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Welcome!

Centre for Bioscience update May 2008

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A quick reminder about the **Teaching Award scheme** launched by the Centre to further recognise outstanding practice in learning and teaching in the biosciences. These awards provide an opportunity for bioscience academics to receive national recognition for their outstanding learning and teaching practices. They are open to all UK bioscience academics who work in higher education or who teach higher education in a further education establishment. Further details and the online application form can be found at:

www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/funding/recognition/award.aspx **Deadline for applications: 4th June 2008.**

New Short Guides

The Centre has recently developed four short guides based around specific areas of learning and teaching. Intended as informal, accessible introductions to various topics, the guides complement the information and material available on our website. The guides produced so far are: Transition to higher education; Preventing and designing out plagiarism; Inclusive learning and teaching in the biosciences; and Advice on starting your bioscience course, a guide for students.

The guides are available to order or download from

www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/shortguides.aspx

Feedback on the guides? Suggestions for future short guides? Please get in touch!

News from the HE Learning and Teaching Community

Organising large classes, a request from Kashmira Dave and Peter Goodyear, University of Sydney

We are gathering examples of different ways in which university teachers organise large classes - looking particularly for ways of arranging for students to work in different kinds of groups, teams, classes, learning communities, etc. At this stage, we are trying to discover as wide a variety of different ideas and approaches as possible. We don't want to trouble you with a questionnaire.

If you have experience of some innovative ways of organising students into effective working groups (small, medium sized, large; short-term or long-term), we'd like to hear from you. Just email us a brief description of what you do, or send us a copy of the material you use with students that tells them what you expect them to do.

We are not planning to publish the outcomes of this first stage of example gathering. The goal is to develop a framework on which to map the examples sent in to us. If you'd like to be kept

informed about our work, please let us know. At a later stage, we may need to gather further information about selected examples. Please do say in your email whether you would be happy for us to contact you later in the year, to elicit more information about your approach. With thanks and best wishes, Kashmira Dave and Peter Goodyear, CoCo, University of Sydney.

Email address for replies: kdave@edfac.usyd.edu.au

Beacons for Public Engagement Initiative: E-Survey

The Beacons for Public Engagement (BPE) initiative was launched by the UK Higher Education Funding Councils, Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust in January of this year. The initiative aims to encourage a change in culture within HE with regard to engaging with the public and to support the development of public engagement across all subject areas and activities. It will do so by building on and refining existing work, and through the development of new practice.

The Beacons are based around the following universities: Cardiff and Glamorgan; UCL and Birkbeck; East Anglia; Manchester, Salford and Manchester Metropolitan; Newcastle and Durham; Edinburgh. There is also a National Coordinating Centre involving the universities of Bristol and UWE.

Oakleigh Consulting Limited are evaluating the BPE initiative on behalf of the funders. This e-survey forms part of our baseline assessment for the evaluation and we are interested in the views of staff within both BPE institutions and those who are not in BPE institutions.

The questionnaire can be found at www.oakleighsurveys.co.uk/bpe/ and is composed of a series of open and closed questions it should take no more than 10 - 15 minutes to complete. We would be grateful if you could complete this survey by 23rd May 2008.

If you have any queries regarding the completion of the e-survey, please contact Zeb Nash at Oakleigh (zebnash@oakleigh.co.uk).

A voice for British Biology

The Biosciences Federation and the Institute of Biology are to join forces in a new organisation representing British Biology. A joint vision statement setting out the aims of the new organisation is available from

www.bsf.ac.uk/Media/news/A_Voice_for_British_Biology_Apr08.pdf

If you have any views or questions please contact Richard Dyer Chief Executive, Biosciences Federation by email rdyer.bsf@physoc.org

Events from the HE Learning and Teaching Community

Foundation Degrees: validation, support, enhancement and employer engagement

Date: 13 May 2008

Location: York

After the tremendous success of a similar event at Croydon college in March, the Higher Education Academy HE in FE Enhancement Programme and fdf have jointly organised another collaborative event on the validation of foundation degrees suitable for all subject disciplines and aimed at: Programme leaders with programmes to be (re)validated in 2008, Managers with responsibility for quality assurance in HE, HE Managers, and Business Development Managers.

The intended outcomes for this event are: 1) Awareness of current activities for enhancement provided by the Higher Education Academy and fdf for providers of HE in FECs and sources of information, including Fd endorsement, employer-based training accreditation, the accreditation of prior experiential learning, employer engagement following Leitch. 2) Increased knowledge and understanding of the principles and processes for validation of HE awards by an institution with degree awarding powers. 3) Increased knowledge and

understanding of the employer engagement agenda and of the toolkit to assist FECs developed by fdf.

For more details and to book online please see:

www.engsc.ac.uk/nef/events/validation_13_05.asp

'Playing with Learning' - unlocking the learning experience

Date: 5th June 2008

Location: Scarman House Conference Centre, Warwick

Playing with Learning is a unique opportunity for practitioners to engage with innovative and exciting ways of energising learning with HE in FE learners.

This event, organised by The Higher Education Academy HE in FE Enhancement Team, is designed for lecturers from all disciplines who teach on HE in FE programmes in Further Education Institutions.

As the day progresses, fill your shopping bag up with a range of tools and resources, all included in the conference fee, that will enhance your teaching and motivate your learners.

Further details and the provisional programme can be found at:

www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/HEinFE/Playing_with_Learning.htm

Using concept mapping in Neurobiology

Date: 25th June 2008, 1.30 – 4.30 pm

Location: King's College London

King's Institute of Learning and Teaching has been awarded a grant by the Higher Education Academy to develop concept mapping as a tool for teaching at university. The grant includes funding for a series of workshops for the teachers of neurobiology and related disciplines. The workshop will introduce the method and review of data collected in the course of university teaching.

Concept mapping is important for HE because it allows teachers to research their students' prior-knowledge and to document learning empirically. This can be done even among very large classes and has little impact on overall teaching time. At King's College we have used the approach as part of our programme of academic development and the data we will present will show how various university lecturers now use concept mapping to improve their teaching.

The workshops are free of charge, but numbers are limited. To reserve a place or to request further information, please contact: Alicia King, tel: 020 7848 3905, e-mail:

alicia.king@kcl.ac.uk

Higher Education Academy Annual Conference 2008

Date: 1st – 3rd July 2008

Location: Harrogate International Centre, Harrogate.

The overarching theme for the 2008 Conference is "Transforming the student experience" which will be explored through the themes of: Policy and Leadership; Student Feedback and Engagement; Learning and Teaching; Employment, Entrepreneurship and Recruitment; Internationalisation; and Assessment.

Confirmed keynotes include David Crosier, Programme Development Director, European University Association; Baroness Morgan of Drefelin, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills; and Dr. Colin Beard, Sheffield Hallam University. The Annual lecture will be delivered by Professor Laurie Taylor.

Further details and online booking is available from

www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/conference

With best wishes from all at the Centre for Bioscience,

heabioscience@leeds.ac.uk