Citizen science:
have you used it in your classroom?

Science in School would like to hear about your experiences!

Do your students like to experiment with real data coming straight from a mass spectrometer or a satellite? Or do they feed their own careful observations into the database of an ongoing research project? Perhaps they do both!

Citizen science web-based platforms, which allow classrooms to interact directly with real-time research projects, are becoming increasingly common. They offer a diversified panel of activities that teachers can choose from to build on the latest advancements in science, but they can also improve students' computer skills, provide them with a realistic glimpse of what scientists' work is really like… and obviously give them the satisfaction of playing an integral part in furthering our knowledge.

At *Science in School*, we feel that these platforms offer valuable support for teaching science. We would like your help to investigate in more detail just how they can be used in practice.

Have you used these tools in your classroom?

If so, did you think they were effective and valuable? Why?

How did you integrate them into your lesson plan?

What were the main challenges you faced when using these tools?

We would like to hear about your experiences and maybe share them with our readers!

Please contact us at editor@scienceinschool.org

Citizen science platforms broadly fall into two categories: those that ask non-scientists to provide researchers with data for further scientific analysis in the lab; and those that give free access to data generated in research labs, for anybody to use and analyse.

These platforms also vary in their design and function. They can look like games, such as Foldit (http://fold.it/portal), or like databases, such as the NASA Giovanni website (http://disc.sci.gsfc.nasa.gov/giovanni). They can also be active platforms where students can report on their observation and post data online, like for the Great Sunflower Project (www.greatsunflower.org), or classify the enormous amount of data generated by astronomers, such as in Galaxy Zoo (www.galaxyzoo.org). Many more examples are available on the web, in various countries and languages.