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Engaging first year students in Biochemistry through co-design of module delivery

As student cohorts become larger and more diverse, there is a need to comprehend how to engage students. This can be done by encouraging the 'students as partners' attitude, placing them in a more active role, considering them as 'co-producers'. This study involves collaborating with students in co-designing of module delivery with the aim to make it more engaging and involves a first year MPharm and MSci module in the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at Ulster University. Feedback from first year student cohorts has shown that the topic of Biochemistry is a "dry" subject area and is long and laborious to learn. In this study, the academic partnered with first year and second year students with the aim to making the subject area more engaging. Consultations took place during class and also on an individual basis using a questionnaire as a guide. This collaboration resulted in the following plan:

- Traditional lectures in class and recorded with optional supplementary reading.
- Active learning activities in class such as quizzes/MCQs.
- Optional use of technology in class to ask/answer questions.
- All materials available on Blackboard learn.

This experience of 'inclusive partnership' has brought a better mutual understanding which should see positive results with student engagement and the overall experience and performance in the long term.

Key words

Co-design, student engagement, first year biochemistry

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Primary author: COLEMAN, Heather

Presenter: COLEMAN, Heather

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