

# SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY SKILLS IN FIRST YEAR BIOLOGY: BUILDING ON PRE-TERTIARY SKILLS OR BACK TO BASICS?

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**KEYWORDS:** biology, scientific skills, transition, benchmarking

## ABSTRACT

With the imminent introduction of the Australian Curriculum, will first-year biology subjects build on and offer further development of the skills and capacities that students will acquire once the curriculum is implemented? The answer to this question has important implications for student transition to, and success at university. Data was collected using university handbook entries from all thirty-nine Australian universities with more detailed information provided by first year biology co-ordinators. The focus of this benchmarking process was inquiry skills taught in first year core biology subjects. Preliminary data will be presented showing that almost all Australian universities offer experiences in multimodal forms of communication, working in teams and undertaking experimental investigations, and are well placed to build on the skills pre-tertiary students bring with them into first year undergraduate studies. Other notable differences and their implications for first year biology courses will be highlighted.

Proceedings of the Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education, University of Sydney, Sept 26<sup>th</sup> to Sept 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012, page 15, ISBN Number 978-0-9871834-1-5.