

Sustainable “Children and Child Protection” E-Learning and 3D Simulation Programme

Walsall College



Project synopsis

The Child Protection e-learning programme delivers interactive and engaging e-learning for those involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Users can use the programme in their own time and at their own pace to learn about the issues regarding child abuse and protection.

Project aims

When delivering child care or child protection related course, it's often difficult to provide visual and engaging learning tools on such a delicate and theory based subject. Images of children or actual role play scenarios are impossible to incorporate into a training course.

The aim was to deliver an e-learning programme which would enhance learning and engage users so that through highly visual multimedia based learning, they would gain knowledge through interaction and valuable learning modules.

Most other training courses are face to face classroom based where participants have to take time off work or away from home and travel long distances to reach where the course is delivered. The majority of them also don't feature any visual aids and is very text heavy and theory based. It was intended that an e-learning programme would solve this by delivering a programme which anyone could access at any time they wished and learn at their own rate. They could also use it as a refresher course and access any module at any given time. The programme would also be rich in multimedia to enhance the learning programme so that it would be more innovative in terms of sector practice.

Project delivery

The programme brought together experts from the child care and child protection sectors to produce an e-learning programme developed by experts in the e-learning and training field. Walsall Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB) runs a Level 1 Safeguarding Children and Young People Course which we saw potential as developing into an e-learning course for people who aren't able to attend the course or want a refresher based programme.

The programme is designed for use either in a classroom environment as a teaching aid or as a standalone application. The user is able to select from the modules available and work through them which will include an end test at the end of each module.

Based on the training needs analysis, it was agreed that the modules and topics which were to be covered in the course would be as follows:

Module 1: Introduction and Legislation

- Topic 1 - Introduction
- Topic 2 - About the Industry
- Topic 3 - Case Studies
- Topic 4 - Legislation
- Topic 5 - The Common Assessment Framework
- Topic 6 - Summary
- Topic 7 - End Test

Module 2: Physical Abuse

- Topic 1 - Introduction
- Topic 2 - What is Physical Abuse?
- Topic 3 - Facts and Figures
- Topic 4 - Laws and Regulations
- Topic 5 - Vulnerability
- Topic 6 - Signs and Symptoms
- Topic 7 - Summary
- Topic 8 - End Test

Module 3: Sexual Abuse

- Topic 1 - Introduction
- Topic 2 - What is Sexual Abuse?
- Topic 3 - Facts and Figures
- Topic 4 - Laws and Regulations
- Topic 5 - Vulnerability
- Topic 6 - Signs and Symptoms
- Topic 7 - Summary
- Topic 8 - End Test

Module 4: Emotional Abuse

- Topic 1 - Introduction
- Topic 2 - What is Emotional Abuse?
- Topic 3 - Facts and Figures
- Topic 4 - Laws and Regulations
- Topic 5 - Vulnerability
- Topic 6 - Signs and Symptoms
- Topic 7 - Summary
- Topic 8 - End Test

Module 5: Neglect

- Topic 1 - Introduction
- Topic 2 - What is Neglect?
- Topic 3 - Facts and Figures
- Topic 4 - Laws and Regulations
- Topic 5 - Vulnerability
- Topic 6 - Signs and Symptoms
- Topic 7 - Summary
- Topic 8 - End Test

Module 6: Responding to Concerns

- Topic 1 - Introduction
- Topic 2 - What to do in Response to Concerns
- Topic 3 - Barriers to Actions

Topic 4 - After a concern is reported
Topic 5 - Summary
Topic 6 - End Test

Module 7: Reporting

Topic 1 - Introduction
Topic 2 - Record Keeping
Topic 3 - Report Writing
Topic 4 - Sharing Information
Topic 5 - Summary
Topic 6 - End Test

These together with the aims, objectives and treatment of the programmes were documented and signed off by subject matter experts. Information was gathered so that the scripts writer could produce scripts for the developers to work from and produce assets for the programme.

The programme treatment is based on a mixture of text, audio, graphics and animation. The interface is intuitive, , easy to use and navigate. The user would be easily able to identify the topics associated with the course and have the ability to navigate through any topics at their own pace.

It soon became apparent that producing 3D characters to portray body language and emotion on such a sensitive subject as child abuse, would not be the best form of action. Instead photographs were used as they gave more meaning and a sense of emotion to the programme.

Once development had completed, the programme was reviewed by subject matter experts who gave their feedback and amendments were made to make sure everything was correct.

The main lesson from the project was that it was found to be difficult to schedule in enough time for those involved in reviewing the content or arrange a suitable time to hold meetings or review sessions. Everyone involved already had a full time job to content with and the extra work load meant that content wasn't reviewed or created as thoroughly as it could have been.

Project outcomes

The programme has been well received by all involved in developing the e-learning programme, and can see how beneficial it will be to learning about child protection and safeguarding young children. The main benefit was greater accessibility to those who work with and deal with children either day to day or on a less frequent basis. By raising awareness of child abuse, this can only lead to more intervention and hopefully reduce child abuse, which is of the utmost importance to the lives of children and their families.

The overall intuitiveness and engagement of the programme, meant that it was easy to understand and follow. Along with the ability to use the programme as a refresher course or easily learn about a certain topic.

In terms of its initial aim of a virtual reality based simulation to help practice child protection procedures was seen as too advanced for the timescale and budget available. Instead an e-learning programme which could be accessed by all would be a much better way of delivering a training course on child protection procedures and issues.

The e-learning programme increases awareness and knowledge of child protection which is vital in this day and age. It also supports lecturers and trainers in enhancing their range of tools when delivering training. Users are able to access the course at their own pace and own time

without losing valuable working time or having to travel far distances. It will reduce costs for companies who send their employees on a training course. It helps improve student qualification rates as they are able to learn efficiently and become more proficient from the e-learning programme. It builds confidence with the users capabilities due them learning the correct processes and procedures in relation to child protection.

Throughout the development, the programme was tested by students and staff from Walsall College and WSCB. The feedback was extremely positive by all users, tutors said that it is a great aid tool to used by them to be part of a blended solution, while the student enjoyed the interactivity and the way that information has been displayed which help them greatly to understand the subject in more details and depth. The project hasn't had time to gather suitable feedback from other external resources We believe that this programme will help the consortium members to use it as a valuable training tool accessible to everyone, in which a more informative and engaging course is bound to increase awareness and have far more impact than a standard classroom based course.

The plan now is to make the programme blended and part of the current course plan so tutors and students can all benefit from.

Sharing of project findings

We will share our finding and programme outcome with others by publishing data on the Excellent Gateway, conferences and seminars.