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U.S. and Europe, critical shortages of nursing staff and GPs exist that require affordable methods of education. FutureLearn is looking to support governments, regional health systems and individual healthcare trusts address their challenges, either using courses available on the platform or developing custom courses delivered privately to staff across organisations.

But besides the demand for new staff, health systems are faced with major technological trends, such as genomic medicine, big data and nanotechnology that will revolutionise diagnosis and treatment. We see opportunity to assist governments and health providers address the skills needed in these emerging areas. ■

# Teaching Ultrasound Imaging Online

## The Educator's Viewpoint



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### Why did you decide to offer this course?

A major reason for developing this course was to share health-related activities at the University of Twente, specifically our experience and research with ultrasound technology. We wanted to transfer the philosophy that having both clinical and technical knowledge in the (daily) use of medical technologies can optimise success in clinical practice. We wanted to make people excited about the technical and medical aspects of ultrasound, and to train our own educational team in the use of novel digital learning environment tools.

### How have the faculty found it?

We enjoyed the project a lot as this was the first time our faculty had developed an online course at such a scale for such a broad audience. Our own clinical and technical educators were all enthusiastic about creating materials for learners interested in the topic. The beautiful thing here is that the materials we produced could also be used for our own students, or to support clinicians in their local practices.

Furthermore, thanks to the course, all educators and education experts involved now have more insight into the possibilities and challenges of using digital learning environments.

### What has the feedback of the learners been?

The combination of having course steps in the form of case studies and explanatory videos, complemented by technical theory was most interesting for learners. From learner comments, we know that most of them wanted to have a better grounding in the principles and pitfalls of ultrasound in order to be better supported in their working lives. The course attracted professionals already working with ultrasound, which was our main target audience, as well as those with a general interest in the topic.

### How did you approach the design of this course given the potentially vast audience?

The main challenge was that we had to design a course that would suit the needs of a vast audience with a great variety in backgrounds and prior knowledge of the subject. The advantage of the social learning aspect of the platform was that if learners wanted to go beyond the content covered in the course step, they were able to elaborate on the content through discussions with other learners, by sharing their knowledge from their experiences in the field. Whilst the course attracted a vast audience, owing to their differing levels of understanding, learners could go through the course at their own pace. We structured the course in weeks focusing on different areas: technology, medicine and the integration of technology and medicine in clinical cases. ■



The course, *Ultrasound Imaging: What is Inside?* will be running again on the FutureLearn website from Monday 23rd October - see <https://iii.hm/bdu>