

DEVELOPING SCIENTIFIC LITERACY FOR ALL UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

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ABSTRACT

University educated students should possess at least a basic level of scientific literacy so as not to be disadvantaged in a highly technological global environment. Most, if not all Australian universities, list the graduate attribute of "being knowledgeable" yet many graduates are potentially unable to make decisions based on scientific understanding. Without a basic knowledge of science, graduates will find it difficult to make informed choices about their health care, their environment and the society in which they live. The ability to critically analyse the validity of a given argument or media presentation in order to come to a logical conclusion should be considered highly valuable in terms of graduate qualities and consequently an important requirement of all university degrees. A course to teach scientific literacy needs to be carefully structured to maintain student engagement and to provide understanding without the focus on creating scientists.

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