Negotiated Task - Reflection

The successful tender of a contract to deliver training to a wide audience, from allied health assistants, junior and senior allied health professionals to team leaders and managers meant varying degrees of pre-existing knowledge and understanding of the content to be delivered as well as seeing the content through different lenses. Little flexibility existed in regards to the actual content to be delivered and expectations were high to ensure maximum benefit to all participants.

Having to deliver these workshops provided an opportunity to bring together all aspects of the EDGCT5009 module: from using social media in the form of Eventbrite, Survey Monkey and a Weebly, implementing brain friendly teaching and learning techniques through for example a power point handout on soft coloured paper containing few words and mainly pictures, to encouraging interactive discussions to facilitate better retention of information by all participants as per Edgar Dale’s Cone of Experience.

Initial contact with participants was made through Eventbrite, a software platform which can be shared on social media, and chosen as a medium for participants to register for the event as well as for us to gauge participants’ understanding of the topics to be delivered by asking them specific, topic related questions upon registration. Eventbrite allowed us to specify what information we wanted to collect about each individual participant such as name, profession, discipline and contact details, as well construct questions that would shed more light on a participant’s understanding of the topics, which allowed us to modify and/or adjust (personalise) each delivery if required. Eventbrite also provided the opportunity to contact registered participants via email or social media if a session was cancelled, as well as the possibility to construct many types of reports providing quantitative data for an evaluation report. Although Eventbrite suited our purpose, it is not the be all and end all as may make out to be. The limited information that possible participants see when they open your page may make them decide to not register or buy a ticket (Bousquet, 2013). Even though our event was free, targeted to a specific audience and advertised through particular networks, we still had some people either asking for more information to decide if they should attend, or not attend at all as the event title gave them the wrong impression of what to expect.

Well before the start of the workshops a small pilot group were asked to participate in an on-line survey through Survey Monkey and were asked more detailed questions about the three topics associated with the content to be delivered. This was done to establish how detailed the content to be delivered face-to-face should be and what could be left for self-study using a Weebly. Although I believed that most potential participants had at least an average knowledge of the content to be delivered, the survey provided an insight in the limited knowledge people actually had and their desire to gain more. This made deciding what and how to deliver even more important.

Deciding on the method of delivery was influenced by recent study in other modules associated with the EDGCT course. According to Edgar Dale learners retain more information if that information was obtained through active means (doing, discussing) rather than through passive means (reading, hearing, observing) (Anderson, ?). As such an interactive classroom platform was chosen where each topic would be explained intermingled with the use of scenarios brought forward by participants. An interactive classroom is one where the emphasis has gone from the teacher to the students who are actively involved in the content delivery. ‘The atmosphere of the whole class has been changed from completely teacher authority to learner autonomy with necessary teacher interference’ (SJTVU, 2014) and both facilitator and participants operate at an equal footing. However, this meant that time could be taken up by discussions instead of providing the required facts and information, and with delivery time being restricted to three hours, additional support to provide participants with extra information was required. As such, a Weebly was created which focussed more in-depth on the theory parts of the three main topics: the role of an Allied Health Assistant, the process of delegation, and effective supervision.

Although my Weebly was built to provide extra information to participants on a needs basis, ie. the Weebly was accessible to all but only those wanting additional information to what was provided face-to-face would access it, a Weebly can successfully be used in the classroom. An educational Weebly can empower students ‘to express themselves creatively using a variety of multimedia features, all within a protected environment’ controlled by the teacher (Weebly, 2014). Although maybe not as easy to use as a Wiki, Weebly does allow collaboration between students and sharing of information as contributors can be given access by the administrator (teacher). Some state that the ‘less control the more powerful the tool’(Technology Integration for Teachers), but once out in the ether anyone can read the Weebly and as such teachers remain responsible for moderation of any content placed or blogging on the Weebly.

The Weebly looked good and provided all the required information and also had an option for interaction with participants through a blog. However, in hindsight and with that little bit more knowledge and confidence now on my side, I would have probably chosen for a closed group in Facebook as per the Social Media part of this module. Emails containing specific questions to the content delivered in the workshops still arrive in my inbox on a daily basis and it would have been more interactive if these questions would have been posted on Facebook as some of these could have easily been answered by other participants. However, there is always next time.

# Additional links for more information if required:

Introduction to Eventbrite - <http://www.slideshare.net/fullscreen/robg/introduction-to-eventbrite/1>

Workshop Weebly: <http://ahaframework.weebly.com/>

# References:

Anderson, H.M. (?). Dale’s cone of experience. Retrieved from: <https://www.etsu.edu/uged/etsu1000/documents/Dales_Cone_of_Experience.pdf>

Bousquet, D. (2013). Is Eventbrite helping or hurting your workshop attendance? Retrieved from: <http://eventstrategysolutions.com/is-eventbrite-helping-or-hurting-your-workshop-attendance>

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