Priya Ganatra, Spanish

I can honestly say that being a mentor for ASM has been one of my favourite experiences in my first year at Warwick! I initially applied because I’m thinking of considering a career in teaching and wanted to get some experience, and this programme has made me solidify that that’s the career path I want to pursue.

I think the main thing that I’ve gained has been an increase in confidence, because before I never could imagine being able to independently design and deliver a lesson to students (let alone at one point to 12 students in a different subject!), but I’ve also developed skills in patience and in communicating concepts clearly and concisely which I’m sure will come in useful for lots of things in the future. The programme has even helped me improve my own Spanish because it’s given me the chance to refresh some GCSE grammar points that I hadn’t looked at in a while and had forgotten.

Of course, the programme has also felt really rewarding because we’ve had the opportunity to help students from more disadvantaged backgrounds improve academically, and to talk to them about our experiences and answer questions about Higher Education. It was especially such a great feeling in the last session to see one of the students, who had been to most of the sessions, was remembering and using the complex writing structures that we had taught him! Overall, I’ve really enjoyed the programme and would love to take part again next year.

Ben Long, Religious Education
Being a mentor in Philosophy and RE has been a great experience. I have been able to work closely with students, seeing their confidence throughout the programme along with their enthusiasm for the subject. Having not done RE before, the ASM programme enabled me to develop my planning and communication skills whilst also allowing me to help local students with their studies. I used the ASM programme to provide a bridge for the students from their GCSEs to the prospects of further study at university, a connection that many students find distant and ambiguous. This is especially the case with a subject like Philosophy, both due to its scope and lack of prevalence in school curriculums. Overall, the mentoring programme has enabled the development of both myself and local young people, hence I would recommend it to anyone interested and I hope to still be part of it in the future.

Karol Cecot, Spanish

I have thoroughly enjoyed the entirety of the ASM programme. I was mentoring in Spanish at Sidney Stringer Academy and found the whole process very rewarding, not just for me but for the students also. I was able to get somewhat of an insight into the world of teaching as I had the opportunity to have my own students and pass the knowledge on to them. It was really rewarding to see that after my explanation, certain concepts that are quite difficult in Spanish became easier for the students to understand. In broader terms, it was also nice to see the interest that the students had regarding University and University life- I was happy to explain what the process looks like (regarding UCAS, student loans, accommodation, etc.) and thus, allowed them to understand that it is an achievable goal if they work hard!

In general, I would love to have an opportunity to repeat this experience as it was definitely very enriching and valuable, it would be great to see some more students if there is to be another year of the ASM programme!
Sofia Lisk, History

I have learnt a lot from being a mentor and certainly found it to be enjoyable break from studying on a Wednesday afternoon. Previously I had worked as a tutor in an education centre, but I learnt that working in a school environment feels very different. It was great to practise planning sessions which were a mixture of academics with broader study skills and I enjoyed sharing resources that helped me go through my own GCSEs. I also particularly enjoyed reflecting on what I personally have enjoyed about studying and going to university to share this experience with others and offer advice.

Above all, perhaps, I developed my ability to discuss sensitive issues when students would discuss the difficulties of balancing home challenges or health issues with studying, to name a few examples. This was perhaps the most valuable lesson for me as these aren’t issues that I regularly come into contact with during private tuition which attracts children from typically wealthier backgrounds.

I hope this is helpful and I do hope the programme is funded again next year!

Kate Grimsdale, French
I have been a mentor for a student studying French. It was extremely rewarding to see the same girl attend the sessions week on week. She used our tips in her speaking exam and it was great to hear that she was taking our feedback on board. I enjoyed getting to know our mentee over the weeks but I also enjoyed getting to know the other mentors. It was a great way to meet other like-minded people who perhaps don't study the same course as you. Being part of the mentor scheme has allowed me to feel better prepared for my teaching placement during my year abroad. I feel the mentor scheme also enhanced my adaptability as, often, the student told us what she wanted to work on which made the sessions quite spontaneous!

Jack Kendall, History

I have been a mentor for History and have really enjoyed the entire process. I have also gained so many skills such as time management and delivering content in an engaging
manner. I have enjoyed working with the students on revising their GCSE content, as well as answering some general questions about university and learning a little bit about their thoughts on their futures. I hope that the sessions have been useful in making the idea of university seem less abstract, as well as providing some practical revision before entering Year 11.

Olivia Saunders, French

I have really enjoyed being part of the mentoring programme this year and helping year 12 students with their A-Level French work. It has been really lovely to be able to chat with the students each week about a subject that both they and I enjoy so much whilst acting as a mentor for them not only in the subject but also for University life or life post-18 education in general. The Campus visit was a particular highlight for me as the students were able to experience for themselves a taste of the University life that we had discussed in our sessions. I hope that the students found the sessions productive and beneficial, it was a pleasure to work with them.

Sam Webb, History

Being an academic support mentor for history has been an extremely rewarding experience and has greatly improved my organisational and speaking-listening skills.
Working with students who were engaged and eager to learn made it easy to teach them key concepts and deliver revision activities. I feel that this programme has allowed me to make a real difference in the education and academic future of the group, and for that I’m very grateful to have been given this opportunity. I know that these skills will assist me in my future studies and overall, I feel I have gained much from the experience.

**Jodie Green, Chemistry**

As someone considering a future in teaching, being an academic support mentor has been a really valuable experience. It was a really rewarding to make an impact to a young person’s education and I enjoyed seeing their progress over the weeks. I have learnt from this how to be a better teacher and mentor, developed my communication skills, and have gained a lot of confidence throughout the process.

**Florence Crewe, Maths**

I have been a maths mentor for the past academic year and I’ve learnt how rewarding teaching can be: to be able to guide a student from saying “I can’t do this” to seeing them fully understand that topic in a session or two is a great feeling. While I only mentored them for a few months, I felt like I made a lot of progress; mainly with regards to their confidence and for many of the students I had, a bit of confidence was all they needed. I’ve also learnt how adapt to different students learning styles, because although they were
from the same set, some students told me they prefer visual learning and interacting, while others prefer just doing practice questions. This ability to adapt is useful in all aspects of life – not just teaching.

I enjoyed mostly seeing how far the students’ confidence had come – at the beginning they would be tentative to ask questions but at the end they would ask lots of questions and be happy to ask even if they thought it was a silly question. I also enjoyed educating the students about what options they have with regards to jobs/higher education because this was an area that they knew almost nothing about. I briefly discussed student loans and told them where they could find more information and a few of the students who initially said they would not consider university because of them cost, afterwards seemed much more keen on the idea. So that was an area that a felt I made a real difference. I gained experience with taking a group of year 10 students and keeping their attention for an hour which can be quite a challenge.

I’ve also gained experience on how to lesson plan, and when is appropriate to go off topic – for example the students showed an interest in Fermat’s Last Theorem which is something worth going off topic about because it is a very famous maths problem and gives an insight to University maths.

Harry Smith, Maths

The ASM programme provided us with the opportunity to experience teaching life inside a real school with real students who needed real help, and it was very insightful with respect to the challenges teachers face on a daily basis. I loved being a part of it all, talking to teachers and students alike about their experiences and supporting them with their learning. I’ve learned the importance of planning lessons and being able to catch all questions, as going into lessons without a clear knowledge could easily lead into an unproductive or confusing session. I think the university visit was my favourite part of the whole experience, being able to engage young students with the some of the maths we
learn at university, and seeing their excitement for university life, like living on campus and the freedom of their learning. As a prospective teacher, this has certainly made me excited for the path ahead.

Martha Almeida, Spanish

I have really enjoyed being a mentor on this program, as it’s great to consolidate my own knowledge as well as helping others at GCSE level to prepare for their exams and improve their knowledge and learning. From being a mentor I’ve learnt about delegation and cooperation with fellow mentees, but also adaptability to what the student wants and how to present information in a way that GCSE students will be able to learn and retain it.

It has been really rewarding to see one of my students remembering a key phrase that I had taught the previous week, and knowing that I was able to help them to make the most of the program and the opportunity. I also enjoyed talking about university and encouraging others to think about a path in higher education, giving my advice and personal experience.

Charlie Harrison-Austin, Maths

I mentored 3 GCSE students in Maths. I enjoyed helping them understand new topics as it was rewarding when I could see how their confidence had improved. I also appreciated the opportunity to try teaching to students. It helped me to understand how planning a lesson can be important and increased my appreciation for my own teachers!
Tia Patel, Sociology

Over the last 8 weeks, I have thoroughly enjoyed working as an academic support mentor to a small group of GCSE Sociology students at West Coventry Academy. Working within the education system is a career path I aim to follow in the future, which made this programme an ideal opportunity for me to work professionally with staff and students, familiarise myself with a classroom environment, and build confidence in planning and leading lessons.

Throughout the weekly sessions, I aimed to solidify core content knowledge, provide useful revision resources, spark sociological debates, and engage pupils with interactive quizzes and activities. During this experience, I was able to quickly build rapports with the pupils- which was particularly beneficial when discussing plans for life after their exams and possible university prospects. Overall, I believe this programme has greatly helped both the students and mentors involved and am optimistic it will run even more successfully next year!

Ashleigh Lin, Maths

I have really enjoyed my time as an academic mentor- as the weeks progressed, I feel like I really engaged with the students. I enjoyed helping them with their schoolwork and being able to take charge of my session each week, which although was slightly nerve wracking at first, definitely helped to improve my confidence in presenting ideas to a group, especially to a group of students who look up to you as a mentor rather than one of their peers. I mostly found it rewarding to chat to them and offer advice for things like exam stress and their future academic goals, which I feel that they genuinely valued. I appreciate the opportunity to have been able to help these students and I have really enjoyed this experience.
Benjamin Fox, Maths

I worked as a maths mentor and thought it was a great experience. My teaching skills improved greatly over the course of my employment. I learned almost as much from my class as they did from me. I got along well with my class and I'm glad I got the chance to work with them. I would definitely recommend this job opportunity to anyone interested in mentoring.

Sol Rodriguez Oliete, Philosophy

My name is Sol and this year I was a mentor for philosophy. This experience has helped me develop my organizational skills and has increased my confident. I have always been a bit scared of talking in front of an audience and being a mentor has helped me overcome this fear. Unfortunately, there were not enough philosopher mentees to continue with the group. However, I was given another role that allowed me to continue teaching philosophy and engage with the students in an indirect way. I really enjoyed the event when they came to Warwick as I had the opportunity to meet new students. I found that they
were all very enthusiastic and were not afraid to participate. It was a very nice experience that I think all of us enjoyed.

Ethan Jones, French

I very much enjoyed my time on the ASM programme. I've learned a lot about planning lessons and adapting to students' specific needs and difficulties. I think I've gained the ability to try out and test different teaching strategies in order to find the most effective ones for students. I've also gained an understanding for teaching French culture to students through the use of listening and video comprehension exercises which is useful to know about, especially for standing out when applying to universities and writing a personal statement. I was happy to see that most students were interested in continuing into further education in the future and was able to signpost them towards useful resources in that area.

David Zaho, Maths

The thing I enjoyed about Academic Support Mentoring was how much I could relate to the students' situations. I was in their shoes less than five years ago, and was therefore able to pass on my recent experiences of what comes after GCSEs, from choosing A-levels to applying for university.

It was rewarding to guide them with their next steps. I also feel my ability to plan sessions improved, as well as my communication skills with different types of audiences.
Dan Shamron, Maths

I’ve been a mentor for maths and found myself really engaging with the students. I was able to help the students with their maths work and chat to them about university and their prospects. I found that they were quite appreciative of my help and saw that they were quite nervous about the idea of going to university, but after speaking to them they realised that university was a very achievable goal for them! I’ve enjoyed being a mentor and hope to carry on inspiring students in the future.

Ben Afram, Maths

I really enjoyed the ASM mentoring programme as it gave me the opportunity to be independent. I was able to plan and deliver my own sessions, I was able to cover topics that I wanted to (and thought the mentees would benefit from) as well as pass along any tips I thought would be useful. I was stepping out of my comfort zone but it gave me the chance to improve my confidence and public speaking in explaining concepts in maths to a group of people I didn’t know.
As a mentor, I learnt that some parts of the teenage school experience don’t change drastically within a few years and so there is always common ground to connect with the mentees but also, everyone has a different experience so there are always opportunities for both the mentors and mentees to learn something new. The students that I got to work with were great: they were friendly, welcoming and participated well - they made me feel like the effort I was putting in wasn’t in vain which I appreciated so I hope they benefitted as much as I did.

Charlotte Mitchell, Chemistry Mentor

During my time as a mentor I really started to bond with the students and by the end they were more comfortable to ask questions about both chemistry, to widen their knowledge, and university. I believe this program has had a huge impact on the students as I saw their eyes light up when I explained something in a different way to their teacher which before they didn’t fully understand.

As well as mentoring the students in chemistry we also talked about attending university. Some were interested in studying medicine and others were undecided at the start, but by the end were thinking about studying chemistry or continuing in STEM. It is really rewarding being able to inspire a new generation of women in STEM.

I would have thoroughly enjoyed and gained a lot from having a mentor in either year 10 or 12 so being able to do this for students is really rewarding. For me it has built my confidence and cemented my ability in being able to teach people chemistry in a way that is clear and understandable.