

# Teenage Programme at the BA Festival of Science 2007

## 1. Summary

The 2007 programme for 14-19 year olds at the BA Festival of Science ran from Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September to Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September and included 35 events put on especially for this age range alongside selected events from the Main Festival Programme.

775 students attend over the four days, representing 29 schools and 4 individual bookings from home educators or families. Questionnaires were distributed to students and teachers throughout the Festival during events. Raw data can be found at G:\YPPCurrent\Festivalprogramme\York\Evaluation Results.



## 2. Student Feedback

Completed questionnaires were collected from twenty one of the Teenage Programme events: 4D Imaging, Are you living Sustainably, BACKchat, Bionic Ear Show, Café Scientifique, Cancer-when things go wrong, CSI York, Eat Drink and Be Merry, ER at HYMS, Every Breath, Extreme Science, Good Bugs Bad Bugs, Hollywood Science, Millimetre Waves, Murder on the Emerald Express, Music and Media Technology, Noise, Premature Babies, Rough Science and Sounds Matters.

Feedback was on average very positive on the comments section with examples such as; 'Very informative and I had a good time', 'He was very good. A lot of humour, and I learnt a lot of facts from him' and 'Amazing'.



The types of activities which proved most popular were those that exhibited a hands on element, or provided a good opportunity to discuss a topic that was interesting to the students present.

The event that stood out as the best example of this was 'Cancer: when things go wrong', in which 79% of students from 3 schools found the event entertaining, 76% found it educational and 83% found it overall satisfying.

In comparison, the events which fared less well in the evaluation still scored on average 'fairly' or 'no view' for appropriateness, valuable content and student enjoyment, although there were a few questionnaires returned with results in the 'not very' and 'not at all' categories. Comments from the students suggested that these sessions were too long or not active enough and that the speakers were not always projecting their voices for all the attendees to hear: 'It was boring at the beginning when it was just talking', 'Very good, but too easy' and 'All good. Some were a little quiet.'

The results from this year's Festival questionnaires may have been skewed due to the high number of 'no view' answers that were recorded for every event and so only general trends can be pinpointed.

### **3. Teacher Feedback**

30 teachers and 3 home education parents completed questionnaires commenting on 21 events in total.

Within the groups that attended the festival this year, 94% of groups comprised GCSE level students, while 6% of groups included AS Level students, 3% year 8 and 3% year 9 students. This is in comparison to GCSE only student attendance last year.



Of these groups, 79% attended in relation to their 'science syllabus' and 55% attended either solely for, or in addition to 'enrichment' and 'students' enjoyment and motivation'. Only 12% attended for 'Citizenship'.

82% of teachers reported that they found the activity met their expectations at the 'extremely', and 'very' levels. 60% of teachers also found that the events attended had extremely valuable content and delivery of the activity. Comments from the teachers included: 'Excellent student participation', 'Thought provoking drama, well acted with valuable discussions', 'very good, well organised and pitched' and 'very accessible info, good equipment, excellent manner of delivery'

Additional comments noted that a few groups were late for their activity as the site could be difficult to navigate for visitors, that some of the events may have benefited from additional material as the subjects were not those familiar to the students or staff and that on occasions the venues were too loud for the students to hear instruction. Also the event, 'chocolate, naughty but nice' was singled out by one teacher as being not at all enjoyable, appropriate or what was expected showing that when a talk is pitched incorrectly it has a large effect on the groups enjoyment of an event.

### **4. BAcKchat**

BAcKchat was held at lunchtime, between 12:00 and 13:30 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the Festival. The topics covered were Medical Science, Sustainable Energy and Psychology. 30 to 50 students attended each session and in total 38 questionnaires were submitted from these students (this number being low due to students arriving late to the session).

60% of students felt there was a good level of discussion and 68% found it very enjoyable. Of all the students, 80% found it informative to some degree (47% found it to be extremely informative) with no student feeling that they had not learned from the experience.

The students found interacting with the speakers and facilitators easy and enjoyable with them commenting that: 'The people sat at the tables with you are very friendly and entertaining', 'Very informative' and 'I think all the speakers were helpful and answered questions.'



The Teachers comments were also mainly positive with one school ticking the extremely category for all the questions asked. All schools said that subjects covered were 'very' or 'extremely' appropriate. All schools felt that the session had valuable content ranging between 'fairly' and 'extremely'.

## 5. Recommendations

Based on the findings from the evaluation of the Teenage Programme, the following recommendations can be made:

- **If possible, avoid holding the event during the first week of term.** Although schools still came, some said that they would have liked to but couldn't and less students can be reached during three days than in a full school week.
- **Encourage speakers to include some element of practical or discussion work in their event.** Although students are often shy, the activities with the least comment about boredom or lack of understanding came from those which had an element of involvement from the speaker to the students, which encourages those that may not have an aptitude in theory.
- **More information should be given in the schools programme regarding topics that are not so main stream.** This would help avoid misinterpretation and an event not meeting the expectations of the teachers booking for those schools that have a tight time frame in which to visit.
- **BACKchat should continue to involve scientists and topics that are current.** The scientists that are most successful in this kind of event are those that are young or those that are particularly engaging about their subject. The subjects should be kept as those in current events, but clear linkage to curriculum based topics would be advantageous to the teachers.
- **Hands on based events should be sought for the KS 4/5 programme.** Students and teachers both commented that hands on activities allowed the students to experience the science in a different way than can be achieved in classes or through in-schools visits. It was also noted that they supplement the curriculum in a positive manner allowing schools to make a good case for attending.