

Currently working as a Science Teacher, Stephanie volunteered as a peer mentor in 2005-2006.

At the University of Melbourne I studied a Science degree with majors in Physics and Mathematics. As I always enjoyed these subjects at school I initially started university studying an Engineering degree. This wasn't for me so I decided to follow the subjects I loved and I returned to Mathematics and Physics.

I applied for the **In2science** program during my 3rd year of university. I did this because I was considering teaching as a possible career option. I was very unsure about my suitability as a teacher and the **In2science** program appealed as a way of gaining an inside view of the world of teaching without the responsibilities of a teacher. I wanted the chance to see how students were in classroom and how I related to them. I also remember science being poorly taught during my education and I believe this is a problem that should be corrected and the **In2science** program is a fantastic way to do this.



During my time as an **In2science** Peer Mentor I was able to help the students and teachers by being another person to explain concepts and by actively being involved in the life of the classroom. Having questions answered while the students are wrestling with concepts can help students understand ideas better and can make science appear less daunting. The **In2science** Peer Mentors are young and are still students themselves so are often able to relate to students on a different level to their teachers.



I participated in the **In2nanotech** roadshow to regional Victoria in 2006. We visited schools in the Wimmera and ran activities about nanotechnology. We were able to introduce students to new concepts that are being incorporated in our everyday lives while they know very little about the technology.

Being a Peer Mentor has given me a new confidence in my ability to relate to people, in my capabilities to communicate with many different people and in my prospects as a teacher. A classroom environment is a unique place and can bring out a completely different aspect of a persons character. It has also given me a better understanding of how people learn and what it takes to communicate effectively; listening is probably the most important element.

Currently I am working as a teacher at Brunswick Secondary College. The **In2science** Peer Mentoring program has helped me immensely in this job. Not only did it give me the confidence to pursue this career but it gave me a huge head start on classroom management, the demands of running a lesson, the ways students learn and the administration of a school.

Steph