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Education and Training Matters

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Authors	Tyson, Julian
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There can be few members of our profession who would argue with the assertion that the appropriate education and training of analytical chemists is of paramount importance for the continuation and development of our branch of science.

Similarly, there can be few not aware that considerable concern is currently being expressed over the quality and quantity of analytical chemists emerging from educational establishments and that various facets of education and training are being closely scrutinised. Following the publication of the RSC Working Party report on "Supply of and Demand for Analytical Chemists," many strong opinions were expressed.¹ There was even some pre-emptive debate in the pages of this journal.^{2,3}

Yet the membership of the Division's Education and Training Group is the lowest of any subject group, at 4.1% of the total Divisional membership. Is this to be interpreted as lack of interest in education and training matters on the part of the Division? Or possibly that Division members feel that advances in their particular subject area or technique are more important than education and training?

A more optimistic explanation, however, may be that the Divisional membership regard the Education and Training Group as a specialist group for teachers and educators only, in which teaching methods and educational theory and philosophy form the basis of Group meetings and discussions. In other words, the Group is regarded as a subject group of the Education Division rather than of the Analytical Division.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The Group has two principal aims: to improve education and training in analytical chemistry and to encourage young people to take up careers as analytical chemists. In achieving the first aim, which must be somewhat long term, the Group has been involved in a lot of behind the scenes activity of a somewhat different nature from that in which other Groups in the Division might indulge. Matters have now reached a very interesting stage in one area at least, with

the publication of the "Undergraduate Teaching Syllabus in Analytical Chemistry."⁴ The problem is now how to make universities take any notice, and it is to the parent body's Professional Affairs Board and Qualifications and Education Board that we now look for some pressure to be brought to bear.

As far as public relations are concerned, two major publicity exercises are in hand, the production of a "glossy brochure" and a tape-slide presentation. The first of these is scheduled for distribution by SAC 83.

Despite these clandestine activities, the Group Committee attaches great importance to one of its ways of achieving the first stated aim namely "to provide a forum for debate on educational policy and training requirements." The Group Committee feels that there is still a communication gap between those in industry with a requirement for the education and training of analytical personnel and those involved in such

education and training. In an attempt to bridge this gap, the Group is embarking on a series of meetings each of which will cover a particular subject area in analytical chemistry and at which various aspects of the appropriate education and training, from undergraduate programmes to short in-service courses, will be examined.

It is to be hoped that industry will avail itself of this opportunity to make its views and requirements known.

References

1. Royal Society of Chemistry, "Supply of and Demand for Analytical Chemists," RSC Professional Bulletin No. 53, December 1980.
2. Penketh, G. E., *Anal. Proc.*, 1980, **17**, 163.
3. Palgrave, J. A., *Anal. Proc.*, 1980, **17**, 294.
4. Education and Training Group, *Anal. Proc.*, 1982, **19**, 104.

J. F. TYSON