

What we've learned about...

## Planning and running a collapsed timetable day (CTD)

### Introduction

Collapsed timetable, dropdown day, deep learning day, flexible Friday, theme days...

Whatever you call them, suspending the timetable for a whole day and focusing students on a subject or a theme can be a really great experience for everyone involved.

The cross-curricular learning on a collapsed timetable day enriches students' understanding that what they learn at school relates to the real world.

Students and staff get an opportunity to succeed in a different way – and you can learn a lot about students' skills and interests from seeing them take part in a mass event like this.

### Feeling inspired to plan a day?

We've compiled a list of top tips from teachers across the UK and included what we've learned about running fun and inspiring events at the Science Museum.

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# Top tips for planning and running a collapsed timetable day (CTD)

The planning and setup of the day can be as much fun as the day itself. Like most things, a bit of forward planning will help your day run smoothly.

## Scheduling your day

First, **set a date** and get it into the school diary. It's best to avoid the start of term or around exam times.

Consider planning your day to **coincide with an existing event**, e.g. National Science & Engineering Week, Black History Month, famous scientists' birthdays, anniversaries, etc.

## Funding your day

Depending on your plans, a collapsed timetable day may require **additional resources and materials**.

Find out if money is available in a school or department budget and if so how much you can have.

If you're looking for additional funds you could **apply for a grant** – many national and local societies and institutions offer monetary support for specific types of activity.

Your day need not be expensive. **Many speakers will offer their time for free** to support schools and students. Similarly, many **shops and local businesses** are happy to donate materials with a bit of advance notice.

A great incentive to get people involved would be to **use the day to raise money**. Your day could be spent planning and running a fundraising event or making a product to sell.

## Sharing the workload

As soon as the date is in the diary, start to recruit other members of staff. People like to be a part of big events and getting them involved at an early stage will give them a sense of ownership. Collapsed timetable days are all about **cross-curricular working**.

**Get your students involved:** invite an after-school club, Sixth Formers or the school council to take responsibility for parts of the day – they have great ideas to make the day relevant for them.

Assign yourself or another colleague the role of **Event Manager** for the day. Your task is to be the main point of contact on the day and help the day run smoothly.

Invite **parents, governors and other local dignitaries to get involved** as guests, competition judges or to help out on the day.

## Planning content for the day

You can take your inspiration from a cross-curriculum theme, e.g. *atmosphere ...exploring climate science day*, a national event or simply something that you or your students are interested in.

## Make your day fun, inspiring and memorable

**Start off with one strong idea** and build on that – this is easier than trying to fit together a lot of disparate activities and will make the day feel more like an event.

Invite **science presenters, theatre groups** or speakers and develop your activities to follow on from or support them.

**Mix it up:** use a **range of activities** to engage your students. Include **hands-on activities, demonstrations, team events** or **competitions**. Encourage students to work with different people throughout the day.

## Practicalities to consider

Make sure that **all participants know their role** and where they should be on the day. Brief everyone involved the day before the event (*see event crib sheet*).

If you need a large space to run activities, make sure that the school hall is available on the day. Identify how many classrooms you will need and if any must to be booked in advance.

When planning your timetable **include 10 minutes between activities** to reset equipment and for groups to move between sessions.

Plan in **registration time and lunch arrangements** and ensure all staff, guests and helpers get a chance to eat and go to the toilet! Notify key school staff if there are any changes to the normal school timings.

Don't forget to **record your event:** get people to take pictures or make shorts films or podcasts.

Assign people to help **set up** the event and **clear up** afterwards.

**Prepare for the unexpected:** allow time and flexibility in the timetable in case things do not run to plan.

# Useful contacts

## Speakers and outreach providers

The Science Museum comes to you! We can bring dynamic curriculum-linked shows and workshops into your school, community group or science club.

[www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/outreach](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/outreach)

STEMNET STEM Ambassadors are an invaluable and free resource for teachers and schools. They offer their time voluntarily to enthuse and inspire students within schools about STEM subjects. Your local STEM Ambassadors management contract holder can help you decide how best to employ an Ambassador.

[www.stemnet.org.uk/content/stem-ambassadors](http://www.stemnet.org.uk/content/stem-ambassadors)

The Global Dimension website is a guide to books, films, posters and web resources which support global, intercultural and environmental understanding for all age groups and subjects.

[www.globaldimension.org.uk](http://www.globaldimension.org.uk)

The Climate Change Speaker Network brings together about 100 speakers who give talks on climate change and related environmental topics – carbon emissions, renewable energy, energy efficiency, peak oil, eco living, etc.

[www.climate-speakers.org.uk](http://www.climate-speakers.org.uk)

## Activity ideas

The Science Museum offers a wide range of free resources that are tried and tested in schools. We also sell great products designed to bring science and STEM to life.

[www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/educatorsresources](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/educatorsresources)

Planet Science provides free and fun science resources for children, young people, teachers and parents.

[www.planet-science.com](http://www.planet-science.com)

*TES (Times Educational Supplement)* online features a huge range of resources on all curriculum subjects – great to browse for inspiration.

[www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resources](http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resources)

## Grants and support

The **UK Association for Science and Discovery Centres** website includes a database of funding bodies that support STEM activity in schools. There's also advice on how to write a grant application, and inspiring information about what other schools have done. It's focused on clubs, but much of the information is relevant to other activity too.

<http://sciencecentres.org.uk/resources/stemclubs>

**Awards for All** is a lottery grants scheme funding small, local, community-based projects in the UK, including projects in schools.

[www.awardsforall.org.uk](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk)

The **Institute for Education Business Excellence** offers members advice, information and support in planning and making the most of partnerships with business, including access to virtual support, resources and guidance on areas such as employer engagement, CRB and improving your 'welcome mat' for employers.

[www.iebe.org.uk](http://www.iebe.org.uk)

Contact your local **Education Business Partnership (EBP)**, which works to connect local businesses with educational institutions, and may be able to help you form links with local businesses or funding opportunities.

**For this activity and many more, visit [sciencemuseum.org.uk/climatescienceresources](http://sciencemuseum.org.uk/climatescienceresources)**

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