Cell EXPLORERS
Summary report
2015-2016
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Cell EXPLORERS working model

Project students
Curricular based

Volunteers
Students / Staff

Outreach/Engagement

Services

Evaluation
Impact studies

Benefits
- Society
- University
- Students

NUI Galway Team Composition* 2015-16

The 3 Cell EXPLORERS Teams* active in 2015

NUI Galway Final Year project students

- 97% students satisfied
- 100% students recommend science communication to be part of curriculum

Student’s experience of the projects

Biochemistry External Examiner:
“The outreach projects are very well organised, and the students who take part in these gain significantly from them. This is to be applauded”
Cell EXPLORERS volunteers feedback

Volunteers have gained:
1. Communication skills 91%
2. Teaching skills 91%
3. Confidence 86%
4. Skills of working with children 80%
5. Working in a team 77%
6. People management 77%
7. Speaking in group 66%
8. Oral presentation 63%
9. Organisation skills 60%
10. Time management 51%

Benefits of taking part:

Other gains:
- A whole new experience. It really opened my eyes to what I am passionate about.
- I gained a love for passing on my scientific knowledge to younger kids and helping them have a good time.
- I gained a better perspective of the scientific world after college etc. from the team and grew in enthusiasm and confidence.
- I found out that whatever career I find myself in, I know that I want science communication and outreach to be a part of it.
- I feel I’ve developed as an individual by working with children and the other volunteers.
- I have gained a lot from making a child smile when teaching them about science. I feel like a better role model than I did before.
- The interaction with kids brings an awareness, a feeling of joy that is magical.
- I have gained friendship with meeting new people.
- My work with Cell EXPLORERS has developed my interest in the world of Biochemistry.

View* on the Cell EXPLORERS programme

Positive feedback was provided on all aspects of the programme

The Cell EXPLORERS programme is worthwhile
I would recommend becoming Cell EXPLORERS to my friends
I had sufficient training to complete the school visits/workshops/activities
I had sufficient support on the day of the school visits/activities
The school visits/workshops were organised well
I felt that my time made a worthwhile contribution
I felt that my opinion was asked for and listened to
I felt part of a team

2 Favorite Aspects
1. Work with children
2. Bring excitement of science to the public

90% would volunteer again
86% think their experience will help them in their studies/career.

View* on Science Outreach

It is important in universities
100% Agree

It should be part of the undergraduate curriculum
100% Agree

Why is universities engagement important?
- To get young people in science
- To benefit society
- To complement science learned in school

How should it be integrated?
It should be mandatory: 20%
It should be optional: 80%

I loved every single minute of it and feel like I grew as a person.
I met lots of new people and realised I had a talent for public speaking which I never knew about.
I realised I loved teaching and I am considering it as a career option.
It’s such a valuable experience and I feel as though the kids really get something out of it - it’s a very unique program that I’m proud to be a part of.
Overall the whole experience was great craic.
I’m really grateful for the opportunity to work with cell explorers, and fully intend to take part more in the future.
I thoroughly enjoy volunteering with Cell EXPLORERS and hope to continue my work with the programme over the course of my undergraduate degree.
I believe that it is a terrific worthwhile initiative, not only for the promotion of science within National schools but also the promotion of science and the science facilities within the NUIG itself.
Fantastic DNA School Roadshow 2015

Schools visited by NUI Galway, UL and AIT teams

3 Teams
64 Volunteers
24 Schools
46 Classes
1285 Children

634 Children Feedback
21 Teacher Feedback

Children's feedback

- The session was well organised
- I understood the presentation
- I understood each step in the experiment
- My demonstrator was helpful

Percentage of total responses (634)

- I agree
- I disagree
- I don’t know
- No answer

"You are the best at teaching science and thank you for taking time to teach us more."

"Would you come back again and we can learn new things!"

"It made me think that I am made up of lots of cells."

"I think that Cell Explorers are really cool. I hope they come again."

What new thing did you learn about science? (Top 5 answers)

- Facts from DNA experiment/presentation
- It is fun/interesting
- About breadth of science
- About how scientists work and think
- Nothing/I don’t know

- I learned that science is interesting and you don’t need to be an expert to do it.

- I learned that scientists don’t just study they explore new things and can get many jobs.

- That science is very important for the world, animals, people, plants and bugs.
Meeting scientists

Had you met a scientist before?

Did you like meeting the Cell EXPLORERS scientists?

Teacher feedback

Top two most beneficial aspect of the visit as ranked by teachers:

1. The opportunity for each child to do an experiment
2. The interactions between the children and local 3rd level science demonstrators

Differences between CE & other science visits to school:

- CE more hands on (x8)
- CE has more instructors (x4)
- CE well organised / resourced (x3)

(Schools reported average annual science visits of 1.5 with St. Dev of 1.15 and median of 1)

- The session was well organised and presented
- The content of the session is well adapted to the age group of my class
- The demonstrators were well trained and prepared
- The balance between presentations and activities is right
- I would recommend Fantastic DNA! to colleagues and would host it again
- I would be interested in hosting Cell EXPLORERS sessions on other topics

‘The children thoroughly enjoyed the session, and are now hoping to do more.’

‘Really enjoyable and memorable day. The children talk about it nearly every day since.’

‘The session was extremely well-organised and the facilitators very professional. The children loved the visit and it really got them interested in science.’

‘The session was fantastic and the class were totally engaged.’
NUI Galway Cell EXPLORERS sample activities & reach

- BT young Scientist 2015 & 2016: 348
- Teacher training Fair: March
- Eirgrid Science days 2015 & 2016: 38
- Spring/October open days: 124
- Pin of Science 2015 & 2016: 193
- Scientist for a day: Oct & February
- Brain explorers 2015 & 2016: 38
- Workshops are Galway Science & Technology Festival Exhibition May 2015: Little Cells, Fantastic DNA; Under the microscope; CNS next top Model Organism; Brain explorers
- NUI Galway 3rd MiniMedSchool 2016: 104
- Famelab 2016: 93
- St. Patrick’s Festival - the day itself: 150

Let’s make Galway the European Capital of Culture

We’re backing the bid