

Creating an electronic virtual education platform for health professional students

Date completed: 24 May 2013

Background and context

This project expanded an existing virtual education platform, utilised by Peninsula Health junior medical staff, with the aim of making it available for use by a larger interprofessional user group within the Mornington Peninsula Clinical Placement Network (MPCPN).

Project objectives and expected impacts

The project objective was to create an electronic platform managed by Peninsula Health (PHPrime) to enable up to one hundred students/supervisors/administrators (from a multi-professional health background) to simultaneously and safely log in at the same time and for all nominated CPN students to be given 'user' rights to the system.

The redevelopment of a more robust version of PHPrime will enable the expansion of the user group to all clinical students and supervisors. Shared access will offer new opportunities for interprofessional learning, communication and collaboration amongst these new users.

Project activities and performance against stated deliverables

Project activity	Project deliverable/target	Due date	Status
Funding Agreement signed	January 2012	April 2012	Completed
Meeting with Jamweb (IT company) for initial discussions and tasking for Stage 1 of activity	April 2012	11 April 2012	Completed
Stakeholder meeting 1	Initial meeting	7 May 2012	Completed
Stakeholder meeting 2	Second meeting	3 July 2012	Completed, Steering Group formed at meeting
Project Officer appointed	Appointment in accordance with Peninsula Health policy	11 July 2012	Completed
Stage 1 activities	End November 2012	30 November 2012	Proposed Stage 1 scope of work was agreed in August 2012 and scope of work commenced. Build completed December 2012. Testing of build finalised March 2013.
Stage 2 activities	End September 2012	15 May 2013	Consultation commenced August 2012. Three consultation meetings with CPN members were conducted in September 2012. Work commenced December 2012 on completion of Stage 1. Presentation to MPCPN Committee of work in progress was conducted in February 2013. Build completed April 2013 with product testing then conducted in April/May. Training day of potential users conducted 22 May 2013 with three sessions held each of up to twelve attendees.
Finalisation of project	End May 2013	24 May 2013	Project delivered, completed and finalised. Steering Group disbanded. Live use from Friday 24 May 2013.

Project management

A Project Officer supported the activity following their appointment in July 2012. This role included oversight of the build and management of potential user requirements and general coordination activities. The final activity delivered by the Project Officer was the training of potential end users on Wednesday 22 May 2013. A Steering Group was formed in July 2012 and also supported project oversight. As noted above, wide consultation with potential users was conducted with the CPN Committee members briefed at their meetings during the project life.

Project performance against stated deliverables

Project activity	Project deliverable/target	Due date	Status
Incorporated in Section 3 above	Incorporated in Section 3 above	May 2013	Completed

The project has delivered the new PHPrime for use by students and training organisations that are members of the Mornington Peninsula CPN. Success may be measured against this objective.

All members of the MPCPN were invited to participate. Stakeholder meetings were held on 2 May and 3 July 2012 and an oversight Steering Group was formed at the second meeting. Three further consultation meetings were conducted with MPCPN members in September 2012. Advice on this consultation was provided to the Department of Health (DH) in progress reports dated 15 August 2012 and 12 March 2013.

Progress of the activity was regularly reported to all members of the MPCPN in newsletters dated October 2012, December 2012, February–March 2013 and April–May 2013. These newsletters are circulated throughout the MPCPN and are available online at through DH.

As noted on page 17 in the July 2013 DH document entitled 'Supporting Victoria's clinical training networks 2014-2016', there were twenty-six organisational registrants in the MPCPN in 2012. Eight of these sector organisation types were represented at the delivery training sessions conducted in May 2013 and included student supervisors from public health, local government, education providers and general practice. Peninsula Health, which provides the vast majority of student placements to the MPCPN, included supervisor representatives from medical, patient service assistants, nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy with additional registration from psychology.

All those attending were directly involved with student placement.

Project outcomes

The redevelopment of a more robust, new version of PHPrime has been achieved. This will enable the expansion of the user group to all clinical students and supervisors nominated across the MPCPN. Shared access will offer new opportunities for interprofessional learning, communication and collaboration amongst these new users.

Student capacity within the MPCPN were not directly affected by this project, however the quality of the learning experience was significantly improved following delivery of the activity. PHPrime is akin to an electronic briefcase in which each section contains a discrete user group (as student or supervisor) but is selectively receptive to postings (including virtual educational resources) in other sections of the briefcase. Students can create an e-portfolio or training record, there is also option to include placement objectives and competency information, content management functionality, self-determined training and learning activities planner for student users, event and other training opportunities information, access to online educational resources such as DVDs and contact information for other students of their specific formal group. None of these quality enhancements were available previously to students within the MPCPN. These quality enhancements were introduced to PHPrime as a direct result of the project as requested by the student supervisors attending stakeholder and consultation meetings.

Evaluation feedback at the training sessions conducted in May 2013 was very positive with student supervisors indicating the new PHPrime met their quality improvement requirements for student placements. A briefing on the progress of the project, which included quality enhancements, was also provided to DH representatives during two site visits to Peninsula Health in 2013.

The original MPCPN proposal, incorporated in the Funding Agreement, noted the objective of this activity was to create an electronic platform to enable up to one hundred students/supervisors/administrators to simultaneously and safely log in at the same time and for all CPN students to be given 'user rights' to the system. This objective has been achieved in the new PHPrime.

The expected impact in the original submission was that the redevelopment of a more robust, new version of PHPrime would enable the expansion of the user group to all clinical students and supervisors. Members of the MPCPN were consulted and given every opportunity to participate in the redevelopment as noted and eight of twenty-six sector organisational types participated in training sessions in May 2013. This included Peninsula Health student supervisors and administrators where the vast majority of student placements occurs within the MPCPN.

Evaluation

As the system is new it is anticipated it will take time to rollout to MPCPN potential users for everyday use. The CPN newsletter will be utilised to publicise the new system as widely as possible and this has commenced. Response to initial training on 22 May 2013 was very positive and attendance came from a wide variety of potential users. These included public health, vocational education training, local general practice, local government and registered training organisations.

It is intended to conduct an evaluation of the new PHPrime by means of an online survey in late 2013. This will target both student users and staff utilising the system.

Positive aspects

The opportunity to receive funding that allowed expansion of the existing system was most welcome.

Difficult aspects

There were a number of challenges arising from this activity:

- Managing expectations of potential users to be 'realistic' in regards to what a new system could deliver. This was explained by ensuring they were aware that the new PHPrime was not designed to replace existing systems, but should be seen as an adjunct to how current oversight and management of their student population is undertaken.
- Ensuring that the software designer dedicated sufficient staff to modify the existing system was arguably the most demanding activity of this project. The Project Officer was very dedicated and provided significant oversight and support to achieve this requirement.
- The project ran to budget, however expenditure flow was not uniform by month which made oversight challenging.
- The contract agreement with DH was very detailed and not an easy document to utilise in practice as it appeared ambiguous in places and overly wordy in some sections. This made understanding detail within the agreement a challenge for implementation.

Key learnings

In IT projects, careful oversight is required to ensure delivery is as close as possible to planned dates. Considerable hands-on management is frequently required to achieve this. The most pleasing aspect of this activity is that a really useful system will be delivered to students at the MPCPN.

Conclusion

This project, whilst challenging to implement and introduce, should provide a useful electronic adjunct to existing student support IT systems in the MPCPN.