

Case study > Disabling Abuse > South Australia > 2009

Disabling Abuse – A Refresher Course

Minda Inc in partnership with Workplace Education Services, TAFESA South

Background

Minda Inc was established in 1898 to provide a home for people with an intellectual disability; and has progressed into one of South Australia's largest disability support organisations, assisting over 1,100 people with intellectual disability. Minda Inc is also one of the State's largest employers with over 900 staff. Since 1998, Minda Inc has been a registered training organisation (RTO) providing professional development to staff, supported employees and the community services sector. Training is provided from Minda's state-of-the-art training facility, the South Australian Learning Centre.

Work place Education Services (WES) and Minda Inc have a long and rewarding working relationship. Through the various training programs that have been delivered by WES, key contact staff have had many opportunities for professional dialogue with the senior manager of training and development Muriel Kirkby. It was during one of these sessions that the opportunity and some funding to develop e-learning for the organisation were discussed. The senior manager asked WES if there was scope to develop an e-learning program as an effective tool to better utilise training in their fabulous facilities and to increase to the coverage of staff undertaking learning.

From a business perspective, the key business drivers identified for the implementation of e-learning were to:

1. Increase staff knowledge.
2. Address access and equity to educational opportunities for staff who traditionally work on roster systems, night staff, casual and part-time staff.
3. Provide online access to training materials,
4. reduce costs and time associated with training in the long-term
5. And ensure quality and consistency of training.

At the 2009 Graduation Ceremony, Minda Inc launched *Personal Power – recognising and preventing abuse* program. This course was a face-to-face program delivered as a one-day workshop. The project's aim was to support and empower the workforce, in particular the casual workforce to gain the mandated knowledge on abuse and ethical issues which are embedded in many core competency across a range of awards, in particular the *Certificate III in Disability Work*, a necessary qualification to maintain best practice in accordance with the direction from DIS-15 policy. This project will help carers to gain knowledge and empower carers to recognise and prevent abuse in the community services sector.

The Senior Manager of Learning and Disability and the WES Coordinator saw this as an opportunity to embark on e-learning Journey. One deliverable was to produce an e-learning package to add value

to the highly successful *Personal Power* project. The original programmer was delivered entirely face-to-face. An online refresher course that was run periodically seemed ideally suited.

Disabling Abuse – a refresher course was an e-learning program which aimed to maintain and refresh knowledge and empower carers to continue to recognise and prevent abuse in the community services sector. Other outcomes of the project and the journey it took would be realised through understanding and having access to infrastructure to deploy e-learning content and recognition of compliance with current industry e-learning standards (SCORM).

The support from the Framework was of immense value and an excellent resource for RTOs, learners, practitioners and anyone interested in e-learning. From the commencement of the project to the end the Framework website has been improved making it very user-friendly. It also provided a great model to begin gelling concepts of how the project's own website or links may want to appear and the team agreed it that it was also a good direction to point other organisations to if posed with the question – how does one get started in e-learning?

What was done

The impact of attending the VET Teaching Conference 2009

Early on the project, the Project Manager (Muriel Kirkby) and the Project Facilitator (Desma Moshou) attended the VET Teaching Conference 2009. There were experts talking about a variety of topics on online studies, hands-on workshops and delegates could touch, see, feel and inquire about a variety of resources and products to support and enhance e-learning. Some of the session included:

- Workplace Coaching for online studies
- Working together – Positive learning partnerships
- i object
- Beyond textbooks

This shaped the thinking and planning our project. Firstly it made the project team think about the importance of Minda Inc and TAFE SA (WES) partnerships and how the project could best support each other to provide the best outcomes for learners. In the SA e-learning strategies one of the things that is highlighted there is that of 'presenting opportunities for practitioners to share best practice in e-learning'. TAFE SA has been using e-learning for many years and could help Minda Inc, benchmark and avoid unnecessary costs. The project was a tool that could be used to 'encourage arrangements that facilitate the sharing of resources among RTOs'. Educationally, the lesson learnt here is that e-learning, in partnership with an RTO enables industry to deliver relevant, updated skills to its workers. The project provided the realisation that just producing or offering an e-learning resource to learners is not adequate. The role of an e-coach or workplace mentor is very important. Practitioners skilled in e-learning need to be given responsibilities of sharing, supporting and encouraging others by participating in mentoring programs

The project facilitator also embarked on an extensive search for all the freeware software currently available. This was important for organisations who are often working on tight budgets. The general perception of the team members from Minda Inc was that e-learning is very costly to implement and the realisation of how much support and free e-tools there are available to use, in particular for educational purposes, surprised most team members. This research allowed the opportunity to explore the issues of licensing, copyright and AEs share licensing. It was important to addressing different learning styles and to have inclusive and equitable e-learning practices to help those with disadvantages. Minda Inc recently increased it's scope to cater from Certificate I through to Diploma and has changed it's policy of providing education to staff to providing education to all including people.

Social e-learning - Issues and challenges for moving to social e-learning

The team was introduced to social software tools. They were encouraged to use Facebook and Twitter. Facebook proved popular, however there were issues and challenges with social e-learning that emerged were:

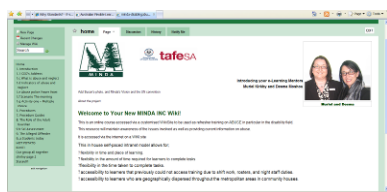
- The technology infrastructure within the organisational context did not support the use of social software. There are all sorts of firewalls which will need to be addressed with policies. This was going to be a challenge due to the nature of Minda Inc services. Under the *Age Care Act 1997*, service providers must comply with their obligations to privacy and confidentiality and therefore the technology infrastructure demands a high-level of security. Nevertheless, the organisation must be supportive of educators to embed e-learning.
- It also showed that the learners themselves may encounter barriers and challenges that need to be addressed. One is their computer literacy, how savvy they are at being able to use the software, and the strategies needed to be put in place to assist them.
- There was some resistance to learning with social software, from learners who were not self-directed. They just want to be told what to do. They've been very much conditioned by older methods of transmission and acquisition. They are quite resistant some strategies to push them a little bit further were required. Engaging them with some media-rich sources seemed to appeal to them.
- One of the other learner issues was identity. Some learners found it very awkward to be writing in a public manner. They were happy to discuss it in class but when they see it in writing, they dislike the exposure - being available for everyone to examine.

Anne Bartlett-Bragg in her paper '*The changing learning landscape*¹' said:

The educators themselves need to think about their own practice... danger is that we just renovate our current practice with technology, rather than redesigning. In redesigning, engaging our learners so much more and acknowledging their experiences and drawing that in to make them more rich environments. So our pedagogical practices have to be examined very closely on an individual basis. Some people may choose not to follow those paths with social software and I think we have to accept that that is not going to be everybody's style.

The resource, *Your Guide to Social E-learning*² from the Framework was very useful. This resource gave validation to the issues explained above.

Wikispaces

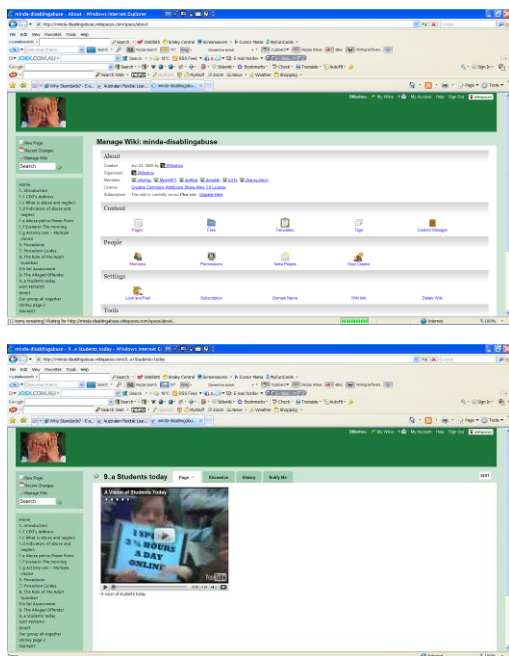


After the initial Facebook practice, the team led by Desma looked at Wikispaces. Wikispaces and Wikipedia are based on the wisdom of the crowds. A project wiki was created on: <http://minda-disablingabuse.wikispaces.com>

The project used the wiki as a learning tool for all the team to play in, like a 'sandpit'. The group learnt that Wikispaces offered three types of spaces: public, protected and private. Wikispaces also provided an ad-free space at no cost to educators. The project made their wiki private and only invited members could enter. There was discussion this during one of a meeting about privacy and keeping records on who was required to do the course and when they completed the course. The project also explored how short film clips ie the scenarios produced from *Personal Power* could be embedded. Desma demonstrated at a team meeting with a YouTube clip on students of today. This worked well.

¹ http://socialelearning.flexiblelearning.net.au/social_elearning/elearning/documents/Anne_Bartlett_issues.doc

² <http://socialelearning.flexiblelearning.net.au/index.htm>



The group got around to 'How do we assess' and found that this was where the wiki may have its limitations.

Hot Potatoes 6

Hot Potatoes was fun at easy to use with lots of variety and good instruction.

The team was able to explore this from their private home computers and upload onto the wiki. IT security did not enable this program to be downloaded. They also tried:

- Multiple choice using JQuiz
- Gap-fill exercise made with JCloze
- Crossword made with JCross
- Jumbled-sentence exercise made with JMix
- Jumbled-word exercise made with JMix
- Ordering exercise made with JMatch
- Matching exercise made with JMatch.

In May, Mick Munro and Desma were able to attend Clint Smith's (E-learning Consultant) Master Class. This was of great help to the project, it helped focus the plan. At the class, the Building teams for sustainable e-learning was very relevant, looking at project specific roles and who's job it is to do what was very important for the projects success.

Clint Smith also introduced the Design E-learning³ site. This has been a fantastic resource to continually come back to and make reference to.

A	Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe requirements • Plan online support • Ensure staff skills • Plan testing schedule • Allocate resources
B	Analyse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe learners • Describe context • Review current practice • Identify existing resources
C	Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select approach • Select a range of strategies • Draft resources • Design learner support materials • Identify RPL options
D	Develop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare resources • Prepare assessor resources • Trial resources • Provide professional development for teachers • Revise resources
E	Deliver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform learners of criteria • Conduct assessment • Manage the process • Ensure authenticity
F	Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate tasks and processes • Evaluate process • Evaluate tools (software etc) • Modify processes

³ <http://designing.flexiblelearning.net.au/index.htm>

Looking at other industry examples

This provided the project with some good teaching resources for courses that were taught at Minda Inc but also showed examples of where to get ideas from and of how the project could best design and create the resource. All the industry e-learning demonstrations can be found on the E-learning for Industry⁴ website. The website is filled with resources, video clips, audio reports, other case studies; practical guides for introducing e-learning and discussion forums aimed at helping businesses develop and implement an e-learning strategy.

The E-learning on a shoestring⁵ website was also particularly helpful. It looked at a variety of free technology tools and evaluated their usability. One resource that was very applicable to the area of community services and health was *The Zero Tolerance to Violence*, which was initially delivered as a compulsory eight-hour face-to-face training program for all NSW health workers. In order to reduce cost associated with staff downtime and travel and address issues of trainer availability, a paper-based workbook was introduced to deliver the bulk of the training, with face-to-face training being reduced to two hours. Even though the main focus of the industry e-learning demonstration was to engage health workers in e-learning and practically demonstrate that face-to-face learning can be supplemented and reduced with interactive online learning.

Their online modules were built using Flash and loaded into North Coast Area Health Service's Moodle LMS. The Flash materials were then made available to other health agencies as a component to load into their own LMS. The *Practical Guide to E-learning for Industry* gave the team a road map to follow however many of us took different and varied roads, some short, some long and some kept veering of into different areas of discovery and had to pull back continually, this was a common hazard.

Moodle for dummies course

Four of the team attended the session run by Richard Wallace, By the end of the day Muriel was convinced Moodle was the way to go. David Zwallo (Technical Expert for Minda Inc) was consulted and advice from Richard was sought. Minda Inc decided that in its future directions for e-learning, they would have their own Moodle site.

The Minda Inc Strategic Plan 2009-2012⁶ refers to using e-learning to implement courses that can be accessed through the learning and development website to be hosted on Minda Inc's Moodle.

Benefits experienced by (Disabling Abuse Team)

Developing the capacity

The lessons learnt and the important benefit that came out of the project was the understanding of developing capacity.

- Developing the IT Infrastructure; providing adequate Bandwidth, providing suitable hardware and software.
- Ensuring the availability of appropriate hardware and software to learners, practitioners, RTOs, industry and other organisations.
- Supplying technical support:
 - IT support needed to understand the tools for e-learning as part of their role. At the moment educators find things they want to use, but are blocked or hit technical barriers and the IT people don't understand the need or the purpose.

⁴ <http://flexiblelearning.net.au/industry>

⁵ <http://creativecommunity.flexiblelearning.net.au/tech.htm>

⁶ http://www.minda.asn.au/files/u1/MINDA_STRAT_PLAN_WEB.pdf

- Advanced technical and learning support for practitioners is essential for e-learning to function effectively and efficiently.
- Training via e-learning must be accessible in the home and/or workplace of those working in community housing and other more remote areas.
- Engaging the mature age worker - most care workers fall in this category. Retraining mature age workers for the digital age is a major issue confronting the workforce.
- Providing training and mentoring programs in technology that is designed to overcome resistance to new technology.
- Integrating e-literacy and technology into all workplace training.
- Acknowledging that e-literacy is essential for workers in today's highly competitive workplace, revolutionised by technology. Up-skilling and re-skilling workers in e-literacy will have a major positive impact on workforce capacity and capability.
- This can be achieved by conducting a regular audit of e-learning in training and assessment.

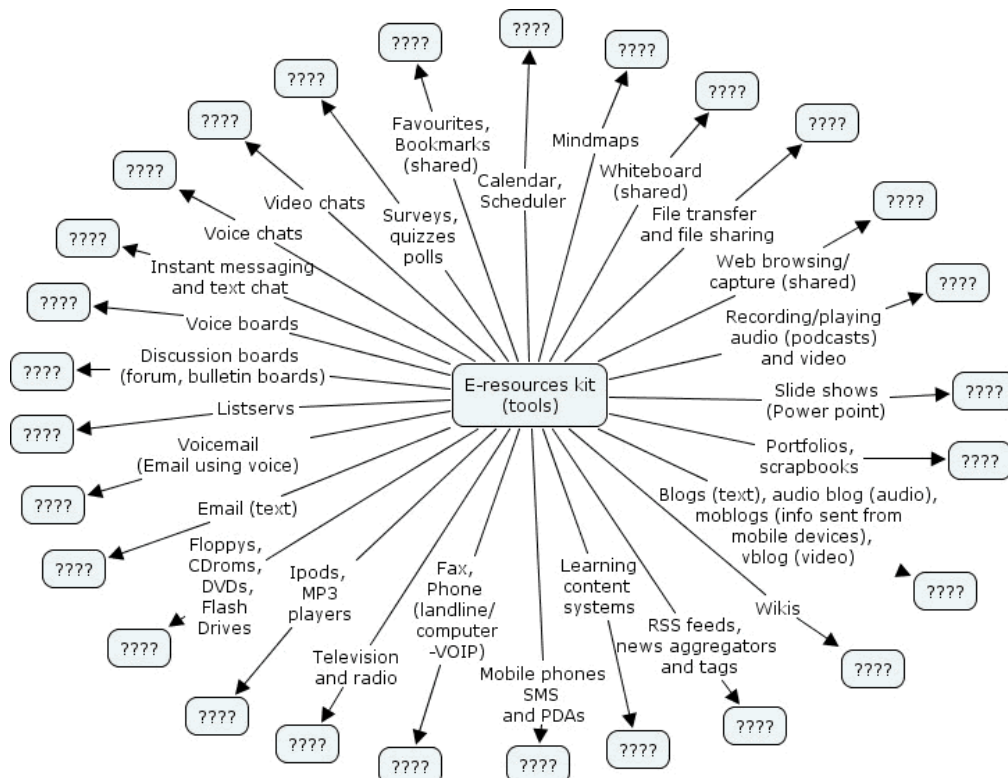


"My personal opinion on the greatest benefit the Framework provides through it's seed funding is legitimising staff time to explore and take a hands-on approach to practicing, trialling, evaluating, improving and then to try some more in the playground of e-learning. Some not yet inducted into this world perhaps do not appreciate the time these activities can consume when we are 'baby' e-learners or even toddlers. Like learning any new skill the initial stages may appear long and laborious but soon enough the skill becomes second nature. Without the funding, professional development such as this would never happen as more and more organisations and managers are forced to measure success in outcomes of a more concrete nature". Desma

Lessons Learnt

The diagrams below put the projects thoughts into something pictorial. There is so much to learn about e-learning, it is a continual process and one that possibly has no end.

Diagram 1 - Some e-learning 'speak' the project was interested in, but didn't know how to approach.



Lesson 4 - The outputs

- a. The experience itself and all the learning that ensued. Documenting it into a case study to share through the Framework.
- b. A CD resource with a learner guide.
- c. A classroom space on VETSA to demonstrate the capabilities of Moodle and a learner guide.
- d. A portfolio of useful online training resources which are free to download and use under the AShare licencing arrangements.
- e. Understanding the legal issues in flexible learning for practitioners and instructors, copyrights, permissions and intellectual property.
- f. Having a clearer picture of e-learning design.
- g. An e-learning induction guide.
- h. A suite of free e-learning tools such as:
 - i. Audacity
 - ii. Switch Sound File Converter
 - iii. Veta Data
 - iv. Survey Monkey
 - v. Hot Potatoes Quiz maker
 - vi. Food Safety Toolbox
 - vii. ARED
 - viii. Wink
 - ix. iSpring
 - x. Lecture Scribe

The outcomes

Initially the resources will be trialled internally. The participants who will be trialling the project will then be required to complete a survey to rate the project in various categories:

- Ease of use
- Learning design
- Accessibility
- Visual
- Readability
- Audibility
- Enjoyment.

The course *Personal Power* has been delivered to the 900 at Minda Inc. In about six months they will need to complete the course as a refresher. Statistics and results of the survey can be collated then for a more accurate analysis. From the pilot group that trialled, the outcomes demonstrated that an e-coach or mentor needs to be made available. Infrastructure also needed to be addressed. Learning and development staff who were involved and are responsible for the training needed to have extensive e-learning professional development. The organisation as a whole needed to support e-learning and allocate the necessary time and funding needed.

Reflections

Estimate some time, then multiply it by ten and then you may still have underestimated, so allow plenty of time for exploring, technical hiccups, slow downloads, computer freezes, new discoveries and getting hooked in the world of e-learning. Sharing the work evenly across the team members not only benefits individual members but the project as a whole.

Framework connection

The national training system's e-learning strategy, the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework) funds and supports [E-learning Innovations](#) projects which aim to embed e-learning into the national training system by supporting and enabling innovation in training design and delivery, at the state and territory level.

Acknowledgement

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