



Science Newsletter –March 2008 Edition

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Upcoming Events

Mon 31st March--3rd April 2008. Five Year 11 students will take part in The Smallpiece Residential @Oxford University.

Mon 7th April 2008. Sentius workshop for Primary Schools.

Tues 15th April 2008. Carbon Challenge Road show sponsored by BP.

Thurs 17th April 2008. Medical Physics Lecture for AS Physics students.

'Talk Science' Teacher Training Day

Supported by BP 

The Talk Science teacher training day was attended by Mr M Smyth on 11th March 2008, at W5, Belfast. This was a two part program by BP; Talk Science for teachers and The Carbon Challenge Roadshow for pupils taking place in school on 15th April 2008.

'Talk Science' is a series of master classes from The Science Museum for secondary school science teachers across the UK. The day allowed teachers to actively explore how to construct and run 'discussion and debate' events for the classroom.

Topics covered in the session included event formats, powerful questions, planning 'discussion and debate' lessons and facilitation skills.

The day concluded with work in small groups, in which teachers prepared their own discussion lesson to take away and use at school.

Mr Smyth described the day as being very beneficial and was able to implement some of the discussion techniques in class.

National Science and Engineering Week

National Science and Engineering week (7th -16th March 2008) provided an opportunity for students throughout the school to become involved in Science and Engineering activities.

One of the main aims of the NSEW was to raise the profile of the event itself and there was evidence that this has been achieved. Pupils rated the experience positively and expressed strong interest in participating next year. The main activities can be summarised as follows;

- Primary Schools STEM road show entitled 'Lost in Space' delivered by Mrs Vida Given of Sentinus. Eighty primary school pupils attended in total. Schools included Nazareth House, Longtower, Fountain, Lisnagelvin and Bunscoil Cholmcille primary schools.



- Secondary Schools STEM roadshow entitled 'Lost in the Mountain' delivered by Mrs Vida Given of Sentinus. Year 8 pupils in school attended and were joined by pupils from Saint Patrick's & Saint Brigid's, Claudy. Activities explored the means of survival when lost in such a situation and included making a generator, a solar powered alarm, a balloon propelled car and launching a rocket.



- Sue mc Grath of Science2Life delivered a series of innovative and interactive seminars to Year 8, 9, 10 & 11 pupils. They were joined by pupils from Saint Cecilia's College.



- Mr Joyce held a Science knowledge based and practical quiz for Year 10 pupils after school.
- Mrs Gill held a Science quiz for Year 12 pupils after school.



- Year 9 pupils took part in a 'Colour Chaos' project throughout the week. This was a series of activities exploring the theme of colour in every aspect of science. Activities included 'Catch a Rainbow', 'Doing the Splits' and 'Rainbow Fish', to name a few.



- Similarly Year 11 pupils participated in a project entitled 'Vertically challenged'. This included a range of engineering based activities exploring the theme of buildings and the forces that are required to put them together. Activities ranged from 'Flying Cornflakes', 'How does a building feel?' to 'Spaghetti Towers' and much, much more.



- Mrs Gill's Year 9 pupils took part in '**ready to learn? The experiment**'. The experiment was designed to investigate the impact of factors such as diet, sleep and exercise on children's readiness to learn. Pupils took part in online activities and received feedback on their responses.
- The University of Ulster hosted several events to celebrate National Science 7 Engineering Week. A program called 'Virtual Worlds' was presented at The Magee campus and attended by Year 13 AS Physics students. The activities included a series of lectures and interactive demonstrations from The Schools of Computing and Intelligent Systems and Electrical and Mechanical Engineering. A second series of lectures on 'Microbial Dinosaurs' and 'The Bionic Human' was held at the Coleraine campus and these were attended by AS Physics and AS Biology students.

Visit to the University of Ulster



Miss A King & Miss G Mc Crory, accompanied by Year 11 pupils, attended a second lecture at The University of Ulster entitled 'Neuro Science and Brainwashing'

Dr Kathleen Taylor of Oxford University explored the neuroscience behind the phenomenon of thought manipulation.

Easter Revision School

An Easter Revision Program was organised for Year 12 Double Award Science and A Level Chemistry students.

Wed 26th March; Double Award Chemistry revision was delivered by Miss G Mc Crory.

Thurs 27th March; Double Award Biology delivered by A King and AS Organic Chemistry by Dr M Joyce.

Fri 28th March; Double Award Physics with Mrs M Gill and A2 Organic Chemistry by Dr M Ferris.

Approximately seventy students participated in the Double Award Science activities each day and thirty students in A Level chemistry activities. Students from Foyle and Londonderry College and St Columbs College also took part in the A Level Chemistry revision classes.

Each course followed a carefully designed program, covering the key elements of the syllabus, with emphasis put on problem areas.

Students were supplied with revision packs which contained revision notes and past paper questions. Students were taught study techniques and how to organise a revision program.

Response was very positive from students concerned, and they seemed to benefit from this disciplined environment, as some suggested that they struggled to motivate themselves at home.

In light of this success, Easter Revision classes will continue next year.