Science Museum Research Summary: What teachers want from classroom resources

This document is based on key findings from a Science Museum Talk Science Research Report covering 18 months of work with teachers. Please contact us on learning@sciencemuseum.org.uk if you would like more details.

What are 'classroom resources'?

We define 'resource' as any information that teachers are given or are able to download, with relation to a particular event or programme.

What do teachers want from resources?

It's vital that all resources are linked explicitly to the National Curriculum – otherwise they may never be used. Teachers want resources to include all necessary information collated and formatted for them so they can be used directly in the classroom with little additional preparation. Resources should be cheap, easy to store and appropriate for as many different year groups, classes and topics as possible.

How specific should resources be?

Although clarity is essential, so too is flexibility. Most teachers dislike resources that require every step to be followed exactly in a prescribed order, as they may want to adapt the activity's content and structure to suit their students and learning aims for the lesson.

What level of ability should resources target?

Ideally, teachers would like two versions of resources: one for higher-ability students and one for other pupils. However, if they could have only one version, they would prefer resources aimed at higher ability students. This is because it is easier for teachers to select appropriate information for students with different learning needs than to find extra information for higher-ability pupils.

Some teachers also like resources to be based on simple scientific concepts so students can understand the principles behind them and build on their prior knowledge. More difficult scientific concepts could be included as part of the extension activities once students have understood the basics.

How should resources be made available online?

It's important resources are easily accessible and downloadable. School computer networks may lack the most up-to-date software or block certain websites (such as YouTube), so resources should be provided in a range of formats.

How should resources look?

Some teachers have found that students are more engaged and take more care over resources that they perceive as high-quality. For example, it's been noted that students respond better to materials that look good, even if they're just put in a plastic wallet. Teachers will spot spelling and grammar mistakes as well as factual inaccuracies so ensure all resources are well edited and look professional.

Further resources:

Find out what teachers say they'd like to get from a website by consulting a summary of key findings from a Science Museum Research report:

- Science Museum Research Summary: What teachers want from museum websites

Find out how to work with teachers as advisors on new resources by reading a sheet in our *What we've learned* series:

- What we've learned about running teachers' advisory panels