

Executive Summary

Project: AI-Enhanced Onboarding & Microlearning for Volunteer Guardians ad Litem (VGALs)

Sponsor/Context: Clark and Cowlitz County Child Advocates in Washington State

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Purpose of the Project

This project set out to modernize and scale the training experience for Volunteer Guardians ad Litem by creating short, practice-ready microlearning that improves interviewing quality, documentation neutrality, cultural responsiveness, and legal compliance. The work responds to a clearly defined performance gap: new volunteers reported uncertainty conducting interviews, separating quotes/observations/interpretations in notes, and applying state confidentiality requirements during real cases. The goal was not only to teach *what* to do, but to help volunteers perform *in context*—confidently, consistently, and in alignment with RCW requirements for guardian ad litem duties and records confidentiality.

How Outcomes Will / May Be Used

Operational Use (Immediate):

- **Onboarding:** Six bite-sized H5P microlearning modules (plus one bonus unit) will become the core of a self-paced orientation sequence for new VGALs.
- **Performance Support:** Printable job aids and interview checklists provide real-time guidance for field visits and court reporting.
- **Coaching:** A custom GPT assistant (“VGAL Interview Coach”) offers scenario-based practice, quick refreshers, and just-in-time decision support tied to the modules’ language and workflows.

Program & Stakeholder Value (Near Term):

- **Consistency & Compliance:** Training content embeds documentation neutrality, cultural humility, and confidentiality practices aligned to Washington law and local manual guidance.

- **Efficiency:** Supervisors and SMEs can shift from repeating fundamentals to higher-value coaching; standardized artifacts reduce rework.
- **Data for Improvement:** Built-in checks (quizzes, reflective prompts, scenario decisions) and post-module surveys create a feedback loop to iterate content.

Strategic Potential (Longer Term):

- **Scalability:** The modular format and AI coach can be adapted for other counties or partner programs with minimal re-authoring.
- **Outcome Tracking:** Defined KPIs (time-to-first-case readiness, documentation quality, interview fidelity, retention) can connect learning to program outcomes.

Process Used to Complete the Project

1) Front-End Analysis & Alignment

- First, I conducted SME interviews and reviewed program materials to confirm the performance gap. I prioritized interviewing techniques, how to create neutral documentation, and adhere to confidentiality standards set out by Washington State Law.
- I gathered all the relevant information from current training materials and cross-referenced from various other programs in different states, then interpreted relevant state requirements for GAL duties and juvenile records confidentiality. I used this information to embed those expectations into learning objectives within the eLearning Modules and checklists.

2) Design

- I authored clear terminal and enabling objectives after conducting a task-analysis focused on interviewing techniques for Volunteer Guardian ad Litems after focusing my efforts with the SME. Then I built detailed design docs and storyboards for each micro-module to speed up the development process.
- Instead of creating only one module in H5P (my chosen authoring tool), I selected a microlearning cadence to reduce cognitive load, reinforce spaced practice, and fit volunteer schedules.
- I chose to weave Gagné's Nine Events across modules (gain attention via short NotebookLM videos; stimulate recall with flashcards; present chunked content; guided practice; feedback; retention cues and performance prompts).

3) Development

- I built six interactive H5P modules (plus a bonus unit) that cover: interviewing foundations; neutral documentation (quotes vs. observations vs. interpretations); confidentiality; cultural humility and home-visit etiquette; open-ended vs. leading questions; and scenario-based practice. Some of the material is repetitive to use Behaviorist techniques.
- I created AI-enhanced visuals using Napkin.AI whiteboards for conceptual scaffolds using the created scripts adapted from the existing User Guide and produced 6 short explainer clips via NotebookLM. I recorded all the audio myself to compliment the slides and be more in line with cognitivism.
- I developed the VGAL Interview Coach (custom GPT) to provide coached walkthroughs, real-time answers to VGAL questions, and instant rationale if they need answers quickly and beyond working hours of their supervisors. Happy to report that internal spot-checks showed highly consistent guidance within the tested scenarios.

4) Quality Assurance & Iteration

- I ran internal reviews with the SME against design criteria (accuracy, tone, neutrality, legal alignment) and usability checks (clarity, load time, mobile-readiness).
- I incorporated formative feedback (content tweaks, added examples, clarified rubrics for quotes/observations/interpretations), and lastly, refined the knowledge checks found within the modules.

5) Implementation Planning

- I packaged modules for WordPress/H5P hosting and produced a facilitator quick-start for the modules and the custom GPT to support the roll-out.
- Drafted an evaluation plan with instruments mapped to Kirkpatrick Levels 1–3 and program KPIs for Level 4 alignment.

Key ID Model / Theory That Framed the Work

Primary Frame — Dick & Carey Systems Approach + Human Performance Technology (HPT):

- Dick & Carey provided the backbone for translating verified performance gaps into measurable objectives, aligned assessments, and coherent instruction.
- HPT ensured the solution targeted *performance* (not just knowledge), considered environmental factors, and connected training to program-level outcomes.

Supporting Models Applied in the Build:

- **Gagné's Nine Events** structured each micro-lesson's flow (attention → practice → feedback → transfer).
- **Cognitivism** informed chunking, dual-coding (whiteboards + narration), and spaced retrieval.
- **Behaviorism** guided deliberate practice and immediate, specific feedback in knowledge checks and coached dialogues.

Products Delivered

1. **Six H5P Microlearning Modules** (+1 bonus) with interactive checks and downloadable job aids.
2. **AI-Enhanced Visuals** (Napkin.AI whiteboards) and **short explainer videos** (NotebookLM) aligned to objectives.
3. **VGAL Interview Coach (custom GPT)** for guided practice and performance support.
4. **Checklists for VGALs** were created as per the SME requirements to have this documentation easily accessed for volunteers.
5. **Learner Analysis** for this project and future projects
6. **Evaluation plan** to assess the impact of the training.

Early Results & Anticipated Impact

- **Clarity & Confidence:** Learners reported accuracy of custom GPT by answering specific questions. Did not receive specific feedback on the eLearning modules.
- **Time Savings:** Supervisors can reuse micro-modules for refreshers and post-training follow-up to reinforce the knowledge learned from the short instructor-led training sessions they currently have.
- **Scalability:** The content and AI coach are structured for rapid adaptation across counties and case types.

Risks & Mitigations

- **Legal/Policy Drift:** Maintain a lightweight review cadence with SMEs to capture policy updates; fast-patch content in H5P and the AI coach prompt base.
- **AI Hallucination Risk:** Constrain the coach to vetted language, provide citations within the coach's responses where appropriate, and prompt users to verify against job aids.

Next Steps

1. Pilot the full pathway with a small volunteer cohort; capture usability and confidence pre/post.
2. Tune items with low discrimination, add two additional scenarios, and publish a facilitator debrief guide.
3. Set up a basic dashboard to track onboarding, documentation quality, and retention at 30/90/180 days.
4. Package the county-agnostic version for reuse and inter-county collaboration.

In Conclusion: This project delivers a practical, scalable path to increase VGAL interview quality and documentation rigor to meet volunteers where they are. This will shorten the time to confident performance and align day-to-day practice with program standards and state requirements.