

Use of Information Communication Technology in the Veterinary Education Project by Four Universities in the Tokyo Area (Vet4u)

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Vet4u is a 5-year project that was initiated in 2012 by a collaboration of 4 veterinary schools in the Tokyo area; namely, The University of Tokyo (national school) as the representative, and 3 private schools, i.e., Azabu University, Nippon Veterinary and Life Science University, and Nihon University. This is financially supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. In the "Vet4u" project, the Information Communication Technology (ICT) plays an important role as well as the face-to-face approach. ICT helps sharing educational resources, which may be insufficient in individual universities. In addition to the universities, the project includes 8 collaborating organizations related to veterinary profession: OIE Regional Representation for Asia and the Pacific, National Institute of Animal Health, National Veterinary Assay Laboratory, National Institute of Infectious Diseases, National Agricultural Insurance Association, Equine Research Institute of the Japan Racing Association, Food Agricultural Material Center, and Animal Quarantine Service. In the "Vet4u" project, these organizations are considered as stakeholders, because the graduates may work for them in future.

Educational resources (digitalized materials) are provided not only from the universities, but also by those stakeholders. The students can use the resources for self-study, or at the classroom. ICT platform is built based on the core curriculum for veterinary education in Japan (51 subjects). Lectures provided by employees of the stakeholders are recorded in digital format, and all Vet4u students have access to these e-learning contents. The virtual slide system is used for studying histology and histopathology. Microscopic images of a sample slide are digitalized, and teachers as well as students use the images through the Internet in the classroom and at home. We are now trying to introduce free and low-cost learning management systems such as Moodle for establishing a sustainable ICT system, although supporting staff resources are necessary for its effective and practical use.

Keywords: ICT – collaborating universities – stakeholders – educational resources – core curriculum –virtual slide