Summary

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Background

The planning for this workshop began over coffee during the National Teaching Workshop held at UTS in July 1996, following a presentation in which the visual aids were all but unreadable. A group of UniServe staff from the UniServe Coordinating Centre, UniServe Science and UniServe Health discussed holding a workshop on how to handle images and this grew into how to use computer packages to archive and present images.

After several planning meetings, UniServe Health volunteered to be the host organisation led by Wendy Swinkels, and the Coordinating Centre managed the program development, advertising and the financial side. Cathy Clegg and particularly Aileen McCulloch from the UniServe Coordinating Centre put in considerable effort behind the scenes to make things happen. We decided to make the program a single strand rather than having parallel sessions so that we could adopt the strategy of demonstrating the sorts of activities using images used across a wide range of disciplines. The aim was to show what could be done without necessarily getting to grips with the details of how to do it.

Outcomes of the Workshop

We were approached very early on by Dr Ric Lowe with an offer to give a keynote address on his work on teaching with images and this led us to develop a more formal theme on pedagogical issues, to make us more aware about what we were attempting to teach. We sought to complement this with specific examples from a range of disciplines, and to devote some time to practical exercises with some of the IT tools available. It turned out that many of the participants had tried or used PowerPoint on some previous occasion, but there was a great interest in developing skills in PhotoShop which is an inherently more difficult program to master. Participants recognised the power of PhotoShop to improve their use of images in teaching, even if some were overwhelmed by its complexity.

Conclusions from the Workshop

I believe we provided a more theoretical discussion than participants were looking for, and did not provide enough unstructured time for people to try out some of the techniques they encountered. A more integrated program of methods might have been better, but I enjoyed the range and diversity of the practical examples given by the later keynote speakers.