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# Nanoscience and Nanotechnology at High School: a Hands On, Inquiry Based approach

The Fibonacci Project European Conference - Leicester 27/04/2012





#### **Upper secondary: too early for Nanoscience?**





At what point should one allow high school students to <u>experience cutting edge science</u>?

When are they considered to have a **sufficient knowledge foundation** in spite of the fact that they are **daily exposed to** and already massively consume the **technological outcomes**?

Upper Secondary students should be more mature, more prepared ready to make vocational choices ...

### **Paradox**

...still teachers seem to take a step back!

Less curious pupils or less appetizing Science Menu served?





### Mostly a teachers' issue \*



#### **External constraints**

- Curriculum pressure
  - No Time!
  - ☐ Managing Higher Maths + abstraction
  - ☐ Impending Assessment
    - ✓ National tests
    - ✓ How to grade: no guidelines, time consuming
  - ☐ The «scaffolding» curse \*
- Lack of equipment and funds

#### **Personal beliefs**

- Confidence needed!
  - ☐ Little experimental experience
  - ☐ No personal experience in research and IBSE
  - ☐ It calls for a new «role»
- Not «in-depth» enough
  - □ Only spectacular → unsuitable for higher education
  - ☐ IS IT ??!! <a href="http://iypt.org">http://iypt.org</a>

The International Young Physicists' Tournament

<sup>\*</sup> Specific of the Italian context



#### What we tried to work on



#### **External constraints**

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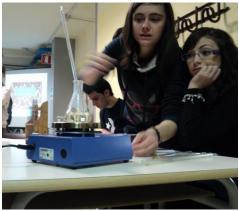
#### **Focus on Nanoscience**

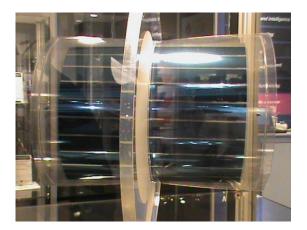


#### Nanoscience is an ideal playground to

- engage students in frontier research
- introduce the basics of quantum mechanics at high school level with an hands on and intrinsecally interdisciplinary approach,
- ☐ link **fundamental science** both to present and perspective **technology**
- enhance Inquiry Based Science (IBS) approach at secondary level









### **IBSE:** why it can help



#### IBSE suits very well our aims because

- is based on students active involvement
- offers significant tasks linked to the real world
- ☐ is a working style (researchers')
  - Learning to *ask questions...* and *use evidence* from their own experimental work *to answer*
  - Formulating conjectures and making predictions
  - Communicating conclusions and being ready to discuss
- □ calls for a **new teacher's role**: no "sage on the stage" but "guide on the side"









#### **Nanolab Project labs:** features



- Researchers involvement Easy to perform in school **Short**: 1-2 lessons **Low cost**: reasonably cheap materials and equipment Strong interdisciplinary approach: Physics, Chemistry, Biology Can be taylored to suit different needs and levels
- ☐ Highlighting fundamental points in nanoscience. At the nanoscale
  - ✓ new properties can be observed
  - ✓ new laws are dominating
  - ✓ atomic manipulation can bring to new pre-designed materials
  - ✓ to this aim *new tools* are needed
- Massive use of new technology tools
  - ✓ some of them already owned by students themselves: cameras, mobiles, smartphones, ...
  - ✓ open source software
  - ✓ sensors



### **Nanolab Project labs: contents**



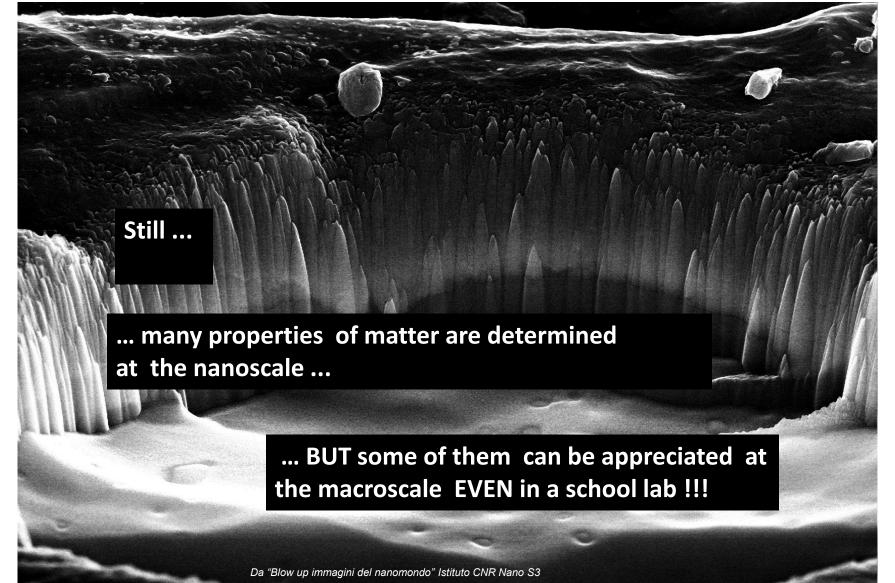
Althoug	sh addressing nanoscience the activities
	still teach fundamentals and strongly link to curricula supplementing
	traditional topics
	sometimes challenge "school linear physics"
	are a natural complement to visits at the research center

Topic	Key idea	Link to curriculum
Memory shape alloys	properties are determined at the nanoscale: atomic manipulation for smart materials	phase transition, metals behaviour on heating
Gold Nanoparticles	size matters; light and matter interaction	light scattering, spectrometry, particle diffusion
Nanostructured Surfaces	new hierarchy in forces	Forces, friction
<b>Conductive polymers QTC</b>	Quantum Physics at work	conductivity



### What we can't see at school ... yet







#### **Nanomaterials**

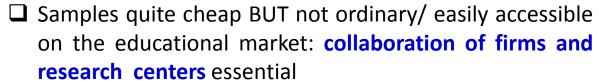






A central role in the lab activities is played by nano materials.

- Produced with specific and predesigned physical and chemical properties, they are actually leading to many and appealing applications.
- ☐ Students excited to deal with **the real "stuff "!** materials with direct applications energy harvesting, space flights,...
- ☐ Unknown, no preconceptions, cannot appeal to text-book 'truth' (teachers too!)



















### Memory metals: qualitative approach

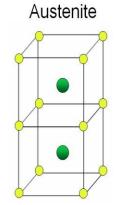


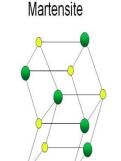


#### **Qualitative testing** of Nitinol:

- discover typical behaviour
- imagine possible applications

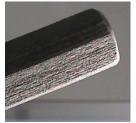
Shape memory activation







What's a **phase transition**? A solid-solid example









acoustic transmission, pliability, reflectance, surface smoothness electrical resistivity



A look inside



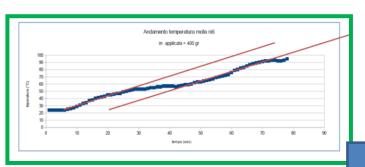


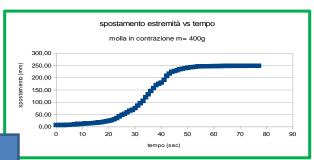


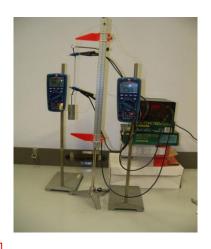
### Memory metals: upgrade



Still keeping the «wow factor» as motivating input BUT upgrading from communication to quantitative experiments





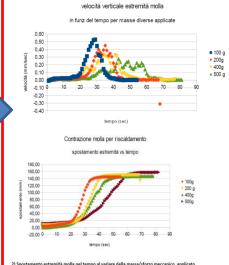


#### **Linking variables**

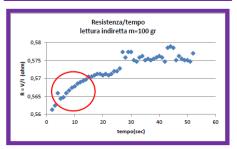
2,5 -

Hysteresis in elongation vs time: what does it stand for?





#### Deeper insight





#### Nanoparticles: size matters!







Colloidal gold synthesis

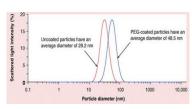


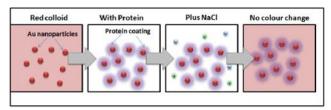




Medical application as **colorimetric sensor**: the change in aggregation level is signalled by the change in colour.



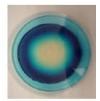


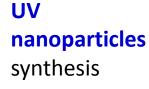


#### **Diffusion model** according to dimension









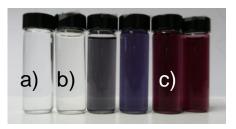




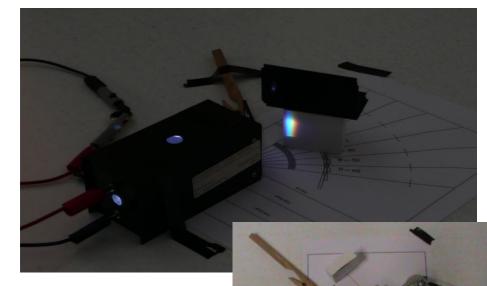


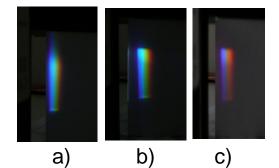
### Home made spectrophotometry

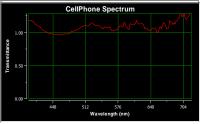


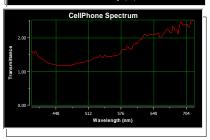


- a) Empty vial
- b) Gold solution
- c) Colloidal gold









Trasmission: a) e c)

Plot Trace Selection

Interestly (Sample)

Interest

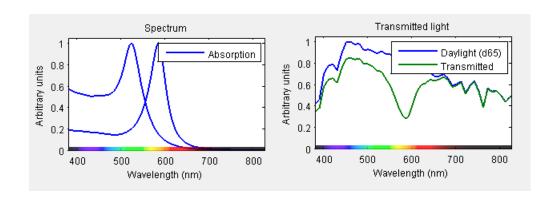
Experimental setup

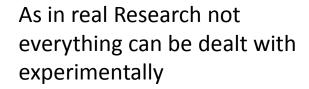
Handy Spectrometer

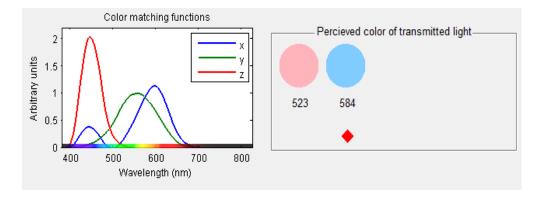


### **Beyond experiments: Simulations**









That's where simulations come in and help in investigating, still IBSE!

Integrated with the experimental activities, easy to use interfaces, works on any PC



### **Quantum Tunneling Composite**



#### Can QTC /organic polymers be good pressure sensor?

What are the characteristics of a good sensor?

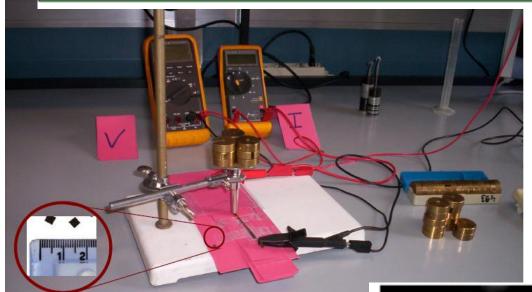
- Quick answer
- Sensibility
- Affidable, high precision
- Little influenced by the environment
- Strong

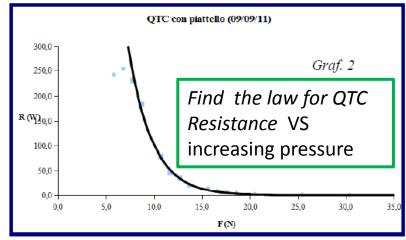




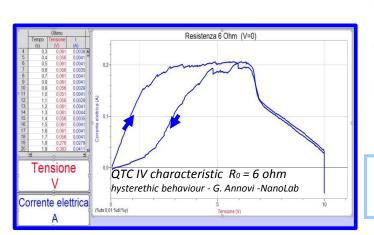
### QTC: upgrade

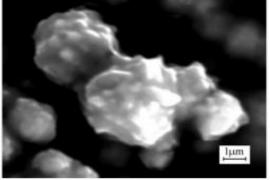


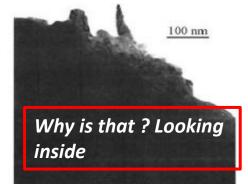




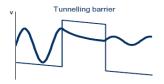
The experimental apparatus







«Anomalous» IV Curve: what's hidden behind?

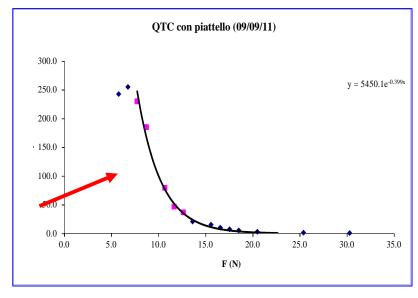


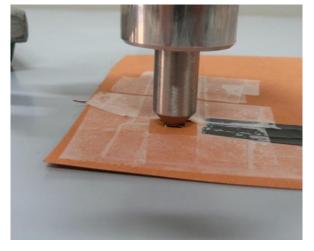


# Transport measurement















# I. Taylored to suit different levels



Labs can be used according to teachers' inclination either			
	in the last year (nanoscience/modern physics modules) across the curriculum since the very first years extending and completing traditional themes with counterintuitive aspects		
as			
	simple demonstrations, guided experiments open inquiry activities		



### I. Taylored to suit different levels



**WOW**! and beyond ...

Contact angle, adhesion, capillarity, superhydrophobics and superhydrophillics, anphiphyllic molecules, Lotus effect, nanolitography, stainless textures, selfcleaning glass, microfluidics, hierarchically nanostructured surfaces, physics of droplets, inks for printable electronics





Superhydrophobicity

 Bio-inspired manipulation at molecular and atomic level can lead to the design and synthesis of new materials with new functionalities such as super adhesives or super hydrophobic surfaces.



#### Nanoworld forces





- At the nanoscale gravity effect can often be overlooked.
- Electromagnetic and intermolecolar forces play a dominant role owing to the very small masses.
- At the nanoscale most of the atoms and molecules are at the interface thus surface properties in objects are dominated by surface interactions.
- Tribology has to do with interfaces ...
   Nanotribology is not just a proportional scaling down of macro friction

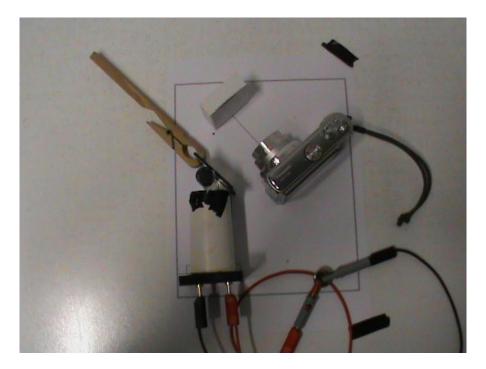




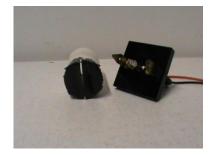


#### II. Low cost





- ☐ Students can assemble on their own and devise improvements: no black boxes!
- ☐ Main issue: minimum quantity



Toilet paper roll + black sellotape: 0 €



Ultra bright led 1,60 €



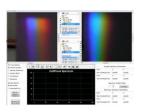
Diffraction grating 2,50 \$



Glass vial **0,30 €** each



Colloidal gold less than 1 €



Software open source

0€



### III. New technology tools



Students have easy and free access to lots of technolgy quite useful for science work (unthinkable a few years ago). Many cells can make photos (single ones or multishot), shoot videos, can have incorporated sensors (apps)/software.



Students taking drop pictures to measure contact angle



- Motivating
- Portable
- Low cost

# AND MOST IMPORTANT powerful!

- allow measurements impossible by hand
- save time
- Relatively high precision



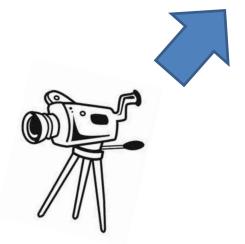


### III. Application example: nitinol



- ☐ A nitinol spring contracts in about 10 seconds:
  hand measurements of the spring lenght are IMPOSSIBLE! → video tools used
- □ Tracker: 25 frames per sec → measurements allowed each 0,04 sec average human reaction time is 1 sec <a href="http://www.cabrillo.edu/~dbrown/tracker/">http://www.cabrillo.edu/~dbrown/tracker/</a>
- $\rightarrow$  Access to <u>much more</u> information!  $\rightarrow$  steps and stops!
- ☐ Monitoring multiple measurements at the same time











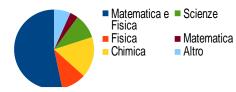
### 1st professional developement course

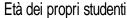




30 selected teachers (FIFS) out of 54 requests from all over Northern Italy

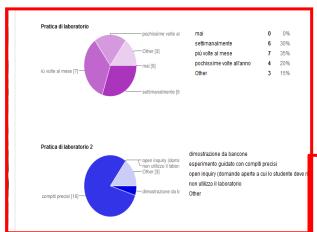
Materia insegnata (tot. 30)

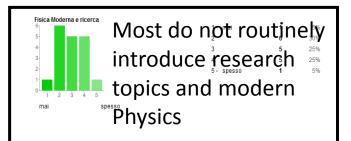




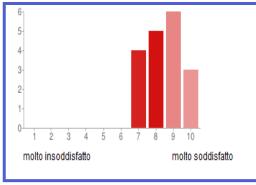








60% often in the labs BUT no one with open inquiry modality



Course satisfaction. 74% declared they would implement at least 1 lab within their classes.



# **Building teachers' confidence is vital ...**











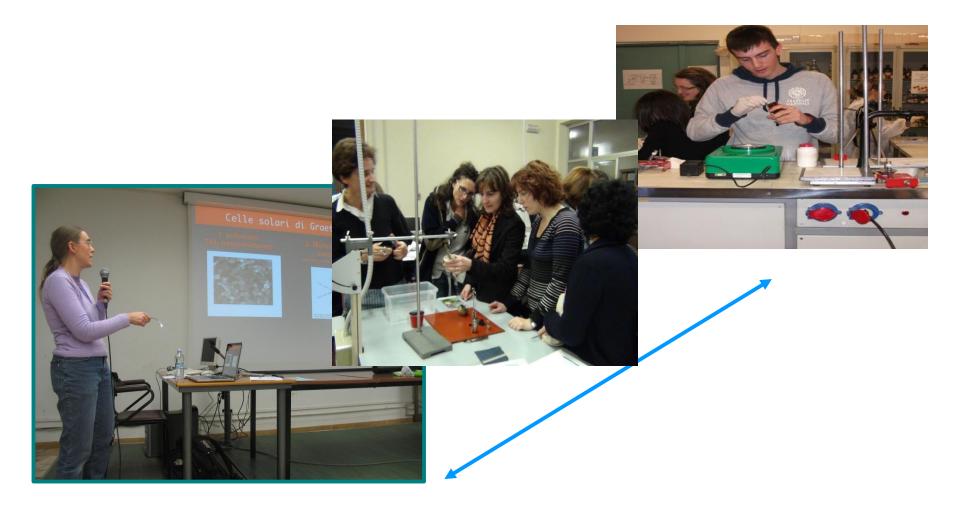






# ... to tunnel through to students







#### www.nanolab.unimore.it

Guida Docenti

Simulazione





Free download of materials and resources

Editable under the **Creative Commons** Licence





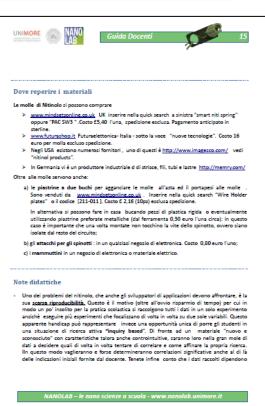


#### **Supporting materials**









Background reading

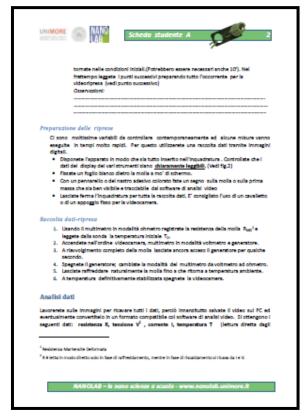
Detailed building instructions

Where to buy materials and equipment + price

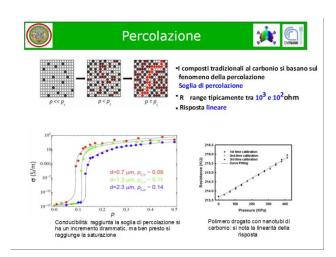


#### **Supporting materials**









Student lab sheet editable

Teacher guide with didactical notes

PPT editable

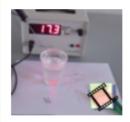


#### Lab video guide





Riempite il bicchiere con acqua tra gli 80°e i 90°C. Piegate il filo nella forma voluta ed immergetelo nell'acqua. Usate le pinze per recuperarlo. ATTENZIONE agli occhi ! Se l'acqua è molto calda il filo tende a scattare appena sopra il pelo dell'acqua!



Avendo a disposizione un termometro si può rendere quantitativa l'osservazione. E' possibile stimare la temperatura minima di attivazione ripetendo più volte il ciclo man mano che il liquido si raffredda.



Ad una certa temperatura si comincia ad osservare un recupero solo parziale della forma. La transizione di fase infatti non è globalmente isoterma: i domini martensitici si trasformano in austenite a temperature diverse all'interno di un certo intervallo.



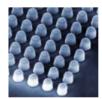
Al di sotto di una certa temperatura la memoria di forma non funziona più. Il filo rimane deformato.



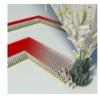
#### **Seminars**



I seminari di NanoLab intendono proporre agli insegnanti di scuola superiore uno sguardo su argomenti della più attuale ricerca in nanoscienze, direttamente dalla voce dei ricercatori che su tali temi lavorano quotidianamente



Dalla Fisica della materia alla Tecnologia: uno sguardo sulle nanoscienze
G. Goldoni – Dip.Fisica UniMoRe – CNR S3 – Modena
presentazione video approfondimenti



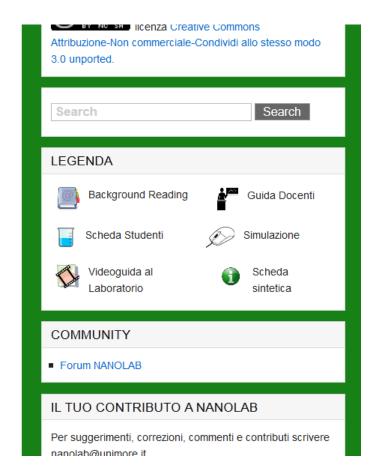
Nanostrutture auto organizzate: entropia,monostrati e macchine molecolari V. De Renzi – Dip. di Fisica UniMoRe – CNR S3 – Modena presentazione <u>video</u> approfondimenti



Polimeri Conduttivi

A. Ruini – Dip. di Fisica UniMoRe – CNR S3 - Modena

presentazione video approfondimenti





#### **Open issues**



#### **External constraints**

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  - No Time!
  - Managing Higher Maths + abstraction
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  - No personal training in research and IBSE
  - ☐ It calls for a new «role»
- Not «serious» enough
  - Too easy → suitable for younger pupils
  - ☐ IS IT ??!! See http://iypt.org



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Thank you for your attention!

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