



Case study

Increasing students' confidence with I'm a Scientist



Many of our students lack confidence in their academic ability so they were buzzing when they realised they can hold their own in a conversation with intelligent and educated people. This helped them realise they are all scientists too!

Julia Anderson, Further Education Teacher

Julia is a teacher at a general further education college in a large, post-industrial, non-university town.

“Our students come to us lacking confidence,” she says. “They are doing A Levels, but because they’re at college rather than a Sixth Form, they think they’re ‘2nd class’ and they really aren’t.”

Growing students' confidence

Through the *I'm a Scientist* activity Julia's class had meaningful engagement with scientists, which increased her students' confidence.

“It was so good for students to see they can hold their own in a conversation with intelligent and educated people who have studied these topics for ten years,” she said.

Engaging students in a two-way conversation with scientists

Thanks to the activity, Julia's students “got unbridled access to scientists they wouldn't normally get to talk to. Students and scientists were on fire, sending

questions back and forth throughout the live chats.” Julia noticed how this two-way interaction differed from face-to-face events where students are too nervous to speak up.

We went to a university event and I wanted students to approach the scientists, but they were too shy. There was none of that in the live chat. No fear from students, they were just really comfortable.

Improving social mobility

Students were able to see their background wouldn't prevent them from becoming a scientist. One was keen to know where the scientists studied, and “when a scientist explained the majority of students on his undergraduate course were from state schools, my student could relate... it helped him see you can grow up working class, on a low income and get ahead.”

Read the full case study: ias.im/96.11012

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