Before introducing computer based distributed learning into its nursing curriculum the Institute of Health and Community Studies conducted some research into students’ computer ownership, use and attitudes (n108)

Computer ownership amongst students prior to starting the course was 64%, however nearly a fifth (18%) used computers less than monthly, and over a quarter had never searched the WWW. Less than half (43%) responded positively to the statement ‘I like working with computers’ and around one quarter (24%) only use a computer if they have no choice.

The attitude of students to being asked to use IT was encouraging, with almost half looking forward to using it, but there was a significant minority who did not relish this requirement. The results suggested that students would need quite a lot of support if they were going to successfully cope with the IT requirements of the course, and a support programme has been implemented ahead of the introduction of online materials.