

Welcome to the August '09 edition of the **In2science** update. We welcome all new Peer Mentors and schools to the program and we are looking forward to a great semester. Placements started officially this week though a couple of Mentors had already started!!!

Since the end of the last round of placements in June our Mentors have been busy with exams and the **In2science** team have been busy training 47 new Mentors and arranging their placements ready for this semester. We have been able to place approximately 87 Mentors in 38 of our partner schools. As can sometimes be the case, some Mentors have not been able to be placed this semester due to timetable constraints at either a University or school level and a couple of schools have not been able to participate due to additional commitments.

Our new Mentors are looking to gain a range of benefits from the program. Here are some of their comments:

“Getting out of my comfort zone and understand the teaching environment.”



Mentors (left to right) Michael, Hewitt, Lynda & Taher at the Bundoora training session

“I would like to work with students to help improve their understanding of science and so they have fun”

“Building [my] confidence and better communication skills with other people.”

“Revising basic scientific concepts, whilst mentoring, which can help me with my course.”

“Want to help out students who need help and are then able to learn by themselves with confidence.”

In2science Prizes

Once again we have a number of prizes to give away to participating teachers and university students. This semester we are grateful to following for their kind donations:

Prize	Donated by:
1x Teacher - <i>Nature of Biology – book 1</i> 1x Teacher - <i>Nature of Biology – book 2</i> 1x Teacher - <i>Nature of Biology – book 2 – teachers resource manual</i> 1x Mentor - <i>Science Alive – level 6</i> 1x Mentor - <i>Science Quest 1</i> 1x Mentor - <i>Science Quest 2</i> 1x Mentor - <i>Science Quest 3</i>	Jacaranda books John Wiley & Sons Ltd www.jaconline.com.au/
A year subscription to Australian science magazine COSMOS 1x Teacher 1x Peer Mentor	Cosmos Magazine www.cosmosmagazine.com Luna Media
Global warming mug 1x Teacher 2x Peer Mentor	In2science

These and other prizes will be awarded towards the end of the semester.

Placements for this semester run from:
week of 3 August to Week of 26 October
(11 school weeks)

In2science News

Congratulations to our own **John McDonald, In2science Manager**, on his latest award. John received an Australian Learning and Teaching Council (**ALTC**) citation for outstanding contribution to student learning.

Long serving Mentors - Last semester saw a record **fourteen** of our Peer Mentors complete their third semester of placement. Students from La Trobe University received their *Letter of Commendation* at a recent morning coffee with Dean of Science, Technology & Engineering; Professor David Finlay.

Mentors from the University of Melbourne will receive theirs on 12 August.

This semester we welcome two new schools to the program:

Canterbury Girls Secondary College
Heathmont Secondary College

This takes us to a total of 44 schools associated with the program.

Evaluations - Many thanks to all the schools and Mentors who took time to fill in our *'end of placement'* evaluations for semester one. It is only through receiving this feedback that we can ensure the program is running smoothly in the schools and everyone involved is benefitting. Link teachers will be sent copies of this internal evaluation to help them build the program in their schools.

RMIT - Brains Trust - RMIT has recently received funding to run a one year project along similar lines to In2science. Focussing on Year 5-8 students in several northern suburbs schools they have been recruiting their university students to participate. **In2science** Mentors Fred (Uni Melb) and Shainie (LTU) kindly volunteered their time to talk to prospective Mentors at two RMIT recruitment sessions in the city. **In2science** wishes RMIT every success with their program and is happy to offer support where it can.

Information for Schools

Many thanks to all the teachers who have welcomed Mentors into their classrooms for semester two. It is great to have so many teachers seeing the value of the Mentors in the classroom and the opportunity it presents them to try different pedagogy. All teachers with a Mentor should have received a pack from **In2science** (please contact us if you have not received one). Many of our teachers are becoming quite experienced at utilising a Mentor in the classroom and have achieved great success over the years. The aim of the program is to help engage students in science and mathematics and we actively encourage teachers to seek new ways of enhancing the lessons with the support of the Mentor.

If this is your first time with a Mentor it is extremely important that you have read through the documentation to help understand the program and what can be achieved through it.

Communication between teacher and Mentor is integral to the smooth running of a placement. Hopefully all teachers have an opportunity to talk with the Mentor about their expectations and about ideas for classroom lessons prior to the commencement of the placement. For Mentors, students and teachers to get the most out of the regular Mentor visits, providing hands on, practical activities and group work is the best approach to take where possible. Where possible it is best to avoid sitting tests, showing DVD's and extended teacher talk as these severely limit the time the Mentor has to interact with the students and engage in their learning.

If teachers want to undertake activities that may require additional support from the universities, your initial contact should be with the Mentor and then the **In2science Team**. **In2science** is very keen to support activities which help engage students with the University community.



Mentors (left to right) Yagmur, Hannah, Adele, Erin, Lori & Nicole with Prof Finlay

National Science Week

August 15 – 23

Theme: *Astronomy: Science Without Limits*

If you are planning activities for **National Science Week**, then maybe the Mentors can help out. Science week takes place during this block of placements so let **In2science** know if there is anything you would like to do and we will see if we can help out.

Date for your diary:

In2science Day for Y9 students
Wednesday 2 December 2009
The University of Melbourne

Chemistry teachers - To get the latest news on **VICS Outreach** or **RACI(Vic) Education** events, sign up for their newsletter. Send a plain text email to mailserv@unimelb.edu.au with "*subscribe chemistry-connections*" in the email body.

Biology teachers – check out the [VCE Biology Network](#) for regular updates and to join their mailing list.

Information for Mentors

Many thanks for volunteering to be part of **In2science** this semester. Ensure that you have read through your handbook again and remember that as with many things that you do, the more you put in the more you get out. Try to push your "**comfort zone**" to challenge both yourself and the students. For many of you this will be your first placement and we hope that, despite a few nerves at the start, you settle into your school quickly. The first few weeks are always the most difficult as you get to know the students and then you. Remember what you learnt at training and try to be as proactive in the class as you can. If you are unsure of anything then do talk to the class teacher or contact the **In2science Team** who are only too happy to help and offer advice.

Many teachers have commented that it is very much appreciated when Mentors show initiative. Where possible try offering to bring something to show the students or suggest an activity you think the students may enjoy. By becoming proactive in the classroom you improve the interaction you have with the students; asking them about the work they are doing and engaging them in meaningful conversation are skills you can develop. Talk to the teacher if you want to take anything in to show the students. Feel free to ask for support from **In2science** if you want to organise any visits etc.

Make sure you talk with the teacher about what you would like to accomplish from the placement so they can support you in achieving your goals. They too may have outcomes they wish to achieve and it is only by working together that these can be realised. Try to learn a few names and don't be put off by students not wanting help initially, as they get to know you they will become more receptive.

Where possible, relate the class work to the work you are doing at university. Remember to encourage the students to explain their ideas and understanding of the work they are undertaking. A good Mentor has good listening skills. Praise and encouragement go a long way with everyone – use it to your advantage. The bookmarks, stickers, pencils and erasers help too! Let John, Alison or Jacinta know should you require more.

Don't forget to keep a record of your travel expenses for reimbursement of up to \$10.00 per week. Travel claim forms are located at the back of your Peer Mentor's pack.

Placements officially started this week (**3 August**) and will run until the week of **26 October**. The semester is 11 weeks in length and there will be a school term break between the 18 September and 5 October

Facebook - for this semester we are looking to set up a **group** which should make communicating with fellow Mentors much easier. We will let you know about this once everything is organised.

Support Mentors - In2science established a small team of experienced Mentors (past and current) who have offered to support new mentors through their placements via the blog or regular informal meetings. The groups at both La Trobe Bundoora and the University of Melbourne held coffee nights during the first week of semester. Those Mentors who

attended had the opportunity to chat amongst themselves and learn from the experiences of others. We hope to have additional coffee nights like this in the middle and at the end of this semesters placement block. Hopefully we will get many more attending.

Mentor Shainie wrote the following from the La Trobe, Bundoora In2science Coffee night:

*We held our first ever "coffee with a Mentor" session on the 29th of August at the Bundoora Campus. It was organised by some **Support Mentors** to provide a platform for new Mentors to meet others involved in the program in a very informal manner, have a chat, have some coffee and in essence to have a good time. Comments on placements, life at uni, experiences both good or bad, concerns and quite a few laughs were shared over biscuits and coffee.*

It was great to see the new Mentors enjoying themselves, and to all of you who missed out on it, don't be shy to come to the next one!!!! We will let you know when the date and time is confirmed.



News from the Institutions

La Trobe University

Hardy little fish is struggling

A tough little fish that looks like a golden sardine has been saved from possible extinction in the drought-stricken Murray-Darling system by an ecologist at the University's Mildura campus.

Researchers identify crucial protein

In a world first, Melbourne scientists have discovered that the stress signaling protein AMPK is responsible for stimulating infection in mitochondrially diseased cells.

The research undertaken by scientists from La Trobe University, Deakin University and the University of Turin, Italy, was carried out in the slime mould (*Dictyostelium discoideum*) whose cells are strikingly similar to human cells.

Postgraduate Expo Month

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/postgrad/events/pgexpo>

Open Days

Bendigo – 16 August

Shepparton – 21(Fri) August

Albury-Wodonga - 23 August

Melbourne (Bundoora) – 30 August

Mildura and nearby locations - 28 July to 14 August

The University of Melbourne

Behrend Memorial Lecture, featuring Professor Tao

Visiting Australia as the Clay-Mahler Lecturer, Professor Terence Tao will talk about some of his personal experiences on how the internet is transforming the way he and other mathematicians do research.

Time and Date: 6:00pm, Monday 31st August 2009

Venue: Copland Theatre, Economics & Commerce Building, University of Melbourne

To register please email science-events@unimelb.edu.au

Podcast – [the Effect of Climate Change on Biodiversity](#)

Well worth a listen.

Open Day "A Day Can Make A World of Difference" Parkville campus Sunday 16 August 10 - 4

The Faculty of Science has launched its new web pages especially for secondary schools. Future students, parents, teachers and careers advisers can find out more about the opportunities and activities of the Faculty at <http://www.science.unimelb.edu.au/schools/home>

Monash University

[New findings on the birth of the Solar System](#)

A team of international astrophysicists, including Dr Maria Lugaro from Monash University, has discovered a new explanation for the early composition of our solar system.

Astronomy In A Nutshell

2009 is the International Year of Astronomy (IYA). Monash University Astronomers have developed an exhibition that explores and explains astronomy.

Date: Friday May 15, 2009 to Wednesday December 23, 2009

Time: 10am until 5pm, Monday to Friday

Venue: Building 74, Monash Science Centre, Clayton campus

Cost: free

Wildlife of Gondwana Exhibition

The Monash Science Centre will host the Wildlife of Gondwana Exhibition. This exciting exhibition explores the diversity of life in the great southern super-continent Gondwana from 3.8 billion years ago to the present. Both exhibitions are open to schools and the general public.

More information: 9905 1370 or website: <http://www.sciencecentre.monash.edu.au/>

Websites to try

Here are a couple of sites that may be of interest:

IET Faraday – UK site - exciting year-long programme of resources, activities, competitions and events designed to inspire young people about science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

With a new theme every year, the website contains a wealth of resources, including teaching materials:

<http://faraday.theiet.org/>

If you are looking for breaking science news and articles try:

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/>

Chemistry World delivers the latest chemistry news every day:

<http://www.rsc.org/Chemistryworld/>

This site focuses on physics in everyday life. It has a link which has many different experiments using common household items:

www.smglaels.org/physics/home/links/physics_in_everyday_life.htm

The In2science Team

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