

EARLY DAYS OF GOING BLENDED FOR DENTAL STUDENTS AT JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

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KEYWORDS: blended learning, anatomy

Background

James Cook University (JCU) has an undergraduate entry Dentistry Course where students are taught with the more traditional face –to – face method using lectures and practicals. Like many universities JCU is moving towards a blended approach to learning, offering a more interactive, self-guided learning experience (Ma'arop and Embi 2016). The students admitted to dentistry are high achieving, and could be expected to readily engage with online material, however confirmation of this is required to ensure successful engagement and implementation of the blended approach.

Aims

The aim of this study was to investigate if the dental students currently enrolled in a first year introductory Anatomy and Physiology subject (n=83) and taught in the traditional method are ready to move towards a blended educational method.

Description of intervention

Eight streaming anatomy revision videos were uploaded onto the subject website prior to the commencement of study week before end of semester exams.

Design and methods

Content usage statistics were collected 24 hours and seven days after the videos were uploaded. After the videos were uploaded an open revision laboratory session was held. Those students who attended were given the option to complete a short, anonymous questionnaire about the subject's online material. The questionnaire used a series of five-point Likert scale questions with optional comments to collect student perceptions regarding the online material. Data from the questionnaires and content usage statistics from the online material were analysed.

Results

In the 24 hours after the anatomy videos were uploaded the subject site received 204 hits. After seven days the subject site had received a total of 1714 hits (approximately 21 views per student). Of the students enrolled in the subject 36 (36/83=43.4% of the students) accessed the site in the 24 hours after the videos were released, while 76 (76/83=91.6% of the students) accessed the site over the seven days. Of those students who completed the anonymous questionnaire (n=32) 81% reported that the online material was useful for revision.

Conclusions

Similar to the results of Gaida et al 2016, our students referred to the online material numerous times and most found it helpful in their studies. There was a strong indication that the students would like more online material to assist them in their studies of the subject especially the anatomical component. These preliminary data indicate that the dentistry students are willing to interact with online vodcasts. In future, we plan to introduce much more of this type of material.

References

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Proceedings of the Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education, The University of Queensland, Sept 28th to 30th, 2016, page 82-83, ISBN Number 978-0-9871834-5-3.