

Poster Presentation

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The crystal race; engaging children in the crystal world

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The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in association with the International Union of Crystallography (IUCr) declared 2014 as the International Year of Crystallography. One of the main activities, around the world, was providing students from all levels with crystallography demonstrations specially selected for their ages. In Uruguay most of the activities celebrated that year were carried out by a group of professors and students from Facultad de Química, Universidad de la República (1). In order to show how science and technology make a huge impact in our everyday lives and make for interesting and exciting career options, we designed and performed "The Crystal Race". For the first time, this activity was performed during the "Semana de la Ciencia y la Tecnología (SCyT)" (Science and Technology Week) in 2014, promoted by the "Dirección de Innovación, Ciencia y Tecnología para el Desarrollo" (DICyT, Innovation, Science and Technology Administration for the Development) and the Ministerio de Educación y Cultura (MEC, Ministry of Education and Culture). The competition consists in a typical race like "Ludo" and Trivial Pursuit, where participants race through a board by rolling a die, to get to the center and win. Seven teams are formed, and each is assigned a crystalline system name (cubic, hexagonal, orthorhombic, monoclinic, triclinic, tetragonal and rhombohedral - trigonal-), a number, and a pawn. The number indicates the order of play and the pawn corresponds to the crystalline name. The gameplay consists of each team answering questions about crystals and their properties. The activity was designed for school aged children (especially in the age range between 9-12 years old) and also seeks to maintain the attention of children during it. We performed the race in state and private schools with different social and economic backgrounds (more than 10). With this activity we have improved the children's knowledge about crystallography, crystals properties and their application in their daily lives. Also, we have encouraged the interest of young students on science.

(1) <http://www.cristalografia2014.fq.edu.uy/>



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