

SUPPORTING TRANSITION INTO FIRST-YEAR CHEMISTRY THROUGH A COMMUNICATION EXERCISE

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ABSTRACT

Internationalisation and widening participation policies have resulted in an increasingly diverse student population. One result of this is that universities are implementing transition pedagogy policies as they recognise that all students need to be acculturated into academic conventions at tertiary level. This paper reports on a project which is part of the university's initiative to embed first year (FY) transition pedagogies into the FY curriculum. For many undergraduate science students, the challenge of commencing their university studies is exacerbated by the requirement to take FY subjects in which they do not have a strong background, or that they may be perceived as difficult or irrelevant. The first semester first-year Chemistry subject (65111 Chemistry 1) is one of these. The aim of the project was to design a student-centred communication exercise, to enable students to discover for themselves that chemistry is relevant and interesting, and to try and foster a sense of belonging. To further support students' transition, the exercise was based around a low-stakes formative assessment item in the first four weeks of semester. The presentation will describe the team's approach to the project, the challenges and outcomes, and will discuss student feedback.

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