EMBEDDING EMPLOYABILITY IN SCIENCE EDUCATION

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A new second year employability course offered in blended learning mode at the University of Newcastle was showing promising outcomes in student learning outcomes and perceived student relevance. Highly interactive workshops with embedded feedback from peers and the tutor seemed highly effective. Then COVID-19 happened.

The course was transitioned from blended to online learning mode and student attendance in (now online) workshops dropped suddenly and significantly. Might non-attendance compromise students' learning?

In this paper we review multiple lines of evaluation data demonstrating that even after the move online students were well supported by the course materials, produced high quality work, improved their employability and, despite not having highly interactive workshops, recognised the benefits of peer collaboration.

We outline the key pedagogy that our research identified as being the driver of these successful outcomes. We also explore how the evaluation data has highlighted further improvements in the course. Lastly, we investigate the importance of well-planned evaluation that can tell the full 'story' of teaching and learning outcomes in science degrees.