



students learning with communities

# Chemical Sciences in the Community



Students Learning with Communities



## Students Learning with Communities (SLWC) in the School of Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, DIT

We have implemented community based learning activities since 2007. Initially, we developed compulsory assignments in a Year 4 Chemical Control and a Year 2 Professional Skills module. These projects continue to run but have been modified to ensure their sustainability.

We have since expanded our community based learning provision to several other modules and to research projects. A Year 2 assignment, involving visits to secondary schools to give interactive and informative presentations on Studying Science at third Level, has been in effect since September 2008 in collaboration with Leslie Shoemaker (see her poster on Second Level School Visits also). Two Community Based Research projects in chemistry that contribute to cross-disciplinary projects established by the SLWC office have also been implemented (see our other poster for more details).

## Safety Audits & Chemical Risk Assessments in Small Businesses

For the Year 4 Chemical Control project, in 2007, each student group submitted a report and safety audit for a laboratory they visited in a secondary school. Since then, we have expanded this initiative to include SMEs (small to medium enterprises). Each group of students contacts a local small business or organisation (e.g. beauty salon, garage, dry cleaners) and arranges to perform a safety audit and a chemical risk assessment. (Staff involved: Dr Patricia Ennis & Dr Claire Mc Donnell)

## Interaction with Schools, the Aisling Project After-School Initiative and the General Public.

In the Year 2 Professional Skills project implemented in 2007, students developed information literacy, communication and teamwork skills by presenting group posters and demonstrations at the Chemistry at Work outreach event for secondary schools in DIT and helping to organise it (liaison with industry speakers).

Since 2009, students have worked instead with a class studying Leaving Certificate Chemistry in a local school, Synge St CBS, and their teacher, Mr Joe Nicholl. They provided support on certain topics and lab practicals identified by Mr Nicholl and demonstrated instrumentation not available in the school when the Synge Street students visited DIT.

Since 2011, some of our students have developed a series of five "Slice of Science" interactive, hands on sessions to support learning about scientific processes and concepts occurring in everyday life for children aged 8 to 11 in the Aisling Project after-school initiative in Ballymun. This has proved a very effective learning opportunity for the third level and primary level participants. In 2012, our students prepared demonstrations for the Science Zone in the Dublin St. Patrick's Day Festival and interacted with the general public at the event.

(Staff involved: Dr Claire Mc Donnell)

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