning programmes at local, national and international level. I also wanted to get an insight into the range of e-learning software that may be used in order to develop innovative education programmes.

Objectives developed prior to visit

My objectives of the visit were as follows:

1. To gain an insight into organisational factors that impact of the development of e-learning / on-line learning at local, national and international level.
2. To view innovative e-learning pedagogies so that the diversity of student needs may be met through innovative approaches to on-line learning. E-learning pedagogies can be problematic- as there is no one perfect pedagogy that fits all learners' capacities or requirements.
3. To gain insight into the structures and processes into innovative ways of developing materials that would engage the learner. E-learning pedagogies in Ireland are somewhat constrained by organisational / institutional factors, such as lack of technological applications and innovative thinking. Solutions to this challenge may come about from innovative instructional design. Staff proficiency in technology is still in its early development, particularly in healthcare. There is a need for an intelligent approach to the roll out of content, underpinned by strategy and systems.
4. To explore various models of practice in developing e-learning material, and how these innovative modes of delivery could link to a robust curriculum. In Ireland, e-

learning pedagogies are evolving in the sense that they provide new models of practice and technological tools. I considered that this visit would provide me with an international approach to innovative modes of development and delivery, owing to the experience of this international company.

Outcomes achieved:

Understanding the Community of Learners. The model of “Community of Learners” as proposed by Palloff and Pratt (2003) provided me with a basis of understanding the key factors in developing online learning. The community of learners of “virtual students” need to remain at the centre of any e-learning initiative. However, they argue that the success of any education initiative for a community of students that engage in e-Learning is that the designed needs to take cognisance of three key factors. These are: “effective course design”; “effective online facilitator” and “effective student support”. Without the integration of those key elements, it is unlikely that the online “e-Learner” will achieve maximum learning potential. During my visit, I had the opportunity to consider those key elements, and while some of the elements were outside the control of content designer, there needs to be a strategy in place to address actual and potential problems for the e-Learner while engaged in e-Learning.

Insight into Curriculum Design. Akker et al (2012) acknowledge that the “knowledge intensive learning society” calls on educators to continue to explore innovative teaching approaches when it comes to e-Learning. While it may be argued that the overall structure and process of curriculum design for face to face education programmes are easily transferable to an e-learning model, I engaged in a process of exploring both structure and process of an e-Learning curriculum. This took cognisance of the mode of delivery – i.e. online education, together with context, input, process and outcome. I explored an innovative model with Mr. Glenn Davidson (Education Technologist) and plotted an approach that captures 4 “C”s of practice, namely “craft”, “concept”, “construct” and “competence”.

	Pre-read	What does it look like for me as a learner	Discovery	What do you want / like me to do as a result of being a participant learner
Craft (Subject Matter) Subject Process	Lenses of practice Evidence based practice	Podcasts Youtube Reflective activities Discussion board Virtual classroom Policy Documents Relevant literature	Construct a “praxis” of practice – that is localised and contextualised.	Shared learning Case study analysis Initiate a practice development activity Mind maps
Concept	“Stream” as per syllabus.			
Construct (Theory / Practice)	Relationship between concept			

	and construct			
Competence (Skills)				

Figure 1: Curriculum construction framework.

As the above framework was being developed, central to my learning were the approaches that may be used within an e-learning mode of delivery that would capture some of the complexity of learning, not only from a theoretical point of view, but also its impact in practice. Key to the successful outcome of enacting the above framework was asking the question “what do I want the student to learn”.

The value of mLearning

Beetham and Sharpe (2013) acknowledge that mobile learning (mLearning) is gaining popularity. It can support learning across different contexts and their popularity and can be used by the learner in a variety of learning contexts. mLearning can be particularly beneficial in informal and semi-formal contexts where learners have more control over their learning goals and where motivation is often high. While I was familiar with the concept of mLearning, the visit to Dexler provided me with the opportunity to explore a systematic and co-ordinated approach to developing mLearning. Key to its success include the following components: it needs to be a). “convenient and easy to access”; b). “just in –time-learning”, c).“bite-sized modules”, d).“contextual and information” and e). “application oriented”. I witnessed how the development of mLearning was created and how it was used within the construction industry, while the principles are easily transferable to healthcare learning.

Visit 2: Centre for Palliative Care, Australia

I also visited the Centre for Palliative Care Australia in Melbourne. The purpose of this visit was to explore similarities and differences that The Centre of Palliative Care, Australia experience in their quest to expand the range of education programmes and reach a wider audience. During this visit, I met Karen Quinn (Education Co-ordinator), Soula Ganiatsas (Head of Operations), Fiona Israel (Victorian End of Life Care Program) and Professor Peter Hudson (Director). We had an opportunity to discuss our experiences in developing on-line education, in an effort to reach out to organisations that do not have education facilities or access to face to face teaching sessions. Similar to Ireland, the staff identified the need to embrace e-learning within all education programmes, so as to reach a wider audience.

Potential outputs to be delivered as a result of visit:

- Summary report to the All-Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care.
- Inform education curricula in designing, developing and delivering palliative care education in non-specialist palliative care settings.

- Develop small “learning nuggets” for dissemination in clinical practice, for example, code of professional conduct and ethics”, oral hygiene and documentation.

Reference:

Akker, J., Robert Maribe Branch, R., Gustafson, K., Nieveen, N., Plomp, T.(2012) Design Approaches and Tools in Education and Training. Springer. New York.

Beetham, H., Sharpe, R. (2013). Rethinking Pedagogy for a Digital Age: Designing for 21st Century Learning. Routledge. London.

Palloff, R., Pratt, K. (2003) The Virtual Student: A profile and Guide to Working with online learners. Wiley. New York.