MULTIDISCIPLINARY LAB – DOES IT WORK?

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KEYWORDS: laboratory, multidisciplinary

As part of the restructure of the Bachelor of Science program of The University of Newcastle, a multidisciplinary laboratory course (SCIE1002) was introduced for the first time this year as a core course. Students are given the opportunity to develop their capacity to engage and understand the perspectives of multiple disciplines while addressing scientific challenges. They also learn essential/foundational laboratory skills required in their chosen majors and across a range of other diverse science disciplines.

The course was developed by several disciplines within the Faculty of Science: Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Environmental Science and Management, Geography, Physics and Psychology. Explored using multiple disciplinary approaches, the laboratory sessions focus on two practical research questions: Water – Would you drink it? and Energy – How much does it cost? Initial students’ feedback are positive; students engage with the online contextual pre-lab materials and, particularly, with the laboratory active learning as they provide real world relevance. The laboratory setting generated a highly interactive environment with student peers and staff enhancing students’ learning and building staff-students relationships.

This presentation will discuss the development and implementation of the course, challenges encountered and planned improvements guided by both students and staff feedback.

Proceedings of the Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education, The University of Sydney and University of Technology Sydney, 2 - 4 October 2019, page 15, ISBN Number 978-0-9871834-8-4