

# "Making the Connection: using on-line technologies to determine the learning needs of first year students in a human biology program"

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## Abstract

The use of Interactive Online Learning Modules (IOLMs) within a teaching strategy known as Just in Time Teaching (JiTT), provides educators with the opportunity to stimulate first year student engagement in a topic prior to entering the face to face (f2f) learning environment.

This paper will focus on the design, implementation and evaluation of IOLMs in the JiTT format, to enhance student learning outcomes through content connectivity, in a first year human biology course. The continuous feedback loop integral to the IOLMs provides insight to the students' learning needs prior to entering the classroom and enables educators to create a dynamic and relevant student-driven learning experience. Student Evaluation of Learning and Teaching (SELT) surveys and initial evaluation report a high level of student satisfaction and an improvement in progression rates was evident in the first year human biology program.

*Key words: online learning technologies, first year students, student engagement*

## Session Plan

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| 3 mins  | Introduction, background to first year program and institution   |
| 10 mins | Description of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On-line technologies used (and why)</li><li>• Creating the learning environment in a first year cohort with diverse learning needs and on-line 'confidence'</li><li>• Developing and implementing the on-line interactive learning modules</li><li>• Qualitative and quantitative outcomes</li></ul> |
| 2 mins  | Future developments using this teaching and learning approach<br>Summary   |

Questions/Topics for Discussion:

1. What are the current online technologies used in first year programs that you teach in? If you don't use/use very little online learning tools, where could you see them having an impact?
2. What are the limitations (if any) that you foresee using online technologies in your first year teaching programs?
3. Rate your level of 'instructor confidence and competence' using online technologies. What resources would be needed to gain more confidence and competence using this learning and teaching approach?