‘Should we fix climate change?’ – Newcastle University Public Engagement Case Study

Summary

‘Should we fix climate change?’ is a National HE STEM Programme outreach workshop developed by a current PhD student to allow participants to experience hands-on activities related to climate change data, and to encourage debate-style discussion surrounding the science, ethics and politics of climate change.

Background

STEM engagement is an important avenue for enthusing young people about science and the involvement of professional and young careers researchers can be a mutually valuable experience. Newcastle University Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering recognise the need to provide early career researchers with the support and opportunities to create and participate in HE STEM activities, specifically through the development of deliverables directly related to their area of research.

The ‘*Should we fix climate change?*’ workshop was created following successful bidding by Newcastle University Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering to allow a PhD researcher to attend training provided through the National HE STEM Programme. This has led to the creation of a workshop based on the research expertise of the PhD student, who will then act as an ambassador to facilitate the development of similar workshops by other faculty members via the Postgraduate Development Portfolio system. The faculty aim to create a strong network of STEM ambassadors by this approach.

‘*Should we fix climate change?*’ provides opportunities for both undergraduate ambassadors and young career researchers at Newcastle to be involved in the delivery of a project in which the university has technical expertise. It provides a deliverable workshop with flexible content between Key Stages 3 and 4 that allows participants to debate the political and social implications of scientific research.

Project Highlights

1. Creation of a new workshop, which will be run in-house at Newcastle University over the summer term 2011-12 and autumn term 2012-13

2. Engagement and collaboration with Newcastle University Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering undergraduate STEM ambassadors

3. Provision of training for early career researchers wishing to develop their own STEM engagement activities

4. Creation of a STEM 'champion' scheme within Newcastle University Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering

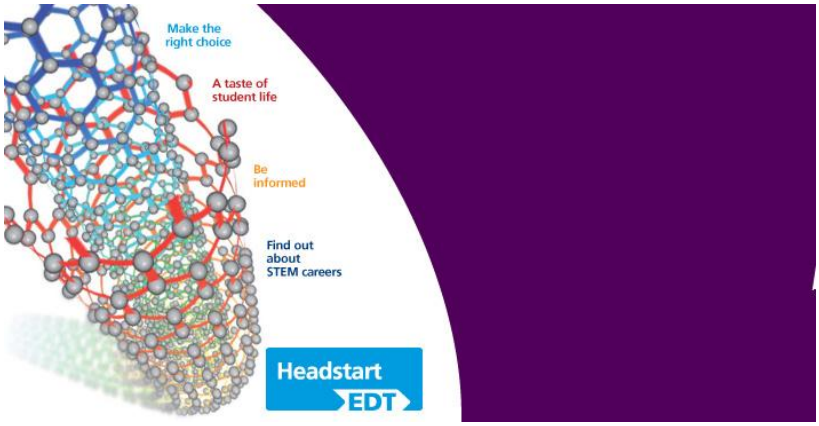
Outcomes

- 5 days of project delivery at Newcastle University during Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering Headstart Summer School and for schools in the North East over the summer term 2011-12 and autumn term 2012-13

- 6 undergraduate ambassadors to be involved in project delivery

- Project materials to be left in legacy for the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering to use in further STEM engagement activities

- Training seminars for PhD researchers to be provided in Autumn 2012 in order to promote the approach learnt during the adopter seminars and to encourage the creation of more bespoke workshops



This activity was undertaken as a part of the National HE STEM Programme, via the South West Spoke. For more information on South West Spoke projects, please see www.hestem-sw.org.uk. For more information on the overall national programme, please see www.hestem.ac.uk.