



Case study

Two-way engagement: immediate feedback on communication



You get direct responses as to whether or not the students like, and understand, your answers to their questions.

Max Jamily, PhD student at SynBioCDT

Before taking part in *I'm a Scientist*, Max's previous outreach experience was mainly blog posts and summer camps. "That definitely sets *I'm a Scientist* aside, where the main focus was me and my work," he says.

Through participating in *I'm a Scientist*, Max developed a "better arsenal of metaphors and analogies" for describing what he does, and feels he has more confidence and a much better understanding of what public audiences find interesting about his work

Learning from your audience

For Max, the 'two-way' nature of *I'm a Scientist* was key to the impacts on his communication skills. Responses and feedback from students directly helped him develop new analogies, and told him when he wasn't explaining himself well enough.

"The whole thing was very two-way — you're giving answers to the questions people are directly asking you, and then you get their responses as to whether or not they like the answers, both immediately

because they'd say 'that makes sense' or they'd ask another question, and also long term because of the voting."

A new culture of communication

Since taking part, Max has found himself talking much more with colleagues in the lab about their work and his own, and in a way that is more meaningful than technical.

Two-way engagement where you're actually having a scientific discussion, pitched at the right level, is just so much more productive.

"I think the amount that I chatted with my colleagues when I had these inventive questions from students in *I'm a Scientist*, made me see that if I had that same level of discussion with them about my work it could be really productive. In general I've been trying to see the wood for the trees a bit more and actually talk about the concepts, rather than just the finer details, which as technical scientists we always get bogged down in."

Read the full case study: ias.im/96.12126

Register to take part: imascientist.org.uk/scientists