

# Bangladesh Workshop on Biochemical Education



*University of Dhaka.*

We were fortunate to visit Dhaka, Bangladesh, to meet and work with biochemistry and molecular biology academics and educators. The Bangladesh workshop on biochemical education titled 'Designing biochemistry courses: online, face-to-face and practical programs' was held at the University of Dhaka on 18-19 December 2011. The purpose of the workshop was to explore student-centred teaching principles and methods and to discuss practical applications of current thinking in science education. It was a lively, productive and thoroughly enjoyable meeting.

Organisation of the workshop was led by Professor Syed Saleheen Qadri with the active support of the Bangladesh Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (BSBMB) and financial support from the International Union of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology (IUBMB) and the Federation of Asian and Oceanian Biochemists & Molecular Biologists (FAOBMB). The workshop was very well attended, attracting 31 delegates representing all of the government-funded universities as well as some private institutions. We were grateful to participants who travelled long distances to join us.

Our hosts from the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Dhaka had provided an excellent informal working space for the sessions, which allowed us to practice some of the interactive teaching activities under discussion.

On Day 1, we explored key ideas about student learning including the importance of active learning, the implications of student approaches to learning (deep vs surface learning) and alignment of objectives, teaching and assessment in subject and course design. On Day 2, Emma Yench led a hands-on session using the Moodle learning management system where participants were able to enrol as students in a Moodle subject website and experience

some of the possibilities. This was followed by practical examples of active learning strategies, peer instruction and inquiry laboratory teaching. Participants were also given a resource kit of key references and sources of information for science teaching and learning. All participants were active contributors to sessions with lots of important experiences and good ideas shared amongst the group. At the end of the workshop, participants were presented with certificates of participation by Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dhaka, Professor Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique.

In between the hard work, we and the workshop participants were treated to splendid dinner in the grounds of the Vice-Chancellor's residence, at the kind invitation of the Vice-Chancellor. It was particularly pleasing to see the support offered by the Vice-Chancellor to this educational initiative. It is clear that there is a strong desire to improve student learning in biochemistry and molecular biology in Bangladesh and lots of energy to put into this. Members of BSBMB will play a leading role in developing biochemistry and molecular biology education in Bangladesh. We wish all the workshop participants and organisers a very productive and satisfying 2012.

*Associate Professor Liz Johnson (La Trobe University), Associate Professor Susan Howitt (Australian National University) and Emma Yench (La Trobe University)*

*Presentation of participation certificates by Professor Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique (right), introduced by Professor Syed Saleheen Qadri (left).*



*Education workshop in progress.*

