

The Project Place



Young Ambassadors for Chemistry in Korea

As Korea celebrates 2006 as the Year of Chemistry, the Korean Chemical Society hosted a Young Ambassadors for Chemistry (YAC) workshop in Gwangju in the southern part of South Korea. The event took place from 20–24 February 2006 at the Chonnam National University in Gwangju.

YACs is a project of the Committee on Chemistry Education (CCE) and the Science Across the World program; its aim is to increase the public's understanding of chemistry using young people to mediate between chemistry and the general public. The students (age 10–18) perform chemistry-related activities at public locations and explain what they are doing to the passers-by, who are usually unable to keep away from the interesting



The line of cosmetics developed by the students.

hubbub they witness taking place among the group of children. The event in Gwangju was the fourth YAC event, following on the heels of others held over the past two years in Taipei, Taiwan; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Krasnoyarsk, Russia.

Train the Trainers

Prof. Choon Do, the Korean representative to CCE, organized and hosted the event and translated all event materials into Korean (the materials are downloadable from the Science Across the World Website <www.scienceacross.org> for all Korean teachers).

The event included a four-day training program for

middle-school science teachers, high-school chemistry teachers, and English teachers from around the region, as well as guests from Taiwan and Japan. The English teachers played an invaluable role at the event, stepping in to help interpret when we couldn't make ourselves understood and helping create a truly collaborative, multilingual experience.



Production of the cosmetics.

On Monday, teachers carried out activities from the Science Across the World topics “Chemistry in our Lives” and “Talking about Genetics around the World”—including counting the number of taste buds on each others’ tongues and surveying variation in their own group in the classroom.

On Tuesday, we carried out a “Post-It” debate on the issue of genetic science. At the same time, the teachers discussed the chemical “products” that students would produce and the advertisements for them they would prepare.

Colleagues were invited to subscribe to the Science Across the World program and join more than 5 000 teachers in some 120 countries in exchanging cultural

Students perform television commercials for the cosmetics.



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and scientific information. The teachers coped extremely well with the English-language website; although the site is available in many languages, Korean is not yet one of them.

On Wednesday, teachers built a model of DNA from local sweets, successfully managing the challenge of melting marshmallows, and produced their own cosmetics. Thursday featured planning and preparation for Friday, when the teachers would help their learners

perform these same chemistry-related activities in a public place.

The day ended with an evaluation of the week and a discussion of the future. The participants reported that they liked the hands-on activities that helped to enhance motivation and relate chemistry to everyday life. They appreciated the chance to improve their presentation skills, particularly in English. They also expressed an interest in organizing additional YAC events and in having the chance to learn more and further their international collaboration. In particular, they expressed an interest in topics related to drinking water, conservation and recycling, renewable energy, diet and food, keeping healthy, fieldwork, dyes and coloring, and science games.

YAC Day

The YAC Public Understanding Event got started at the Gwangju bus terminal around 10:00 a.m. The teachers and about 70 students gathered to conduct science activities aimed at enhancing public interest in chemistry.

The candy DNA the students built grew longer and longer, advertising campaigns were prepared, groups delivered their product presentations, the final length of DNA was put together, and prizes and gifts were handed out to the participants.



All told, 3 600 visitors viewed the event, the press covered it (see <www.ikbc.net>), the teachers and students worked together confidently, the weather was glorious, and everybody had a great time with chemistry—the whole point of the event.

All of the teachers who participated in the event worked hard and were very patient—particularly with our

interpretation challenges. Prof. Choon Do, who was the host and organizer, discussed the event at the 19th ICCE conference held in Seoul in August 2006.

The following partners also helped make this event a success:

- Korean Chemical Society <www.kcsnet.or.kr>
- National Chonnam Normal University, Prof. Wang Keun Lee
- National Science Council
- British Council, Seoul <www.britishcouncil.org/korea.htm>, and Director Gavin Anderson
- GlaxoSmithKline <www.gsk.com>, who is the main sponsor of the Science Across the World program and who sent goody bags for all participating teachers and students

In addition, Cognis Korea <www.ko.cognis.com/korea/kocognis.html> donated the main ingredient used in preparing the shampoo and BioRad <www.biorad.com>, Life Science Education, donated the “Genes-in-a-Bottle Kit” that enabled students to extract their own DNA.

This report was prepared by Lida Schoen, science education consultant, and Keith Kelly, language education consultant. Schoen is a titular member of IUPAC CCE, team member of Science Across the World, and task group chairman for the initial YAC project. Kelly is FACTWorld coordinator <www.factworld.info> and NILE associate trainer <www.nile-elt.com>.

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 www.iupac.org/projects/2003/2003-055-1-050.html

Moderators of the “Post-It” Debate.

