



How to handle the pros and cons of courses run by distance education only

Femke Buisman-Pijlman PhD
Jason White, PhD

Discipline of Pharmacology
Faculty of Health Sciences



Overview

- What do we teach?
- Who do we teach?
- How do we teach online?
- Our experiences
 - Student questionnaire start program (Msc)
 - Personal feedback students
 - Official student evaluation: SELT (Msc)
 - Teacher experiences
- Special interest areas
- Pros and cons



What do we teach?

Postgraduate programs in Alcohol and Drug studies

Graduate diploma and Graduate Certificate

- 1999: started using distance education
- 2005: only use distance education
- 4 courses
- International MSc in Addiction studies (2008)
 - Managing program and teaching 2 courses

Face to face - some online content - **only online content**



Why do we teach by distance?

- Flexibility student learning ¹
- Access from remote areas or abroad
- Exceptional possibilities

International Master of Science in Addiction Studies
Developed curriculum and taught by three universities together (Australia, UK, USA)

2008 9 students

2009 35 students – 13 countries – each continent

¹ Del Valle and Duffy 2009



Who do we teach?

- All off campus students
- Mature age students
- Extensive experience in the field
- Interstate, remote areas, international

Start questionnaire 2009 (based on J. Baron, CLPD)

- Comfortable using compu: 80%
- Experienced in online learning: 60%
- Good time management skills: 90%



Preference for online environment

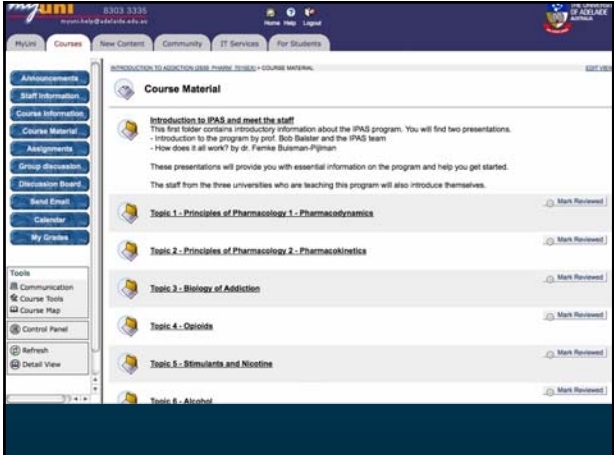
Start questionnaire 2009 (based on J. Baron, CLPD)

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Makes me feel part of community | 90% |
| • Gives me sense of control | 65% |
| • Considers prior knowledge at start | 85% |
| • Offers variety of learning activities | 85% |
| • Makes me engage in discussion (30% disagrees) | 65% |



What do we use?

- Blackboard (MyUni) portal
- Handbook, learning objectives
- Readings (through library)
- Lectures by external experts
- Quizzes
- Discussion boards
- Assignments
- Virtual classroom (Not Msc)
- 95% of communication: MyUni or email




Introduction to ADDICTION: ABBEY PRASAD - COURSE MATERIAL

Course Material

Introduction to IPAS and meet the staff!
The first folder contains introductory information about the IPAS program. You will find two presentations. Introduction to the program by prof. Bob Baker and the IPAS team
- How does it all work? by Dr. Femike Busman-Pijman

These presentations will provide you with essential information on the program and help you get started. The staff from the three universities who are teaching this program will also introduce themselves.

- Topic 1 - Principles of Pharmacology 1 - Pharmacodynamics
- Topic 2 - Principles of Pharmacology 2 - Pharmacokinetics
- Topic 3 - Biology of Addiction
- Topic 4 - Opioids
- Topic 5 - Stimulants and Nicotine
- Topic 6 - Alcohol



Topic Outline
TOPIC 1 Principles of Pharmacology 1 - Pharmacodynamics (16 692 kb)

Learning Objectives
After you have completed this topic you should be able to:

- Briefly describe the gross anatomy of the nervous system.
- Briefly describe the structure and function of a neuron including how neurons communicate with each other via synapses.
- Discuss the possible ways in which drugs may affect the neuronal communication process.
- Discuss the concepts of agonists, partial agonists and antagonists.
- Discuss the concepts of drug affinity, drug efficacy and potency.
- List the mechanisms underlying the development of tolerance and physical dependence to a drug acting as an agonist.

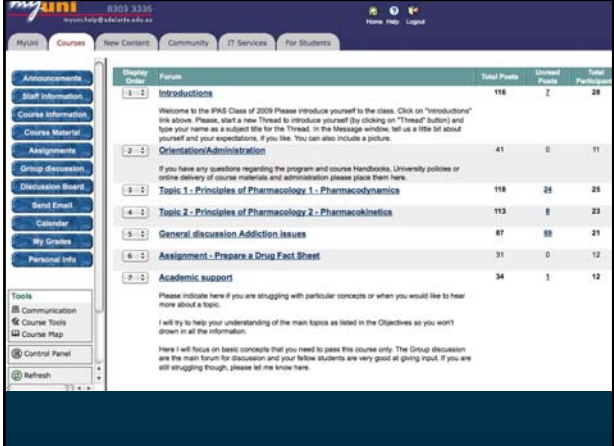
Concept Lecture

Readings

Topic 1 - Principles of Pharmacology 1 - Pharmacodynamics
Link to Topic 1 on Discussion board

Quiz Topic 1 Pharmacodynamics IPAS
Please use this quiz for revision. You can do the quiz as often as you want, but it will only save the last attempt. I can only give feedback if you finish the test and submit it.

The basic concepts - Topic 1
The basic concepts - Topic 1 (679 692 kb)
Here you can find a pdf with the basic concepts that you need to understand for topic 1. I have used the objectives to extract the basics from the lecture by Steve Neugebauer. I have changed the slides to make it easier to understand (where possible). I could not add much to his lecture, so I have not re-recorded it.
Femike



Forum


Category	Forum	Total Posts	Unread Posts	Total Participants
1	Introductions	116	7	28
2	Orientation/Administration	41	0	11
3	Topic 1 - Principles of Pharmacology 1 - Pharmacodynamics	119	26	25
4	Topic 2 - Principles of Pharmacology 2 - Pharmacokinetics	113	8	23
5	General discussion Addiction issues	87	89	21
6	Assignment - Prepare a Drug Fact Sheet	31	0	12
7	Academic support	34	1	12

Welcome to the IPAS Class of 2009 Please introduce yourself to the class. Click on "Introductions" link above. Please, start a new Thread to introduce yourself (by clicking on "Thread" button) and type your name as a subject title for the Thread. In the Message window, tell us a little bit about yourself and your expectations, if you like. You can also include a picture.

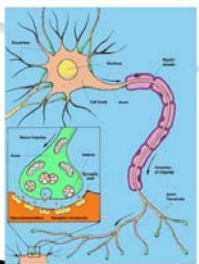
If you have any questions regarding the program and course Handbooks, University policies or online delivery of course materials and administration please place them here.

I will try to help your understanding of the main topics as listed in the Objectives so you won't drown in all the information.

Here I will focus on basic concepts that you need to pass this course only. The Group discussion are the main forum for discussion and your fellow students are very good at giving input. If you are still struggling though, please let me know here.




Neurons: Structure



VCU

KING'S COLLEGE LONDON



Evaluation tools: useful?

Learning resources	60% (6.2)	50% (6.0)
Readings	80% (6.4)	66% (5.8)
Lectures	80% (6.4)	66% (6.0)
Discussion board	80% (6.2)	83% (6.2)
Quizzes	80% (6.4)	50% (5.7)

SELTP IPAS 2008 (low student numbers, % (strongly) agree and mean likert score)



Student expectations and worries

"If I have **time** at 5am or 9pm to attend a lecture it is available to me to do so."

"Well, I think its a great opportunity for the people like me to gain knowledge in addition field from **World's prestigious Uni's staying in the family environment.**"

"Having so much **flexibility** will be both **good** and possibly **damaging** for me; I will need to create my own structure to stay on task. I am very good with attending in-person classes. I will need to develop greater self-discipline."

"I would feel confident and encouraged if I get a regular **feedback** about my performance and ways to improve especially during these initial days"



Student worries

"Completing the assignments on time worries me because of **work and other life demands.**"

"Now I realise that the online learning is tricky. It is going to be difficult I am not very good at **expressing myself** in words."

"Oh dear! I feel as though I need to do **computer studies** to do this course."

"Whilst I have confidence that I have the capacity to manage the information should it be delivered in a more **user-friendly way**. The first unit was information over-load for an adult beginning university study. It appears that I have not passed the first Unit therefore I wish to take time to discuss my learning needs."



Expected pros and cons

Why IPAS?

- International perspective program
- Learning from other students
- Learning from international experts
- Flexibility
- Combination work, life, study
- Networking
- Freedom of online learning
- Comprehensive program

Start questionnaire IPAS 2008, 2009

Worries

- Technical difficulties
- Finding materials
- Time management
- Group work
- Communicating using computer
- Accessibility materials
- Lack of face-to face contact
- Time zones and getting support
- Can't ask lecturer questions



Current issue - teacher

- Motivating students by distance, helping them adjust to online learning (time difference)
- Teaching versus help desk
- Quick feedback (larger student numbers) ¹
- Limitations of facilities and resources with heavy use MyUni (library, IT, copyright)
- Technical problems ²
 - University facilities do not see facilitating online access for off campus students as a priority
- Time to respond to student requests

¹ Vondenwell, et al, 2007. Gallien and Oomen-Early, 2008)

² Hailey, Grant-Davie and Hult, 2001



Special interest communication

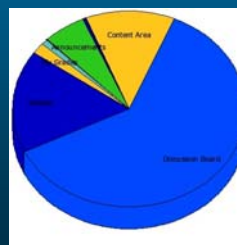
- Good student-student and student-teacher contact
- Mainly via discussion boards - asynchronous ¹
 - Discussing content
 - Clarification of concepts
 - Discussing professional experiences
 - Asking for help
 - Monitoring technical problems
 - Questions about assignments etc
- Enough room for individual learning styles? ¹

¹Shea, Li and Pckett, 2006, Zhu, 206, Rovai, 2007

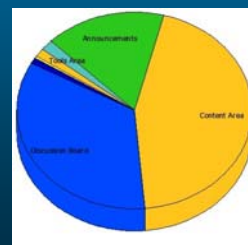


Personal styles: MyUni use

High contributor



Low contributor



Example from Introduction to addiction 2009



Feedback and assessment

Important for student motivation and success ¹

- Formative:
 - Getting them involved and up to speed
 - Online quizzes
 - Feedback about discussion contributions
- Summative:
 - All linked to course and topic objectives
 - Essay + exam + discussion board
 - Rubrics (before and after)
- Peer review assessment: within discipline, international team, external review

¹ gallien and oomen-eraly, 2008



Motivating students and Feedback

Quotes:

"Thank you so much for the nice feedback. It makes a bit easier to motivate yourself in the last few days of studying before the exam." student Graduate Diploma

"Thank you very much for your support, feedback and encouragement, it helped me a lot and this shows in my mark." Student Graduate Diploma

SELT IPAS 2008 and personal student feedback



Evaluation teacher

This person shows enthusiasm for encouraging student learning	100% (6.8)
This person is interested in helping students to learn	100% (6.6)
This person stimulates my interest in learning in this course	100% (6.6)
This person is accessible to students seeking advice	80% (6.4)
This person is skilled in facilitating group discussions	80% (6.2)
This person gives clear explanations	80% (6.2)
I receive adequate feedback on my work	80% (5.8)

SELT IPAS U1 2008 (7 point scale)



Cons

- Students experience different – doesn't fit all
- Emphasis on written communication
- Student: managing time
- Lack of face-to-face contact
- Asynchronous study
- Managing problems takes time
- IT problems
- Copyright issues



Pros

- Flexibility student learning
- Access from remote areas or abroad
- International perspective
- Diversity of students
- Exceptional collaborations
- Expert input
- New markets