

7 Summary

Development of a blended-learning-course and studies concerning acceptance and integration into veterinary medical education

Universities are facing new problems because of the current enormous growth of knowledge and increasing requirements in veterinary medical education. Next to basic education the veterinary medical educational institutions are requested to enable specialization to students and to provide postgraduate education. For this there is a search for new ways of knowledge transfer. In connection with academic education, e-learning is of increasing importance. The objective of this project was design and development of e-learning materials and their use in university courses. Acceptance of e-learning and its possibilities of integration into the veterinary medical education was evaluated.

As an example the course “Basics of naturopathic treatment” was developed into the form of a blended-learning course. The weekly ex-cathedra teaching was supplemented by e-learning materials. The interactive materials served as preparation and post-processing, as well as for absorption of the contents of the course. The students should be given the possibility to deal with the contents not depending on any given time and at their own chosen speed. The course was offered to students from the 5th to 8th term of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the Freie Universität Berlin. For creation and management of the e-learning materials the Learning-Management-System “Blackboard” (Blackboard[®] Inc.) was used. This system allowed besides course management and supply of communication tools the integration of different formats into a virtual learning environment. The e-learning materials could then be accessed via the internet.

In order to evaluate the method of e-learning and the offered course, two questionnaires were created, one was handed out at the start of the course; whilst the other was handed out at the end of the course.

The students considered e-learning a reasonable supplement to conventional teaching methods and enjoyed using it. E-Learning was judged as being suitable for the learning, from basic methods to full expertise. It was valued as better than lectures but not as good as textbooks. The students were generally open-minded about the new teaching methods and approved the wider use of e-learning in academic education.

In the future it is intended to create more courses and to offer this course in form of a pure e-learning course. Furthermore the collaboration with other universities will be intensified.