

## Science “Magic” Shows: communicating science in an unforgettable way

**Derek Fish: Director: Unizul Science Centre, Richards Bay, South Africa**

An ancient saying tells us:

**“Tell me, I forget,  
Show me, I remember,  
Involve me, I understand.”**

While a hands-on experience of Science is clearly the most memorable, enthralling Science “Magic” Shows have long been a popular means for communicating science to people of all ages and cultures. Mr. Wizard became a household name in America, and Julius Sumner Miller toured the world with his physics demonstrations. Within the context of an interactive Science Centre, such a science show provides a unforgettable event for all visitors, and a cost-effective way to provide a new experience with each visit. Where this is followed by hands-on activity, it provides an lasting experience for visitors of all ages.

This presentation will look at some of the different trends in the development of science education (e.g. the continental vs. the Anglo-American or “heuristic” tradition, the constructivist approach etc.) and how these are reflected in different methods of Science Communication within the context of a Science Centre. The role of “gee-whiz” Science Shows will be highlighted and examples shown of how to make these shows both exciting and educational.

The presenter, Derek Fish, has run a Science Centre for over 10 years, and has visited over 40 Centres around the world. He is well known for his science demonstrations, having won competitions in South Africa and in the UK. The talk will be illustrated with many examples of exciting demonstrations performed with simple materials.