

Chemical Communications Projects – inspiring the teachers of the future

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The Chemical Communications project was developed as an alternative to lab-based final-year BSc projects for students who aspire to be teachers or follow other careers in science communication. The students have the opportunity to work for at least ten days in a school or organise and run a major outreach event. Students gain employability skills by: developing teaching materials and resources; teaching large and small groups of pupils; critically evaluating learning experiences; and presenting their work at a full day symposium. So far 73 students have benefited from Chemical Communications projects since 2006, many of whom are now successful teachers. Notably we have had students entering the teaching profession solely because of the positive experience they enjoyed during the project.

The students support each other and provide feedback on each other's project plans. Previous students have said:

“Each person wanted each other to do well because we all knew how much work it has taken.”

“The symposium was enjoyable and inspiring because it gave us a chance to showcase our work. It was an opportunity for us to reflect on and improve our styles of communication.”

The project model could be adapted to suit other disciplines; details about how to run such a project will be discussed, including how to avoid potential pitfalls. Running these projects is the highlight of my academic year, it is so rewarding to see students blossom and succeed.