SLD112 LEARNING OBJECT OF COMPUTERS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FOR COMMUNITY BASED MEDICAL STUDENTS

Sld112 Objeto De Aprendizaje De Computacion Y Manejo De La Informacion Para Estudiantes De Medicina Comunitaria

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RESUMEN: Como parte de los esfuerzos para fortalecer la fuerza de trabajo en el sector de la Salud en Gambia, el gobierno decidió implementar, con la ayuda calificada de la Brigada Médica Docente de Cuba, un programa de formación de médicos en la comunidad. La mayoría de los materiales docentes para tal Programa están disponibles en formato digital, y tanto los estudiantes como los otros elementos involucrados en el proceso, deben tener la posibilidad de acceder a ellos sin restricciones. Por esas razones, la signatura Computación y Manejo de la Información constituye una materia esencial en el curso premédico para nivelar las habilidades de estudiantes, facilitadores y tutores implicados. Este objeto de aprendizaje el cual incluye el curso y folleto interactivo, está concebido para proveer conocimientos y habilidades y manejar materiales docentes computarizados, así como acceder y discernir información en línea de manera autónoma. El objetivo del presente trabajo es mostrar las particulares del objeto de aprendizaje de Computación y Manejo de la Información en el curso premédico del Programa de Formación de Médicos Comunitarios en Gambia.

Palabras Clave: Objeto de aprendizaje, Computación, Manejo de la Información.

ABSTRACT: As an effort to strengthen the Health workforce in the Gambia, the Government has decided to implement, with the qualified help of the Cuban Teaching Medical Brigade, a Community Based Medical Programme. Most of the teaching materials for the Programme are available in computer supported formats that will allow the students, as well as other elements involved in the process, to access them without restraint. For those reasons, the subject Computers and Information Management constitutes an essential matter delivered as part of the premedical course to properly level the skills of the students, facilitators and tutors implicated in this endeavor. The learning object which includes the course programme and an interactive booklet is intended to provide skills to handle computerized teaching materials and to access and discern online information autonomously. The objective of the current paper is to present the main features of the learning object of Computers and Information Management created for the premedical course of the Community Based Medical Programme in The Gambia.

KeyWords: Learning objects, Computers, Information management.
1. INTRODUCTION

According to the WHO, the current crisis in human resources is the most important issue concerning public health, either in developed or developing countries. A shortage of more than 4 million doctors, nurses, midwives and other health workers is estimated worldwide. The Gambia is among the countries outlined as “critical” with regards to the shortage of workforce in the health system [1].

As an effort to strengthen the health workforce in the country, the Government of The Gambia has decided to implement, with the qualified help of the Cuban Teaching Medical Brigade, a training program to form Community Based Medical Programme [2].

This is a new approach for health professionals’ formation, supported by the extensive Cuban experience in health workforce development and constitutes an feasible instrument to fulfil the gap in service coverage and even go further with a minimum of time and resources.

This new conception diverts from the traditional format by giving the students the opportunity to be in contact with their own communities since the very beginning and throughout the whole formative process, another peculiarity is that the teaching materials are supported in digital and magnetic devices including video cassettes, with video lectures and compact discs with electronic presentations, tutorials, trainers, bibliography and supplementary materials [3].

The teaching-learning process is led by qualified doctors who are already working in those communities. This fact guarantees that during their formation these students will be closely committed to the areas and patients whom they will take care of as future practitioners [4].

The implementation of this strategy for the formation of community based doctors look forward to meet the workforce goal, which, according to the definition given in the previously mentioned World Health Report is “To get the right workers with the right skills in the right place doing the right things!” [1].

The learning object which contains the course programme and interactive booklet is intended to provide the students involved in the CBMP with knowledge and skills to handle computerized teaching materials and to access and discern online information autonomously.

The objective of this paper is to present the main features of the learning object of Computers and Information Management created for the community based medical students in The Gambia.

2. CONTENTS

2.1 METHODS

The hypermedia was built after a thorough search of course programmes to finally select the one that best resembled the methods and ways used in Gambia.

Microsoft FrontPage, version 11, was the HTML editor from the Microsoft Windows line of operating systems, used for the design and construction of the hypermedia. The final product was converted in an executable single file using the Webcompiler software to improve the user’s handling feasibility.

2.2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The programme, as well as the interactive booklet was divided into chapters, taking into account the logic of teaching principles. The access to the Course Programme appears in the left of the screen. It includes introduction, rationale, aim, teaching strategy, objectives and contents, evaluation system, time distribution and bibliography.

The interactive booklet, in the right of the screen, presents a link for each of the four themes which are coincidental with the ones displayed in the objectives and contents of the course programme: Introduction to computers, Microsoft Windows operating systems, Microsoft Office tool suites and Internet and electronic mail.

A map of The Gambia with the four starting teaching sites of the CBMP; Bwian, Farafenni, Bansang and Basse Santa Su, appears between the linked aspects of the Course Programme and the Interactive Booklet. [Image 1]
Most of the sections in the Course Programme are linked to a single screen which includes all the related aspects at both sides of a changing central panel, except for the Objectives and Condition which will be linked to each of the four themes which are at the same time linked to the corresponding contents in the interactive booklet. [Image 2]

Image 2. Objectives and Contents of the Course Programme of the learning object of Foundations on Computers and Information Management for Community Based Medical Students in The Gambia.

Each theme is linked to a single page which contain the objectives, teaching materials, basic bibliography, complementary bibliography, assessment and a time table, which includes all the contents and teaching modalities linked to the interactive booklet. [Image 3]

Image 3. Theme I. Introduction to Computers. The page includes objectives, teaching materials, basic bibliography, complementary bibliography, assessment and a time table linked to the interactive booklet.

The four chapters of the Interactive Booklet, which are coincidental and linked with the themes in Course Programme, present different topics which are accessed through hot words along the whole hypermedia.

Chapter one, titled Introduction to computers, includes: definition, history, hardware and software, case, central processing unit, mother board, memory, disc drives, cards, cables, mouse, keyboard, monitors, modems, digital cameras, printers, files and documents, folders and directories, four basic operations: input, processing, storage, output, computer health and safety. [Image 4]


Chapter two, titled Microsoft Windows Operating Systems, includes: general overview on MS DOS & Windows operating systems, history, Windows explorer, using Windows menus, backing up files, keyboard shortcuts used with Windows and computer viruses. [Image 5]

Chapter three, titled: Microsoft Office Tools Suite, includes: Microsoft Office, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Power Point. [Image 6]

Chapter four is titled: Internet and Electronic Mail. It includes: The Internet, History, How does the Web works?, Who uses the web?, Future Trends, Electronic Mail, Electronic Addresses and Parts of an electronic message. [Image 7]

The course of Foundations of Computers and Information Management was inserted in the premedical bridging course taught for the first time in the first semester of the 2007–2008 academic year of the CBMP in The Gambia [5].

In all the screens, at the lower area there are links to the home page, to the next page and to the previous page.

The home page includes an access to the credits of the learning object, user can find there general aspects about the authors and the ways to contact them. [Image 8]

3. CONCLUSIONS

The hypermedia for the course programme of computers and information management, apart from been used as a methodological and didactic guide, also allowed students and professors to use it as a useful tool and consulting material. And it can also be used to bring students up to a common level in basic and general knowledge about computers and information management, due to the variance in standards among graduates from irregular educational systems in developing countries as it is in The Gambia.

4. REFERENCES


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