Final report on LTIF project 2010: IO 360288

Business TAFE School

Project focus: The development of an online tool for RPL self-assessment.

Project Manager: Sherridan Maxwell

Project rationale:

To address critical needs for
1. RMIT to meet Skills Reform expectations for promoting and providing timely RPL assessment opportunities
2. increased emphasis being placed in the new Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) qualification descriptors on the application of knowledge and skills (applied competencies)
3. providing a platform for industry engagement and input into evidence requirements
4. creating opportunities for better student engagement and learning experiences by extending the RMIT trial of PebblePad software for managing student self-assessment and creation of ePortfolios

Proposed Project deliverables:

1. guidelines and exemplars for creating student friendly plain English descriptors of the application of units of competencies to guide student self-analysis
2. an industry consultative model, guidelines and exemplars for generating evidence based content
3. identification of user needs, functional specifications, content requirements, interaction and information flow architecture, navigation and design and an evidence rating schema
4. a self-analysis tool and reporting system using PebblePad software that a student can complete in under two hours
5. an evaluation report of the trial of the tool including industry, student and teacher feedback
6. provide RMIT VET program teams with a student friendly online tool to support quality RPL practice

Project Activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Planned activity</th>
<th>Activity outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop guidelines and create trial descriptors using student friendly plain English descriptors</td>
<td>1st semester The Diploma Accounting, Diploma of Management and Cert III in Business Admin programs started a process of re-designing their current RPL tools including listing critical aspects of evidence. The Cert III in Business Administration also then trialled the use of PebblePad with the students who were applying for RPL to check suitability/usability. The trial was not hugely successful as most students didn’t want to apply for RPL, and there was mixed response to the use of the e-portfolio by the students who did use the process, mostly due to age and access to computers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop evidence based content, model and guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build tool and reporting system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct the trial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned activity</th>
<th>Activity outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the tool/project</td>
<td>2nd semester There was a change in the Project Manager, and finally the setting up of the steering group who reviewed the outcomes from the 1st semester activity and re-adjusted the project outcomes, but not of project focus which is to produce a student friendly on-line tool for RPL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake revisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It was felt that the project plan at the outset had not been sufficiently clear and there was reluctance to deviate from the plan, the outcome up until 2nd semester was that there was little activity happening overall and insufficient outputs.

The steering group formed consisted of Helen Smith, ODT, Terry Whitty, SEH, Silvia Baroutis, BTS, Mark Mosutto, BTS, Meaghan Botterill, with support from Margaret Taylor ODT, Pauline Porcaro, Business College office.

What was finally developed were 2 short videos, one focused at teaching staff and one with the student as the focus, explaining the steps and people involved in RPL. Along with the videos is a template that is based on the student video, following the slides so that a program team can drop in their specifics for their individual programs.

These videos are based on an example of a diploma qualification, they explain in simple plain English the steps a student needs to undertake in the RPL process, the when, how and who. Along with the video there are links to the RMIT web documents.

The project deviated slightly in that the products produced are usable by any program in TAFE and as the 2 videos are web based they can displayed on both the School web site and the RMIT VET Essentials site.

School staff have been given a copy each of the ‘teachers’ version on USB sticks and the student video has been used in the Business TAFE school in orientation activities.

---

### Project deliverables:

1. Guidelines and exemplars for creating student friendly plain English descriptors of the application of units of competencies to guide student self-analysis.

   Each program put together a template with the competencies required of the individual qualification and a list of evidence that would be expected. It is however the simple video that has the plain English component for both staff and students. The video is based on an example of a current BTS program, the Diploma of Accounting with a guide on how the student can work through the competencies and evidence competency.

2. An industry consultative model, guidelines and exemplars for generating evidence based content.

   The model and videos have not at this point in time been taken to industry forums, however it is anticipated that this will be done through the Industry Advisory Committee meetings this year

3. Identification of user needs, functional specifications, content requirements, interaction and information flow architecture, navigation and design and an evidence rating schema.

   Through the steering group the identification of needs of the student and staff in the RPL process was articulated, a designer was brought in to develop and script out the video requirements, draft the 2 videos with the specific audiences in mind and where the videos would be located, web sites, Blackboard and PebblePad. Along with the accompanying template for students to follow.

4. A self-analysis tool and reporting system using PebblePad software that a student can complete in under two hours.

   This is the one aspect of the project that was not completed; however the tools that were developed are applicable for use in PebblePad.

5. An evaluation report of the trial of the tool including industry, student and teacher feedback.
To date the teachers and admin staff in the school have given positive feedback on the teacher video and only a few programs to date have shown the RPL video to students, and only to those student who are currently working and likely to require RPL as part of their enrolment process.

6. Provide RMIT VET program teams with a student friendly online tool to support quality RPL practice.

This has been the surprising aspect of the project in that the tools developed have a wide application at RMIT. It is anticipated the 2 videos and the template will be available on the RMIT VET essentials web site and the student video can be put on the MyRMIT site.

Attachments: