HAPPY STUDENTS, HAPPY LEARNERS

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Abstract

Background/context:
Traditional boundaries of learning ‘spaces and places’ have drastically shifted with varied blended tools and methods now available to educators. We present results from an evaluation project examining the impact on student learning of kuraCloud, an online blended learning platform. We have implemented kuraCloud in our clinical physiology laboratory-based teaching within the MBChB (medical) and BPharm (pharmacy) programmes at the University of Auckland over the past 3 years. We will report on results of questionnaire data from students currently enrolled in these programmes. Our study has sought to understand how ‘deeper learning’ can be supported in physical laboratories where numerous ‘distractors’ can derail deeper learning (e.g. technical equipment issues and jargon-filled, pre-work not always completed prior to labs). Data from our research suggest that the use of more blended approaches to such teaching has enabled students to feel more connected to the deeper learning purpose than in previous traditional lab-based sessions.

Research/evaluation method:
Our research study (2017-2019) is evaluating the effectiveness, from the student perspective, of learning concepts taught in laboratory sessions using blended learning approaches. Students at Stage 2 and 3 of the MBChB and BPharm programmes are invited to complete an anonymous online questionnaire and attend focus groups to uncover their experiences using blended modules of learning in kuraCloud in their pre-lab, during-lab, and post-lab coursework. We will synthesise questionnaire data from the MBChB cohort (n = 41) who completed 7 clinical physiology labs during June - August, 2018.

Outcomes:
Qualitative responses from the questionnaire indicate themes of significance including that kuraCloud allows clear physiology connections, revision of content in students’ own place/space and ability to receive instant feedback within labs via the online quiz elements. We will discuss strengths and potential gaps in this blended learning approach from the student perspective.

Keywords: e-learning, student engagement.