

Young Reporters' Scotland (YRS)

BIG BANG EVENT 2018

Article by Jasmine Lawrie, YRS Ambassador



On Friday 20th April, ESP organised an exciting and educational event regarding STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) in Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries alongside their associates who include The Crichton Trust, Food and Drink Federation Scotland and DYW Dumfries and Galloway. The aim of The Big Bang event was to educate and inform S1-3 pupils from local secondaries about STEM, the available career pathways and encourage them to uptake a career within STEM.

The event included multiple stalls, each with different company representatives, who were there to speak to the young people about their job and relation to STEM, and in return, were open to any questions or queries which the pupils had. Many stalls provided them with the opportunity to engage in an experiment or practical activity which helped to build upon their knowledge. Some events were hands-on, but this encouraged engagement and sometimes required the pupils to use their initiative. Conversations between pupils and representatives were strong and it was evident that the pupils were learning a lot more about STEM careers, especially in industries which

they didn't associate science with – an example being scientists within the Food and Drink Federation Scotland, whereby they told me that scientists are required for new products, making adaptations to current products etc.

Besides STEM, sustainability was also an aspect which representatives were hoping to educate children on. I had been informed that this was an area that they had been learning in their school curriculum. Whilst interviewing pupils, it was clear that they didn't know what sustainability was and struggled to comprehend it. We concluded that this is something they probably do know about, but the word sustainability perhaps throws them off-guard, and to break it down into manageable pieces would improve their understanding. Apart from discussing STEM, I heard representatives explaining sustainability and how their company contributes towards our planet's future.

I spoke with the company representatives, who were able to express to me that they feel they had made an impact on the pupils. They reported that engagement levels were above satisfactory, and pupils were opinionated when it came to them discussing their career options, with quite a high number stating that they hoped to study within the STEM industry. As well as companies, ESP had invited along Dumfries and Galloway College, and University of the West of Scotland (UWS) who were able to discuss potential course options for those wishing to study in these areas.

The event itself had a high turnout, and whilst speaking with Wendy, key organiser for the event, she was impressed with the vast numbers of engrossed pupils. Stalls which had a practical activity were always the busiest as they were drawing the youth in, especially if there was some sort of gaming activity, but the representatives were informative and explained to the pupils, in a manner which they would be able to interpret, the underlying education which linked back to STEM. The pupils, being S1-3, are an age where they're deciding their future pathway and career options, so providing them with the opportunity to speak to local companies was beneficial.

The Big Bang is an event which occurs across the whole of the UK, trying to inspire young people to consider entering the STEM pathway in their future career. I was fortunate enough to attend, and from my visit, believe that this is something more schools should participate in. We should be encouraging our young people to get involved in STEM, because after all, they are our future workers, and we need to raise their awareness about the available jobs and opportunities available to them in these industries.



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