Champion
the Researchers

PEER REVIEW

Radu is an electronics engineer. Like most researchers, Radu publishes his research in academic journals. This is a formal way of getting research into the scientific community. Before research is made public, other scientists working in a similar field check your ideas and experiments to see if they are good enough. This process is called peer review.

IDEAS FOR PEER REVIEW IN THE CLASSROOM

Method

Arrange a peer review session the next time your class does some practical or project work.

Once the work has been written up, anonymise it and redistribute among the classs.

Each reviewer then reads through the work and lists **what they like** about it, **what concerns they have** about it and **suggestions for improvement**.

Extensions

You could start up a science journal in your school's science club, and pupils could get involved in the peer review process. Check out Frontiers for Young Minds as an example.

The research link

Peer review is an important and widely-used research tool. It helps to ensure that research is good enough to be accepted by the scientific community. For example, reviewers might check that experiments have been repeated a sufficient number of times, or that a large enough sample of the measurable variable has been used for the results to be of statistical significance.

Work can either be rejected, accepted providing certain changes are made, or accepted outright. Reviewers are normally researchers in a similar field to the author, so that they have a good understanding of the science involved.

Additional guidance notes

These three Nuffield Foundation websites provide tried-and-tested practical work ideas:

http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/practical-physics

http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/practical-chemistry

http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/practical-biology

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