Participating schools

Partner schools, sample and acknowledgements

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This trial was only possible because six Victorian secondary schools opened their classrooms to research. We thank their leaders, teachers, Year 9 students and families.

Gippsland Grammar	**Iona College**	**The King David School**
Luther College	**Nagle College**	**Waverley Christian College**

Sample

855 Year 9 students analyzed (865 randomized)	**401 / 454** female / male students	**14.7** mean age in years (SD 0.55)	**3 + 3** rural (n = 480) and urban (n = 375) schools

All six are non-government schools from the Catholic and independent sectors in Victoria, Australia, each with an Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) above the national mean of 1,000. Rural schools are in regional Victoria and urban schools in metropolitan Melbourne. All participating students were in Year 9 and studying compulsory science.

What participation involved

For the school

- One session during scheduled Year 9 class time in Term 3, 2025.
- Parent consent collected through the school's own online consent platform.
- A member of the research team attended to support students and handle technical issues.

For students

- In one class session, a baseline motivation survey, then a 35-minute online activity, followed by the survey again.
- Students gave their own assent before taking part.
- Everything ran online in REDCap during class, with the STEMGuide chatbot on hand.

Acknowledgements

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Schools interested in future studies can contact Professor Jiesi Guo: jiesi.guo@acu.edu.au.

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