

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS IN SCIENCE-BASED DEGREE PROGRAMS: STUDENT SATISFACTION OUTCOMES WITH DIFFERENT PROJECT DELIVERY MODELS

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Tertiary interdisciplinary projects are used to develop students' disciplinary and employability skills. The aim was to determine student satisfaction with different delivery models of interdisciplinary student projects.

A systematic search and review of journal articles reporting on student satisfaction and employability skills developed by interdisciplinary project work was undertaken. Projects with varying interdisciplinary width and depth, project task authenticity and involvement of external partners (from industry, government or community) in the project were examined and reported student satisfaction outcomes were compared. Data were analysed using the χ^2 test.

The interdisciplinary project model did not affect the development of disciplinary or employability skills, apart from interdisciplinary effectiveness, which was significantly better developed in a truly interdisciplinary project ($P=0.009$). Interpersonal skill development was significantly improved where projects had integrated rather than sequential tasks ($P=0.04$). Student satisfaction was unaffected by project delivery mode, but improved when the project task was authentic ($P=0.05$). Improved learning was reported in about half the projects included, and significantly improved employability was reported with consultancy projects ($P=0.04$) and where an external partner was involved ($P=0.04$).

Interdisciplinary projects that are authentic and involve an external partner generate better outcomes in terms of overall student satisfaction and employability skills development.

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