

**Online Learning: Supportig an Undergraduate Physiotherapy Programme With Electronic Learning Environments**

**SIMON IGO; J. DALLEY**

*School of Health and Social Sciences*

*Charles Ward Building, Coventry University, Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5 FB  
United Kingdom*

**PURPOSE.** To describe how electronic learning environments using web ct have been used to support an undergraduate physiotherapy programme. **RELEVANCE.** Changes in higher education have placed greater demands on institutions to produce flexibility in the structure of courses and programmes. Universities must provide innovative, relevant and flexible-learning opportunities to satisfy the diverse needs and demands of a modern curriculum including the use of information and computer technology. **DESCRIPTION.** "Study Webs", using Web CT, were developed for modules in a physiotherapy undergraduate programme and formed part of the University's Virtual Campus. Computer mediated communication (CMC) principles were used to support student learning and to assist lecturers with their teaching and learning strategy. Study Webs provided an environment that overcame time and the geographical barriers of traditional teaching methods (asynchronous communication), providing access to course material, journals and informative databases. In two modules, the asynchronous nature of the study webs allowed tutors to develop virtual online classrooms to deliver material on evidence-based practice and patho-physiology. **OBSERVATIONS.** Using questionnaire data student feedback was positive; they valued the nature of the Study Webs in particular 24-hour access to handouts, course material and other valuable resources. Students recognised the value of virtual classrooms in that they were free of time and location barriers that allowed flexibility for study, but felt the medium was impersonal compared with that of face-to-face communication. **CONCLUSIONS.** Study Webs, using Web CT, have allowed staff to develop modules that remain flexible and innovative to support the needs of physiotherapy undergraduate students. Further work will explore how Study Webs can be used as an adjunct to traditional teaching and learning methods, remaining flexible to support the needs of staff and students.