

SESSIONAL STAFF TRAINING FOR IMPROVED STUDENT EXPERIENCE

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It is widely recognised that the quality of the undergraduate experience in science is often dependent on student interactions with sessional staff; in some cases, sessional staff have primary responsibility for teaching within tutorials and practicals, on field trips, and sometimes in lectures. Preparing postgraduate students to teach requires them to accept responsibilities that they may not have signed up for when they decided to become scientists, and they are unlikely to have been exposed to pedagogical theories in their science studies. In addition, in their role as teachers, postgraduate students and other sessional staff must be respected as having their own knowledge and attitudes towards teaching, which will influence their personal teaching practice. We held a full-day workshop with the goal of improving the learning experiences of undergraduate students by improving the training of sessional staff in teaching. This was designed based on the latest literature with three aims:

1. To enhance sessional staff's sense of psychological empowerment;
2. To develop the belief that sessional staff can enhance undergraduate students' learning experiences;
3. To increase the level of communication and harmonise experiences across campuses.

Results from surveys and interviews before and after the workshop will be presented.

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