



Bringing science to life: Centre of the Cell online launches today

<http://www.firstlight.cn> 2007-03-20

14 March 2007, Sixty leading UK scientists are the driving force behind a major new learning resource aimed at inspiring young people to take up science.

Launching today, 14 March 2007, Centre of the Cell online promises to be an essential destination to teach and learn about cells, health and medical research. The ground-breaking, interactive website is a rich source of facts, games, pictures and films, all inspired by and taken from the work of scientists and researchers at Queen Mary, University of London, and its medical school. Visitors to Centre of the Cell online can also debate the ethics of bioscience, discover more about biomedical research, and explore career options in science and biomedicine.

A resource in its own right, the website will also be integral to Centre of the Cell – a unique project launching in 2008 that will improve young people's knowledge of biomedical science, and make the work of research scientists more visible and relevant to the lives of school students.

Coinciding with National Science and Engineering Week (9-18 March), the website launch is marked with an event in Whitechapel, London attended by local school children and the scientists behind it. The youngsters will be the first users to explore Centre of the Cell online.

Director of Centre of the Cell, Queen Mary's Professor Frances Balkwill said: "Centre of the Cell is dedicated to inspiring curiosity and learning by connecting science to everyday life. We aim to make science more engaging and enjoyable in order to inspire young people to study science and to take it up as a career. Centre of the Cell online (www.centreofthecell.org), an integral part of the project, will teach young people about bioscience using a variety of engaging tools including interactive games.

Cell biology and an understanding of sickness and health is a substantial part of the Science National Curriculum at Key Stage 2, 3, and 4. In a survey of over 900 school children and teachers, the Centre of the Cell research team found that young people had difficulty understanding cells and the way their bodies work. Many students consistently struggle with these concepts, and fewer are taking science subjects beyond GCSE. Centre of the Cell online is designed to incentivise young people about science – its makers hope it will become the website of choice to learn about cell biology and biomedical science.

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