

# **BEAMS**

## **Building Engagement and Aspirations through Mentoring in Schools**

Widening Participation and Building capacity in our communities through the BEAMS Program

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Building Engagement  
and Aspirations through  
Mentoring in Schools

# Presentation Overview

- Why BEAMS?
- What is BEAMS and how does it work?
- Research Methodology
- Successes and Impacts of the program
- Challenges faced
- Future directions



# Why? What the literature tells us

- Creed, Tilbury, Buys, and Crawford (2011) goal orientation, self-belief and aspirations can be influenced through school based interventions.
- Chan, Rhodes, Howard, & Lowe (2012) School based mentoring (SBM) programs most popular methods to support and influence students' emotional, behavioural and academic outcomes in the US
- Bowden and Doughney (2012) cultural and economic variables enable educators to predict which students may be at risk of not aspiring to attend university.
- Mentoring has been identified as a way to improve students' self belief, self-efficacy and aspirations (Rhodes and Lowe, 2009) while providing important information on pathways and support for transitioning into the next stage of schooling (Kelly, Butler, Twist, MsDonnell, & Kennedy, 2011).



# The BEAMS Project

- BEAMS (Building Engagement and Aspirations through Mentoring in Schools) is a multi-faceted project that builds partnerships between primary and secondary schools with USQ, through a combination of **face to face and online mentoring across three campuses**.
- University students visit local schools on a regular basis to interact and support students in a **classroom environment with the teacher present**.
- The program builds skills, knowledge and capacity needed by school students, **to continue education and training and aspire to employment and careers beyond school** through mentoring using student peers as role models
- **Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program**  
Queensland Consortium - Widening Tertiary Participation \$750,000

# WHAT IS BEAMS?

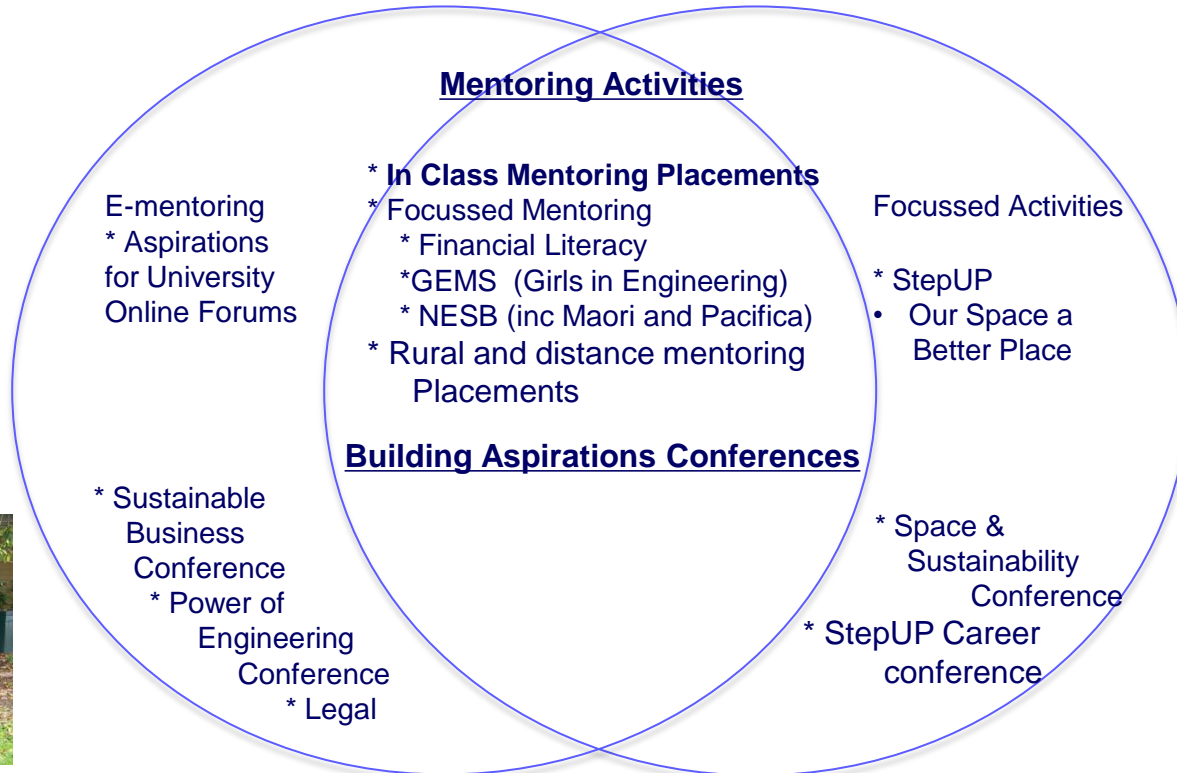
- The project is school and community focussed.  
Mission: “To stand beside young people to help them develop aspirations and build capacity for further education and career”
- Works collaboratively with principals and teachers in schools to define and deliver the project.
- Examples of how mentors engage: Assist to develop skills, aspirations for further education and career, completing assignments, special projects, English literacy, financial literacy, computer literacy.

# BEAMS Framework

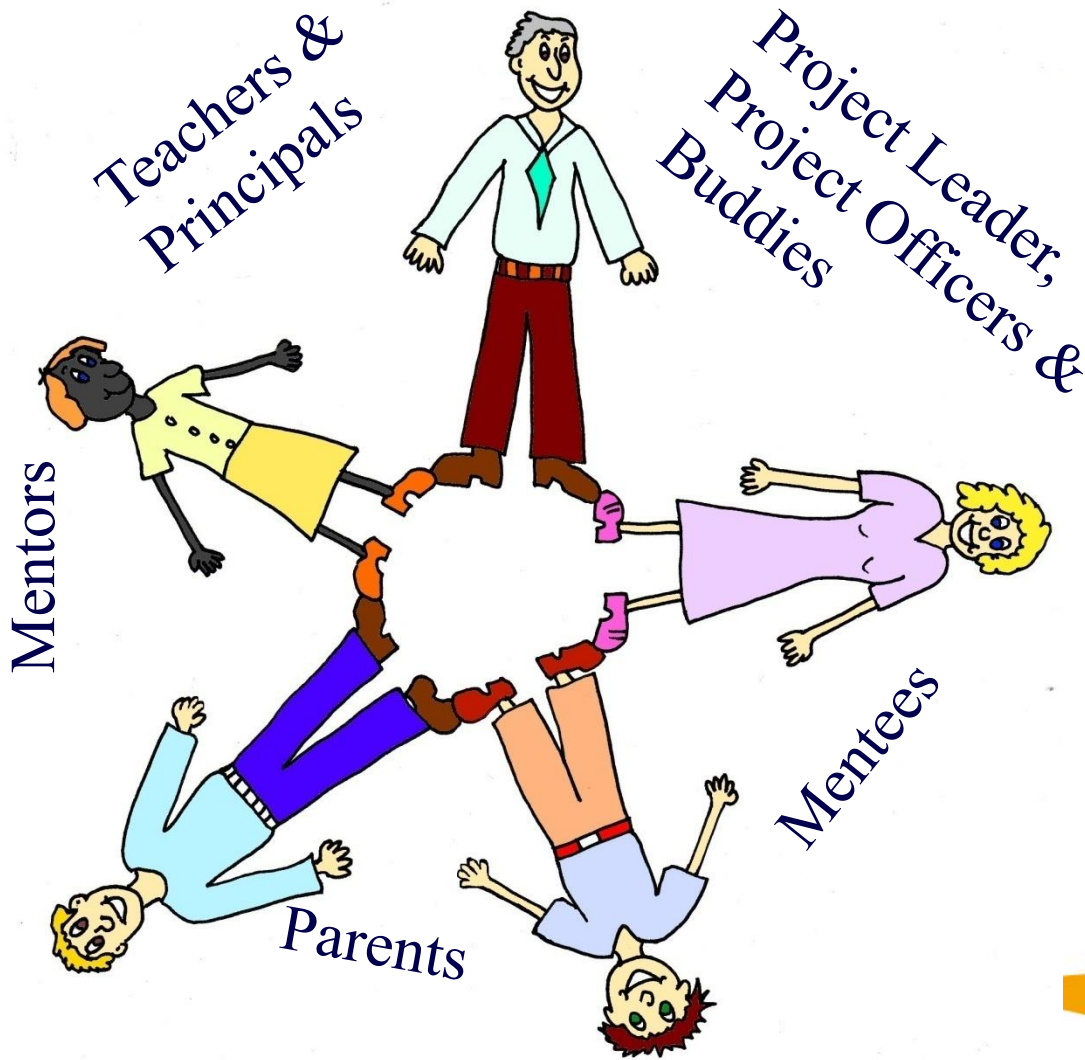


## High School Programs

## Primary School Programs



# BEAMS community



# HOW DOES BEAMS WORK

## **STUDENT MENTORS** are:

- Screened, recruited and trained in peer mentoring and hold blue cards.
- Matched and assigned to a school/class/teacher/project for the semester or year as per contract.
- attend schools for a minimum of 1 to 2 hours per week for up to 30 weeks.
- role models as young people succeeding at tertiary study with a minimum GPA of 4 (scale 1 to 7).



# How does BEAMS work - Process

- Recruitment – screening and acceptance
- Training and Certifying
- Placement – matching and Contracting
- Ongoing Support
- Ongoing Feedback and reflection
- Interventions (if necessary)
- Evaluation
- Celebration

*Communication*  
*meetings, webpage, facebook*

# Research Methodology

- Mixed methods approach
- Pre and post survey instruments are used to measure experience, skills level and impact of the project for individuals.
- Reflective journals
- Focus group discussions
- Semi structured interviews with a sample group of teachers and principal
- Grant KPIs



Whatever success means to you, we'll support you to achieve it.

## Project Successes

- 25 Schools in Springfield, 8 Toowoomba and 2 Fraser Coast contacted participation agreements finalised, mentors in schools
- 83 **Mentors** trained and hold blue cards at Springfield, Toowoomba, Frazer Coast
- 42 **Contracts** finalised
- 5 successful conferences (2 for high schools students year 9-12 with 378 students and 28 teachers attending and 2 for primary students years 2-6 with 853 students and 48 teachers attending)
- Online training materials completed
- E-mentoring process organised (requires different training for mentors)

# Impact: Schools & Placements - Quantitative



School	School SES Quartile	Year	No. of Mentors	Grade Level	Reach (student no.)
School 9	3	2012	1	10-12	30
School 10	3	2012	1	10-12	31
School 11	2	2012	1	7	4
School 12	1	2012	1	10-12	26
School 13	2	2012	1	10	27
School 14	2	2012	1	7	27
<b>Total:</b>				Secondary Primary	1057 486

# Project Successes

## Impact

- ❑ Monitor improvement of transition of low SES students to further education and impact on aspirations

### Examples:

- ❑ 6 weeks of mentoring resulting in 6 students participating in Head Start and 4 then going on to university.
- ❑ Aspirations for University Forum – students wanting to participate in Head Start.
- ❑ USQ students: development of generic employability skills
- ❑ Education student gaining employment at the school where she mentored

# Conference Perceptions: Impacts

Engineering conference perceptions of professions has changed from conferences:

- Before = working with machines. After = working in many different areas to help build a better future.
- *Regarding engineering: Before I thought of the quote "oompa loompas of science" from the Big Bang Theory (TV Show). Now I think it is making a change in the world."*
- "I never knew that there was many other types of engineering jobs beside civil and mechanical".

Aspiration to become a member of particular professions:

- "Engineering is more about the thinking, creativity and the upcoming technology. It is something I might take up as a job."
- *"Many people who study engineering seem to really enjoy it and it would be a very interesting job."*

# Project challenges

Challenge	Action taken	Action
Contracts	Legal department contract, signed for each placement.	Continued..
Students reluctant to travel	Finding schools close to the students' residence.	Continued..
Students maintaining commitment once contract drawn	Contact with students, explanations focusing on responsibilities	Mentors - importance of contractual agreement - training & at time of signing.
Staff not making the most of the mentor's placement (sitting at the back of room)	Specific write up of objectives of the placement in the contract. Discussion and explanation	Staff professional development morning tea.
Teacher or teacher aide perspectives of their students capabilities	Contact with Principals	planned professional development for teachers/aides
GPA of some cohorts who want to be mentors	Consultation with learning support	On campus mentoring referral to Meetup.

# Project challenges

Challenge	Action taken	Action
Training for Distance Ed students to be mentors in rural and regional locations	Training manual and methods adapted to include online delivery	Resource online training interactive short course, videos (multi cultural perspectives) video-conferencing
Schools request specific cultural groups, NESB: Maori, Pasifica and Sudanese	Focused placement & recruitment to include mentors from identified backgrounds	Working more closely with cultural leaders
Training include more focus on social inclusion, cultural diversity.	Training adapted to include guest speakers with expertise	Closer collaboration with specialists working in schools with NESB groups to refine delivery
Need to develop focused projects in discipline areas eg maths, science	Recruitment of mentors across different faculties	Ongoing



# Future directions

- ❑ Expand to other Universities....
- ❑ QLD, NT and NSW and
- ❑ New Zealand 😊



# Mentors' reflections



Mentors have reflected on the positive feeling of wellbeing, skills development, and making a difference that participating in BEAMS has given them:

*"I am loving this program, being in the classroom is truly rewarding."*

Education student (mature age Mum with two small children) *"I had difficulty presenting in front of my uni class prior to joining the program. Now I do presentations to Academic staff at university, visit schools to talk about the BEAMS project"* and was interviewed and received a permanent teaching role in one of the schools in which she mentored.



# A final Word from a Mentor

hey Anita!

Just had to let you know about my beams mentoring today at..... state high school!!

I've been working with a small group of boys and girls, in the year 8 personal development class. The students i work with have bad behaviour problems and learning difficulties. But today! wow progress was achieved!!!! i have been building a relationship with the students and today was the best class ever! the students were attentive and we managed to complete a task creating power points on bullying. one student in particular i have never been able to interact with anyone but today she completed 6 slides! with only minimal assistance and when i set her another slide to complete and i walked away when i came back she was still working on it!!

Huge achievement the teacher was blown away with today progress! and that the work was completed.

Extremely happy, this is what BEAMS is all about!!!!

Thanks! 😊

# Questions and Feedback



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# More Information



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