

Abstract Submitted
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Teaching Energy to a General Audience ALISON BASKI, SALLY HUNNICUTT, Virginia Commonwealth University — A new, interdisciplinary course entitled “Energy!” has been developed by faculty in the physics and chemistry departments to meet the university’s science and technology general education requirement. This course now enrolls over 400 students each semester in a single lecture where faculty from both departments co-teach throughout the term. Topics include the fundamentals of energy, fossil fuels, global climate change, nuclear energy, and renewable energy sources. The students represent an impressive range of majors (science, engineering, business, humanities, etc.) and comprise freshmen to seniors. To effectively teach this diverse audience and increase classroom engagement, in-class “clickers” are used with guided questions to teach concepts, which are then explicitly reinforced with online LON-CAPA¹ homework. This online system enables immediate feedback in a structured manner, where students can practice randomized versions of problems for homework, quizzes, and exams. The course is already in high demand after only two semesters, in part because it is particularly relevant to students given the challenging energy and climate issues facing the nation and world.

¹Free open-source distributed learning content management and assessment system (www.lon-capa.org)

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