

“How can I make it even better?”

In conversation with Dawn McCann - A Science Influencer with Science Across the City (SATC)



Tell me about becoming a Science Influencer

In 2019 I was nominated by my headteacher to become a Science Influencer. I didn't feel overly confident and took some convincing, but agreed to join the team. Starting with a buddy, we went into two local schools to support them. It's just grown. I've now been promoted to the more formal role of Coach and have several days allocated to support schools. We reflected on their targets for development and are now working through tailored support to improve science. This time it has been easier to go it alone because I know that I am further along in my science journey and I can help them improve science teaching and the life chances of their children.

Being part of the Science Across the City network is clearly important to you

Before I've always been isolated as science leader but I found this little hub of super science people who had got their teeth into so many science things and it was all new to me. Now it's like a sense of

belonging with the like-minded SATC community. It's being in the loop with other science leaders and you're really on the same page – your confidence just grows. We share information, resources, ideas and suggestions. We have our Whats App group to ask questions and bounce ideas around, so there's quite a buzz all through the year. You just get better and better as you work with them. You constantly strive to improve.

What opportunities opened up for you when you became part of SATC?

There have been so many great opportunities. The Digging Deeper days broadened my knowledge of the organisations out there who support and promote primary science. Science Learning Partnership facilitator training helped me build skills in the delivery of science training. This made me realise I do have the ability and skills to disseminate information to others. I received Teacher Assessment in Primary Science (TAPS) training then became a TAPS champion supporting two local schools.

“While policy rhetoric stresses knowledge and technique as central to good teaching, I draw attention to the importance of purpose, passion and desire.”

Hargreaves (1995:9) Development and Desire: A Postmodern Perspective.

Being part of this SATC project has taken my passion for the subject to a new high. I'm always looking at 'What can come next?', and 'How can I make it even better?'

Also I've written some TAPS focused assessment tasks and one has already been published on the TAPS website. I have presented at Teach Meets in person, and virtually at the Association for Science Education national conference. It was quite scary at first, but as everyone listened to me, so it was not so bad! Last summer I was one of several Science Influencers awarded CSciTeach (Chartered Science Teacher). Clearly the group helped and my involvement with SATC supported my application massively.

I am currently looking at the links between science and reading through the Better Reading-Better Science training and am also very a passionate about developing STEM, particularly good maths and computing links with science - my next venture!

Tell me about sharing your passion for science

I used to think that everyone knew more than me. It's only little old me. I was a fidgety hands-on learner and I'd get bored sat in class. However, I always had a passion for science, but not until now have I felt in a position to share this passion with others, in the way that SATC has prepared me for and is allowing me to! Being part of this SATC project has taken my passion for the subject to a new high. I'm always looking at 'What can come next?', and 'How can I make it even better?'

Final Thoughts?

I don't do it for myself. I do it because I love it and it has such an impact on the children. I don't understand why people don't like science. Science is the best subject in the world for children.



"I often state that success breeds success, but for this to be effective first we have to identify the success that should be celebrated. Dawn is a wonderful example of a Science across the City success, but the most modest subject leader you could ever meet. Her knowledge of the science landscape is extensive and her energy to share ideas and connections with others is boundless. She is an inspiration and positively influences science education practice in her school, within the Science Influencers network, and with the teachers she coaches."

Tina Whittaker,
Co-lead to Science across the City.

