

START: teaching kinesiology to Gen Y

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Kinesiology/functional anatomy is viewed as essential foundational knowledge for clinical reasoning and decision making in physiotherapy practice, and is taught in the first year of the Bachelor of Physiotherapy program at the University of Melbourne. Student feedback on this subject highlighted difficulties in engaging with, understanding and applying kinesiology principles. A student centered educational model using streamed lectures and audience response technology (START) was introduced in 2008. Students had a choice in using a combination of an interactive software package and streamed lectures, as well as attending interactive large group quiz sessions that made use of audience response keypad technology (ART). While keypad technology is increasingly used to engage students in learning, the START model encouraged students to work in small groups to answer multiple-choice questions, therefore drawing on collaborative construction of knowledge as a key pedagogical principle. The ART offered both lecturer and students immediate feedback on student understanding, allowing the lecturer to target teaching to gaps in student knowledge. Data was collected from four key sources: 1) focus groups and questionnaire data from students; 2) researcher diary; 3) exam results and 4) peer reviews from 'expert teachers'. Findings showed increased student engagement with key themes included student Control, Choice and Capacity to learn. There was no significant difference between exam results with the previous cohort suggesting that the alternative approach to standard lectures did not reduce learning outcome. Further research is needed to determine if this model assists with knowledge retention and clinical application.

Ethics was approved by The University of Melbourne Human Ethics committee in 2008.