

SIESWE CASE HISTORY

SCOTTISH INSTITUTE
FOR EXCELLENCE IN
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION



THE CHALLENGE

SIESWE (Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education) identified that the drive towards national standards would need to be underpinned by a wide range of education and training materials that could be created, stored, managed, accessed and re-used by a wide range of stakeholders.

Three key elements were identified:

- Create a repository of educational and training materials
- Create content for this repository
- Allow easy access to the content

BACKGROUND

SIESWE was formed in 2003 by nine Scottish universities with a desire to achieve common goals based around three themes:

- Achieving the policy objectives of the new social work honours degree
- Strengthening the evidence-base for practice and education for practice
- Supporting the implementation of an employee development framework for the whole social services workforce

In aiming to develop a set of National Standards within Social Work Education, SIESWE seeks to bring about transformational change in the education and training of Scotland's future social workers.

The Learning Exchange was specified to be easily accessible to all social workers in Scotland, to give them a rich source of innovative learning materials. Available both in the classroom and in the field, the Learning Exchange would be accessible by academics, practitioners and students in the field of social work. All would benefit from having such a readily accessible store of bite sized chunks of learning or 'learning objects'.

After a detailed evaluation process, SIESWE chose intraLibrary from Intrallect as their learning object repository, to form the core of their "Learning Exchange".

IntraLibrary's ability to support fundamental principles of sharing, re-use and collaboration was instrumental in this selection. It was important for SIESWE that they could both improve the quality of their learning objects, and maximize their return on investment through continued re-use.

LAUNCH

The Learning Exchange was launched in November 2005, and went live shortly afterwards in January 2006.

At the launch, Bryan Williams, Director of the Institute, said, "This is a ground-breaking development in professional higher and further education and those studying to become 21st century social services workers and the users of those services deserve nothing less".

"The beauty of the Learning Exchange is the way that it enables educators to take small chunks of learning and incorporate them into their teaching according to their own needs and teaching styles. Educators can also upload their own materials into the Learning Exchange so that they can be shared with others."

ROLL OUT

IntraLibrary can be rolled out very quickly. Its internal structure can be determined by standard taxonomies, or organisations can create their own to suit their needs – or a combination. Access is via any web browser, so user training is minimal.

IntraLibrary usage is being rolled out progressively to both the public and private sector organisations involved in social work education. NHS Scotland will have access to the Learning Exchange, further increasing the influence of the high-quality material in the Learning Exchange.

Neil Ballantyne, Learning Technology Manager, based at Strathclyde University is delighted with the take-up of the system. "Users have been hugely enthusiastic" he said. "They see the benefits of spending less time preparing material, and the improvement in quality that sharing resources leads to."

THE FUTURE

The Learning Exchange will be further rolled-out to agencies supporting social work education within Scotland. Local Authorities, Voluntary Organisations and the Private Sector will soon be able to benefit from the content within the Learning Exchange.

An additional benefit will be the ability to provide validated web content within the exchange, through providing links to verified web content, and also hosting content.

CONTACTS: www.sieswe.org
 www.intrallet.com