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Frances Coverdale:
Well Summer School certainly gives students the chance to get 'hands-on' experience. Here on the River Frome, about ten miles from Bath, technology students are getting back to basics. They're testing the water here for pollution, as part of their practical work on water quality and the environment. They come down here to take samples which they'll test later in the laboratory. It's a case of putting into practice much of the theory they've been learning at home.

Sue Dobgen
Well what we're doing this morning is looking at the quality of water. Water is a renewable resource and therefore we are assessing it, both subjectively, biologically and chemically. So what we're doing here, this morning, is we're doing the biological and a subjective assessment, you know, is this river good, clean, how long's it been like that? And we can do that by looking at the creatures that live in the bottom and also look at the conditions under which they're living. Part of the requirements of all those creatures, plus any pollution in the river water, is oxygen levels so we're actually measuring the oxygen with an oxygen electrode, um, which is what you've seen, and we will also be considering the flow of the river because if there are pollutants in here everything's fine if there is enough water to dilute it away, so we're actually measuring the surface velocity and the cross sectional area of the river so that we can get an assessment of the volume flow, so that should there be a pollution incident, we'll know whether this river can handle it.

Male student 1
Done quite a lot since I've been here. It's quite a varied course. Looking at all aspects of different things, biology and er, chemistry and that type of thing. Found it really excellent. I didn't expect to learn as much as I have over this past week.

Male student 2
It's been very informative er, there's a good variety of er, different topics, you know, from computers to messing about in the river.

Frances Coverdale
Back in the laboratory the students get down to the business of titration, analysing their samples. This is one of the real bonuses of Summer School, using university facilities not normally available to distance learning, or even part time students. On top of that they can share results, discuss procedures and ideas.

Female student
This course is far more intensive than a course I did last year. There's far more to get through, but um, what I like about this particular Summer School is that there's 'hands-on' experience rather than just theory.

Male student 3
Well the practical work, um, fits in with the work we do at home. At home all we can do is read about it but here in the laboratory we can actually see the reactions taking place

between the different chemicals or the, um, stresses and strains in the bridges that we've been building as models. So it has helped to clarify a lot of things that you just read about.