



Asia Education Foundation

**Asia Literacy
Ambassadors**
Partnering Businesses & Schools

Helping students make informed decisions

Mount Waverley Secondary College, VIC and Ross Ciaravolo

Mount Waverley Secondary College is a state secondary co-educational school with over 1800 students across two campuses, in the outer suburbs of Melbourne.

Mount Waverley Secondary College LOTE (Languages Other Than English) teaching and learning leader Les Mullins decided to apply for an Asia Literacy Ambassador to complement an already busy schedule of LOTE activities at the school. His aim was to encourage a broader range of students at the school to continue to study Japanese beyond Year 8.

He explained, “We felt that having students exposed to the value of becoming Asia literate, beyond the effect on VCE scores, might encourage more students to continue with the study of Japanese language and culture.”

Motivational

The Asia Education Foundation matched Mount Waverley Secondary College with Ross Ciaravolo, a Melbourne-based expert in trade and investment in the food industry, working with clients in Asia and Australia. Les Mullins said, “At our first face-to-face meeting we found we had a lot of similarities in terms of our background and interests and I thought Ross would be very useful for us. I was looking for someone who was motivational and could talk to the Year 8s when they were making decisions about subjects to carry forward; the Year 10s looking at subjects for VCE and the Year 12s, going on to tertiary education.

“Ross came along and the Year 8s did a mock interview with him – the three Japanese classes combined. He saw the two Year 10 classes in their classrooms and talked about his journey – and did something similar with the Year 12s. He told them how he got into languages at university and now has his own consultancy. Ross has got a very

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good business and has reached a good position in his career, and it was helpful for the Year 10s especially to see that rich potential.”

After his first visit, Ross reported, “The burning question from students was ‘how will I benefit from learning another language?’ They could see the relevance in a generic sense, but they found it difficult to see how it applied to their own circumstances. They thought of it as a matter of choice, rather than a necessity for fulfilling their future career prospects.”

Les commented, “It is fairly hard to judge the impact of these things but I just think it’s important to present the students with as much information as possible, and several different perspectives, so they can make informed decisions about what they want to take forward. We also have a sister school in Osaka and well established study tour and exchange programs, all of which adds to their understanding.”