

Update on Pfizer–RSC outreach initiative

DISCOVER CHEMISTRY, THE FIVE-YEAR collaborative outreach programme between Pfizer and the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), aims to enrich the teaching of chemistry in schools, colleges and universities. Now in its second year, there are two new project developments.

Maths for chemists

In September *Discover chemistry* will launch *Discover maths for chemists* (www.rsc.org/discovermaths), a new website designed to support undergraduates with the mathematical concepts required as part of their chemistry degrees. Free to use, the site brings together the best online resources for maths support in chemistry.

Since November 2008, academics from 17 UK universities have evaluated over 600 online resources to identify those that best support the teaching of the mathematical concepts which feature in the first-year of HE chemistry degree programmes. With a bank of resources compiled, a student focus group helped with the design of the site.

Features of the new site include:

- A Google-style search facility which allows users to search using chemical or mathematical terms;
- resources categorised based on length,

relevance and format;

- materials providing support for GCSEs onwards;
 - context-based examples to help with revision;
 - resources designed to relate first-year maths to chemistry courses;
 - a feedback facility for students to evaluate and comment on their favourite resources, and to suggest new resources for the site.
- The website will continue to be developed during 2009–10 and new resources designed to tailor maths support specifically to the needs of chemists will be added.

Discover LabSkills phase two

This September will see the start of the second phase of the two-year project to disseminate Bristol ChemLabS' AS Chemistry LabSkills module to as many secondary schools as possible in the UK through PGCE chemistry teachers (see *Educ. Chem.*, 2009, 46(1), 5). Developed by Learning Science and chemists at Bristol University, this interactive laboratory manual enables both trainee teachers and chemistry students to do 'pre-lab' work ahead of practical classes, allowing them to get the most out of their time in the lab.

In phase two of the project a CD-ROM of

the new, combined AS/A2 version of Chemistry LabSkills will be made available to the new cohort of PGCE chemistry trainees for the duration of their training year (10 months). In addition to the expanded scope, this latest version includes several new features to help trainee teachers and students revisit practical skills.

As a separate part of this second phase, all UK schools will be given access to an online version of the resource for a three-month period. This will give all chemistry teachers the opportunity to trial the software. Non-PGCE trainee teachers (eg those on the Graduate Teacher Programme), can apply for access to the online resource for the full 10-months.

Over the coming months, the *Discover chemistry* team will look to source additional funding to secure the future of this project and to ensure new chemistry teachers have the resources to deliver high-quality practical chemistry lessons with confidence.

If you have any suggestions for the *Discover maths for chemists* website, or want further information on the Discover LabSkills project contact Lorna Thomson, project officer for *Discover chemistry* at the RSC (e-mail: thomsonl@rsc.org). ■

web watch

Tony Tooth, chemistry teacher at The King's School in Ely, looks at some websites that may be of interest to chemistry teachers. In this issue: sharing teaching materials, science images and SATIS revisited.

SLIDESHARE

<http://www.slideshare.net/ahardwicke>

This website lets you share your presentations with the world, by uploading PowerPoint, OpenOffice or PDF presentations. You can choose to share your material either publicly or privately, with colleagues or on intranets or private Internet sites. Without registering you can browse, search by topics and view publicly shared resources. By registering for free you can download any of the publicly shared material.

This particular link is to the 'SlideSpace' of the 2008–09 Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) teacher fellow Anthony Hardwicke. This contains 21 presentations and PDF

documents to support *Today in chemistry*, a 365-page chemistry calendar which highlights anniversaries in chemistry. There is also a series of presentations on KS3 mini-practicals designed so that simple instructions for each practical, accompanied by graphics, appear step by step with a click of the mouse. Practical in the series include burning magnesium, the reaction between calcium and water, endothermic and exothermic reactions, displacement reactions and neutralisation.

A quick search through the whole site didn't reveal many other areas of interest to chemists, but, if more of us started to use it, the site could become a useful resource for disseminating teaching materials.

SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

<http://www.sciencephoto.com/index.html>

Science Photo Library offer an amazing collection of images with nearly 10 000 in the chemistry section ranging from people, through reactions, to tunnelling electron microscope images. You can buy images as prints but the schools' subscription, which costs £149 a year (or £249 if you want access to high-resolution images) allows all images to be downloaded and used through a school intranet by students and staff in documents, PowerPoints, coursework etc. Promotional use, such as in a prospectus, is however excluded from the license. This site is well worth a browse if you want to enhance your teaching materials.

SATIS REVISITED

<http://www.satisrevisited.co.uk>

To support the teaching of the 'how science works' section of the GCSE specifications, the Association for Science Education (ASE) is updating its *Science and technology in society* (SATIS) material originally produced in the 1980s. A summary page for each SATIS unit gives information on the topic, including the number and type of activities within the unit, and a list of downloadable files. Each unit also provides 'Guidance for teachers' with information on how to use the unit and how to work through the individual activities. The 'Web links' page takes you to further resources that support the activities in the unit and provide additional information on the topic.