



Turning Biomedical Science Inside Out: A Near-Campus Field Trip and Linked Assessment Teaches Students the Wider Context of Health & Care Professions

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Abstract

Biomedical Science students routinely engage in laboratory practicals and lectures but rarely go outside the university premises to learn in outdoor environments. Field trips support students' subject-specific content and skills gained through active learning, knowledge co-creation, and authentic learning experiences, alongside promoting social skills and group cohesion. However, their role in Biomedical Science undergraduate education remains underexplored.

We hypothesized that place-based learning, where students measured the air quality while simultaneously learning about communities and history within Sheffield, could help Biomedical Science students to make the link between the role of environmental and social determinants of health. This experiential learning was linked to an assessment where students explored the biomedical context of one of the popular Sheffield monuments visited during their field trip and presented orally and in writing on their findings. This was designed to cement their learning about the history of determinants of health in the city they have chosen to study in and relate these back to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) standards of proficiency.

We ran the walking lab with two academic cohorts and collected qualitative and quantitative student feedback via a questionnaire. Students' reflections on their learning process from their written assessment material was analysed. Students reported increases in context-based learning, with increased understanding of how social, economic, and environmental factors impact health in Sheffield and the world. They also reported feeling more connected to their course and its relevance to real-world issues. We recommend this low-cost intervention as a method to create authentic learning experiences that link students to the wider context of their degrees.

Keywords

knowledge co-creation, experiential learning, low-cost intervention, field-trips, biomedical science

Citation:

Simpkin, P., Boyd, C., Clark, J., Cole, L. & Schwartz-Narbonne, R. (2026). Turning biomedical science inside out: A near-campus field trip and linked assessment teaches students the wider context of health & care professions. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.7190/jostle.v1i1.628>