

Cultivating Life:

The Integrated First Year Experience

QUESTIONS

- What experiences should students have and what competencies should they be developing in their first semester of engineering?
- What should not happen in the first semester of engineering?

IDEAS GENERATED BY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

What should first-years experience?

- Support for the transition to Higher Education
 - Create a community of belonging
 - Develop a support system of peers, mentors and staff
 - Guidance in navigating the institution
- Exposure to complex engineering problems: engineering is challenging!
- Opportunities to explore and play: engineering is fun!
- Flexibility to discover strengths and weaknesses with opportunities to develop and reflect
- Contextualisation of the study programme: Maths and science modules should be connected to engineering, developed as tools which engineers use to model the world and solve problems
- Structured development of professional competencies
 - How to work together (learn from each other, manage conflict)
 - How to learn independently and take responsibility for learning
 - Self-regulation, planning and managing time
 - How to communicate professionally
- Meet role models for a balanced university life
- Exposure to the career: What does it mean to be an engineer in the workplace? What does a professional engineer do?
- Exposure to the disciplines, identification with chosen discipline

What should first-years NOT experience?

- Alienation from the university and their departments
- Isolation from other students
- Excessive modules and clashing deadlines
- Negative feedback e.g., being told that they will fail
- Feeling stuck in the wrong degree without opportunities to transition
- Lack of access to necessary resources, e.g., IT, textbooks