

## **Flexibility drives student agency**

### **EIF (Exploring Identities & Futures)**

#### **Luke Northcote, Heathfield High School**

Luke taught Exploring Identities and Futures (EIF) in the Semester 1 pilot this year and has been instrumental in introducing EIF and Activating Identities and Futures (AIF) at his school. His pilot class comprised of 40 students on an entrepreneurial pathway. Luke has taught this group for the past three years.

The most significant change has been the flexibility of the EIF course and the opportunity to build student agency over individual education and impact curriculum, as compared to the PLP course.

Through EIF, students have been able to ascertain recognisable credit for a range of projects undertaken.

The flexibility of EIF meant that students could undertake a range of significant projects under Assessment Type 2 (AT2) that would not have been possible under the traditional PLP course model as they would not have been able to fit the Subject Outline or Performance Standards. For example, in EIF, one group of students worked with AusOcean, to build and launch a rig and collect data on marine ecosystems. As part of AT2, the students researched where this would fit in the school curriculum.

Another pair of EIF students created a workshop for teachers for a nationwide conference, working collaboratively with students from a rural high school.

Additionally, one student was able to work toward gaining a farm apprenticeship, again due to the flexibility of this subject and the ability to align with students' personal interests and goals.

The types of projects undertaken also enabled students to easily demonstrate some of the capabilities from the Learner Profile pilot. Capabilities such as Personal Enterprise and Self-Motivated Learning fit well and were easily assessable. Furthermore, Principled Action was incorporated in a number of the projects as students were driven to see the benefit for the community, or other people, in what they were undertaking.

Luke felt that fostering and encouraging this flexibility as a teacher requires a significant change in pedagogy: an exploration with students on how to manage and build their own enquiry, time and passion projects in middle school.

Notably, the students in Luke's class were familiar with the engagement model and working independently through their entrepreneurial work, and EIF fit with the approach well.

This approach, along with the significant projects undertaken and links that could be observed with the new capabilities, affirmed the direction they took.

Overall, the flexibility of EIF provided the scope for students to undertake tasks ranging from those that were at a conceptually high level to those that were something very personal and considerably beneficial.