



WHAT IS MYSCIENCE?

MyScience is an award-winning program that brings in people (with science knowledge) from outside the school to support the teaching of science in primary schools.

The program encourages primary students to undertake a scientific investigation and to communicate their findings to their school community at a Science Fair. Exemplary projects may then be submitted into an award scheme such as the [Young Scientist Awards](#) - a project of the [Science Teachers' Association of NSW \(STANSW\)](#).

WHAT IS MENTORING?

Student mentoring refers to situations where teachers, other adults or older students work on a one-to-one relationship or small group basis with primary students, to achieve planned outcomes. Knowledge is transferred based on encouragement, constructive comments, openness, mutual trust, respect, and a willingness to learn and share.

HOW OLD WILL THE STUDENTS BE AND WHAT DAYS WILL I BE NEEDED?

The age range of students in a primary school is typically 5 – 12 years. The most likely ages of *MyScience* students will 8 – 12 years (Years 3 – 6).

Students work in groups of twos or threes with one mentor typically working with two or three groups of students. This means that one mentor will be supporting two or three different investigations. In a typical class there will be five mentors who come to the classroom AT THE SAME TIME for each of the school visits.

We have found that the optimal number of mentor visits is THREE. Mentor visits are scheduled according to the sequence of learning activities in the *MYSCIENCE IMPLEMENTATION PATHWAYS*. Between the school visits you may communicate online with your students to progress their investigations. The class teacher will arrange the communication method such as: email, wikis, iphone, video conferencing.

HOW MUCH TIME IS REQUIRED?

We envisage three school based visits of 60 – 90 minutes each and online communication with students for the times in between. If a 60 minute orientation/preparatory period is factored in (reading the information in 'PREPARING FOR THE MENTORING ROLE' in the Mentor Implementation Pathway) and two hours for online communication then the total time commitment is approximately 8 HOURS.

It is highly recommended that mentors attend their students' Science Fair but this is not mandatory.

Based on original work by Joanne Michael, Quakers Hill East PS.
Adapted by Anne Forbes, ACU.

WHAT AM I REQUIRED TO DO?

Generally, your role is to support the students in their quest to conduct their own scientific investigation. Ask the students lots of questions. Simple yes/no questions are a good place to start – “Do you understand what you’re doing?”, “Have you tried this before?” After they start to become more cooperative ask them some open-ended questions - “What might happen if you tried this approach?” “Why do you predict that outcome?” “Can you describe the Internet searches you have undertaken?”

At every stage ask them to think about what they are doing – from “Why are you doing it like that?” to “What impact might your results have on society?” Remember though to pause, to watch, to listen and most importantly – to enjoy!

Talk to your students about your own interest in science or engineering – how it developed, the subjects that you studied in high school, or at university and what these experiences were like. Put aside the first twenty minutes of your first visit for just getting to know your students. Find out THEIR interests – these may provide you with insights for how to ‘tweak’ student investigations so that they have more appeal.

Follow the MENTOR STEPS in the IMPLEMENTATION section of the *MyScience* website and you will remain aligned with what the teacher and students are doing in their classroom.

WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?

Mentoring provides an opportunity to contribute to a student’s development, reflect upon one’s own career, share experience and knowledge and maybe even discover new ways of thinking! Students not only learn new skills, they will learn firsthand the importance of collaboration and “team spirit”. The encouragement they receive from a supportive mentor will help enhance a student’s belief in their own abilities. For some students, this experience may stimulate thinking about future employment prospects. Who knows, you could be encouraging a budding Nobel scientist!!!

AND FINALLY...

Thank you!

THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TRULY APPRECIATE YOUR EXPERTISE AND TIME AND HOPE THAT YOU ENJOY YOUR *MYSCIENCE* EXPERIENCE.