

Ambassador Profiles

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Occupation: Senior Operations Support Advisor

What were your interests when you were at school?

I enjoyed maths and science particularly at school

As a student were you able to take advantage of any STEM type activities outside the usual school timetable?

Unfortunately, the opportunities that are offered to school now were not available as easily, however the experiments that we were shown in lessons were sometimes spectacular. This sparked my interest in how things worked and why.

If so, how did this influence your career path?

What are your roles and responsibilities in your workplace now?

I have many roles, primarily plant support for process operations. I work with site regulators and support their inspection visits and liaise with other departments on site to collate information that the regulators require.

Why did you decide to become a STEM ambassador?

When I joined Sellafield in 2000, I quickly became involved in school activities and essentially a local competition for secondary schools based around Robot Wars which we called Cyber Scraps, was the starting point. We ran the competition successfully for several years, until the structure of the academic system changed in that it was more difficult for the schools to commit to entering. Therefore other activities were devised and we became involved with the STEM ambassador team. In order to carry on doing this type of work, I agreed to be an ambassador.

What do you feel are the positive outcomes of being a STEM Ambassador?

For yourself?

You get to work with a number of pupils that have different ability levels and to know that at the end of the sessions that are offered to them, that they have learnt something away from the conventional classroom environment, gives you a sense of achievement and satisfaction.

For the pupils taking part in the activity?

For some of the pupils involved, a different approach is welcomed as they may learn better from that particular type of delivery. It's a chance to work hands on with equipment in a safe environment, where they are encouraged to explore as well as learn. It's the

opportunity to work with more people or a different mix of people to normal. It encourages team work and is above all, good fun!

For the teaching staff accompanying the pupils?

For the teachers, it allows them to engage in activities that they would not be able to run by themselves necessarily in the classroom.

The larger events would bring them into contact with their peers from other schools and gives them a chance to network.

It supports topics in the curriculum and they can sometimes use the information as a launch pad into those topics at school to generate pupil enthusiasm.

Which STEM activity have you enjoyed the most and why?

There was an activity that ran at Sellafield that involved the local Special Needs School and another secondary school. They were split into mixed teams and had to build something from KNEX.

It was interesting at first to watch the teams as it started off being 'us & them', but as the day evolved they actually started to work together and use each other's strengths. It was nice to see as under usual circumstances the mix of pupils would not be together.

It showed the pupils another side to team working and the results from each team were something that they could be proud of – even if they didn't win the competition.

What was your role in this activity?

I was supporting the activity and going round the groups checking on progress, answering any questions that they had. Offering encouragement where needed.

Do you think being a STEM Ambassador has enhanced your career in anyway?

I think that being an ambassador has taught me some valuable skills, It gives you greater confidence enhances your communicative skills and allows you to develop mentoring and team leadership skills. Then you have the time management aspect which can be useful when completing projects.

If you transfer these skills back into your work place, then it has to enhance your career!

Do you have any advice for people who are considering becoming a STEM ambassador?

It gives you some time away from the day job and allows you to work with some amazing people along the way. You get out of an event what you put in. To know that the pupils that work with you get something out of the day and that you've helped to achieve that is a good feeling.