

ASK THE CENTRE PANEL

After reading through the **Centre Update** and the **10 Year Celebration** reports Reps formed groups to discuss Centre activities using a START, STOP, or CARRY-ON analysis In order to develop a set of questions to be posed to Centre staff panel. Within the information here, the Centre has included suggestions for Reps on each topic.

HOW SHOULD THE CENTRE DECIDE WHICH PUBLICATIONS ARE PRINTED AS HARD COPIES OR AS WEB VERSIONS (PDF)?

It was suggested **short guides** be produced as electronic versions because they 'carry less weight' when compared to **Centre Reports** which are 'heftier' and should still be printed as hard copies because of their having wider impact. **New lecturer's pack** – cost of printing – might be better as an electronic format. We produce very few short guides which are not costly; **Reports** take on large amounts of time;

A few examples of how some REPS use Centre Publications:

Graham Scott– uses assigned sections of Centre Reports for the basis of Learning and Teaching meetings and happily prints off the Short Guides to share with his colleagues. There was a suggestion to find out specifically how each of the guides, reports etc are actually used by the community.

Andy Bates: Student Short Guides: Making the Most of Practical Work was included in First Year student handbooks (college prints out) in the Biomedical Science programme - use to help understand the course with some students coming back to say how helpful these were.

Do you have any other ways in which you use Centre Publications with your department, colleagues? Please share these with us, if so.

WHAT ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE REPS NETWORK IN ORDER TO REACH A BROADER AUDIENCE EITHER WITHIN RESPECTIVE DEPARTMENTS OR ACROSS THE UK? WHAT PRACTICES COULD REPS BEGIN TO DO TO SHARE THEIR OWN PRACTICES, SEEK SUGGESTIONS/IDEAS ABOUT PEDAGOGICAL CONCERNS/PRACTICES, WAYS TO WORK WITH HOME DEPARTMENTS?

Each Rep could provide the Centre with information (photo, links to their blogs, websites, web 2.0 activity) which the Centre can add to a **Reps biographies** section on our website

Some Reps wanted to develop a directory of expertise was mentioned to list areas of experts profiles in a certain area/field - google gnews(?) was shared as a possible way forward, but past indications and input suggest this sort of sharing won't materialise.

Ask each Rep to include on their own website: identify yourself as a UK Centre for Bioscience Rep to include links to the Centre; include a section on teaching/pedagogical activity to share and ways to point others to one's work

Do you have other ways in which you let others know you are a UK Centre for Bioscience Rep? How else do you disseminate Centre news and information across your 'network'?

WHAT IS THE CENTRE DOING FOR NEW LECTURERS IN THE BIOSCIENCES?

New lecturer workshops specifically designed for bioscientists which would fill a niche not covered by generic university programmes or pgCERTs although some bioscience departments run their own versions, but it was thought this would be better run by the Centre as it could attract more delegates and bring together experts across the UK.

Suggestions for the workshop: full day. It was difficult to identify a good time to actually host such an event.

New Lecturer's Pack - expensive to produce due to printing costs– physical folder hoped that it would be a work in progress where lecturer's add to it; there was discussion that a physical object was more desirable as it was thought it would be used more than an electronic document;

What type of 'introduction to teaching in the biosciences' do you share or provide with new colleagues?

WOULD THE CENTRE BRING TOGETHER A DATABASE OF ACTIVITIES, LESSONS, ETC IN A EASY TO USE FORMAT?

Lecture and animation bank was discussed recalling past attempts at this were unsuccessful. There were suggestions to deposit examples on YouTube. There needs to be a way to share high quality lecturers/supportive materials such as those semi commercial approaches BristolChem labs. At the heart of the Centre's activities is the sharing of practice, but there needs to be follow-up and input by the community in order for this type of databank to be successful. Overall the collection idea is a good one and is the basis for the Centre's work with the **OER project** (www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/oer/index.aspx). The uptake of OER items can be seen in the Centre's pilot project report. Limitations within the OER culture are the difficulty in getting lecturers to either submit their own work once released by the home institution and the uptake up of someone's work and used within one's institution. Issues exist around making the material their own and workable for them in order to receive appropriate reward and recognition. Build up some experience in taking on someone's material, sharing experiences with the material and how you made it your own – we need this input for helping to shape future OER work/depositories. Terry suggested Jorum www.jorum.ac.uk/ but to remember such repositories need to have a critical mass of content and incentive to contribute and use them.

ARE THERE WAYS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF APPLICANTS SUBMITTING TO THE STUDENT AWARD?

Some Reps suggested the activity could be linked to coursework at home institutions. There was also a call to raise its profile by perhaps publishing the best one in national press to share with a broader audience. It was acknowledged the departments must be willing to participate or uptake will be small. Best for the essay to be a part of the students' work but it

can conflict with other requirements such as the Final Year Project. Other topics to consider; Possible ways are to incorporate it as a part of a tutorial exercise; for more suggestions see: www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/funding/essay/

CAN THE CENTRE DEVELOP QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH GUIDELINES FOR PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH?

This understanding is particularly important with respect to quantitative information, collection and analysis. Steve mentioned that clearer guidelines may be forthcoming re Bioscience Education eJournal which could be way to share best practices, guidelines, advise, set of frameworks, exemplar articles to point people towards interested in pursuing more pedagogical related research. Some wondered if this might be down in conjunction with Research Councils. Would there be any benefit to repeating some of the Pedagogical Research Events run in the past?

WHAT CAN THE CENTRE AND REPS DO TO ENGAGE THE UN-ENGAGED?

Currently the Centre has 121 Reps in the HEIs across the UK who are informed of their role and activities they can do as a Rep once they agree to become a Rep. We would like to use more web 2.0 technology such as skype to interact with Reps (new and experienced) to interact face-to-face; twitter to quickly share resources and allow 'rebroadcasting' of Centre resources/deadlines/etc. We do seek other ways for Reps to interact with the less engaged within their own depts. Some Reps have used various Centre resources, such as ImageBank and Bioscience Education, as discussion starters to departmental or learning and teaching meetings.

What strategies have you, as a Rep, used to inform and engage the less interested within your department or school?

OTHER POINTS OF DISCUSSION:

More student involvement in Centre Activities, events – Centre appreciates the student voice and could do more to include students. The limitation is the need to be able to identify students who will be available and willing to participate during our events or other activities. Many times are events are during a non-teaching time allowing us to meet at an HEI but students are not available. Inclusion of students within forum was mentioned. The Centre maintains web pages for students (undergraduate through PG) www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/network/students/index.aspx.

Decisions on what resources should go to print were shared with the thought that shorter resources such as the PDF versions of Short Guides etc are very useful and individuals can easily print on an as needed basis. On the other hand more formal reports with broader and greater impact should be printed to maximise exposure. There was talk though about needing to find out how people are using the printed materials in order to increase the impact and reach of Centre resources. Alan emphasised his views of having a people network be the keepers/distributors of the resources/publications/etc .

Terry suggested using our robust search engine found on all of our web pages when looking for certain items, but it was highlighted that sometimes you don't know what to search for since you are unsure of what you are specifically looking for. In this instance it would be better to make use of the

A-Z list (www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/az.aspx) Perhaps the Centre could add a 'where to start looking' prompt on our web site to assist with this issue. Another way to keep track of materials you like is to use a social bookmarking site such as Delicious, (Centre account is www.delicious.com/heabiotutor) Through this system Reps can share with the Centre their account in order for us to include individuals on our site and add your identified resources to our account. A good tagging strategy, the labels you give to your bookmarked items, will allow anyone to bring up materials around a common theme on any social bookmarking site.

Event fees and charging for events was brought up. Historically though the Centre has not resorted to charging since most event presenters are bioscientists sharing what they do. It is a problematic issue, but should we look at doing it on a cost recovery basis? We realise the outcome could be a drop in attendance if charged especially with academic travel/professional development funds being minimal or nil. The Centre is considering the way forward in this context.

The future of the Centre was discussed. David discussed what he knew about the possible options being presented to the HEA board: Cluster, Distributed, or Single group models. Kevan also shared views about these changes. There currently is a lot of staff changes and turnover occurring within the HEA. He doesn't know which model will be picked, although the cluster/distributed are seen as the most favourable in discussions he has been a part of.

Technology how to's and definitions need to be a part of the community. Alan believes that separate and hard to find documents across the web isn't a way forward. Instead his suggestion is for the Centre to push the development of communities which would share things such as Technology how-to sheets for emerging technologies.

On that theme and with a look to the future Terry suggested the development of a distributed group where the Reps can be sharing across their networks (either within their HEI/department or broader if have a presence on the using web 2.0 tools) and with the Centre who can rebroadcast and amplify the Rep's items identified as important to bioscientist involved with teaching and learning. Simple ways Reps can participate in this way would be to:

- Capturing events – talks on slideshare; online video – requires permissions which could be a condition of presenting at Centre events.
- The Centre needs to record and re-publish all materials and resources and ask Reps to help 'push' or share with in-house colleagues or across own networks across the UK

If you have further ideas, comments, please send these on to us (heabioscience@leeds.ac.uk) in order to inform our future work.