



The Red Zone was a general science-themed Zone, which ran from 2 to 27 November 2020.

The activity ran for longer than previous *I'm a Scientist* Zones (4 weeks instead of 2). It also featured more scientists (over 30 instead of 6). This was to offer greater flexibility to teachers in how, and when, they can take part in *I'm a Scientist*.

The Red Zone was funded by the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Discover 2019 programme.

Scientists

- 32 scientists created profiles in the Zone.
- 30 engaged with students through live Chats and/or Ask questions.
- Scientists from a broad range of fields and career stages took part. For example:
  - Aisling O'Connor - Research Officer at the VistaMilk SFI research centre
  - Ayesha Sharif - PhD student studying nanoparticle conduction at NUI Galway
  - Boris Galkin - postdoctoral researcher at the CONNECT telecommunications research centre in Trinity College Dublin

Students

- 1,145 students from 31 schools across Ireland logged into the Zone.
- Turnout was 76% of the 1,500 capacity.
- 55% of active students were from target schools (DEIS and/or U).
  - 43% were from target county (U) schools.
  - 17% were from Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) schools.

Live Chats and Questions

- 53 live Chats took place during the activity.
- 90 live Chats were booked (1.5 times the expected number), but dropout was higher than usual, with 24 cancellations and 13 'school no shows'.
- On average, 3 scientists attended each live Chat session.
- 4 teachers typed questions in a live Chat on behalf of their students, so the number of students engaged may be higher by up to 100.
- 654 student questions were approved. Scientists responded with 903 answers.

**Key figures**

Schools	31
Students logged in	1,145
% of students active	84%
Scientists onboarded	32
% of scientists active	94%
Questions asked	1390
Questions approved	654
Answers given	903
Scientist comments	42
Student comments	50
Student votes	754
Live chats	53
Lines of live chat	14,021
Average lines per chat	265

**Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**

In November 2019 *I'm a Scientist* reached 1835 students from 55 schools. In November 2020 increased uncertainty and pressure surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult for teachers to plan ahead and take part. Despite this, 1145 students from 31 schools were still reached.

The additional challenges are reflected in the higher than usual dropout rate for live Chats. 85 chats took place in Nov 2019. 90 were booked in Nov 2020 but only 53 actually took place. Some schools restricted access to shared IT equipment, leading some teachers to ask questions in live Chats on behalf of their students, projecting the Chat on a screen.

## School activity

School	Chats		Live chat lines		
	Active students	attended/ booked	Total	Per student	Questions approved
Loreto Community School, Donegal (DEIS/U)	111	5/6	976	9	51
Tyrrelstown Educate Together National School, Dublin (U)	85	4/9	709	8	24
Leixlip Community School, Kildare (U)	73	4/5	573	8	2
Educate Together Secondary School, Wicklow (U)	72	4/5	720	10	87
Mountmellick Community School, Laois	63	1/0*	11	11	42
Gaelscoil Na Cruaiche, Mayo	58	4/6	731	13	5
Castleknock College, Dublin (U)	52	2/7	563	11	51
Naomh Colmain, Kilkenny	52	1/2	417	8	152
Skerries Community College, Dublin (U)	49	3/6	675	14	64
Balla Secondary School, Mayo	41	1/1	327	8	0
Coola Post Primary School, Sligo	33	3/3	438	13	0
John Paul II N S, Dublin (U)	29	2/2	510	18	19
St. David'S C.B.S., Dublin (DEIS/U)	26	1/1	149	6	83
St Margarets N S, Dublin (U)	25	1/1	330	13	6
St Pius X National School, Dublin (U)	24	1/1	278	12	16
Ath Na Lionta, Cork	23	1/1	112	5	14
Coláiste Chill Mhantáin, Wicklow (U)	19	1/1	75	4	3
Meánscoil Iognáid Ris, Kildare (U)	18	1/2	101	6	0
Tallaght Community School, Dublin (DEIS/U)	17	1/1	62	4	9
St Molaga's School, Dublin (U)	16	1/1	148	9	2
Christian Brothers Secondary, Dublin (U)	15	1/1	194	13	1
St Annin's, Galway	15	1/1	122	8	0
Coláiste Chiaráin Summerhill, Athlone	14	1/1	59	4	2
The Kings Hospital, Dublin (U)	13	1/1	10	1	19
Coláiste Bríde, Dublin (U)	12	2/2	78	7	0
Colaiste Cholmcille, Galway (DEIS)	5	1/1	86	17	1
Scoil Dara, Kildare (U)	1	0/0	0	0	1
Our Lady Of Mercy Primary School, Co. Tipperary**	0	1/1	260	260	0
Scoil Ailbhe, Tipperary**	0	1/1	50	50	0
Gaelscoil Chluain Dolcain, Dublin** (U)	0	2/2	29	29	0

\* 1 student from this school took part in an open Chat.

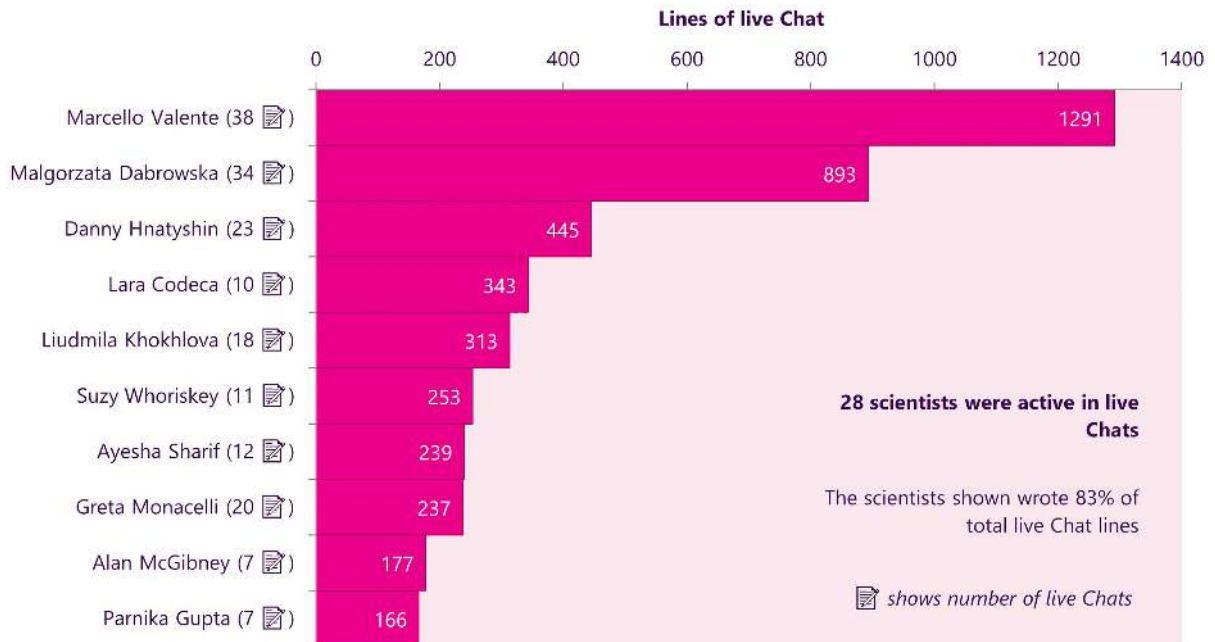
\*\* These schools took part through the teacher account due to restricted access to individual student laptops.

We try to reach schools that are less likely to receive visits and benefit from other engagement activities. Find out what we mean by under-served SFI target schools (U) and Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), and how you can support us in working with these at [about.imascientist.ie/2016/widening-participation](http://about.imascientist.ie/2016/widening-participation)

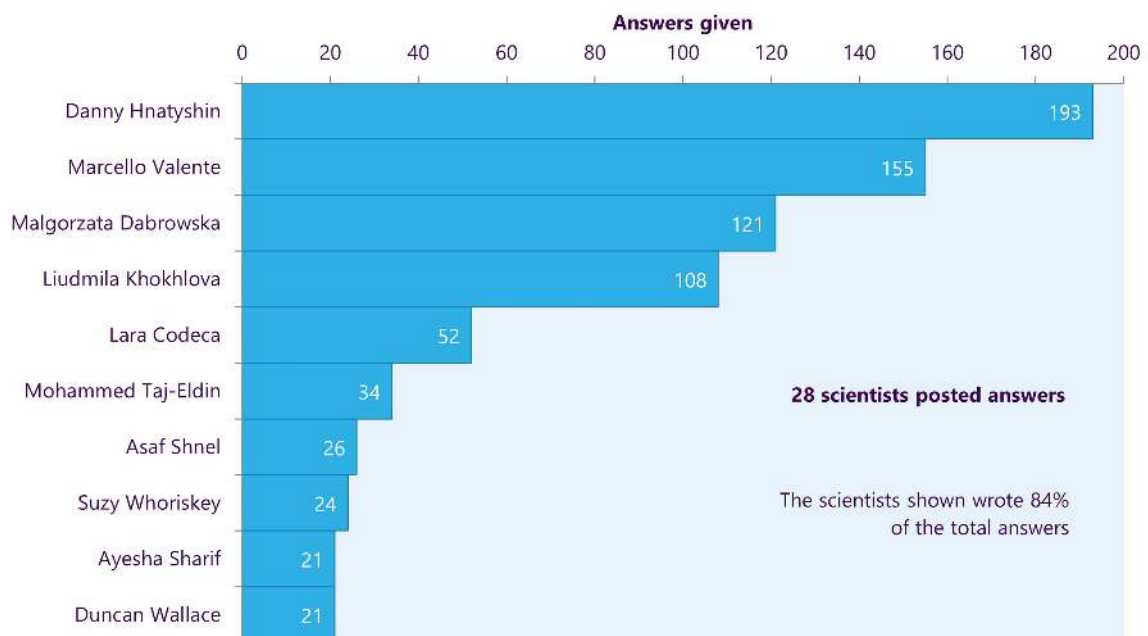
## Scientist activity

30 scientists were active in the zone, writing 5,228 lines of live chat, and providing 903 answers to posted questions.

### 10 most active scientists in live Chats



### 10 most active scientists in posting answers

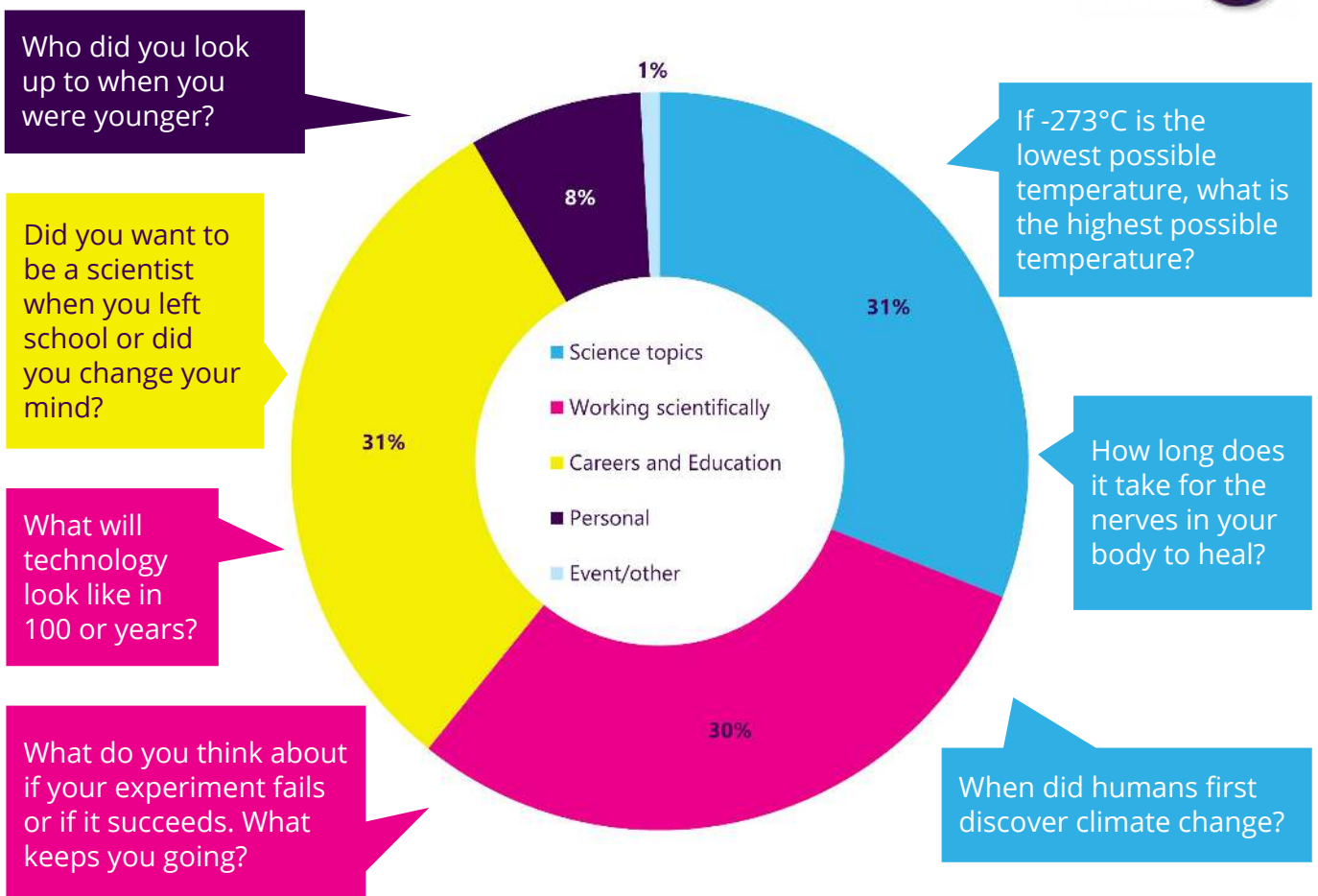


See all the participating scientists: [red20.imascientist.ie/scientists](http://red20.imascientist.ie/scientists)

## Frequent words used in live chats by students and scientists



## Question themes and examples



## Examples of good engagement

Often in chats students would relate science conversations to their own interests, which helps to support their Science Capital. In this conversation, students compared the planet Europa to the Europa depicted in a video game.

**Keevaaa** @all What Planet do you think we are going to live on next???????????

**Marcello** @Keevaaa: Mars and probably after that we will go to Europa (planet size moon of Jupiter)

**Fionn** @Marcello: would Europa be like it is in destiny 2 beyond light

**Marcello** @Fionn: All we know it's that it's full of water, so who knows

**Danny** @Fionn: Haven't played destiny 2, what is europa like in that game?

**Fionn** @Danny: its a barren ice desert with storms

**Danny** @Fionn: There probably arernt actual storms on europa, its pretty boring weather wise! But yes its pure ice!

**Fionn** @Danny: ok thanks

**Lara** @Fionn: yeah. But think about the huge euro-fishes that may live in those deep deep oceans under the ice.

Scientists and students also discussed gaps in current knowledge and research, and the potential for students to fill in these gaps in the future:

**EnyaB** @Danny is netherite real

**Danny** @EnyaB: Nope, nothing quite like that is known to exist!

**EnyaB** @Danny: could we artificially make it?

**Danny** @EnyaB: Probably not, but maybe not impossible! We need to talk to a materials engineer I think!

**EnyaB** @Danny: don't you know any materials engineers?

**Danny** @EnyaB: Nope! Maybe you should become one :)

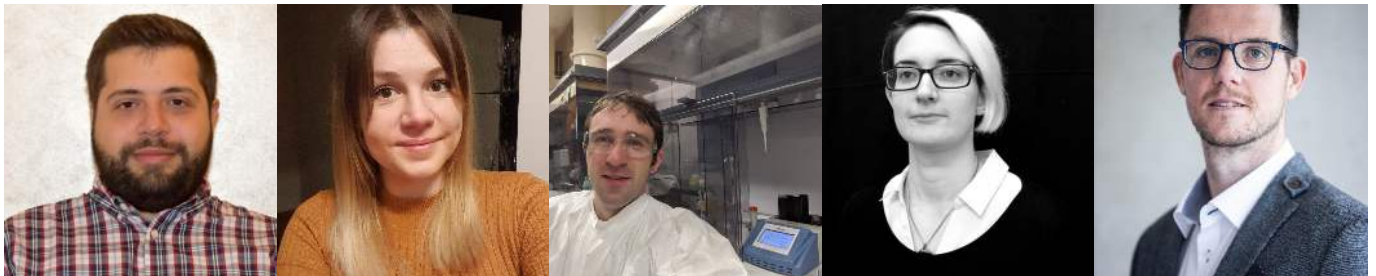
**EnyaB** @Danny: maybe i will danny you have inspired me i will thank you at my graduation

**Danny** @EnyaB: Amazing! Thanks! Lots of cool questions you asked!

## Scientists of the Week

Students voted each week for their favourite scientist to be named *Scientist of the Week*. There was a tie in week 4. The *Scientists of the Week* were:

**Marcello Valente, Malgorzata Dabrowska, Danny Hnatyshin, Lara Codeca and Alan McGibney.** The overall winner of the Zone was **Marcello Valente**.



## Feedback

“thank you so much!!! you answered so many questions today and thanks for that. your work is amazing and i hope you have a good day 🙌🌟👉😊”  
Student

“This is not the first time that I’ve participated in *I’m a Scientist, Get me out of here*, but I’m happy to say that this year, I had even more fun than before!

I would like, one day, to replicate this format in Italy, where an event like this would be appreciated for sure.”

Marcello, Red Zone Winner

“Wish I had more time to spare! It was really entertaining and some questions impressed me very much.”  
Liudmila, Scientist

“Thank you so much for all your interesting comments and answers, this has been great.”  
Teacher

“It was very busy especially to combine it with lab work, but totally worth it! I hope it was beneficial for students and maybe we inspired someone to choose this path, that would be the best prize after these 4 week.”  
Malgorzata, Scientist



**CB - Science @ise\_CB** Nov 18  
1st years joined scientists for a live web chat for our final [#scienceweek](#) event with [@imascientist](#) Thanks to Malgorzata (researching MS in [@nuigalway](#) ) and Charu (an electronics engineer in [@UCC](#) ) for answering our questions. Good luck with your research. [#wevoted](#) [#STEMeducation](#)

