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Deaf Scientists as Role Models and their Impact on Deaf Students Learning

Introduction

There are many crucial factors that contribute to enhancing Deaf students' learning. Exposure to positive Deaf role models plays a major role in building students' self-esteem and increasing their academic capabilities.

Purpose

The purpose was to explore ways to engage young Deaf students in their learning about principles of chemical sciences through the 'Kitchen Chemistry Project' with a grant funded by the Royal Society of Chemistry and the British Science Association using a professional Deaf chemical scientist as a role model.

Method

The project team involved Dr Audrey Cameron, a Deaf Chemist / Lecturer from University of Edinburgh and delivery took place over four school days at Heathlands School, UK. A total of 50 students aged between 11-16 years old participated. First two days was developing students' understanding of the principles of chemical sciences. Last two days focused on filming student demonstrations.

Results

Over the four days students gradually developed the skills required to be presenters and demonstrators; their confidence and presentation skills also improved. They also developed team work and communication skills. The clips are accessible for Deaf children who use BSL, see below:

(<https://www.heathlandscomputing.co.uk/kitchenchemistry>).

Conclusion

The project highlighted the need to create increased professional learning opportunities for Deaf research scientists to work in schools. A distinctive feature of the project enabled the school to explore the interplay between the Deaf chemical scientist, the teaching activities, and the student actions.