

How to Develop an Educational Internet Support for  
Physiotherapy Students? Report From a Decentralised Part  
Time Bachelor Program in Physiotherapy

GRETE BARLINDHAUG; M. AARS; B.V EKELI

*Tromsø University College  
Avd. For Helsefag, N-9293 Tromsø  
Norway*

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the project is to explore the possibilities of using internet support in education aiming at practical competence. More specifically, it is to develop a website where the student, through guidance, challenges and information are led into the world of physiotherapy. In other words to utilise the opportunities of the internet medium to motivate, induce and enhance the physiotherapy way of thinking. **RELEVANCE:** This internet system is a crucial part of our decentralised part time bachelor program in physiotherapy. **DESCRIPTION:** Internet based learning management systems are well known in higher education. Systems that integrate learning management with the content of learning, are however rear. Our system combines the two. The management part are organised in a way which makes it easy for everybody involved in the program to communicate. The students have group meetings and tutorials; they submit papers and videos etc. Teachers can monitor student activity on the net. However, the most interesting part is the content part. Here the students can choose between six different learning opportunities: 1) Key lessons, texts that give an overview of central topics in physiotherapy. 2) Physiotherapy analysis, consisting of two parts: one with guided analyses of different patient assessment and - treatments, and one representing the tool to the physiotherapy process. 3) Areas of physiotherapy practice, presenting films from different working places for physiotherapists. 4) Case stories, presenting patients of different age and with different health problems. 5) Learning activities, presentation of reports, cases etc that may encourage the students to literature studies, practical work, writing assessments and reports etc. 6) Terms, a manual with short definitions of words and expression in physiotherapy. There are interrelations between the different learning opportunities, making it possible for the students to work with all of them at the same time. **RESULTS:** Developing this system implies putting to text our physiotherapy thinking and the content of our terms in a clear way. This has been a challenge and made lots of tacit knowledge explicit. So far we have experienced that the students need a lot of guidance to understand the coherence of the subjects and to benefit from the integrated thinking presented. **CONCLUSIONS:** We are still in the process of developing the system and changing it according to the experiences from using it, much like the method of action research. In October 2004 the first 60 ECTS credits will be completed, so then we will have more experiences and results to reflect on.