Curriculum Design Collaborations (CDC) Evaluation Report Guidelines

WRaPS Westminster Research by Psychology Students: A Website for Westminster psychology students to recruit and showcase their research

1. Where did the inspiration to do the project come from?

As part of their accredited degree requirements, all psychology students(including BSc Cognitive and Clinical Neuroscience) must carry out a research study, which requires the recruitment of volunteer participants. Pre-pandemic, these studies mostly took place within our onsite labs , but the pandemic saw the necessity for all these projects to go online. This has led to an explosion in the range and capabilities of online experiments, which has enhanced the quality of many of the student projects. One problem this has created, however, is how to advertise our studies in order to recruit participants outside the university. Currently, students rely on their personal networks and social media to each disseminate the links to their own individual studies.

This problem gave rise to a simple solution: why not bring all of our student project recruitment calls for online participation into one place, specifically a website which would provide a list of study links and summaries.

2. What did you set out to achieve?

The ambition was to create a new website where psychology project students will be able to upload a short study description along with a link. This will facilitate participant recruitment, while also promoting our incredibly diverse researchAll studies have full ethical approval from the University Ethics Committee. The site would be designed and built in collaboration between 2 psychology students and 2 computer science students, supervised by Lecturers from each school.

3. How did students and staff work together on this project? (written by Cristina)

Throughout the project, there was a continuous collaboration between students and staff, which involved both parties meeting every other week to maintain the project's momentum. Meetings offered the opportunity to brainstorm, share ideas and expertise, finalise processes or give opinions about the work done, etc. During meetings, the staff took

the initiative to involve students in all the discussions and make sure that each of us shared our opinions.

From a practical point of view, the tasks and responsibilities were shared fairly between the students and staff. In this sense, the students had the autonomy to finish and resolve their assigned responsibilities however, the staff made sure we are in constant contact with them if any situation or issue came up. The staff focused a lot on providing us the resources from university, communicated continually with students' co-creators team, and were involved in setting up and testing the website. The students focused more on sourcing content, the back-end of the website, logo and design creation.

I believe the teamwork between staff and students within our project was what made us succeed this far and helped us understand that there were no boundaries in communication or reaching out to one another. To give an example, when brainstorming together about the design of the website, the staff completely supported any idea shared, and instead of dismissing ideas that did not work, they took the time to let us test the ideas and to share our opinions on the result. The attitude that the staff showed during this period helped us as students realise that we are autonomous and even if our ideas are not the best, we can always try and test to see if we are happy with the results.

4. What kind of impact do you anticipate that your work may have on learning and teaching going forward (specific to your course/module or in a broader context)?

 Here are just some of the benefits of the website:

- The site will be externally facing, providing easy access to potential participants
- Students will be able to easily find each other's studies, to take part in each others studies hence increasing their participants numbers without having to send multiple group chat messages and post on blackboard
- The course team will be able to facilitate sessions where students do each other's studies, the sessions can take place remotely or in an onsite session
- Staff and students will be able to promote the entire site, ie all the projects, for instance on social media such as the psychology or the westminster twitter accounts.
- The site will provide an externally facing showcase of BSc Cognitive and Clinical Neuroscience student research   Links to the site could potentially be used at open day, or on the course websites, to showcase our student research.
- Initially, the site will be used only for BSc Cognitive and Clinical Neuroscience, but we plan to roll this out to staff research, and all students studying a Psychology course.
- once the initially functionality is working and in place, it will be possible to enhance it with more sophisticated functionality, for instance for students to enter their projects directly onto the site, for admin approval
- a page will be created to showcase past research

5. Any lessons learned from working in partnership?

We learned the importance of communication. It has played an important role during the life cycle of our project. It has increased collaboration and engagement, helped us reduce misunderstandings and made our team stronger overall. (Dominik)

The key to progress was having frequent, regular, prescheduled teams meetings, with strong staff leadership. All tasks were clearly identified, defined and allocated and included in detailed meeting minutes.

A shared google drive was a great help to the smooth running of the project. All resources were kept here, along with all the meeting minutes.

A risk to the project was everyone's availability and ability to do the work assigned to them and attend the meetings. A specific challenge was that 2 of the students completed their studies and 2 began their placement year during the lifespan of the project, so their contributions had to be balanced to reflect this.

The key to the project success was communication and the motivation and commitment of the staff, and their ability to drive the project.

6. Outcomes

- The team applied for a dedicated externally facing westminster URL (web address). This took several weeks and much negotiation, and was approved in June.
- The team chose a site name (WRaPS - Westminster Research Psychology Students), and designed a logo, all of which have been implemented
- A very basic but fully functional version of the site will be ready to rollout to BSc CCN project students at the start of the 22-23 academic year.