Leading by example: creating an inclusive online space
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Please share in the chat:
Name,
Pronouns (if you want),
What is your favorite topping on toast?
Universities

Student Mentors
UG/PG students with post-16 qualifications

Mentor training
mentoring theory, science capital teaching approach, inclusivity and session planning

Schools

Mentees
Year 9-11 pupils, Selected with teachers' input, Unsure if they want to take Physics at A level

Mentoring
Small groups
6 sessions per semester

Sessions promote transferrable skills and careers and self-awareness (with weekly reflection) through weekly themes
Key Aims & Ethos

Physics is instrumental in providing equity in understanding the world; being the language of how we move through it. Physics is relevant to all lives and experiences and should be available to all who wish to engage with it, regardless of background, protected characteristics or academic ability.

Physics is also key to unlocking transferrable skills, such as problem-solving, critical reasoning and numeracy, which can increase a person’s enjoyment, safety and belonging in society and increase economic benefit. Physics skills can lead to an immeasurable number of careers and jobs, in a wide variety of fields.
Moving Online

**Mentor Training**

**Aims**
- Creating buy-in and enthusiasm for the project ethos
- Creating community and building rapport
- Developing confidence, skills and knowledge

**Microsoft Teams**

**Mentee Sessions**

**Aims**
- Creating buy-in and enthusiasm for the project ethos
- Creating community and building rapport
- Developing confidence, skills and knowledge

**Microsoft Teams/Google Classroom**

But mentees not on camera/microphone
Co-mentoring

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How do we do this?

Create a culture where all contributions and people are welcomed in the space

• Inviting participants to bring their authentic selves
• Creating a safe place for contributions
• Eliciting contributions by removing barriers
• Adjusting the training space in collaboration with the mentors
The Online Dilemma

How do you build rapport, and generate engagement, with people you can’t see or hear?
Online communities rely on a level of trust.

Host to a blank screen means you can’t see people reacting to what you say.
  - The challenge for the host is creating a space where communication is relaxed, and people feel able to share their reactions

Online chats are *purposeful* because they don’t disappear, but you need to encourage spontaneity. Online training is also made fun, to keep people human.
Examples

• The difference between an online and in-person version of the same thing (such as ground rules)

• Emojis in the chat!

• Co-mentoring – you can’t lose track of the chat if two people are watching it! No-one gets ignored
‘Online’ self v. ‘whole’ self

How do you bring your whole self when an online persona feels over-curated?
Being authentic in online delivery

• Start with something people can relate to.
  • Mistakes make us human in an otherwise robotic medium. Don’t try to be perfect
  • Ask pronouns and nicknames! Make the space inclusive

• Be flexible with people, make recordings of sessions available, facilitate open conversations.
  • Ask yourself what people will remember about you as a host.

• Lead by example!
  • Value everything put into the chat and engage with it
Examples

• Reflections! Find the most effective way to get feedback

• Tone and positioning on camera help people to see you. Make eye contact with the camera!

• Review and reflect on your actions through session recordings
Recommendations

• Making effort to get to know about learners: ①
  • Using and remembering nicknames and pronouns

• Removing risk from contribution: ② ③
  • Anonymity tools (e.g. Mentimeter),
  • 3,2,1 send,

• Treating learners as humans: ① ② ④
  • Flexibility,
  • Open lines of communication,
  • Supportive culture,
  • Breaks,
  • Content warnings

① Inviting participants to bring their authentic selves
② Creating a safe place for contributions
③ Eliciting contributions by removing barriers
④ Adjusting the training space in collaboration with the mentors
Recommendations

• Creating space for fun: 1 2 3
  • Conversation/interactivity,
  • Gifs/emojis,

• Valuing contributions: 2
  • Thick valuing

• Collaborative design of ground rules 2 4

• Listening to feedback and implementing change 4

1 Inviting participants to bring their authentic selves
2 Creating a safe place for contributions
3 Eliciting contributions by removing barriers
4 Adjusting the training space in collaboration with the mentors
Want to know more?

- www.physicsmentoring.co.uk
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