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TITLE:

A Follow-Up Study on a 2007 National Teacher Fly-In

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ABSTRACT:

This study consists of a long term follow-up with twenty-four teachers who flew into the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina from around the country on October 17-19, 2007 to participate in a two-day workshop. Bio-Link and the National Center for the Biotechnology Workforce jointly sponsored this event funded by the U.S. Department of Labor High Growth Grant and the Advanced Technological Education of the National Science Foundation. The Fly-In 2007 goal was to introduce middle and high school teachers to science activities they could take back to their classrooms and share with their students. This long-term follow-up study took place during September through December of 2010, about three and a half years after the original event, and was designed to evaluate the teachers' experiences since the Fly-In. Ten of the original 24 were found using the contact information provided during the affair, the others were lost to follow-up. These ten teachers had positive experiences introducing biotechnology into their classrooms. Students responded positively when they began to see the application of biotechnology in medical therapies and as it related to favorite shows on television. This indicates that exposure to biotechnology may increase the number of students with an interest in the field of biotechnology and STEM training in general.

PURPOSE:

This study consists of a follow-up with teachers who flew into the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina from around the country on October 17-19, 2007 to participate in a two-day workshop on biotechnology education. We wanted to see if teachers were able to implement what they had learned in to classroom settings.

METHODS:

A series of questions were formulated and asked. Attempts were made to contact all 24 of the original participants using the contact information provided during the event. But, only ten of them were successfully surveyed; the others were lost to follow-up. The replies of ten who responded are the basis of this report.

FINDINGS:

1. Did you gain new ideas in North Carolina at the biotechnology "National Teacher Fly-In"?

Nine out of ten stated they received great ideas from this event. Some of the comments were, "It opened my eyes to advances in Biotechnology"; "It was wonderful to see connections between the classroom and the real world"; and "I really enjoyed the tours and enjoy sharing with my students the amazing things happening in industry."

2. Have you added any of these ideas into your classroom?

Ten out of ten are implementing something from the Fly-In event in their classroom. Teachers are enthusiastically discussing the labs they toured and the advances in biotechnology they heard about. They are also including the hands-on workshops when they can.

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