

Student experiences of computer-based distance learning and its application to future development of modular programmes.

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Introduction

Within veterinary education computer based modules and blended learning are now commonplace. The aim of this study was to analyse the experiences of students undertaking a computer based distance learning module.

Materials and Methods

The online practices of 30 students studying 'Veterinary Nursing of Exotic Species' module was carried out using WebCT VISTA software. Students were also asked to complete a questionnaire detailing their experiences of the module.

Results

It was found that the average session time for each student was 24 minutes. 77% of students completed the questionnaire. 95.7% of these students felt that the discussion forum was an important part of their learning. All students read the postings of others, but 2 students (6.7%) did not post any messages and 6 students (20%) only contributed 1 message. Other findings will be presented.

Discussion/Conclusions

The average session time of 24 minutes suggests that in order to maintain student attention, sections should be designed to allow completion in this time. Students would appear to find it difficult or be unwilling to express their views in writing in front of their peers. More work is required in developing this form of communication skill.

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