

MULTIDISCIPLINARY LAB – DOES IT WORK?

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As part of the restructure of the Bachelor of Science program of The University of Newcastle, a multidisciplinary laboratory course (SCIE1002) was introduced for the first time this year as a core course. Students are given the opportunity to develop their capacity to engage and understand the perspectives of multiple disciplines while addressing scientific challenges. They also learn essential/foundational laboratory skills required in their chosen majors and across a range of other diverse science disciplines.

The course was developed by several disciplines within the Faculty of Science: Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Environmental Science and Management, Geography, Physics and Psychology. Explored using multiple disciplinary approaches, the laboratory sessions focus on two practical research questions: Water – Would you drink it? and Energy – How much does it cost? Initial students' feedback are positive; students engage with the online contextual pre-lab materials and, particularly, with the laboratory active learning as they provide real world relevance. The laboratory setting generated a highly interactive environment with student peers and staff enhancing students' learning and building staff-students relationships.

This presentation will discuss the development and implementation of the course, challenges encountered and planned improvements guided by both students and staff feedback.

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