



Pathology & Biology Section – 2008

G78 CSI Halifax in Miami: The Importance of Practical Courses in the Forensic Sciences

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Upon completion of this workshop, participants will gain insight into the importance of providing practical experiential learning opportunities for students in the forensic sciences and gain a better understanding of the collaborative effort involved with forensic investigations.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by illustrating the need to develop hands-on courses as students, who want to pursue careers in forensic science, need to understand the realities of the training required and the job tasks as well as illustrating the desire for students to experience practical hands-on courses in the forensic sciences and therefore the importance for educators and practitioners to create such courses. In addition, this presentation will illustrate the importance and need for international collaboration in the forensic sciences – students were unable to gain this experience in Nova Scotia but were able to experience it in Miami-Dade County.

Student interest in forensic science has grown tremendously over the past few years; however, a practical approach to the topic is very rare. Within North America and Europe, forensic cases are highly guarded and treated as 'top secret' by police departments and coroner's offices; only a select few individuals receive security clearance to examine and analyse human remains, therefore making it almost impossible for a novice to gain this very necessary 'realistic' forensic experience.

However, in May 2007, a unique and groundbreaking practical hands-on internship was created by the collaboration of Saint Mary's University and the Miami-Dade County Medical Examiner's Office. During this course, students gained a rare and comprehensive knowledge of applied forensics; they were exposed to the multidisciplinary nature of forensic investigation and mentored by experts in the field of forensic science.

Education, Experiential Learning, International Collaboration