Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

Design and Technologies, Food and fibre production, Levels 7 and 8

An existing learning activity linked to a particular learning area or capability in the Victorian Curriculum F–10 can be easily adapted to incorporate career education, enriching students’ career-related learning and skill development.

1. Identify an existing learning activity

**Curriculum area, sub-strand and levels:** Design and Technologies, Food and fibre production, Levels 7 and 8

**Relevant content description:** Analyse how food and fibre are produced when creating managed environments and how these can become more sustainable [(VCDSTC046](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCDSTC046))

**Existing activity:** Investigating different animal feeding strategies, such as grazing and supplementary feeding, and their effects on product quality.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Students are involved in the ‘Cows Create Careers’ program, where they care for two calves over a three-week period. Students learn about animal nutrition and industry careers and complete scientific and research projects on dairy cows.

2. Adapt the learning activity to include a career education focus

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| Existing learning activity | Adaptations, changes or extensions that can be made |
| Teacher introduces students to the importance of nutrition in animal production through questions such as, ‘What is nutrition? What do animals eat? How does it impact their production?’ | Teacher organises school to be involved in Dairy Australia’s [Cows Create Careers Program,](https://www.dairy.edu.au/ccc) This involves the school caring for two calves over a three-week period. This program is curriculum-aligned for schools.  The program involves understanding animal feed and nutrition, monitoring and recording animal growth and completing research projects that are entered into a state-wide competition.  All skills and knowledge are taught by farmers and industry experts who will come into the school and teach students and teachers how to care for the calves. It is suitable for teachers with limited experience in agriculture to participate in. |
| Students choose an industry to investigate (poultry eggs, poultry meat, sheep wool, sheep meat, cattle, dairy cattle, pork, etc.). They research the nutritional needs of that industry. They learn how the nutrition of the feed impacts the product produced. | Students work in teams to feed calves daily, recording feed intake and animal growth. Students write a report, complete a video or design a model which reports on calf growth over the period of care.  Students also investigate the dairy industry and the career options within it. |
| Students present research in the format of a class presentation or poster display. | Students submit their findings at the Cows Create Careers Competition website. Reports will then be assessed, and winners announced. |
| Teacher assesses student research and presentation of industry knowledge. | Post activity, students share what they have gained from the experience in terms of knowledge, skills and insight that they can use for future planning. |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* Teachers will need to negotiate the specifics of the activity with ‘Cows Create Careers’, including timing of the activity, appropriate facilities to run the activity, rostering students/adults to care for the calves, and potential costs involved.
* Participation in the ‘Cows Create Careers’ project is conditional on schools agreeing to abide by the animal welfare guidelines and procedures set out by Animal Ethics Victoria (AEV). This project is pre-approved by [Victorian Schools Animal Ethics Committee (VSAEC)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/Pages/animalsapproval.aspx), so the relevant guidelines and procedures are already set and approved by AEV. Teachers will need to lodge a notice of intent to participate in this activity, which includes agreeing to the animal welfare guidelines.
* Where schools do not have the capacity to physically host calves, CCC can assist with online options and/or visits. Teachers are encouraged to contact the organisation to discuss alternative arrangements.
* The number of schools able to be fully supported in the CCC program is determined annually by Dairy Australia in accordance with resource availability. Therefore, schools may need to contribute to program costs and/or consider that the CCC program may reach capacity, based on demand and resourcing.

Additional resources to help when adapting the learning activity

* Dairy Australia, ‘[Cows Create Careers](https://www.dairy.edu.au/ccc)’
* [Jaydee Events](http://www.jaydee.net.au/) (dairy industry programs for primary and secondary schools)

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* Students develop an understanding of their strengths, interests and skills, enhancing self-awareness.
* Students develop skills to work with others when caring for calves and gathering data.
* Students will become aware of the need to be adaptable within a workplace when they are faced with changes and challenges when caring for the calves.

Know your world – career exploration:

* Students will develop an understanding of the work and career options with the dairy and agricultural industry from doing hands-on work with animals and meeting a range of industry experts and dairy farmers within the program.
* Student experience work and the different roles and skills required through caring and feeding calves and gathering data. These skills range from industry-specific to broader employability skills, such as teamwork and communication.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* Students get to meet a range of people within the agricultural industry and investigate the career options available now and in the future, allowing them to explore the labour market.
* Students understand the skills of time management, asking for help, and committing to completing a task during this project, gaining skills to build and manage their careers.