An Interactive Approach to Education: The Development of an Online Module to Teach Students about Alzheimer’s Disease

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Background & Rationale

Should modern technology be integrated with education? As technology has evolved, educational approaches to learning have been developed to supply the diverse needs of the 21st century student. According to the Medical Education Portal (MedEdPortal), there are approximately 80 interactive learning modules published as online educational resources for students and educators.1 Integrating technology with education achieves the following:

- Promotes active learning
- Broadens information gaps
- Improves information retention
- Promotes problem solving and critical-thinking skills
- Provides economical and easily accessible learning materials
- Encourages an in-depth exploration of content within and beyond the classroom

Why Alzheimer’s Disease?

Alzheimer’s Disease (AD):

- Is the most common cause of dementia
- Leads to neuronal damage and severe cognitive decline
- Is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States
- Is projected to impact 5 million Americans in 2015 to 13.8 million by 2050

Specific Aims:

1. To develop an interactive AD module for student learning
2. To evaluate the module for its effectiveness and assess students’ impressions of its usefulness

Project Approach

Huang’s (2005) five phases for designing interactive multimedia learning modules were used to create and assess the AD module. They are listed below and described in Table 1:

1. Define the educational problem
2. Gather context to address user needs
3. Construct program integrating technology
4. Create a user evaluation tool
5. Collect user feedback to make improvements

Table 1. Five phases of project development (AD—Alzheimer’s Disease)