



Scottish Baccalaureate in Science Case Study

Establishing the school–college partnerships

Forth Valley College is working in partnership with ten local schools to deliver the Scottish Baccalaureate in Science.

The partnerships were established through a variety of routes including:

- ◆ the school liaison officer
- ◆ existing contacts for AH Biology and Chemistry practicals
- ◆ by word of mouth
- ◆ by attending quality meetings at local high schools

Parents and students were also invited to an open evening to see the college facilities and to find out about the Scottish Baccalaureate qualification.

In addition, publicity was generated by the attendance of the First Minister at the launch event, which local press attended.

Delivering the Scottish Baccalaureate

In June 2009, the students attended Forth Valley College on three Friday afternoons before the summer holidays.

The first day was a general induction when students were enrolled, given a library induction, and a tour of the college and the facilities. They also had a basic lab session which included a safety induction element.

The second Friday was the launch event, which involved motivational speeches by the College Principal, the Depute Head of Applied Science and Computing, the Educational Quality Manager for the region, and the Education Minister, Fiona Hyslop. The students received a lab pack containing a memory stick supplied by Global Science, a lab book, a college prospectus, and a gift — either a USB microscope or a Flip video camera, supplied by Innovene.

On the last session before the holidays, the students were invited to attend a session on project management. They were given a presentation by an experienced project manager from a local biotech company and then split into small groups for workshops based around the broad contexts of project management.

Since August, the Scottish Baccalaureate has been delivered by four members of staff, for three hours on a Friday afternoon.

There are approximately 40 students (around 10 per group). The students are invited to attend on a weekly basis, and if they are unable to attend they are expected to contact their lecturer by e-mail to inform them of their progress.

The college VLE (Moodle) has been used to communicate information at the various project stages (eg through PowerPoint presentations and paperwork). The students have been asked to keep an online blog on an e-portfolio called Mahara, which is available through the college VLE.

The Interdisciplinary Project (IP)

The interdisciplinary element has been addressed by timetabling a chemist, a chemical engineer and two life science lecturers to provide a wide knowledge base for advice on projects. This seems to have worked well so far. Additional project advice is offered by staff on a voluntary basis.

Some students have really taken the IP on board and are extremely enthusiastic. Because they have been responsible for the project from the beginning, they have a real sense of ownership and are keen to do well.

Others have required more encouragement to submit work and have struggled to meet deadlines. However, some very impressive plans have been submitted and it will be interesting to see where the students take the projects, given the level of autonomy involved.