BLENDED DELIVERY OF LABORATORY EXPERIENCES: CHANGING ROLES FOR EDUCATION FOCUSSED ACADEMICS

Jack T.H. Wang, Thisun B.H. Piyasena, Gloria D. Woods

Presenting Author: Jack T.H. Wang (t.wang1@uq.edu.au)
School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences, The University of Queensland Brisbane QLD 4121, Australia

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BACKGROUND
Limited external funding and inconsistent promotion criteria can hamper education-focused academics in evidencing their impact (Hubbard, Gretto, Hones, & Tallents, 2015). The sector-wide demand for online program offerings presents an opportunity to align education-focused appointments with teaching initiatives that harness the transformative potential of blended learning experiences (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004).

AIMS
To investigate the impact of blended laboratory experiences through the lens of student learning and the professional development of academics.

DESIGN AND METHODS
Novel laboratory skills videos were produced by education-focused academics at The University of Queensland (UQ), and deployed in a second-year microbiology course (>300 students) in 2019. Student engagement was monitored using learning analytics, and academics (n=6) were interviewed throughout the semester.

RESULTS
Student engagement with the videos aligned with laboratory assessment tasks, and the videos were also used in the professional development of laboratory tutors. Academics consistently cited the time commitment for video production being a barrier to widespread implementation, but valued the transferrable nature of these skillsets for education-focused appointments.

CONCLUSIONS
The increasing digitization of Higher Education provides education-focused academics with the opportunity to drive the high-impact development of online and blended learning innovations within their discipline.

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