

The Forum intends to bring together as many Centre for Bioscience Representatives as possible to share ideas and discuss learning and teaching issues, and also gives us an opportunity to say 'Thank-you' for Representatives' contributions towards the work of the Centre. Feedback from previous fora has been very positive:

- "stimulates and encourages"
- "...gave me an opportunity to have informal discussion with colleagues"
- "Always a pleasure to make new contacts and prompt thought on teaching issues"

The programme included opportunities for informal discussion with colleagues who share enthusiasm for learning and teaching. An important element of the forum was the informal sharing of practice amongst Representatives through the swapshop sessions

## Thursday 6th September: Focus on Teaching Techniques and Resources

### Welcome and Introduction to the Forum

Professor Richard Ellis, University of Reading

### Introductions and group discussion

Facilitated by Julian Park

Delegates were asked to pair-up and then form two concentric circles, with one member of the pair on the inner circle and one on the outer, facing each other. Pairs were then given one minute to discuss the first of the questions below. After a minute the outer circle moved one place to the left and the next question was given out for discussion between the new pair.

1. The thing I like most about teaching is...
2. My hot tip for encouraging students to engage in learning is...
3. My favourite assessment method is...
4. The best ever staff development session I attended was...
5. My attitude to providing high quality feedback to students is...
6. I'll tell you what my attitude to learning technologies is...
7. So why did you come to this reps forum?
8. If I could change one thing in my job it would be...



### Keynote presentation: Enquiry based learning

Karen O'Rourke, Centre for Excellence in Enquiry Based Learning (CEEBL)

Karen introduced the work of CEEBL and spoke about how EBL was used in different departments at the University of Manchester. CEEBL has funded a number of EBL projects within the University, including several in the Life Sciences; case studies from completed projects are available to download from the CEEBL website ([www.manchester.ac.uk/ceeb/](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/ceeb/)).

Karen also discussed how EBL may enhance student learning, student attitudes to EBL and the ways in which student representatives and sabbatical officers contribute to the work of CEEBL, including mentoring and students partnering academics to develop curricula and learning and teaching resources.

## Swapshop: Teaching Techniques and Resources 1

**ENGAGE - a new interactive website for life science undergraduate students** - Gillian Fraser (CETL-AURS, University of Reading) introduced a new website for undergraduate students, which aims to support them in their research activities, with information, hints and tips and quizzes guiding students through, for example, literature reviews, statistics and scientific writing. ENGAGE can be found at: [www.engageinresearch.ac.uk/](http://www.engageinresearch.ac.uk/)

**Use of automated on-line quizzes as a means to engage and motivate students to prepare in advance of laboratory practical work** - Phil Langton (University of Bristol) spoke about how an online quiz, developed in-house, had been used to encourage engagement and participation in lab work. Phil highlighted some of the issues that students encountered, such as lack of confidence in their ability and lack of numerical skills and discussed how the quizzes had been developed.

**Critical reviews of scientific programmes** – Jon Scott (University of Leicester) discussed how reviewing scientific TV programmes (neuroscience) (as an alternative to reviewing scientific papers) could enhance students' critical reviewing skills and encourage thought about what they were presented with rather than a passive acceptance. Students evaluated: scientific accuracy and currency; the objectivity of the programme and the effectiveness of targeting a general audience, rather than a specialised / scientific one.

**Teaching Pharmacology to non-science based health care professionals - PBL or workshops?** - Iain Coleman (University of Wolverhampton) described how he had used both workshops and PBL sessions with healthcare professionals, who did not have a scientific background, to introduce pharmacological concepts. He outlined the structure of the PBL sessions and described how students had been assessed.

## Using museums in teaching

Delegates had the opportunity to visit either the Museum of English Rural Life (<http://www.merl.org.uk/>) or The Cole Museum of Zoology (<http://www.colemuseum.rdg.ac.uk/>).

## Forum Dinner

With after-dinner speaker Malcolm Stansfield providing a light-hearted reflection on 30 years of teaching in higher education



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## Friday 7th September: Focus on Large Group Teaching

### Different perspectives on large group teaching

**Managing very large groups** - Andrea Brown (University of Glasgow) spoke about the realities of organising lecture, practical and tutorial sessions for first year bioscience students at the University of Glasgow, where the year cohort can be in excess of 700 students

**The undergraduate experience from a current large cohort group** - Graeme MacLeod and Shaun Patrick Keegan (University of Glasgow) discussed the advantages and disadvantages of being part of a large year cohort and some of the differing experiences of students who remain at home while studying at university and those who move out.

**Finding the right employee from large numbers of applications** - Sean Clayton-Chance (HR Manager at the Environment Agency) looked at some of the ways in which employers distinguish between job candidates, including ability tests, work sample tests and assessment centres and the effectiveness of these techniques for selecting appropriate candidates. He also outlined some advice for undergraduate students when applying for jobs.

### Centre for Bioscience Update and Group Discussion

News and developments from the Centre

The Centre launched its new website on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September and the structure of the new website was used as the basis for this year's Centre update. Steve outlined the new website and spoke about why the changes had been made to the look and structure of the site.

[Funding and Recognition](#): Julie discussed the funding and recognition section of the website, outlining funding opportunities from the Centre and speaking about the forthcoming Teaching Award scheme from the Centre which aims to recognise and reward the individual.

[Areas of Focus](#): Steve then went on to speak about some of the Centre's areas of focus, including the e-learning group and the PED-R wiki.

[Resources and Publications](#): Discussion moved onto the publications and resources section of the website, Julie spoke about the New Lecturers section and highlighted the New Lecturers Resources packs, recently re-developed. Steve spoke about Bioscience Education e-journal and the forthcoming hard copy 4 year anniversary edition, which brings together all the articles published in the first 8 Volumes of the Journal. Following on from this Jackie spoke about the forthcoming new teaching and learning guide (the third in the series) which will look at undergraduate research with a focus on final year projects. Anne-Margaret then went on to speak about influencing the policy and direction of the Centre and how Representatives could influence the work of the Centre during 2008/2009.

### Swapshop: Teaching Techniques and resources 2

**Getting PDP to work** - Joy Perkins (University of Aberdeen) described how she had used a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis with her students to encourage them to take part in PDP.

**Teaching Chemistry to First Year Bioscience Students** - Stephen McClean (University of Ulster) spoke about how mobile technology, online resources and focussed tutorials had been introduced in a chemistry for biologists module to improve understanding of the subject material. He showed how the measures had improved student understanding of the material and decreased the failure rate significantly.

**Practitioner co-interpretation: a strategy for engagement of teachers in reflection on teaching practice** - Keith Johnstone (University of Cambridge) discussed how the effectiveness of small group teaching had been enhanced through the development of learning approaches and resources. He outlined how the sessions had been evaluated and the tutor workshops that had been developed through this evaluation. Keith also spoke briefly about the Teaching for Learning Network (TfLN), [www.tfln.org/](http://www.tfln.org/), which aims to encourage reflection on teaching practices through a variety of activities.

**What the heck is RSS - and why should I care? A practical guide to subscribing to news feeds and managing information overload** - Alan Cann (University of Leicester) spoke about how RSS can be used to manage information flow for both students and teaching staff. Alan gave a demonstration of an online tutorial which explains RSS, how it works and how it can be used. The tutorial that Alan demonstrated is freely available online at:

<http://www.microbiologybytes.com/tutorials/rss/index.html>

### **Reflection on the Forum and closing remarks**

Stephen Gomez closed the Forum with a summary of the activities and presentations of the past two days, he gave a personal reflection on what he had gained and some of the ideas he would take away from the Forum.