

STUDENTS' TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY LIFE: LEARNING, LECTURES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES IN THE FIRST YEAR

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Though many courses retain lectures as a key part of teaching provision, the format of these lectures can have an important effect on students' transition to university. This paper reports on a comparison between two first year chemistry courses: CHEM113, designed for students without chemistry experience and grounded in the concept of Transition Pedagogy (Kift, 2009) and student engagement, and CHEM114, a more advanced course taught in a more traditional manner. Data has been collected for three years. Initially CHEM113 students reported higher levels of engagement and understanding with more positive attitudes towards chemistry. Gains were attributed to interactive lectures and availability of extra support. However, this year the format of the lectures changed to include pre-lecture videos and quizzes. At the same time new staffing levels lead to the reorganisation of the laboratory programme. We report on how the changes seem to have affected student behaviour and on student perceptions of how the course structure and activities affected their learning in chemistry.

Students completed a questionnaire which included questions from the SALG (Student Assessment of their Learning Gains) Inventory (Seymour, Wiese, Hunter, & Daffinrud, 2000) as well as questions about their perceptions of and attendance at lectures.

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