

## **ILC Project – The Roadmap to Entrepreneurship -2019 – 2020**

### **The Story – How An Entire Year 11 Curriculum Was Delivered to Students With An Intellectual Disability To Promote Entrepreneurship.**

#### **Background**

In a senior campus of a Special School in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, two teachers changed the entire Year 11 curriculum in 2019 -2020 to teach entrepreneurial capabilities to their students.

Students at Year 11 enroll in the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) program at this school. There were a series of work-related units (horticulture; business skills; warehousing) taught by exploring themes relevant to job opportunities in the labour market. A themed VCAL teaching approach is for students seeking a range of experiences within a particular industry sector to inform choices for future pathways and to develop employability skills.

School staff developed an initial idea for establishing a coffee shop using the same themed exploration within the VCAL framework.

**The ILC Roadmap to Entrepreneurship** project introduced an experience of real world enterprise into the school environment that has changed the approach to teaching and assessment, and incidentally disrupted the functioning of the school timetable.

The original idea of the participating school staff member was to expand a coffee making business into school café (that might perhaps be open to members of the public as well). That idea has now been replaced by a proposal to establish an ambitious social enterprise. This has been accompanied by a shift in the teaching approach, moving from an exploration of issues and activity related to employment, to adopting an integrated applied learning approach.

#### **The Impact of STREAT**

An excursion organized as part of the Roadmap to Entrepreneurship project for school staff to visit the STREAT social-enterprise was a key factor opening the eyes of the staff to the possibilities of an enterprise project. (Operating for over 6 years, STREAT provides homeless and disadvantaged young people with life skills, training and work experience through cafes, catering and coffee roasting outlets.) The exposure to an established social enterprise was combined with an introduction to a group of mentors with a background in enterprise and entrepreneurship. The example of STREAT enabled the school staff member to see that all the required learning for the students could be integrated into the enterprise project. Literacy and numeracy, for example, could be part of the operation of the enterprise, rather than taught as separate classes.

#### **Wider School Impact and The Curriculum Change....**

As a result, the staff member restructured the entire Year 11 VCAL program as a result of the ILC pilot. Using the proposal for a coffee business as the base, entrepreneurial skills have now been identified and articulated across the four VCAL units being delivered at the school. The four are:

- Coffee Business (the focus of the enterprise project; now used as a template for the other units)
- Horticulture (students potting plants)
- Basic Business Skills (office administration tasks related to the school office)

- Warehousing (through Endeavour industries)

The pre-existing units have now re-jigged their content as 9 week programs with entrepreneurial content shared across all four units (under the “Work Related Skills” theme of VCAL).

A big change has been moving literacy and numeracy skills from Personal Development, and instead integrating them into the Work Related Skills across the 4 industry areas (so that they have become integrated units, rather than themed units – as was previously the case).

The school staff member commented that *“...it has broadened beyond the coffee enterprise idea to impact the whole Year 11 curriculum. “We are really motivated by this. We can’t wait to have this coffee shop up and running in this space.”*

### **And In 2020?**

With the curriculum revised during the school holidays and the meeting with all of the other Hub schools, the teachers were excited to deliver the curriculum with the support of their business mentors.

The revised approach to delivering the Year 11 program provided a strong base for the entrepreneurial mentors to work with the school staff, supporting the development of student enterprise and business skills.

Then COVID hit and in Term 2, it was decided that it would be too stressful to introduce something entirely new while the students were mastering remote learning. Yet, to the credit of the school’s remarkable staff, they monitored the students very carefully and believed that it would be possible to deliver the course on-line in Term 3. They stated it was also important to have something that inspired the students, for them to connect with others and to remain hopeful during Victoria’s second lockdown.

The course was jointly developed and delivered with the school staff and business mentors with the focus on the coffee shop and on sustainability.

The school staff members believed the contact with and support of the entrepreneurs was significant throughout Term 3.

The new curriculum provided an opportunity for professional growth for the staff as well as for the students. The ILC project provided new opportunities for students to pursue post-school pathways, but it is also becoming evident that teaching staff can see new opportunities for the creation of social enterprises that can assist young people into employment.

### **Next Steps**

2020 has not been an easy year for anyone. Yet the school and business mentors continued to deliver the course on-line. These teachers, along with the other Hub teachers, now want to focus on building a micro-enterprise unit (*see Sydney Road Community School Case Study*). The teacher’s collectively building their curriculum and in collaboration with their community has resulted in the curriculum being rewritten for the delivery in 2021.

Thankfully, 2021 promises to be far more exciting for all of us!