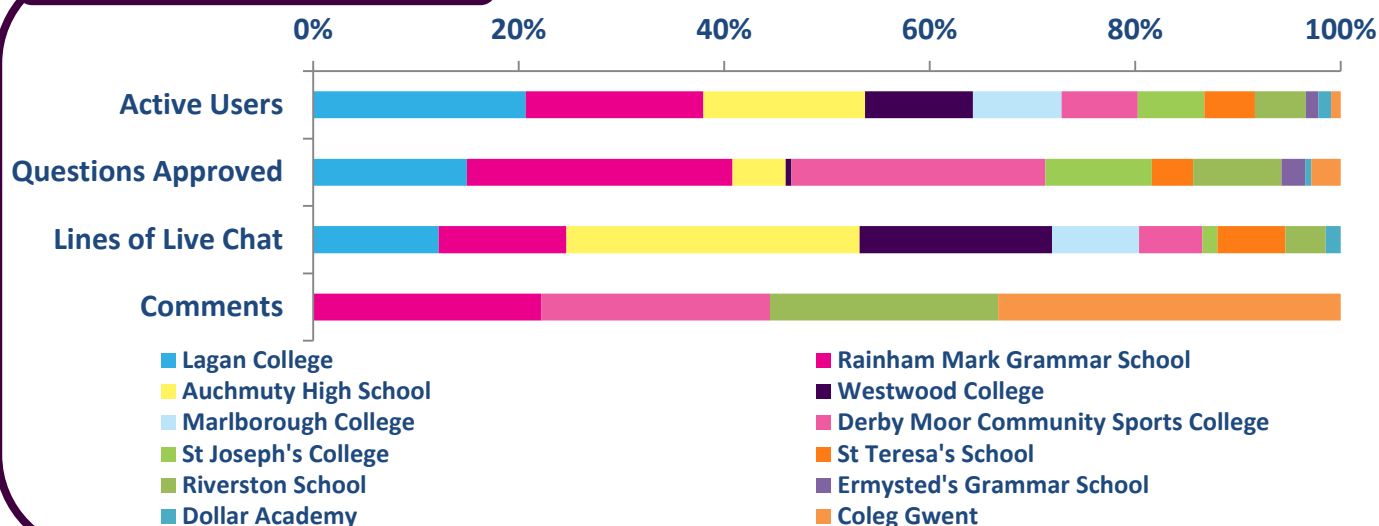




June 2015

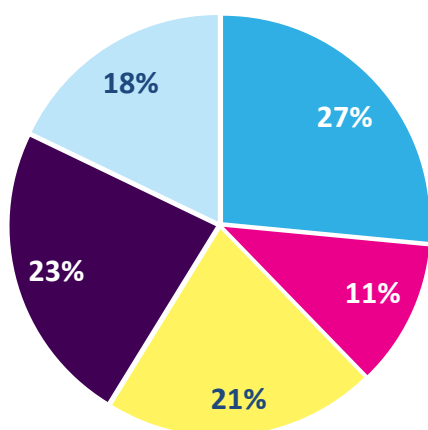
The Polymers Zone was a themed zone funded by the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) and Thomas, Ruhina, Rose and Anne were themselves members of the RSC. It was one of the quieter June zones and questions from students were a mix of those on polymers and broader aspects of chemistry. The scientists were relatively equal in the number of questions they answered in ASK, whilst in the live chats Thomas, the zone winner, was the most active. The live chats varied in their pace and focus on the subject, with some being fast-paced and on-topic, whilst others were calmer or focused more on the students finding out about the personalities of the scientists.

School data at a glance

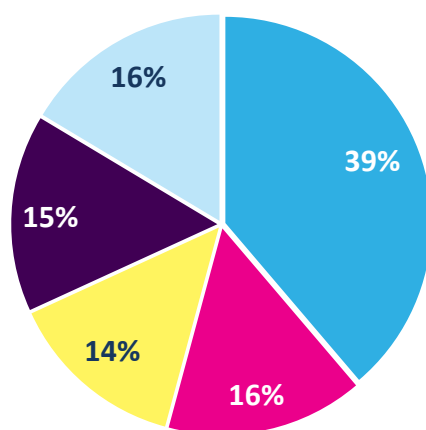


Scientist activity

Answers



Lines of Live chat

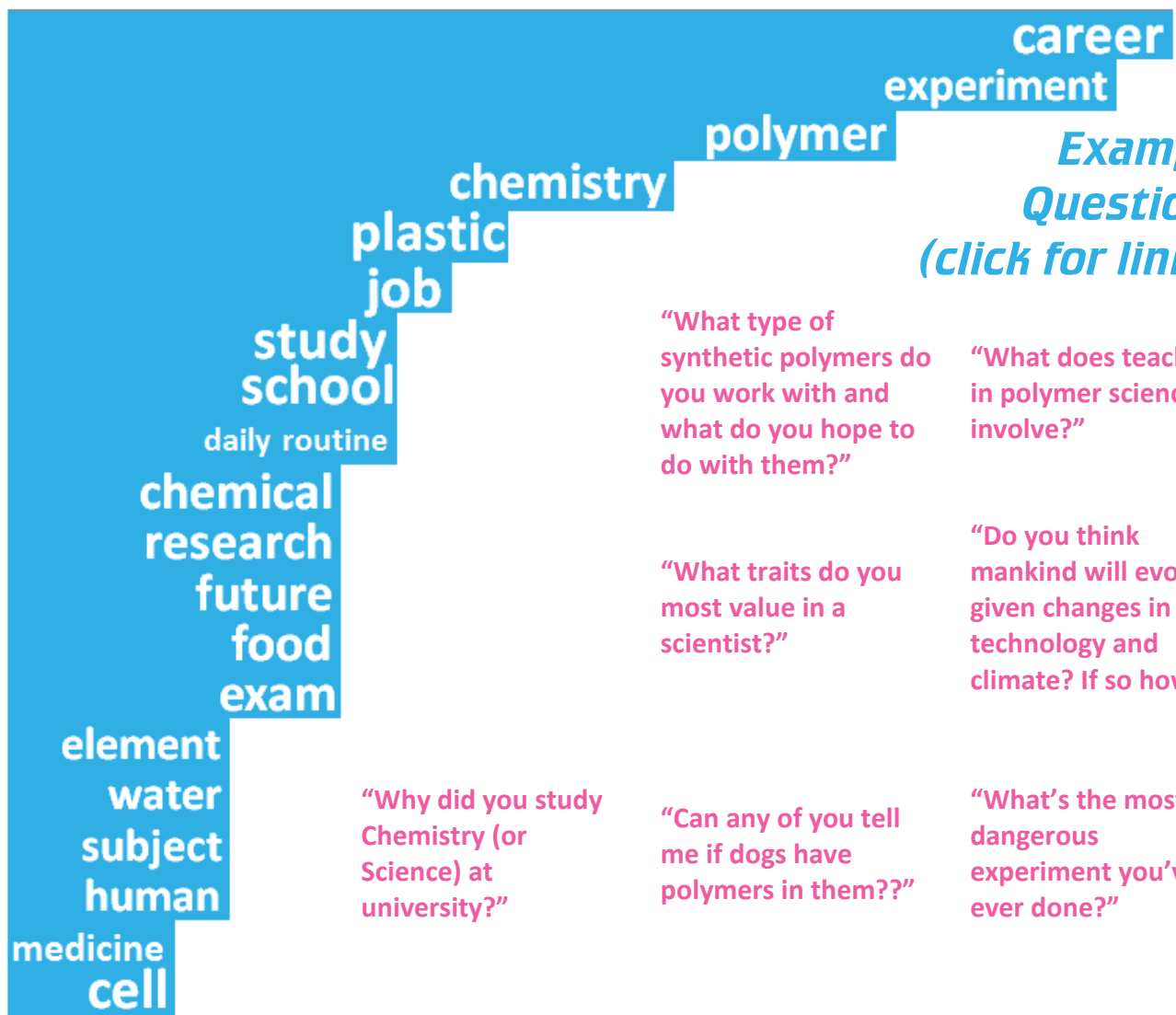


Scientist	Profile views	Position
Thomas Farrugia	841	Winner
Anne Canning	560	2nd
Rose Simnett	679	3rd
Ruhina Miller	642	4th
Arthur Wilkinson	547	5th



Keywords of questions asked in the zone, length of bar represents frequency of use

0 5 10 15 20



Example Questions (click for links)

“What type of synthetic polymers do you work with and what do you hope to do with them?”

“What does teaching in polymer science involve?”

“What traits do you most value in a scientist?”

“Do you think mankind will evolve given changes in technology and climate? If so how?”

“Why did you study Chemistry (or Science) at university?”

“Can any of you tell me if dogs have polymers in them??”

“What’s the most dangerous experiment you’ve ever done?”

“Why did you want to become a polymer scientist?”

“Why is a polymer called a polymer?”

“Does your thesis for your PhD have to be entirely original?”

“What is the oldest polymer?”

“If you can make polyethene, does that mean we will not run out of plastic?”

“Could you name some natural polymeric materials?”

“What do you think is the most important discovery that would benefit humanity?”

“What is a sigma bond and a pi bond?”

Examples of good engagement

The scientists were clearly able to develop a rapport with the students to present themselves as rounded individuals. The students asked some insightful philosophical questions, which the scientists' seemed to enjoy considering:

"How do you know that what you have been taught is true?" – Student

"Good one - when reading published research you do have to be critical, especially if it's really close to your field, but you do bank on other people's scientific integrity and the peer review process (essentially when someone publishes something it first gets read by other scientists who are also experts in the field and tell the editor whether it's fit for publishing or not)." – Thomas, scientist

"Since you do science, and did RE GCSE do you believe in the evolution story?" – Student

"I don't think it's a case of "believe" - there's significant evidence for evolution, and you can actually observe it within our lifetime by looking at things that reproduce way faster than us - bacteria for example. You don't really "believe" in science." – Thomas, scientist

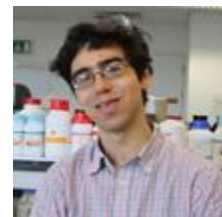
Laura: I agree with you, completely for the scientific evidence of evolution. – Student

"Do you believe in god?" – Student

"I kind of stopped doing religion when I started University - I like to think there are dark gods if any, and that they're constantly setting me challenges. Would that count?" – Thomas, scientist

Scientist winner: Thomas Farrugia

Thomas' plans for the prize money: *"The idea would be to create a calendar detailing different scientists and the contributions they made. I'm quite a fan of the chaps who worked to develop much of what we know today, think Archimedes, Avogadro, Lavoisier – they were quite hardcore and helped advance human knowledge significantly without having access to all the tools we have today. It's nice to read about the people behind the science – they were humans too after all – and helps put their discoveries in context, whilst also giving an idea of how much we have learnt as the millenia have rolled by."* Read Thomas' [thank you message](#).



Student winner: Plasma_based_lifeform

For great engagement during the event, this student will receive a gift voucher and a certificate.

Feedback

We're still collecting feedback from teachers, students and scientists but here are a few of the comments made during the event...

"We really enjoyed this and wish you all successful careers – Chem, student

"Sorry Ruhina I have to go, thank you for answering my QUESTIONS" – emily2, student

"The weeks during the event were a bit of a learning process for me as well... it's great to see other people's take of science, especially when they're carrying out research different to yours' – Thomas, scientist