Evaluation of In2science by ACER | April 2017

In2science mentors increase student confidence, relevance, enjoyment and career awareness of STEM subjects. The program has proved a valuable resource for teachers of science and mathematics.

In 2016, In2science commissioned the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER) to review the impact of their peer mentoring program. Previous reviews had explored benefits to teachers and mentors; this review assessed impact on students.

Correlation between student confidence in a topic and performance has been well established: large-scale studies of 15-year-old school students show strong positive association between students’ attitudes toward science learning and their levels of achievement (Ainley, Kos, & Nicholas, 2008). The In2science program has proved a valuable resource for teachers of science and mathematics, with them being able to make best use of their mentor to suit specific class needs. Now, thanks to the ACER Review, In2science has the data on how our unique program increases student confidence, relevance, enjoyment and awareness of STEM subjects.

By simply having a mentor in the classroom, students showed improved attitudes towards science and maths. The ACER study also noted that these improvements were even greater for students who worked directly with the mentor.

ACER also identified recommendations for improving the In2science program, including clarifying the mentor’s role in the classroom.

ACER Review Student Survey: Mentor Impact

After having an In2science Mentor I now...

Feel more confident talking about science/maths

Try to solve maths/science problems on my own

Have a greater understanding of how to use science/maths in everyday life

Am considering a career in science/maths

Study details

1868 students were surveyed

Year 7, 8 and 9 science and maths classes

34 Victorian schools

Classroom observations took place in 4 schools across 7 classes

Study took place during Semester 2, 2016

Read the full report at www.in2science.org.au

This project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training through the Australian Maths and Science Partnerships Programme