DEVELOPMENT OF AN EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (EIT) SUMMER STUDENT PROGRAM TO PROMOTE E-LEARNING PROJECTS DEVELOPMENT AMONG FACULTY MEMBERS AND STUDENTS

Chi-Ming Chow MD MSc FRCPC, Jodi McIlroy BHSc(PT) PhD, Kevin Imirie MD FRCPC
Department of Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Summary: We described a pilot EIT summer student program at University of Toronto that had provided support to the faculty members and students who are interested in developing medical e-learning projects. This presentation is beneficial to medical faculty members, education directors, and directors of academic computing who are considering implementing similar programs at their own institutions.

Background: With the expansion of enrollment and decentralization of teaching at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, there is a much greater need for developing medical e-learning projects to enable asynchronous distant learning. This need is further magnified by limitations on postgraduate trainees' availability to centralized teaching sessions due to recent changes in resident work hours.

Objectives: The goals of the EIT summer student program were to: 1) combine the faculty content experts and the students who have technical know-how to develop cutting-edge medical educational software; 2) foster a community of faculty members and students who will lead the future medical educational software development; 3) provide a framework of educational software design and evaluation through a series of weekly seminars during the summer program; and 4) create a portal to feature the educational software projects and make them available online for use locally and to share with other medical teaching centers.

Program Description: Altogether five project teams were funded. The subject areas included ventilator waveforms, emergency radiology, oncology, palliative care, and cardiovascular risk reduction. The participating faculty members and the summer students were required to attend weekly seminars. These seminars focused on important educational software development principles, such as: 1) basic educational courseware design principles; 2) user interface design principles; 3) software development process; and 4) educational software evaluation. The participants presented their work at different stages of development to the group for feedback and evaluation.

Evaluation: Feedback was obtained throughout the whole summer program from the participants and by a formal written survey at the end. Overall there was a very high satisfaction level and the participants recommended continuing this program in the future. The sponsored projects were followed up six months afterwards. A number of the e-learning projects are already in use by trainees. The development for many projects is being continued. Several projects have obtained additional funding from other sources or are applying for grants using the summer project as preliminary work.

Web Address: The EIT Summer Program site with links to the sponsored projects is available at: http://www.utorontoeit.com/.

Contact Person: Dr. Chi-Ming Chow - St. Michael's Hospital. 30 Bond Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1W8. Email: cardio@mac.com