

Breakout session on “How to build communities of practise on teaching within physics departments”

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The following is a list of the topics discussed:

- There is the question of how to take students away from a “do as your told instructions” into becoming independent problem solvers/investigators. This is perhaps a matter of creativity and confidence.
- Anecdotally there is a **taboo** about talking about teaching in some physics departments. We want to be able to be comfortable sitting down with colleagues over a cup of tea and informally talk about how each other teaches. (Is this a fear of criticism?)
- Thinking about graduate students as teachers
 - Teaching is seen as transactional - you get what you pay for.
 - **Need to show that physicists value teaching** (arrogance towards teaching compared to research) - as role models for students.
 - **Emphasise the importance of teaching for students** (in all future employment they would be expected to ‘manage’ other people to some extent - this is basically teaching)
 - **Importance of teaching for universities (TEF/rankings)** this can be used to get external pressure to help facilitate change.
- Practical tips and tricks:
 - Having meetings with GTAs to discuss their roles, what are they not sure about, fears of teaching, how to handle different situations (use concrete examples)?
 - Ask GTAs on what areas they want feedback.
 - Meeting on Zoom to discuss/bounce ideas off of GTAs and let them contribute. Breakout rooms to discuss concerns. Ask them how to help build communities for UGs. **Grads closer to students and know what works/doesn’t.**
 - **Value GTAs as part of the solution.**
 - Managing expectations of what is university (this year especially). GTAs are the bridge between faculty and students.
 - Think about what experiences GTAs from international and other different types of universities can bring to the table. They would have seen different things, and you can learn from different ways of doing things.
 - **Regular teaching seminars - “treat your teaching like you teach your research”**. For example, people in a department who change their teaching in any small way - give a seminar on it.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzobpYM5WGk>
<http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1298265/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- General Physics seminars - this is also teaching! Effective communication. Make professors aware of teaching - asking who is your audience.