

New play encourages local children to be creative in science and engineering

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The School of Electronic, Electrical and Systems Engineering (ESEE) at the University of Birmingham is turning its hand to the arts after producing an interactive play which explores the impact of science and engineering on everyday life, society and individuals.

'Magnets, Ducks and Superconductors' was devised and produced by director Matt Turner and researchers at the University to engage Year 9 pupils throughout the West Midlands. It encourages consideration of creativity, interpersonal relationships and ethics through science and engineering in line with the National Curriculum. It also provides an opportunity for schools to showcase their commitment to inspiring learning while confronting the issues of energy supply and the shortage of qualified scientists and engineers.

The 'Theatre in Education' production is performed to small class-sized groups who are encouraged to re-assess their pre-conceptions, participate in the characters' dilemmas and invent new technologies. This project presents the issues through the lives of Maggie, a scientist, and her teenage daughter Jess.

The performances are delivered by Gazebo, a professional Theatre in Education company with more than 30 years' experience in providing educational activities for children.

The first eight week series of the play is now running, which will see over 70 performances to more than 2,000 pupils throughout the West Midlands. Bookings are already being taken for a second run which is planned for the summer term of 2011.

Magnets, Ducks and Superconductors is sponsored by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council under the Partnerships in Public Engagement Programme. A preview of the trial project is available to view at the project website: www.mdsproject.bham.ac.uk (<http://www.mdsproject.bham.ac.uk>)

Notes to Editors

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