Transcript – Steps into STEM

Eleri: Bore da, croeso cynnes i chi gyd. It’s great to have you all here today. I’m very pleased you could all come along to take part in this project. My name’s Eleri Chilcott and I’m Widening Access Manager for The Open University in Wales.

The steps into STEM project has been developed by The Open University in Wales to create a series of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths family learning workshops.

Between January 2014 and April 2015 parents and children from Cwmmedd and Godre’rgraig Primary Schools took part in a range of STEM workshops. The aim of the initiative is to introduce adults to higher education learning opportunities and inspire children to take up STEM subjects in their future studies.

The project is part of a Higher Education Funding Council for Wales initiative which was funded through the South West Reaching Wider Partnership. The workshops covered a ‘Who done it?’ CSI-type crime scene; investigating local nature; the ‘Rock Detectives: Footprints in time’ and ‘Water, water everywhere: analysing our local environment’.

John: This is a short scientific workshop looking at the history of life on earth, and we do this by showing the pupils some fossils; ancient and some modern and we try to tell them actually by looking back through history and looking at the rocks that are on the earth’s surface we can actually work out a bit about who we are and how we came to be here.

Lisa: Today we’ve been looking at the various properties of water. We’ve been looking at density, we’ve been looking at volume and we’ve also been looking at surface tension. It’s about trying to get people more involved in science through fun and engaging ways.

Parent one: I think it’s really good that we get chance to watch; be involved in their learning and see how they’re learning and I think it’s good to teach them about the environment and what’s around and I think it’s a really good opportunity.

Parent two: Well, I think it’s given my son, Arfon a glimpse into the future of what he can expect when he goes to comprehensive and, you know, I think he’s discovered that he’s interested in this subject. It’s been brilliant, absolutely brilliant, thank you.

Parent three: They’ve really enjoyed; really informative for them –

Child: Yeah

Parent three: It’s been nice to do something together

Andrew Herbert: Through the project, we’ve been able to awaken the children’s interest in science, but most importantly as well, we’ve been able to bring together the pupils, the parents and the grandparents to have that inter-generational learning as part of the project.

Eleri: The initiative was developed with the Glynneath Training Centre, the Western Valleys Communities First cluster and schools in the upper Swansea and Neath valleys to increase participation in the STEM subjects at university. The OU in Wales would like to say a very big thank you to all our partners who supported and helped to develop the Steps into STEM project.