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naturejobs

Fixing a broken record

During a recent holiday in northern California, I met a young scientist who was unsure about her graduate-school options. As an undergraduate, she worked in a really good developmental-biology laboratory, was interested in neuroscience, but was having difficulty getting a graduate position — despite some early publications and affiliation with a star of the field.

At this point, I slipped into a 'broken record' riff I've used at career fairs, round-tables and casual conversations this year. I told her to think of all possible career opportunities as a matrix. The vertical columns represent sectors and include academia, government and industry. The horizontal rows represent the broad disciplines of life sciences and physical sciences, with chemistry acting as an interdisciplinary interface between the two. Each 'cell' is divided into 'on the bench' and 'off the bench' jobs.

In this young scientist's case, for example, she might consider emphasizing biochemistry as a way to work her way into neuroscience. The supply-and-demand situation is better in chemistry, and straddling the disciplines allows more options in all sectors. Or she

might treat her technician post as a way to gain more skills, then switch sectors to pick up fresh techniques, before pursuing more formal training.

After the conversation, I reminded myself again that if I can talk this talk, then *Naturejobs* should walk this walk, by helping scientists representing all disciplines. In the past five years or so, we've included content that covers much of the grid — and a good part of the globe. Now, our relaunch of www.naturejobs.com will help readers navigate content and adverts by discipline, skill level and sector, as well as by geography through an interactive map. We are pleased to offer even more services, more direct contact with readers, and more opportunities for readers to participate in *Naturejobs'* own online matrix. And personally, I'm pleased to have found a way to fix my broken record.



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