



Name of peer reviewer: Katie O'Dwyer

Name of SCL student: Heather Lally

Name of SCL tool: Corrib catchment fieldtrip assessment schedule

Discipline area: Aquatic Science

Description of SCL tool in action:

Students in second year of Limnology and Oceanography go on a fieldtrip to eight sites along the Corrib catchment. They sample water chemistry and macroinvertebrates during the trip and analyse their data in the lab. In previous years, preparatory labs were assessed in addition to the final assessment of the fieldtrip report. To reduce the total number of assessments on the module and in aiming towards creating the opportunity for enhanced student engagement a new approach was taken. Rather than using summative assessments of the preparatory labs a formative approach was taken. Students received a competency score, with detailed feedback of their performance, and could use this as an opportunity to practice their lab skills in advance of a final report on both the field and lab work involved in the Corrib catchment study.

Web link to online resources:

Date: 29/04/19

Feedback notes:

Having reviewed the completed student-centred toolkit reported here it was clear that while formative assessments were thought to increase student engagement this did not seem to be the result. Most students did not achieve competency with the initial formative assessment in providing their discussion of the results obtained in the lab. Following this it was found that students did not really engage at all with the second formative assessment due to their realisation that it was formative rather than summative. A number of potential issues were identified in light of this. Most consideration has been given to the possibility that students in second year are not well prepared for valuing formative assessment and realising its relevance and worth.

Some recommendations that have been identified following this review of the student-centred learning toolkit are the following:

- Engaging with students when designing an assessment schedule, and having students think about, and design potential assessments for the course.
- Changing the format of the course. This section of the course was delivered fortnightly with some time between labs and the final field trip. Perhaps this created a disjoint between the two, and students therefore did not recognise the value of the formative assessments at the time they were set.
- Finding out if, in fact, the students would prefer to have their labs assessed in smaller summative assessments ahead of the larger fieldtrip report.
- Investigating in more detail the pros and cons of formative assessment at each stage of third level education, from first to fourth year.