

P011 Pop-Up Science: a student-led public engagement volunteer scheme

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The ability to communicate with non-specialist audiences is a key skill highly regarded by graduate employers. However recent research (Lewis, 2014) has shown that there are limited opportunities within UK STEM undergraduate programmes for students to participate in public engagement activities.

In response to student demand, Pop-Up Science, a student-led, public engagement volunteer scheme was established. The objective, for students to work in teams to create and deliver public engagement activities, their audience predominantly “*hard to reach*” sections of the community or those that don’t normally engage with science. This scheme was advertised to all undergraduate students within the Faculty of Biological Sciences. Students attended a public engagement training workshop, they then worked collaboratively in self-selected groups to create sessions on, for example, “Healthy hearts”, “Bendy bones” and “How the brain works”. Individual sessions were subsequently delivered at family fun days, community fetes and agricultural events across Yorkshire. To gain the most out their participation, students are required to reflect on their experiences and the skills gained, both before and after delivery of an event, and to blog these reflections.

Pop-up Science enables students to develop key science communication skills and gain valuable public engagement experience. It provides significant benefits for the Faculty in enhancing the student learning experience, developing graduate attributes and in the promotion of its activities.

Reference:

Lewis D.I. (2014). Society for Research into Higher Education.
<http://www.srhe.ac.uk/downloads/Lewis.pdf>