

Postgraduate eLearning satellite-based tutorials as a new approach to “teaching to teach” anatomy

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Modern educational trends approach in a more innovative, learner-centered programs that rely on a combination of interactive didactic tools and individualized tutoring. In response to the increasing need for new professionals in the health sciences who are able to apply academic eLearning in Medicine, since 2005 Sapienza University of Rome is involved in and coordinates a multidisciplinary network formed by 11 Italian universities, aimed to deliver a Master (postgraduate) course on teleteaching applied to the health sciences (Matam). This program forms highly qualified professionals for distance teaching/eLearning in health sciences and management. University sites are activated through earth and satellite-based modules, thus creating real/virtual class-rooms or didactic communities. Matam is delivered in two semesters as either synchronous satellite-based or asynchronous pre-registered tutorials (posted on an intranet site). Learners can actively and autonomously follow these modules, interacting with teachers and colleagues, whereas teachers/tutors, in turn, are in a studio at the university. The program considers a total of 60 CFU and admits a maximum of 20 participants per site. The integrated course “Multimedia technologies and virtual reality in imaging diagnostics” (8 CFU) includes 3 two-hour tutorials of human gross and microscopic anatomy (digestive and reproductive tracts), of which one is sent synchronously and two asynchronously.

Matam is a sharing of knowledge, allowing teachers and learners to have a continuous and real-time update. The use of eLearning as an innovative integration within a course considering either ex cathedra and tutorial teaching may be useful for the improvement of students’ motivation and self assessment aptitudes, specially in young undergraduate ones. In addition, eLearning can favour a wider use of computer animations, thus representing a valid complement to courses particularly belonging to health sciences degrees.

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