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**Learner Success in eLearning:
room for improvement –
but how?**

An analysis of the problem of retention and completion in
an online programme

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

Lack of time to work on their online programme was a more significant barrier for students on an online programme than problems such as cost, access to a computer, computer difficulties, childcare or other family responsibilities, or lack of employer support. A 2004 online survey of 77 students of the online Public Sector Knowledge programme, at Change Training, Wellington, followed up by telephone interviews and a focus group session, showed that 92% of students gave 'lack of time' as the critical factor making it hard to study online, and that even when they had dedicated time to do it, work-based tasks and colleagues took priority over working on their online programme.

Findings also showed that allied to the time issue was the evidence that for the majority of students their goal for the programme was not to complete assessments, but to get what they wanted from the learning materials. Without the need to gain the qualification for personal or work reasons, most students chose to bypass the time-consuming summative assessments that constitute a 'completion' and effectively 'drop out'.

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