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School in Space - pupils perform experiment with Thomas Reiter

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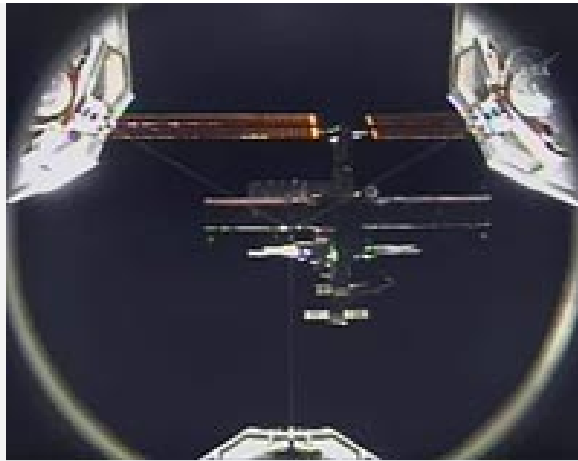
Plexiglass cube containing water-oil mixture

Water/oil mixture on Earth and in microgravity

In September 2006, school pupils will have the opportunity to conduct scientific research with ESA astronaut Thomas Reiter. Reiter is carrying out the same experiment in space as pupils are performing in class. DLR's Space Agency developed a special instrument for this educational experience as part of ESA's Astrolab mission.

The experiment centres around a double-walled Plexiglass cube containing a water/oil mixture (emulsion) and is easy to reproduce in the classroom. After the emulsion has been shaken up, the children can observe how the water and oil first mix together and then separate again. They then have to formulate a hypothesis as to how the emulsion would behave in zero gravity and give a reason for their theory.

The Plexiglass cube was transported to the International Space Station on 24 June 2006 by the Russian cargo ship Progress M-57, along with other supplies. The US Space Shuttle Discovery, which carried Thomas Reiter to the ISS to take up his role as the third permanent crew member, docked yesterday at 16:52 CEST, barely two days after launching, bringing the experimenter safely to the experiment.



A view of ISS from Discovery as the Shuttle approaches for docking

During September 2006, the 'Oil Emulsion' experiment will be carried out in schools throughout Germany. ZDF tivi, a show for kids and teenagers broadcast by German channel and official media partner Zweite Deutsche Fernsehen, will broadcast coverage of the experiment. ZDF tivi will report on programmes like the kids' news programme logo! Viewers can watch the result of the experiment, including Thomas Reiter's own video recordings in space, on ZDF tivi on 23 September 2006. Then all the school pupils involved can see whether their hypothesis was right.

If you would like to take part in the experiment, you can find more information at <http://www.school-in-space.de/>. Back in June, teachers at all secondary schools in Germany received the necessary material for carrying out the experiment in class and a unique code for each school to access the teachers' pages at <http://www.school-in-space.de/>.

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