

CASE STUDY:

M-Care – Mixed Realities for Health and Social Care Education



Region: North West

ICS: Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Education

Key contacts in the ICS:

Michelle Featherstone – HEE Workforce Education and Transformation Lead
Janet Wilkinson – ICS Executive Lead for Workforce, OD & System Leadership

Summary (max. 200 words):

The M-Care (Mixed Realities for Health and Social Care Education) project was established in 2019 working in partnership with the Manchester Metropolitan University to develop a co-ordinated mixed reality programme of resources for health and social care careers education across key stages 1 to 4. The resources are designed to align with the national curriculum programmes of study for science and PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) and can therefore be used in the classroom to deliver lessons across all key stages. A virtual tour and a facilitator's guide accompany the resources to describe the contents and to illustrate how they might be used by teachers to enhance their teaching.

The resource comprises:

- 2D Games
- Augmented Reality (AR Models)
- Whole body system fly-throughs
- Virtual Reality (VR) Work Experiences in Primary, Secondary and Social Care environments
- Virtual Tour
- Facilitator's Guide developed for schools

How was the work developed and implemented (max. 500 words):

Background

The programme was funded by the Greater Manchester Workforce Collaborative utilising investment from Health Education England and was developed over 2 years from 2019 to 2021 from proof of concept, to design and realisation. The resources were developed by the Manchester Metropolitan University project team in partnership with local GM schools and using commissioned services from technical developers Corporation Pop. Also in collaboration were colleagues from Health Education England, Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership, GM Health and Social Care Careers Hub and the wider health community in Greater Manchester.

Governance and Oversight

A reference group was set up to meet regularly and monitor progress as well as to gain insight from all members of the project team. The team worked well together, by utilising a team with a wide skill set and range of expertise the individual elements of the programme came together. Within the ICS, support was received by the workforce transformation communications team and the workforce lead during the launch and its preparation. The reference group meetings and project lead were hosted with Health Education England.

Challenges

- Challenges were met during the pandemic when it was not possible to enter schools in order to get feedback and to test the resources. The project team made alternative arrangements to liaise with schools during this time to ensure that the work continued. However, this caused an unavoidable short delay in the completion of the products and in turn the project ran slightly longer than anticipated.
- Liaising with the developers to ensure the vision was recreated in designing and creating the digital resources.

What worked well

- The inspiration for the project, an idea from a school pupil in Greater Manchester who wanted all school children to have the same opportunities and access to work experience within healthcare provided a solid foundation. A genuine need for these types of resources to be available to children and young adults was discovered and so the level of enthusiasm and the way the pilot schools received the resources was also genuine. The high demand for the project almost certainly helped with its success.
- Regular meetings with the reference group and having the support of a team with a range of experiences
- Making use of the virtual world to work remotely. Meetings were held via Microsoft Teams with the reference group, developers, project team and schools. Sharing digital material (eg transferring files using WeTransfer or weblinks) between the developers and the project team, and with schools for testing and evaluation purposes.

Next Steps

The resources will be made available to all schools and members of the reference group will be promoting them via events, working groups, external comms and newsletters and on social media. The reference group are due to meet again to discuss how the programme of resources could be expanded upon in the future.

Key outcomes and impact (max. 300 words)

The M-Care Mixed Realities for Health and Social Care Education resources were launched via a dedicated online event to schools and relevant organisations across Greater Manchester. The majority of those on the launch event fed back that they would be highly likely to use the resources in the classroom. The launch event showcased the full programme of interactive digital resources, which have been designed to make learning fun and to inspire young people to consider a career in the health and social care sector. By using the resources, children and young people will be able to participate in role-play activities, play games to reinforce learning, experience journeying through three body systems and explore organs in augmented reality, as well as taking part in full virtual reality work experiences. The resources are now available for all schools and education facilities to download and use.

Manchester Metropolitan University have monitored the project throughout the stages of discovery, development and evaluation, to assess the success of the project. Teachers commented that the M-Care resources would be relevant and appropriate for teaching science and PSHE. They were excited to see the materials and gave positive feedback on how they would use the resources to improve pupil engagement in science. Primary school teachers felt that M-Care was particularly valuable in helping pupils to visualise what it is like inside the body. Secondary school teachers commented that the resources had engaged pupils across all ability levels, even individuals who struggle to concentrate in regular science lessons.

“these resources are like gold dust for science” (high school teacher)

“these resources are something that all teachers would love to have readily available in the classroom ... as a way to engage the children a lot more” (primary school teacher)

Throughout the project, pupils of all ages were eager and excited to engage with the digital resources. They reported that the M-Care resources are fun to use and would make their science lessons more interesting and engaging. They gave feedback on what could be improved which informed the ongoing development of the resources.

“It was so fun ... were we learning about science?” (year 3 pupil)

Lessons learnt and advice to other ICSs (max. 200 words):

- Working remotely became a reality due to Covid restrictions during the pandemic. Regular meetings with the Advisory Panel and other stakeholders were held virtually via Microsoft Teams. Digital content was shared with the project schools for testing and evaluation purposes which enabled the project to proceed despite the challenges of enforced lockdowns. Working in this virtual way was not only appropriate for this digital project but also proved an efficient use of time, enabling a wide range of stakeholders to meet regularly, which may not have been so easily achieved in person.
- Finding key contact information for primary and secondary schools proved to be quite challenging as many local authority websites held out of date information. Having a key contact within the ICS or supporting reference group who regularly had dialogue with schools regarding careers events etc would have been beneficial to raising more broader awareness for the programme running up to the final stages for the launch.

Further information and resources:

All the resources can be found on the following websites:

<https://qmcareershub.nhs.uk/m-care>

<https://hee-vr360.azurewebsites.net/m-care/>

Email: VRforschools@hee.nhs.uk

