ChemNet meeting Wed 27 Nov 2013, via Skype

**Participants**: Kieran Lim (Deakin), Glennys O’Brien (U of Wollongong), Dino Spagnoli (UWA), Lachlan Yee (Southern Cross University)

**Apologies**: Roger Read (UNSW), Madeleine Schultz (QUT, currently in Germany), Magdalena Wajrak (Edith Cowan University)

The main part of the meeting focussed on what each participant is doing this month.

**Dino** discussed his catalyst project on interactive pre-labs. Eg question on equilibrium such as you are going to heat an equilibrium mixture: what colour will this turn? Student might answer: pink. Then: why will it turn [pink]? Intention is to implement in Moodle or collaborate with IT colleague to implement in edX (MOOC) software. Also use analytics to interrogate student responses -- for example to see difference between traditional lab manual and these interactive pre-labs. **Glennys** and **Dino** discussed issues like students using the scroll bar to skip over the embedded movies and thus circumvent the intended purpose of the interactive pre-labs. There was no easy solution.

**Kieran** briefly mentioned Deakin’s preparations for a new unit, to be offered in 1st semester/trimester 2014.[[1]](#footnote-1) He also said that he is analysing data from Deakin’s online quizzes in 1st year with the intention of publishing a paper. ASELL in Schools is still waiting for the outcome of funding applications, but meanwhile is running workshops (two in Sydney 2012 and one in Adelaide 2013) and mini-workshops: for example, a mini-workshop tomorrow (28 Nov) at STAVCON[[2]](#footnote-2). Alex Yeung gave the keynote opening address about ASELL in Schools at the FarLabs Conference today (27 Nov). FarLabs is an AMSPP-funded project (David Hoxley, Latrobe) that permits schools to access experiments (eg radiation experiment) via the Internet.

In a previous meeting, **Kieran** had said that Deakin is working with a publisher to produce a customised” version of an American text for the foundations level unit (1st semester/trimester of 1st year). In follow-up discussion in this meeting, **Glennys** mentioned that she wants to use the same American text for her new unit, but some change in American copyright means that the US text will cost about AUD$300. The publisher has provided a “customised” international edition for U of W, at a much cheaper cost, but it seems full of mistakes and other problems. **Kieran** promised to show Glennys a copy of Deakin’s “customised” version of that text.

**Glennys** is preparing for 3 summer online units, which are repeats of face-to-face units offered during the year. The summer version is offered to those students who have previously attempted but failed the face-to-face version, giving them a chance to catch up and progress into 2014 without being delayed a semester.

Journal of Chemical Education is planning a special issue on the North American Advanced Placement (AP) Chemistry, and had sent a “Call for Papers” to Manju Sharma (Physics, Sydney), who passed it onto ChemNet. **Kieran** explained the difference between the AP programs and the Australian year-12 extension/enhancement program. He suggested that what we do in Australia would not fit the JCE special issue theme, but volunteered to put together a special issue either for *International Journal of Innovation in Science and Maths Education* or for *Teaching Science*. The concept is 5-10 invited (or contributed) papers for a special issue and all papers would be subject to normal review, etc. Papers could include *UoW Illawarra Coal Science Fair* (Dr Melissa Thompson <melissa@uow.edu.au>, <http://smah.uow.edu.au/sciencefair/index.html>), the *ConocoPhillips Science Experience* (UWA contact: Dr Joanne Castelli <joanne.castelli@uwa.edu.au>), and other university/school partnerships or outreach programs.

Glennys left the conversation just as **Lachlan** joined the meeting. He was late because of a clash with another meeting. He reported that the ChemNet grant is being used to employ a student to converting data on chemistry anxiety into spreadsheet form. There has been a delay due to a medical emergency so the project will continue in 2014. He is hoping to submit a paper by June 2014.

**Lachlan** noted that the meeting time (late on Wednesday afternoon) was not good for him. Doddle <[www.doodle.com](http://www.doodle.com)> can be used to find a better day/time for the Skype meeting in 2014.

Notes: Kieran Lim

1. At the start of 2013, Deakin redesigned its 2 units of 1st year chemistry into 3 units, to be offered sequentially (a new foundations level unit in 1st semester/trimester, followed by units in 2nd semester/trimester of 1st year, and 1st semester/trimester of 2nd year). The first 2 units have been implemented. The 3rd unit in the sequence will be offered in the same semester/trimester as existing 2nd year units. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. STAVCON: Science Teachers’ Association of Victoria Conference. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)