

School of Chemical Sciences Seminar

"BestChoice: An adventure in e-learning"

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Abstract

BestChoice is an interactive web site (bestchoice.net.nz) that was developed initially to support learning in our first-year Chemistry classes. During the last decade the user-base and the content of *BestChoice* has grown significantly. *BestChoice* now supports 2500 students in ten of our Chemistry courses, including some at second year and in Physics. Even more significant is the expansion of *BestChoice* support to include high schools and other universities within New Zealand as well as high school students in the UK and other overseas locations. The active user total for 2010 was 24 000.

The model underpinning *BestChoice* learning activities is simulation of the interchange of a student with an experienced teacher. Thus, student responses on *BestChoice* question pages generate instant assessment and feedback. The presentation will describe how *BestChoice* is innovative in its

- emphasis on teaching both concepts and problem-solving strategies by guiding students in ways that promote their understanding.
- focus on building relationships with both student users and their teachers to inform development of both the system and its content.
- evidence-based approach to developing content through analysis of data acquired from usage and made available in the companion application *BestChoice Reports*
- capacity both to make students aware of their short-comings and, through *BestChoice Reports*, to inform classroom teaching.