

Welcome to the August '07 edition of the **In2science** Peer Mentoring newsletter. We are looking forward to a great semester of placements with benefits for all involved. Although the Mentors are only a couple of weeks into their placements many have already commented about the warm welcome they received in the classes and the enjoyment of working with the school students.

There are **64 Mentors placed in 28** of our partner schools. Unfortunately we did not have any Mentors for our schools in Wodonga. Hopefully we will get placements running there again next year.

There have been some last minute changes as timetables and availability of both Mentors and teachers change. This led to some Mentors being unable to take up placements.

In preparation for this semester's placements we trained **39** new Mentors and it was interesting to read what these students wanted to gain from their involvement. Many were looking to gain classroom experience to help with their career decision making process, others looking to enhance their communication skills and employability:

I want to gain more self confidence and have the opportunity to inspire students to do science.

I want to gain an insight into how science is taught.

Improve my communication skills and have a break from the typical Uni week.

Semester 2 placements finish the week of the 22nd October.

This semester we also have **two new schools** to add to the ever growing list:

**Bundoora SC
Gleneagles campus - Eumemmerring College**

We welcome them to **In2science** and hope that the teachers and students gain benefit from having Peer Mentors volunteer in their schools.

Please send in photos (digital) of the Mentors in action so they can be shared in our newsletter. This could be some new and exciting practical that is being undertaken or it could be of the Mentors presenting in the class.

Thank you to everyone for completing and returning the **evaluation forms**. These provide valuable feedback about the program and how we can make improvements.

These evaluations came at a time when the new reporting system was being undertaken in schools so understandably we received fewer returns than normal.

The report is on the In2science website:
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/scitech/mentoring/annualreports.htm>

Once again a very positive set of outcomes occurred in the schools and Mentors, students and teachers all gained from the experience. **44.9%** of the student returns said they now interested in pursuing the subject beyond Yr10. **87%** of students want a Mentor in future lessons. Students claimed they got more work done with the extra support in class. Here is some of the feedback:

"Mentor was a very calming influence on the class especially the girls. A great

2007 – International Polar Year
<http://www.ipy.org/>

role model. All the girls in the class said they now aspired to do maths VCE."

Class teacher

"Every single time I needed help he was there. He made me understand everything I didn't know. He was great to have around and he was inspirational. Made me love physics."

Student

Teaching is one of the most important jobs in the world. Patience and passion are the keys for being a good teacher.

Mentor

I gained enhanced communication skills (especially simplifying difficult concepts), a rewarding feeling when the kids clicked with a scientific idea that was previously foreign to them.

Mentor

The **In2nanotech outreach program** for 2007 is taking shape. This year we are heading to Gippsland for a week at the end of November. We already have **Sale SC, Bairnsdale SC, Warragul RC and Traralgon SC** booked in.

On Thursday 19th July we ran a nanotechnology session at our new partner school Eumemmerring SC, Gleneagles Campus. Five undergraduate nanotechnology students gave up an afternoon of their holidays to run the session with the school's high achieving Y10 science classes. The session was excellent and it was wonderful to see the enthusiasm of the school students for this fascinating field of science.

National Science Week
August 18 – 27
Theme: Antarctic Science

Information for Schools

Please ensure that all teachers with Mentors have had copies of the booklet; "Getting the most out of the In2science Peer Mentoring Program – a guide for teachers". Even if teachers have had Mentors before there may be something in it that they have not thought of. This booklet is available on the website or copies can be posted out on request:

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/scitech/mentoring/schools.htm>

A **letter** about the program will be sent out soon to each teacher hosting a Mentor in your school.

If your school is planning anything for **National Science Week**, try to see if you can involve the Mentors in some way – they may even have some ideas of their own.

Some teachers may be aware of the **ICT conference** held at **Northcote HS** in conjunction with **STAV** on the 24th August. There is a Cheese and Wine event at the end of proceedings (3.30pm) which is going to be an opportunity to meet scientists, academics and a host of other people associated with science education. **In2science** will be making a presentation as part of this session.

If you are attending it would be great to see you there and have your support.

Information for Mentors

Ensure you have read through the information regarding mentoring and remember that the more you put in the more you get out. Try to push your '**comfort zone**' to challenge both yourself and the students. Many teachers have commented that it is very much appreciated when Mentors show **initiative** in the classroom and offer ideas for activities etc. Please ask for help if you require it, especially if you are unsure on anything or would like to do an activity etc.

We are currently planning out a visit schedule to come and see you. However, if you are doing something exciting with your classes please send us details as we may be able to attend.

Don't forget to keep us informed as to how your placement is progressing and if there is any help or support you require.

News from the Institutions

La Trobe University

Open Days 2007

5 August - **Bendigo**

12 August - **Shepparton & Mildura**

19 August - **Albury-Wodonga**

26 August - **Melbourne (Bundoora)**

The University of Melbourne

Open Days 2007

Werribee: Sunday 25 March

Parkville: Sunday, 19 August

Burnley and Dookie: Sunday, 26 August

Information on the **Melbourne Model**:

<http://www.futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/courses/melbmodel/>

Websites to try

Interested in nanotechnology? Try these sites:

www.nanovic.com.au

<http://www.azonano.com/> A-Z of nanotechnology.

John McDonald

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In2science Website

<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/scitech/mentoring/index.html>