



## HUBS Workshop

### Collaborative Teaching and Learning: Skills for the Future

#### School of Biosciences, University of Birmingham

Dr Julia Myatt and Dr Julia Lodge hosted a workshop on collaborative learning and teaching at the University of Birmingham on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2018. Not only were they joined by academics from across different departments at Birmingham (even including Philosophy!), but there were also delegates from more than eight institutions in the UK, including individuals from Natural Sciences and other Biosciences departments. The two keynote speakers (Dr Sarah Gretton, University of Leicester and Dr Lis Rushworth, University of Liverpool) focused on embedding the research-teaching nexus and overcoming the barriers to collaborative learning respectively which set the tone for an interactive and discussion filled day.

A key aim of this workshop was to integrate and share knowledge across different science disciplines, which was achieved through a combination of presentations, lightning presentations (no more than three minutes!) and breakout discussions. We learnt how to create successful teams of students from different disciplines, the importance of data science for ALL and how to assess interdisciplinary work.

At lunchtime delegates were given the opportunity to don a fetching hard hat and high-vis bib for a tour of the new Collaborative Teaching Laboratory at Birmingham (opening to students in September 2018) which showcased the types of space where students can interact with students from a range of different scientific disciplines in both a formal and social way. To round off the afternoon we held a charity cake sale (manned by our student intern) raising money for the Social Mobility Foundation who provide opportunities and networks of support for 16-17 year olds, before discussing topics including 'collaboration in lab-based sessions' and 'considering different learning styles when working collaboratively' with input from our student reps.



The conclusion from the workshop was that although collaborative teaching can be more time-consuming to set up and harder to manage, the rewards for the students (and staff) are immense. In today's working environments the expectations that students will have the skills to manage and work in interdisciplinary teams is increasing and we can support this by providing them with the opportunities to engage in collaboration early on in their undergraduate experience.