

TECHLINK

a newsletter for science technicians

No: 65 September 2007

Advanced publicity - make a note of the date now! ... 6th October 2007

ASE Anglia Area Conference - for Technicians and Science Teachers John Innes Centre, Norwich

Here is an excellent opportunity for you to keep up to date with recent developments and move science forward in your school or college. Come and be excited and inspired. The day will feature workshops, talks and lectures at the John Innes Centre, an independent, International centre of excellence in plant

science and microbiology. The conference is organised by ASE and the Science Learning Centre, East of England. Are you passionate about science education? We are. Come to this event and take away relevant and stimulating resources to take back to the classroom and have an enjoyable day. A programme will be posted to all ASE members in Anglia Region. Make a note of the date now! This will be high quality CPD at an economical price.

For further details contact:

Alan Rhodes, ASE Anglia Region Field Officer,
alanrhodes@ase.org.uk Tel: 01707 283000.

Technician's NVQs

School technicians working in design and technology and science are being given the chance to gain professional qualifications at an online training centre.

The Technician's National Assessment Centre has been developed by the Design and Technology Association (DATA) and the Association for Science Education (ASE) to promote professional development for technicians.

The Centre provides the laboratory and associated technical activities NVQ that underpins the four-level technician career structure. Staff progress from assistant technician to technician, senior technician and finally team leader technician.

Training via a virtual centre enables technicians to complete the qualification without having to attend sessions away from the workplace.

The scheme was piloted in the Midlands, Bristol and Sheffield areas in 2005-06.

Enrolment for the year 2006-07 has now closed, but the centre is pleased to hear from technicians wishing to embark on the scheme for the following year. www.techcen.org.uk

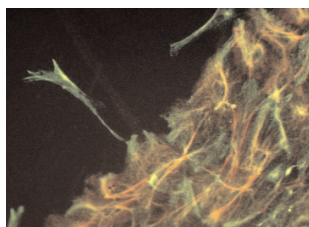
White Board Projector Failures

Train operators invited derision when they blamed delays on the wrong sort of snow. But one electronics manufacturer has an even better excuse for its products breaking down - the wrong sort of skin.

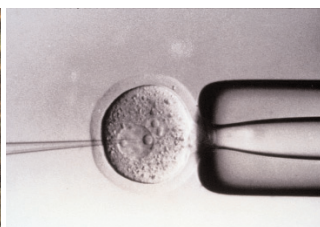
Following a spate of failures, in three now discontinued models of whiteboard projector, sold to dozens of schools, Toshiba has said the T40, T80 and T90 were being damaged by the speed at which children shed their skins. The machines have been used successfully in offices and boardrooms but, it claims, pupils slough so fast, the extra dust has been interfering with the machine's colour sensor, which converts white light into colour.

The projectors may not have been ideal for school use, because they lacked a small protective guard to keep the dust out. Children shed their skins six times faster than adults, so it is a much dustier environment.

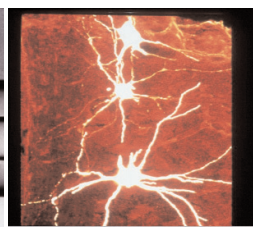
The Japanese electronics giant says there have been around 157 failures on 250 machines sold to schools in West Sussex, where the majority were dispatched as part of the Government's interactive whiteboard initiative. Eurotechnix, a Government approved technology supplier, claimed it has recorded 497 failures within two years.



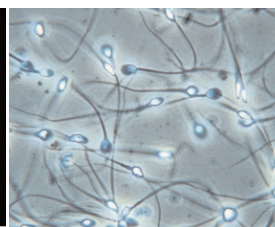
M Osmond
Wellcome Images



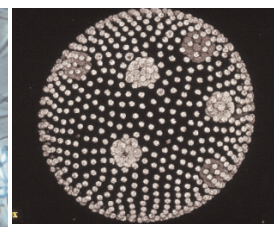
M Osmond
Wellcome Images



Dr David Becker
Wellcome Images



Joyce Harper, UCL
Wellcome Images



Biosciences Imaging Gp,
Soton/Wellcome Images

FREE IMAGES

The Wellcome Trust has a new website providing fantastic images from all aspects of science. Special imaging techniques, colours and professional photographers make these images really special. Take a look if you are preparing white board presentations and make a difference. There are hundreds of images just make sure you use the free ones and give a credit to the source.
<http://images.wellcome.ac.uk>

EDVOTEK

Edvotek is an American company providing equipment and chemicals for classroom activities to do with Genetics and Biotechnology. I liked the look of their glossy brochure and thought the kits looked attractive, albeit expensive. Fortunately, I checked them out with CLEAPSS and discovered that CLEAPSS had evaluated the power supply and found it to be unsatisfactory and therefore not suitable for use with pupils. Hopefully, they have solved this problem now.

Fishing For Ideas

I was standing in a friend's fishing bait shop looking at the array of bits and pieces and fancy gizmos and thinking I could use that in a science lesson. The more I looked the more alternative uses I found. Below is a list of those found so far.

PVA bags - dissolvable plastic bags. Useful for placing coloured crystals in the base of a beaker of liquid to show diffusion and/or convection currents.

Lead shot and non-toxic shot - examples of elements. Specific gravity experiments.

Monofilament Nylon line - cheaper than science suppliers and a greater range.

Pop-up corks - small cork spheres for floating and sinking experiments and many other uses.

Plummets (lead cones) - different sizes, ideal for dropping down tubes of liquids to show different viscosities.

Pole storage tubes - plastic tubes with end caps, clear or transparent green. Ideal for using as tubes for the above but seal the bottom end cap.

Maggot feeders - plastic pots with holes. For releasing maggots in to a choice chamber

perhaps? Too big for Petri dishes but could be used with lunch boxes.

Live maggots and worms of course.

Ledgers - different sizes and densities. Ideal for pendulum bobs.

Antenna floats - relative density of liquids.

Super Glow Night Bobbins - glow in the dark floats.

Night Lights - break the seal and the chemical reaction produces light.

Isotopes - radioactive chemical which glows in the dark. Test out the radioactivity. Take care, do a risk assessment first to test the radiation levels.

I am sure there are many more ideas if you use your imagination. Perhaps I'll loiter in other shops later.

CLEAPSS Chemical Handling 1 Old Buckenham High School 10th October 2007 09.30 - 15.45

Ideal for beginners and those not familiar with chemicals. The day will cover the use of Hazcards, chemical names, labelling, A&E, PPE, risk assessments, reducing strengths, manual handling, storage, disposal, spills and fire. Your school has a health and safety budget and you should be trained to do your job so try to attend if you think you would find it useful.

Technician Training

Both of the health and safety courses will probably be over by the time you receive this but at the end of the summer term the technicians course was already full. If you missed out let me know so that I have your name for the next one.

New CLEAPSS HAZCARDS

These should be with you soon. Look out for them. Bigger, better and red, so you will need a bigger box! Buy extra copies now because next year they will be more expensive.

Norfolk County Council Children's Services
Professional Development Centre, Woodside Road,
Norwich, Norfolk NR7 9QL
Tel: 01603 433276 Email: john.mallott@btinternet.com