Development of a comprehensive and interactive tablet computer-based educational system for I3 using iBooks Author

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Purpose: The Infection, Immunology, and Inflammation course directors felt that the creation of a more comprehensive and interactive digital syllabus would alleviate students’ concerns regarding the disorganized nature of the course materials. The project’s goal was to create a computer-based syllabus that would not only seamlessly integrate various resources, but that would also address a variety of learning styles and study tools.

Background: With the introduction of educational materials for tablet computers, students are presented with countless opportunities make their studying more enriching and efficient. Before embarking on this project, we held a focus group of 10 medical students to find out how they currently use technology in their learning and what they would ideally want from an electronic syllabus. We found that the Apple iPad is used by a significant number of students in the School of Medicine as an alternative to traditional paper-based studying.

Methods: We looked to a variety of digital mediums for creating an interactive syllabus, including online textbook platforms and Adobe InDesign. After researching current options, we decided to use the iBooks Author program. It has unlimited potential for curriculum enhancement via the addition of pictures, self-assessment questions, videos, and interactive images. Furthermore, it provides the flexibility required to adapt a customized course, while maintaining a cohesive framework that delivers a clean, professional looking product.

Evaluation Plan: We plan to use survey instruments, focus groups, and performance on exams as surrogate markers of the impact of this technology. The course directors will work with Dr Christy Boccardin, faculty in the Office of Medical Education, to evaluate data from a quantitative perspective.

Dissemination: The product will be freely available to all UCSF students, faculty, and staff. Our poster will be featured at the Curriculum Ambassadors Showcase to highlight its innovative features and educational impact.

Reflective Critique: Feedback from the Essential Core Curriculum Committee indicated that the new technology would be well received by faculty. Students will be queried at the conclusion of the course and asked to offer feedback on instructional impact and student satisfaction. The course directors will take this feedback into account as they prepare the syllabus for the 2013-2014 academic year.