Learning Catalytics™

EDUCATOR TESTIMONIAL
ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

COURSE: First year undergraduate Chemistry for Biologists course for approximately 110 students

USED SINCE: 2015

SUMMARY: BS1030 is a large "chemistry for biologists" course in the School of Biological Sciences. Learning Catalytics is used to run in-class problem-solving sessions after every lecture.

SUBMITTED BY: **Dr James McEvoy**, School of Biological Sciences

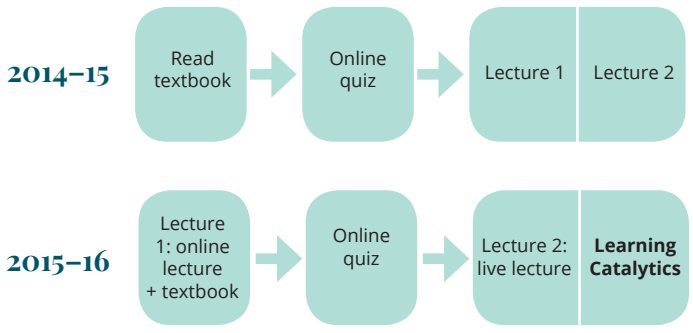
What challenge or problem did you hope Learning Catalytics would solve?

Although the pass rate for the course has improved slightly over the past few years, I have struggled to raise it above 80%. The persistent failure rate of approximately 20% was mostly down to a long "tail" of students scoring very poorly in the final exam. This exam focuses on problem-solving rather than recall.

I hoped that Learning Catalytics would improve the students' problem-solving performance in the final exam, and particularly the performance of the weakest students.

How do you use Learning Catalytics with your students?

Previously I had given approximately 40 x 50-minute lectures for this course. This year I pre-recorded half of this material and made it available as online lectures. I used the newly-available class time to run problem-solving sessions with Learning Catalytics, in a "semi-flipped" approach.



What outcomes/benefits/results have you seen from using Learning Catalytics?

The students attained the highest pass rate ever for the course, breaking the 90% barrier. This can be attributed to a statistically significant decrease in the spread of final exam marks rather than to an increase in the average mark. The new teaching approach seems therefore to have particularly benefited the weakest students.

The students' success in the course correlated better with their attendance at the live sessions than with how many minutes of the online lectures they watched.

The students liked the new approach. Course evaluations were better than last year. There were no criticisms of Learning Catalytics and many students commented favourably.

Other comments?

Thanks to Pearson for developing such a promising system and for supporting it well. Luke Rabbidge (and others) did a great job with the batch registration at the start of term.

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