

ACELL: PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WHILST BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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The Australasian Chemistry Enhanced Laboratory Learning (ACELL) project is a successful project which has been running for six years. The project has built an international community of practice which has collaborated to improve the quality of student learning in undergraduate chemistry laboratories. It provides an example of evidence based teaching enhancement on an international scale. One of ACELL's prime activities has been to organise and run workshops at which the educational and chemical value of submitted experiments is evaluated – the most recent workshop drew participants from 27 universities across Australia and New Zealand. This evaluation process involves both undergraduate staff and students working collaboratively on the experiments, which not only ensures that the students' perspectives are heard, but also provides each group with insight into the other. Furthermore, the immersion approach taken at the workshops provides the opportunity for both the professional development of university teachers and the dissemination of best practices. Another important role of ACELL is to provide a bridge between the chemistry academic community and the literature of education; the ACELL website provides information about education in the language of the professional chemist, which helps to make the literature of education more accessible. This presentation will describe some of the achievements of the ACELL project relating to the growth of a chemistry education community of practice, and the professional development of university academic staff.