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Meeting reports

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Meeting reports

Second Educational Research in the Biosciences Training Course, 13–14 May 2024, Royal Veterinary College, London

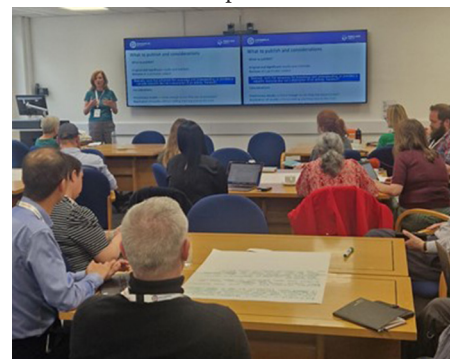
Learning is productive when people with a common interest come together. The second 2-day training event to discuss Educational Research in the Biosciences was a collaboration between the Biochemical Society and the Anatomical Society. Twenty-five educators (from the UK, Ireland, and the USA) assembled to discuss how to design, evaluate, and publish new research projects in bioscience education. The workshops were built around collaborative design through group discussions, which provided an environment to facilitate research collaborations and share knowledge on specific topics of interest. Facilitators shared their experiences and guided the attendees in developing their research ideas. The interactions between facilitators and participants were extremely productive, resulting in learning for both groups. Day one of the training course started with David Smith and Helen Watson introducing scholarship and how it links to educational research. This was followed by Luciane V. Mello and David Smith who discussed the planning of an educational research project and the key stages of the process. Group discussions then allowed participants to start the design of their research project(s); covering the rationale, context, research questions as well as ethics associated with a teaching intervention and/or the evaluation of current educational practices. Discussions were carried on over the training course dinner in a pleasant, and relatively warm, London evening.

Tunde Varga-Atkins and Susanne Voelkel opened day two, covering qualitative and quantitative research methods. It was somehow fascinating (but not unexpected) to observe some level of scepticism towards qualitative data from a scientific community. Nevertheless, discussions between facilitators and participants on the reliability and validity of qualitative research findings illustrated the power of combining the qualitative and the quantitative to

understand, e.g., the perspectives, motivations and behaviours of students and educators in relation to educational practices. Participants were then tasked to continue their day one design of the collaborative research including the methods to collect and analyse data relevant to their context. The exercise ended with a presentation from each group, and everyone was invited to provide feedback, allowing new ideas to emerge. Key themes from the day were around assessment design, integrating generative AI, providing meaningful feedback, and group work.

Finally, Luciane V. Mello presented aspects of publishing educational research, stressing common mistakes that can jeopardize publication. Also discussed were the different types of articles and potential journals for publication.

The on-site and post-event feedback was positive and encouraging, and we aim to return in 2025. Stay tuned to our website and Training Courses calendar and spread the word! ■



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Helen Watson (University of Plymouth, UK)

David Smith (Sheffield Hallam University, UK)

- Scientific Meeting Public Event
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