

Editorial

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education in Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula - Part 2

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This is the second issue of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education (BAMBED) focusing on innovations and research on Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (BMB) education from Latin America, Portugal and Spain. The first issue with this focus is published in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education, Volume 37, Issue 5 (2009). The manuscripts in these special issues resulted from an invitation disseminated through the mailing lists of national BMB societies and were processed according to the journal's regular editorial peer review. The initiative was implemented to encourage the research and communication of educational experiences in Latin America and Iberia. Therefore this is an opportune moment to analyze the experience and draw implications for the future.

The publication of these two special issues with original reports from the aforementioned regions confirms that there are contributions of education in Molecular Life Sciences from different areas of our flat world that are out there waiting for an opportunity or motivation to be written. Some of the reports published here are authored by molecular life scientists with no previous educational publications indexed in the ISI. We are hopeful that these authors will act as part of the transduction cascade that will diffuse and amplify the message that faculty can learn how to apply scientific research principles to their teaching and contribute relevant findings to an international audience.

There were, however, some abstracts that caught our attention as guest editors, that either did not evolve to final written manuscripts or evolved but were not successful in the peer review process. We would like to encourage these respective authors to not leave their work unfinished, but to submit it to a regular issue of this journal. Meanwhile, the authors should consider taking part in their National Education Communities and presenting their work at meetings such as these highlighted upcoming events: 1) The Workshop on Biochemistry Education:

Assessment Strategies in Protein Structure, to be held within the XXXIII Congress of the Spanish Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, September 14–17, 2010, University of Córdoba, Spain, co-organized by Angel Herráez and Manuel João Costa, and 2) The Luzo-Brazilian symposium - Graduation in Biochemistry in Brazil and Portugal: Goals, similarities and differences, to be held within the XXXIX Annual Meeting of The Brazilian of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Society, May 18–21, 2010, Iguazu Falls, Parana State, Brazil.

Every scientist can play a part in solving what are perhaps some of the most relevant issues with BMB education: critical mass and bridging the teaching/research gap. Many interesting initiatives used in our universities are not shared with other professors by means of either formal publications or websites/blogs. Initiatives that are developed by professor A, at University A, are often unknown even to professor B at the same University. In addition, several published ideas for BMB education (reported in BAMBED or in sister journals) do not reach audiences outside the community of research in BMB education, thus missing those who would most benefit from these educational innovations and discussions.

Our national and international academic societies are crucial in fostering modern undergraduate education. These special issues of BAMBED are signs that academics will respond. Better quality undergraduate education - not only in BMB - should substantially strengthen doctorate courses. Strengthening PhD courses is the way to better scientific research and, hopefully, better fundamental and applied (educational) science.

We are grateful to the authors for their excellent contributions and to BAMBED's Editors-in-Chief for supporting the initiative of bringing up these regional issues. It would be gratifying to see similar initiatives extended to other geographic regions.

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