

Welcome to September's **In2science** newsletter. This semester we have 64 Mentors working in 28 of our partner schools.

Semester two is becoming a very busy time in both the schools and the Universities. Our Peer Mentors been involved in a range of activities and are busy helping teacher arrange more exciting things for the students to do.

Last month saw the annual **Open Day** season at the Universities. At the University of Melbourne, **In2science** had a prominent display in Wilson Hall. Although most prospective students were focussed on which course they wished to study there were lots of questions about the program from both interested students and parents who commented on the benefits of such programs. Thanks go to **Mentors Nick and Yan Ting** who gave up their time to talk to students and support the program. At La Trobe University's Bundoora campus there were **In2science** displays and some of the nanotechnology activities from our roadshow were displayed. Thanks to **Mentor Emma** for her help with these.

Hopefully there will be some future students who have already decided to get involved in the program once they have completed the required first year of study.

**In2science** has been showcased in a recent Department of Education and Early Childhood Development DVD that highlights the different Science initiatives occurring in the state through the **School Innovation in Teaching (SIT)** program. **Mentor Stephanie** from the University of Melbourne was filmed at Northcote HS along with **Tania Blanksby** from La Trobe's Department of Genetics who ran a gel electrophoresis activity for the

students. Look out for the DVD in schools soon.

The end of August saw **National Science Week** with its theme of Antarctic Science. Congratulations to all the schools that were able to organise events and activities at their school to help celebrate. **In2science** was able to do a few talks about some Antarctic-based research being done by the Department of Physics at La Trobe University. Hopefully this gave the students an insight into why scientists conduct studies there and the difficulties of coping with the harsh Antarctic environment.

The '**Meet and Greet the Top Cheese**' event at the ICT conference hosted by Northcote High School and STAV Publishing on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> August was a great success. Sponsored by the **Deans of Science** from Victoria's eight universities, this was an opportunity for teachers to meet those at the forefront of current scientific research. **In2science** made a showcase presentation about the program and it was wonderful to see the interest it generated from schools and universities wishing to find out more.



*In2science presentation at ICT conference*

**In2science** is still keen to have an **industry partner** for 2008. Interested parties can contact the Peer Mentoring Coordinator: [j.mcdonald@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:j.mcdonald@latrobe.edu.au)

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

**Victorian Science and Engineering Super Challenge.** Two of our partner schools won through to the Victorian final of this event. Congratulations to **Flora Hill SC** and **Reservoir District SC** for winning their regional heats and best wishes for the state final.

### Mentoring in Action

Our Mentors have been extremely busy in our partner schools. Here is just a snapshot of some of the work they have been doing to help engage students and raise their aspirations in science and mathematics.

At **Reservoir District SC**, Mentor Bonita has been working with students in their SEAL program. This has involved making visits to the **Melbourne Wildlife Sanctuary** at La Trobe's Bundoora campus. Here Bonita undertook some investigations with the students using digital data logging equipment along with some field observations and food web investigations. Great work Bonita.



*Mentor Bonita talks to students at the Melbourne Wildlife Sanctuary.*

Also at Reservoir District SC, Mentor Rebecca (a PhD student) has been supporting students with their own investigations into energy consumption in the school.



*Mentor Rebecca helps students at RDSC*

In preparation for the recent **lunar eclipse**, Mentor Peter gave the students at **Kew HS** an informative presentation on the planets and what caused the eclipse. Well done Peter.



*Mentor Peter describes the eclipse.*

At **Lalor North SC**, Mentors Duc and Stacey have been active participants in their maths and science classes. Duc has been helping with forces and motion and Stacey has been an invaluable asset to the Y7 Maths class.

At **McKinnon SC**, Mentor Gemma has been helping students understand forces and inertia as they undertook a challenge to build a container to protect a raw egg during a fall. Well done Gemma.

At **Mt Waverley SC**, Mentor Kevin has been working with students on their understanding of genetics and helping them build DNA models.



*Mentor Kevin helps students understand genetics.*

At **Coburg Senior HS**, Mentor Belinda has been helping the students get to grips with cosmetic chemistry. Belinda gave a short presentation to introduce emulsions and helped student set up their own experiments.



*Mentor Belinda gives her presentation*

Mentor Rebecca has been actively involved with her class at **St Helena SC**, helping them understand chemical reactions. She has also had time to take in some items to show the students what she studies at university. Recently she was able to take in some **nematodes** to show the students who were most impressed and eager to learn more about the most numerous multicellular animals on earth.



*Mentor Rebecca explains what nematodes are.*

Also at St Helena SC, Mentor Emma was involved in showcasing **nanotechnology** with her class to some visiting teachers and academics. Luckily Emma studies nanotechnology for her degree so she was able to impart her knowledge to both the students and the visitors.

At **Flora Hill SC** in Bendigo, Mentor Cara has been in high demand by the teachers wishing to make use of her subject knowledge. She has been seconded to another class for a couple of weeks to help them with

their research on genetic diseases. Great work Cara.

## Information for Schools

Thanks to all our partner teachers for their hard work this semester. It is always good to see teachers actively engaging their students and maximising the benefits of having Peer Mentors in the classroom.

Please ensure that the Mentors know if you are planning to be away or that there are curriculum days or camps coming up that mean the class will not be at school. Mentors can be a real asset to the class if you are away so don't discourage the Mentors from attending just because you won't be there.

Please also ensure that the Mentor is able to be fully engaged with the students as much as possible. Probably the biggest concern we have from the Mentors is that they **do not feel involved** in the lesson. If possible get the student to deliver a component of the lesson or work with certain groups or individuals (though it is important to vary these from week to week).

Those interested in **nanotechnology** will be happy to know that there will soon be a kit on the market to help deliver nanotechnology to your students. Developed by **NanoVic Ltd** and **Industrious Australia Pty Ltd**, **Nanobits** is a package of information, experiments, materials and networked electronic multi media that introduces principles and examples of nanotechnology. <http://www.nanobits.org/>

Placement end week of the 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

## Information for Mentors

Congratulations for all the hard work everyone is putting into their placements. It has been great to come and see you in action and see the benefits you bring to the classes.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for help or advice. Also feel free to let me know what you are up to by sending in photos or a paragraph of your experiences in the classroom that we can share in the next newsletter.

Term 3 ends on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> September. Term 4 starts on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October. Therefore there will be no mentoring during these two weeks.

Recruitment for 2008 Mentors will begin soon. Please feel free to offer your help to talk to fellow students about the program in lectures and lab sessions. Please tell your friends about the program and what you have gained from the experience. Applications are made online at:

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

## News from the Institutions

### La Trobe University

Faculty Undergraduate student scholarships

**New** Agricultural Science Drought Assistance Scholarships

**New** Environmental Management and Ecology Scholarships at the Albury-Wodonga Campus

**New** Civil Engineering Scholarships for 2008

### The University of Melbourne

The **Faculty of Science** has a number of podcasts on their website covering a range of recent discoveries which may be of interest to both teachers and students:

<http://www.science.unimelb.edu.au/community/media/podcast.php>

### Website to try

**EuroStemCell** have 4 films available online looking at different aspects of stem cell research:

[www.eurostemcell.org/Outreach/outreach\\_film.htm](http://www.eurostemcell.org/Outreach/outreach_film.htm)

**John McDonald**

**Peer Mentoring Coordinator**

### In2science Website

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