

# ENABLING CHEMICAL CONVERSATIONS: INVESTING FIVE MINUTES IN FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

Susan G. Pyke ([susan.pyke@flinders.edu.au](mailto:susan.pyke@flinders.edu.au))

Department of Chemical and Physical Sciences, Flinders University, Adelaide SA 5001, Australia

**KEYWORDS:** first year, engagement, chemical conversations.

## ABSTRACT

Have you ever considered the benefits of being able to orchestrate a five minute one-on-one chemical conversation with every member of a large first year class? Even better where each student presents you with a piece of work which clearly shows whether they have understood and can apply key concepts of the topic, and your conversation is then directed productively. Students receive immediate, personal feedback and benefit from direct interaction with staff around an area of personal difficulty, staff benefit from the direct insight into the students' level of engagement and understanding and can direct students to a support network where any issues or gaps in background knowledge or application beyond the scope of the conversation can be dealt with in a supportive friendly environment. Easy identification of "students at risk" is also a benefit. This has been successfully done in all first year chemistry topics at Flinders University since 2008 with large cohorts (up to 421). While we don't deny it has taken a great deal of hard work the benefits are enormous.

Proceedings of the Australian Conference on Science and Mathematics Education, University of Sydney, Sept 26<sup>th</sup> to Sept 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012, page 57, ISBN Number 978-0-9871834-1-5.