

Faculty of Medical Sciences' Educational Research, Development & Practice Network

Seminar Series

The Introduction and Implementation of Novel, Collaborative Learning Approaches to an Established Undergraduate Biomedical Science Course

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Portsmouth**



It is well documented that collaborative approaches to learning enhance student outcomes by promoting cognitive learning, helping develop social interactions and providing valuable opportunities to develop the skills necessary for postgraduate employment. The introduction of a novel first year unit to our undergraduate Biomedical Science programme, based entirely on collaborative learning, employs a scaffold approach to facilitate the development of the social, cognitive and employability aspects of collaboration whilst gradually introducing students to both the atypical structure of this unit and the expectations of effective group work. Whilst this unit is considered by many within the Faculty as an effective and ambitious way of engaging with first year undergraduates with students reporting positive outcomes in free text feedback, the atypical unit structure causes administrative difficulties for both the timetabling of events and for quantitative end of unit feedback.

Effective collaboration is also required for the successful completion of one of a series of final year, time-restricted, unseen clinical case studies. This assessment requires a number of small groups of students to navigate through 'trickle fed' complex clinical information to form and justify a diagnosis for their patient and to recommend an appropriate therapeutic strategy. Unlike the first year unit, this final year collaborative assessment is scheduled as a single session, can be evaluated easily using standard end of unit feedback questionnaires and has minimal impact on central timetabling.

Both approaches lead to a highly dynamic teaching environment with students placed at the centre of their learning. It is recommended that academics experiment with student-centred, active-learning pedagogies by initially introducing change on a small scale before more ambitiously incorporating more substantial changes to the teaching strategy as a way of improving outcomes and adding excitement to the curriculum.

**1-2pm, Thursday 6 December 2018
Room 1.55, Ridley building 2**

[Register a place here](#) or email
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