

ENGAGING FIRST YEAR STUDENTS THROUGH A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY FORUM

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ABSTRACT

First year teaching staff from a range of science disciplines at Federation University worked together to design and facilitate a series of activities to explore and develop learning skills for incoming first year Science and Engineering students. The activities were designed to address core generic skills applicable to science and engineering students in a range of disciplines and were aligned with graduate attributes. Staff developed the workshops in line with individual subject and assessment requirements so that students could benefit from specific skills at appropriate points in the semester. This took the form of a "First Year Forum": a weekly workshop, facilitated by a range of staff members from library support staff, first year teaching staff and statisticians. The workshops aimed to develop skills in academic writing, research, time management and data handling. Some of the workshops were specifically aligned with assessment tasks, while others concentrated on familiarising students with generic skills that would be useful to them throughout their degree. The final session was a "Revision Trivia session" which built on cross-discipline team work that had been fostered throughout these sessions. This paper will outline the program and its integration into the first year curriculum of the school.

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