

The Brilliant Club Case Study



Tutor Name:
Sarah Ward

PhD Research Area:
Medicinal chemistry
Title: Disrupting the Aurora
A/N-myc interaction in
Neuroblastoma

PhD University:
University of Leeds

Tutor since: Spring 2017 (April/
May)

Brilliant Club Programme:
The Scholars Programme



Which schools have you taught at?

Bingley Grammar, Moor End Academy, Temple Moor High School, Beckfoot Thornton Academy, Dixons McMillan Academy, Batley Grammar, Crofton Academy, St Peter's C of E Primary School, Whitcliffe Mount School, Batley Girls High School, Buttershaw Business and Enterprise College, Bradford Girls Grammar

What is your Scholars Programme course title?

Treating the Undruggable: How to find new medicines when what we have doesn't work (September 2017-May 2018)

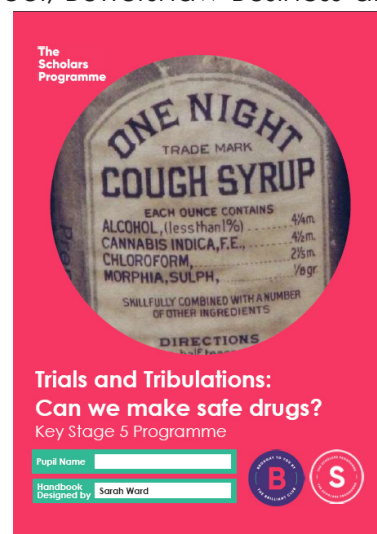
Trials and Tribulations: Can we make safe drugs? (September 2018-May 2020)

What made you want to apply to be a Scholars Programme tutor?

I've been involved in other outreach opportunities during both my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. I led a Kickboxing project in local schools and got involved with local science events which engaged with the general public. I was really interested in The Scholars Programme because it meant I could design a programme based on my own research, which I hadn't had the chance to do before. As a pupil who would have matched some of The Scholars Programme's target criteria I loved the idea of promoting university-style learning to these pupils.

What has been the most rewarding moment of your Scholars Programme placement so far?

One Year 9 pupil in particular stands out for me. At the start of the course she wasn't confident and didn't think she was good enough to have been picked alongside some of the other students. By the end of the course she was planning to go to university to study medicine and eventually focus on oncology. One of the tutorials had focused on what happens in the body during cancer and why it's hard to treat. At the end of the session she told me that her aunt was currently being treated for cancer and she'd always thought you had to do something "wrong" to get cancer (from campaigns talking about the link between smoking, sunbeds, obesity and cancer).



The Brilliant Club Case Study



It was great to see her become more confident in her ability, but also to see her become interested and gain a better understanding of science affecting her own life at the time.



Tell me about being a Scholars Programme tutor. How has it helped in your development as a research students.

My research is interdisciplinary, so I often have to talk to very different audiences and explain my work. Being able to pitch my research at GCSE, A level and at taster lectures through The Scholars Programme has helped me adapt to different audiences much more confidently than before.

What have you gained from being part of The Scholars Programme community of researchers

I've met so many researchers from around the country, some of whom are working in areas very similar to my own and I've been able to make some great connections. I've also had the chance to talk to researchers in very different areas. Without The Scholars Programme I wouldn't have met researchers studying Charles Dickens, premature childbirth or quantum cryptography.

How has The Scholars Programme affected the way you approach undergraduate teaching?

From training weekends I've learnt better ways to use questions when assessing work with my students present, and I've become better at helping students who are struggling without just giving them the answers.

How do you think you have made a difference to pupils as a Scholars Programme tutor?

At the end of the programme a number of my pupils have said they've realised university could be something they could do and better understand what a studying at university would be like. I always try and link my courses to things they experience in real life, so some of my pupils have said they've learnt more about cancers which affected their relatives, why new medicines can be hard to find and how we can limit a disease outbreak (this placement finished just as coronavirus was starting to make headlines).

Do you have any advice for someone looking to apply to work as a Scholars Programme tutor?

The Scholars Programme does require extra work outside PhD research, but the rewards make it completely worth it. If you put the effort in to get to know your pupils and get them interested in your topic they can write some really amazing pieces of work on topics much more complicated than they'd probably cover in school.

To find out more about how you could become a Scholars Programme tutor, please visit our website at www.thebrilliantclub.org