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Context based learning

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Title: Context based learning

Lecturers: Claire McDonnell and Sarah Rawe

Programme and year on which assessment was offered

- BSc Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Year 2

Description

The students are provided with journal articles or academic papers from which they must design their experimental procedure to produce a target drug (or compound). The student then carries out all the typical duties of an industrial scientist (e.g. health and safety, reagent preparation, reactions, analysis, data recording, data analysis and report writing). Finally, the student must estimate the cost of producing a specific quantity of the target drug based on their method.

Why did you use this Assessment?

This method of lab work is more real-life (or contextualised). The student experiences what it is like to produce chemical compounds in industry, but in a safe learning environment. The recipe style labs do not challenge the students' higher order thinking skills in a way this approach does.

Why did you change to this form of assessment?

A more traditional 'recipe-style' lab where the student was provided with all the steps and materials necessary to complete the lab. The change was made to give the students a more real experience of medicinal chemistry in an industrial setting.

How do you give feedback to students?

Feedback is provided as the students' progress through the various lab elements (e.g. executive summary of their work, experimental data analysis). Written feedback is provided in the students' lab book and also orally during lab hours.

What have you found are the advantages of using this form of assessment?

- More real life
- Student develop a deeper understanding of the content and experience.

What have you found are the dis-advantages of using this form of assessment?

- Time consuming to organise and run
- Limited to smaller classes (<20)