



ESA, ESERO, DPSM & Armagh Planetarium

Maths: It IS Rocket Science!

This five-day course hosted by CIT Blackrock Castle Observatory was enthusiastically received by primary teachers eager to bring a fresh approach to mathematics and science in their classrooms.



As part of the work of the European Space Education Resource Office (ESERO) Ireland in promoting Space in primary schools, it received funding from the Department of Education to run this Primary Teacher Summer Course. ESERO Ireland, Discovery Primary Science and Maths and Armagh Planetarium all contributed to conducting the course.

The Need

Numeracy was identified as one of the required course components by the Department of Education and Skills for 2011. Therefore, the course focused on using teaching approaches that develop numeracy skills in an integrated way across the curriculum, around the theme of Space.

The course was devised using the International Space Station Education Kit from the European Space Agency (ESA) so teachers could apply the theme of "Planet Earth in Space" to the development of numeracy skills and their application to real life contexts.

Challenges

The course was very well attended and received. The correct timing was critical as the July date was preferred over later summer. The teachers were extremely engaged throughout and such a large



group is certainly demanding, so the facilitating team shared teaching responsibilities and expertise.

Critical Success Factors

The experience of BCO education team's expertise and knowledge along with its history of productive collaboration with education, funding and space industry partners allowed for ease of collaboration and programme development.

Benefits of the Engagement

Links were strengthened with primary schools and the transferred learning will be showcased by students at BCO during World Space Week.

Teachers are sent updates of key Space related events and registration dates for science initiatives and astronomers will be regular DPSM 'Scientist to School' visitors. BCO has been mapped as an education expert in this area and will partner with ESERO and the Department of Education for the FP7 ESERO2 application.

Cork Institute of Technology strives to strengthen its connection with community groups and the general public. BCO has lots to offer both children and adults alike, but BCO and indeed CIT, also benefit and learn through engagements like this.

What the teachers said:

"Love it! This was wonderful! I have never had a day go by so quickly, profitably and so practically. I've come away energized and enthusiastic and with so much stuff that I can use simple - ideas that I could pull out of the cupboard in the class at a moments notice."

"Possibly the most enjoyable summer course ever! All work carried out is relevant to the classroom and the experiments are so easy to do!"

