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# ONLINE ASSESSMENT DESIGN TO IMPROVE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND REDUCE ACADEMIC WORKLOAD IN FIRST YEAR CHEMISTRY

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At the University of New England, over half of our first year chemistry students study online. Most of our online students also work and have family responsibilities. With the COVID-19 crisis, we now have an entire cohort of students who have been forced to study online. The task of teaching chemistry online, improving engagement with self-study online resources, and supporting our students to become independent learners is something we have grappled with for many years.

Including the 'human' side of teaching in an online environment, whilst maintaining reasonable workloads for academics, is critical. In first year chemistry at UNE, improving the non-content specific skills of our online students has been very successful; however, supporting online students in relation to academic support is still extremely time consuming.

An online formative assessment was developed using the Möbius platform to provide the type of support an instructor would give in the classroom or an online forum. The aim was to encourage development of online students as independent learners and improve engagement with online learning resources, whilst reducing student reliance on instructor feedback and support. Student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, learning outcomes were improved, and academic workload was reduced.

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