



Following successful Regional Representatives Fora held in 2007 the Centre trialled Regional Lecturers Fora; an opportunity to meet colleagues from local institutions and Centre staff, network, share practice and find out more about the activities of the Centre. The Forum was intended to be more informal than our “normal” professional development events, with fewer delegates and time for networking over lunch and discussion sessions.

“An excellent all round event. Stimulating and given me many ideas to put into practice”

“Got me thinking even when not fully relevant to my work”

“Informal format is very useful for generation of ideas”

Introduction to the day and Centre update

Katherine gave a brief introduction to the day, and the purpose behind regional fora – with networking and meeting local colleagues being two of the main aims of the Forum. She also gave an update on some of the recent Centre news and activities, forthcoming events, ImageBank, the student essay competition, new publications and resources and some of the current areas of interest in the Centre.

Publications discussed include the Short Guides (available from www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/shortguides.aspx) and How to sheets (available from www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/esd/howto.aspx).

Swapshop

An opportunity to share practice

Making our students professional

Frank Goodridge, University of Bolton

Integrating professional skills into the bioscience curriculum can give students a sense of how scientists work as professionals and encourage students to think about their future.

Frank described how various professional skills had been integrated into the curriculum using PDP activities. Students were encouraged to start thinking about final year projects in year 2, with the aim of them developing their own project. Informal tutorial slots were also held where students from all years were brought together to interact and discuss, encouraging the exchange of ideas.

Developing longitudinal data sets for student use

Jennifer Sneddon, Liverpool John Moores University

Jennifer outlined a project which aims to bring together local schools and institutions in generating data for use with students from GCSE to degree level. She discussed the lack of this type of longitudinal data set and how it could be packaged to demonstrate to students how science works and lead them through analysing and interpreting data to develop their own conclusions.

Jennifer is developing this work with the support of Science Scope

(<http://www.sciencescope.co.uk/> and Participate <http://www.participateschools.co.uk/>)

There was also some discussion around the UK Air Quality website

(<http://www.airquality.co.uk/archive/index.php>) which gives real-time air quality measures at sites across the UK.

Microbiology and art: encouraging creativity and communication in undergraduate biology students

Joanna Verran, Manchester Metropolitan University

Joanna spoke about a level one course in which students looked at the links between microbiology and art and then developed creative ways of linking the two. She illustrated her talk with examples of work produced by the students and described how the course had encouraged students to look at how microbiology could be used and applied outside the lecture theatre.

More about Joanna's Microbiology and Art module is available in her article from issue 23 of the Bioscience Bulletin, www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/ftp/newsletters/bulletin23p6+7.pdf and her presentation at the 2007 Science Learning and Teaching Conference, www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/ftp/events/sltc07/papers/o20verran.pdf

Embedding experimental and analytical approaches into year 2 bioscience lecture courses

David Boam, Manchester University

David described how he had introduced PBL into a lecture course. Using ePBL approaches students had been encouraged to undertake self-directed learning and had subsequently performed better in a problem-based section of the exam

Workshop - Enquiry and creativity: tools of the trade

Carol Wakeford, University of Manchester

Carol started off the workshop by putting into context the way in which she uses creative tools and encourages creative thinking in her students.

Carol then introduced some of the tools she uses with students to get them to think creatively about science – encouraging lateral thinking and a different perspective – including; Brainstorming; SCAMPER (Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to other uses, Eliminate, Rearrange) – using questions to stimulate the flow of ideas for modification of existing resources; and using random words to trigger novel ideas. Delegates then had the opportunity to try out the tools on a teaching practice or module they were interested in changing or updating.