

GIVING STUDENTS THE CHOICE OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS IN THE CHEMISTRY LABORATORY

Shane Wilkinson^a and Stephen George-Williams^a

Presenting Author: Shane Wilkinson (Shane.wilkinson@sydney.edu.au)

^aThe School of Chemistry, The University of Sydney, Sydney NSW 2006, Australia

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Incorporating authentic assessments into a laboratory program can improve students' engagement and satisfaction whilst developing highly valuable employment skills (Schultz et al., 2022; Sokhanvar et al., 2021). It can promote a deeper understanding by having students translate their data and findings to a real-world audience of stakeholders – occasionally not from the scientific community (Jopp, 2020).

Another assessment strategy is to empower students with a choice of assessments to complete. A choice of assessments can increase student motivation, confidence and engagement whilst reducing the anxiety around assessments (Patall et al., 2010; Garside et al., 2009). This promotes self-regulated learning, self-efficacy and can lead to improved academic performance (Jopp & Cohen, 2020).

At The University of Sydney, students complete four experiments in their laboratory program during their first semester of first year chemistry. Each experiment has a different style of authentic assessment associated with it. Students are provided with the opportunity to select one of these four experiments (and its associated authentic assessment) to submit as their major laboratory assessment for the semester. At the end of semester, students ($n = \sim 750$) were questioned about why they had selected the assessment they submitted. In this presentation, we analyse how popular the different authentic assessments were amongst students and look at some of the motives behind why these assessments were selected.

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