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ASELL  
Advancing Science by Enhancing Learning in the Laboratory



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Dear ASELL participant,

Welcome to the ASELL Chemistry Workshop at the University of Sydney.

Laboratory activities have long been seen as important components of a science course. They can be a popular component of these courses and can stimulate and motivate students to learn more about science. The laboratory experience consistently ranks highly as a contributing factor toward students' interest and attitudes to their science courses. Consequently, good laboratory programs should play a major role in influencing student attitudes, learning and performance. In fact it can define a student's experience in the sciences, and if done poorly, can be a major contributing factor in causing students to disengage from the subject area. The challenge remains to provide students with laboratory programs that are relevant, engaging and offer effective learning outcomes.

Over the next few days, you will be participating in laboratory activities and discussion sessions to expand your understanding of issues surrounding learning in the laboratory environment. In particular, it is important to be able to experience the experiments as learners, and so in this endeavour, we are all learners. In fact, there will be an interesting role reversal, since our undergraduate and research "student" participants already have this "student perspective", they will be the instructors, helping the "academic" participants to relearn what it is like to be a learner.

In addition to the formal program, please take the opportunity to exchange ideas about university education and get to know each other, as an additional aim of the ASELL project is to build a community of academics interested in laboratory-based education and other aspects of university science education.

Sincerely

Associate Professor Kieran Lim  
Chair of Chemistry Panel  
Advancing Science by Enhancing Learning in the Laboratory (ASELL) project