

ADDRESSING THE “SECOND YEAR SLUMP” PHENOMENON IN AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATES

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ABSTRACT

The noticeable increase in diversity of the student population over the past decade has now highlighted engagement issues (Lawrence, 2005) that will be compounded by the general dissociative tendencies that Gen Y and other individuals of today's society now commonly participate in. More and more of our students try to complete degrees in an isolated, relatively off-campus, and academic environment. This is somewhat facilitated by the ever-increasing, time-flexible, blended learning approaches that incorporate the new information technologies. However, these strategies are often at the expense of extrinsic and intrinsic social interactions for students. Moreover, when the “Second Year Slump” is experienced by students (Tobolowsky, 2008) their engagement in learning and motivation are often impaired (Granuke & Woosley, 2005) and they potentially find themselves without the supportive social networks that typically would provide both assistance and encouragement during this time and aid in the progression through their degree (Sanchez-Leguinel, 2008, Anderson & Schreiner, 2000). In turn, this may negatively impinge upon student retention (Tobolowsky, 2008).

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