

# A PILOT STUDY ON HOW CONTEXT-BASED LEARNING IMPACTS STUDENTS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

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In most Australian university systems, students complete broad undergraduate degrees, and therefore the first year modules are fairly general. These foundational subjects lend themselves to context-based learning (CBL) approaches, which aim for students to learn about a particular subject and how it is relevant to their own lives (Pilot & Bulte, 2006).

One model for CBL described by Gilbert (2007) is that of context as the social circumstances. This model relates to topics and activities of importance to communities and is based on situated learning (Greeno, 1998) and activity theory (Vygotsky, 1978).

This project seeks to evaluate the impact CBL can have on chemistry student's environmental awareness and associated behavioural changes. An instrument has been developed to collect data from a large first year undergraduate chemistry cohort who have exposure to a contextualised curriculum. The online survey incorporates multiple choice and open-response questions. The questions are designed to assess environmental awareness, empathy and resulting changes in actions.

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