

PDP Communiqué

Oh, The Places We've Gone and The Things That We've Done: Technology in Training — Ten Years of Change

Eugene J. Monaco,
Executive Director and Public Service Professor,
Professional Development Program

At the June meeting of the New York State Training and Development Council, I was given the opportunity to present a retrospective of training over the past decade. By taking an inventory of the extensive work that PDP has done through partnerships with state and federal agencies over the last decade, I was able to trace the ways in which technology innovations have changed the training and workplace learning of public employees. And, although I've addressed this topic in other issues of the Communiqué, this 10-year retrospective led me toward a more comprehensive appreciation of the changes that have taken place, the ways in which today's training and teaching platforms have come to look quite different from those of a decade ago, and the role that PDP has played in keeping state agency training in step with these changes and practices.

The overarching theme, of course, is that change in tools, access, and technology leads inevitably to change in learning design and deployment. This phenomenon is what has enabled e-learning and interactive learning to become ubiquitous across agency training programs as opposed to being esoteric, as it was ten years ago. We have quickly moved from using simple PowerPoint as an add-on to a lecture to relying on "Pack and Go" presentations as the core element of the learning experience, and we have been able to do this because of the availability of increasingly smaller and more convenient storage devices beginning with CDs, moving on to DVDs, and ending with the current thumb-sized flash drive. In fact, we have been able to eliminate the need for these devices entirely through the increased use of web applications and the ability to rely on Internet access wherever we go. Increasingly sophisticated hardware such as Smartboards, mobile labs, and audience response systems have changed the training, teaching, and learning environment greatly with the opportunity for learner engagement and participation that they bring. This has led us to more "hands-on" or experiential interactive learning as the expected approach in classroom training.

Continued on page 3

A Newsletter from the
**Professional
Development Program,
Rockefeller College**



UNIVERSITY
AT ALBANY

State University of New York



PDP's Peter Kircher and Trish Geary provide a unique cross-training experience for trainees through teleconferencing (see page 5).

**Innovations in Improving Outcomes for Children
Did You Know?**

Pg. 2

**Using the Web to Train the Public Health Workforce
News and Views**

Pg. 3

Pg. 4

Pg. 5

VOLUME 23, FALL 2009

Innovations in Improving Outcomes for Children

Edward Borges, Director of Communications
New York State Office of Children and Family Services

At the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), the single, critical core mission is improving outcomes for children. It is the responsibility of every OCFS manager and worker to stay current with emerging trends and evidence-based approaches in the field. Linking these developments with the practice environment is central to mission success — a mission that consists of transforming juvenile justice, child welfare, and child care.

With a 30 year tradition of linking the learning, applied research, and evaluation resources of the university with the continuing professional education needs of the public service, the Professional Development Program (PDP) at UAlbany's Rockefeller College brings together professionals skilled in communications, multi-media instructional design, and child welfare to OCFS' transformational efforts.

PDP does much more than provide what are colloquially referred to as “deliverables” such as informational videos, brochures, and posters — all of which it does superbly. PDP staff are a catalyst for creating new opportunities to communicate more effectively and efficiently with the agency's clients and stakeholders — and they do it ever-mindful of Governor David A. Paterson's cost-reduction priorities. For example, while working with a PDP graphic designer to redesign the OCFS website which had essentially been serving as an online filing cabinet, the goal was recast as “how to better serve the agency's clients.” Now we are working together on a design for a consumer-friendly online portal for three distinct constituencies: parents/caregivers; youth; and child welfare professionals in public and non-profit agencies. This design, to be implemented in the fall, will go a long way toward facilitating improved outcomes for children and families.

Another example is Bridges-to-Health, OCFS' innovative Medicaid waiver program for medically vulnerable children in foster care. In a dramatic departure from the paper pamphlet promotional approach that might have been used less than two years ago, our working partnership with PDP produced a 12-part video series to teach caseworkers how to navigate the system to enroll the children in their care.



Edward Borges

Typically six minutes long, these episodes can be viewed on the OCFS Internet and Intranet sites, on YouTube, and as a podcast that can be downloaded from iTunes. Caseworkers will be able to download the entire series or just the episode they need on their iPod and watch or listen to it on the bus, subway, or car on their daily commute. And it doesn't stop there — we're publicizing the program on Facebook! No more paper memos or manuals cluttering caseworkers' desks — just the information they need, when they need it, and where they want it.

This is what working with PDP means to OCFS' Office of Communications: insight; innovation; and implementation which improve outcomes for children. **PDP**

Request an Electronic Version

In an effort to support the University at Albany's mission to go green, the *Communiqué* is now available via email.

Individuals who would prefer to receive this publication in an electronic format can email: newsletter@pdp.albany.edu

Did You Know?

The Department of Homeland Security seeks \$75.1 million more in the coming year to develop and deploy cybersecurity technologies for the entire government to counter continuing, real-world national cyber threats and apply effective analysis and risk mitigation strategies to detect and deter threats.

– Gov Info Security

Because the use of computer technologies have been on the rise, learning environments have increasingly added blended learning. The time it takes to add technology to the classroom is significant, however, the results are well worth the time.

- It takes 30 hours to create 1 hour of classroom instruction
- It takes 33 hours to create 1 hour of PowerPoint-based online learning
- It takes 221 hours to create 1 hour of E-learning
- It takes 750 hours to create 1 hour of simulation-based e-learning

– Brandon-hall.com

45 billion minutes were spent on member communities, such as social networks and blogs, in 2008.

blog.nielsen.com

Results from Facebook confirmed that nearly 75 percent of users voted for the new governance policies after debate about the original terms of use, which suggested that the social utility owned users' materials.

– govtech.com

Development times to create one-hour of e-learning:

- Simple Asynchronous: (static HTML pages with text & graphics): 117 hours
- Simple Synchronous: (static HTML pages with text & graphics): 86 hours
- Average Asynchronous: (above plus Flash, JavaScript, animated GIF's, etc): 191 hours
- Average Synchronous: (above plus Flash, JavaScript, animated GIF's, etc): 147 hours
- Complex Asynchronous: (above plus audio, video, interactive simulations): 276 hours
- Complex Synchronous: (above plus audio, video, interactive simulations): 222 hours

www.nwlink.com, (The eLearning Guild, 2002)

Technology in Training – Ten Years of Change

Continued from page 1

Changes in the level of experiential learning in online courses have been made common as well by advancement in the sophistication of asynchronous e-learning applications and web access. In 1998 when PDP created its first asynchronous web-based course for the Office of Real Property Services was at the time cutting edge, but in retrospect, it was a “page-turner” — linear content with few animations and only multiple choice and true/false quizzing activities. Since then, we have created dozens of courses that have reached tens of thousands of learners, all online, providing access to learners previously unreachable except by transporting them to Albany. Today's content is delivered to them where they are. And, because it is database-driven, it can provide a seemingly customized learning experience for each participant since each can now choose his or her own path through the content. The content is designed so that experienced learners can bypass the familiar, while novices can participate in the complete detailed content. Because learner responses are documented and tracked in a database, even asynchronous learners have the experience of an interactive “virtual classroom” as they contribute answers and ask questions while receiving both immediate and delayed responses from their facilitators and co-learners. The expectations for the use of online training have changed as well. Initially limited to regulatory certifications and other more concrete training content, today, just about everything can be taught effectively on the web from software or systems

training to critical thinking and decision-making using complex decision trees, simulations, videos, and animations, which allow for realistic learning experiences. This is a very different picture from the one we were looking at ten years ago.

Other changes in tools and access have enabled “blended learning,” which only ten years ago was seen as a clever way to add variety and engagement in learning for a few highly sophisticated users, to firmly take hold as a preferred instructional methodology. As a result, learning and training no longer are seen as experiences that begin and end with one face-to-face synchronous session or a one-dimensional linear asynchronous curriculum. Instead, learners gain baseline knowledge before a synchronous session through technology-mediated learning opportunities and then do follow-up with online practice sessions. In stating, “Students who took all or part of their class online performed better ... than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction...,” and continuing “...the effectiveness of online learning approaches appears quite broad across different content and learner types and an effective option for both undergraduate and graduate students and professionals,” the U. S. Department of Education study, *Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online-Learning* (May 2009), has provided us with quantitative support for blended learning as a basic requirement for instructional design today.

Continued on page 6

Using the Web to Train the Public Health Workforce

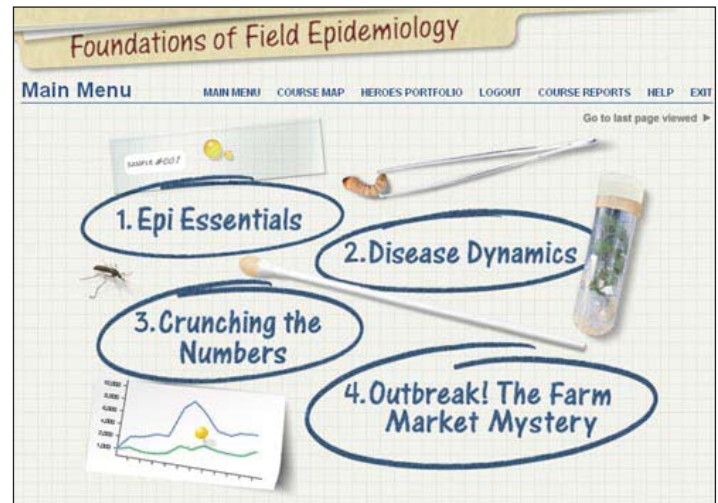
Rebecca Stanley, Manager, Instructional Technologies Unit
Professional Development Program

For most of the past decade, PDP has been designing and developing web-based courses for the public health workforce. A partnership with UAlbany's Center for Public Health Continuing Education that began in 2001 with the development of a single course has blossomed into multi-year contracts resulting in over 40 courses on topics as diverse as cultural awareness, supervisory skills, HIV/AIDS case management, disaster preparedness, preconception health, and integrating tobacco interventions into addiction services.

A Range of Approaches

PDP uses a range of instructional approaches and interaction designs in developing its courses. Some projects are fairly straightforward, leading the learner through a series of instructional topics and activities, with regular opportunities for assessment of understanding. Others immerse the learner in a simulated public-health scenario that requires the application of both knowledge and critical thinking skills to achieve a successful outcome. Video and animations enrich some courses. Others ask learners to contribute their opinions and read what others taking the course have to say.

The many options for course and interaction design afforded by increasingly accessible and affordable web technologies and tools presents a unique challenge to development teams. How do we choose the right approach for a particular project... one that engages learners in meaningful ways and results in positive learning outcomes?



Example of a course on field epidemiology developed for the UAlbany School of Public Health

Walk a Mile in the Learner's Shoes

PDP achieves this end by focusing on the learner. We research the target audience: the knowledge and skills they bring to the training, their professional culture, the demands and struggles they face in the workplace. Working prototypes of new courses are tested on these end users and careful attention is paid to how they interact with both content and design.

The result? We like to think that the proof is in the evaluations submitted by our learners. Here are just a few of their comments:

- “Well organized, educational, informative and very interactive program.”
- “This was an immensely important course. I think it's one of the most important courses I've ever taken.”
- “I was totally into these very interactive modules! I only left for lunch! Great job in getting the points across! Innovative technique wherein your character interacts with other characters with thoughts and responses! Loved it!” **PDP**

Introduction page for an online Tobacco Treatment course that promotes active learning in a self-paced environment



News and Views

Barbara Sander Receives NYWFIA President's Award

The New York Welfare Fraud Investigators Association awarded Barbara Sander their President's Award in appreciation for her support and dedication to NYWFIA as well as for her service with helping NYWFIA carry out its mission. Barbara received this honor on June 2, 2009



Gene Monaco, Barbara Sander, June Mastan

during NYWFIA's 26th Annual Training Seminar, attended by David Hansell, the Commissioner of the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance and Will Zwink, the Director of OTDA's Bureau of Training and Management Analysis (TAMA). Barbara, a Project Staff Assistant, has been with PDP for over ten years, focusing primarily on events planning and coordination for a variety of project areas. Over the last several years she has worked closely with OTDA, their Audit and Quality Improvement Bureau, and NYWFIA to assist with logistics for a number of well-attended, high quality regional training meetings that occur on an annual basis. **PDP**

Ingrid Fisher Receives Excellence Award in Teaching

Associate Professor Ingrid Fisher, chair of the School of Business' Department of Accounting and Law, was honored with an Excellence Award in teaching. Fisher, who joined the University at Albany faculty in 1985, created a new course in accounting communications that focuses on the communication skills needed to succeed in the accounting workplace. Fisher has also distinguished herself through her work with the Professional Development Program developing and delivering the Audit Institute and the Advanced Audit Institute.



Ingrid Fisher

The Audit Institute provides Audit and Quality Improvement auditors with a strong knowledge and skills foundation related to the job tasks associated with their positions. A recent trainee from the Audit Institute remarked "The entire program will be very helpful in my daily duties. The instructor is very knowledgeable and effective in getting the subject across to individuals". **PDP**

Teleconferencing Utilized for a Unique Cross-training Experience

On July 28 and 30, OTDA and OCFS in a innovative cross-training initiative, combined talent and resources via teleconference to provide front-line staff with fundamental program information in order to best serve a shared client population. These teleconferences provided temporary assistance eligibility workers and child welfare staff a foundation for understanding the child welfare system and temporary assistance environment respectively when serving children. PDP trainers and technical staff were instrumental in the success of both offerings. Successful collaborations between state agencies such as this promote the maximization of state resources to a growing population of children in need of services. **PDP**

Lisa Skill Receives HIV Prevention Planning Partnership Award

The New York State Department of Health HIV Prevention Planning Group (PPG) awarded Lisa Skill their HIV Prevention Planning Partnership Award for her commitment and expertise as well as her many contributions in advocating on issues to improve HIV prevention services in NYS. Lisa received this honor on July 30, 2009 during the NYS HIV Prevention Planning Group Full Meeting, which was attended by representatives of various NYS government agencies and community members from across the state. The award was presented to Lisa by Wendy Shotsky, the NYS Department of Health AIDS Institute Governmental Co-Chair and Reverend Arthur Davis, Community Co-Chair for the NYS HIV PPG. Lisa, a Senior Education Specialist, has been with PDP for over 10 years, where she has been the lead on HIV training. Her continued commitment to overseeing and ensuring quality training programs has built PDP's reputation as a well-known quality HIV training provider. In recognition of her accomplishments and the work she does for PDP, Lisa was also the recipient of the 2007 Director's Award, presented to her by Executive Director Eugene Monaco. **PDP**



Lisa Skill

The increased access to the web and other platforms during this period has provided a springboard for implementing distance learning. Ten years ago, access to distance learning experiences was somewhat limited to videoconferencing with satellite downlink sites, which was usually quite expensive and took weeks of planning. Now there is an increased value to using webinars as a less costly and prep-intensive way to reach a broad audience. When we do use videoconferencing today, we ensure that the instructional design allows for their repurposing for a broader learner base over time through video-on-demand and podcasts.

The swift unleashing of networking tools has further allowed learners to remain connected after synchronous sessions, and the growth of Web 2.0 has enabled additional advancements. Combine these advances with the reality that learners have become increasingly comfortable with e-learning and now have expectations that their learning experiences will be available electronically, and with the fact that the workforce demographic has shifted toward workers who have grown up using and relying on technology for their activities of daily living, and we can expect training to be delivered not just via computer-based platforms but by multiple and varying on-demand devices such as cell phones, web books, and PDAs. As this trend continues, expert content will be increasingly available on the web for on-demand self instruction in creative formats like MIT's Open Courseware, podcasts of university lectures, virtual conferences

combined with or instead of onsite events, wikis facilitating collaboration and group learning projects, among others, that are fast becoming routine ways to facilitate learning today. And, although the social networking phenomenon has yet to prove its value in learning and training, it is apparent that the potential of Facebook and Twitter, among others, cannot be overlooked.

PDP has been able to effectively bring its multiple expertises in technology applications to benefit public sector training and development over these ten short years and will continue to advance its knowledge and skill to take advantage of what the next ten years will bring. We will stay on the cutting edge of technology advancements and experiment with new instructional design methodologies. We again expect to be looking across a very different training panorama ten years from now. **PDP**



Eugene J. Monaco,
Executive Director and
Public Service Professor

PDP

© 2009

No material may be reproduced in whole or in part from this publication without permission.

Catherine Reynolds
Graphic Designer

Ed Kirchgessner
Photographer

Kary Jablonka
Contributing Editor

James Bonville & Erida Tomasulo
Associate Editors

Deanna Cooper
Editor

Eugene J. Monaco
Executive Director and
Public Service Professor

PDP Communique is produced by the
Professional Development Program,
Nelson A. Rockefeller College of Public
Affairs and Policy, University at Albany,
State University of New York

Professional Development Program
Rockefeller College
University Administration Building
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12222
p (518) 956-7800; f (518) 956-7865
www.pdp.albany.edu

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY 
State University of New York

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 205