Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

English, Level 7

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 and levels:** English, Level 7

**Relevant content description:** Plan, draft and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, selecting aspects of subject matter and particular language, visual and audio features to convey information and ideas to a specific audience. ([VCELY387](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCELY387))

**Existing activity:** Constructing an informative text, drawing information from a selected source.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Constructing an informative text that specifically addresses aspects of an individual’s working life.

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 leads a discussion about informative texts and deconstructs the structures and features using examples. Students brainstorm and discuss effective interview techniques. What should they ask? What is the best way to elicit a relevant and useful response?Students interview their parent/guardian or a chosen adult to explore facts that they may not have known. The focus is on the subject’s LIFE STORY. From this research, they create an informative text.Students plan, draft and publish a documentary-style piece in which they convey elements of their subject’s story to their class. | Teacher extends students’ thinking and information seeking, either before or during the activity, to ensure that information related to the interviewee’s career pathway is gathered. That is, the task is extended from LIFE STORY to include CAREER STORY. This will be most effective if students are the ones who identify information that is related to careers, and that realisation helps them develop a wider definition of the term ‘career’. For example, something in the interviewee’s past may not have looked like ‘work’ but is clearly linked to a part of their career pathway, either immediately or later in their life.Students should be encouraged to explore points in the interviewee’s story where decisions were made, what lay behind those decisions, and what challenges and opportunities arose from those decisions. This will give students scope to build their own definition of career and develop many career skills and attributes. |
| Students research, plan and construct their informative text about the subject. Teacher may wish to include ICT use, so students can film their final work documentary-style. | During and after students’ research, planning and production of the final text, students reflect on the skills being developed and insights being gathered. Insight into various careers or work pathways that emerged can also be shared and reflected upon.After completion of the activity, students will benefit from a targeted discussion on what these insights mean for their own future planning. For example, considering where these skills might be useful in later life and how they might personally apply any advice or insight provided by their subject. This could be recorded in their e-portfolio. |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* Despite commonly held beliefs that teenagers do not listen to their parents, research shows that in fact, most young people turn to their parents/carers first when seeking career-related advice. By the same token, students often know very little about their parents’ lives beyond how they experience them as a parent. This activity may facilitate interesting reflections within families as students learn more about their parents’ life and career pathways, and what has influenced their decision-making and opportunities.
* Teacher will need to be mindful of the specific nature of their student cohort, to accommodate issues such as intergenerational unemployment, cohorts where parental employment might be tenuous or disrupted, or where sensitive issues are raised. It may be necessary to identify some alternative interview subjects prior to the activity, such as people or young leaders in the local community. Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) often have databases of people in the community who are keen to share their stories and expertise with young people. In many cases, their involvement could contribute to significant career development for young people who have limited access to positive role models.
* Teacher will need to consider how best to scaffold the task of collecting, collating and making sense of the information students gain from their interview subject. This may include allowing time for a second round of follow-up questions as part of the writing and editing process, as a means of showing how a piece of work can be fine-tuned and further developed through the writing process.
* If embracing the ICT component of the activity, teacher will need to allocate time to additional tasks related to selecting/sourcing appropriate equipment, as well as filming and presentation considerations.

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* Students develop research and critical thinking skills as they consider what type of information will be relevant to their final work and how best to elicit this information from their subject..
* Students learn to assess what information is useful and build written communication skills by planning and constructing their informative text. The development of editing skills will assist with both written and verbal communication skills.
* Students develop the communication skills of questioning and active listening.

Know your world – career exploration:

* Students learn that careers are organic and individual, and that many factors will affect the direction of their own career.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* Students reflect on their own skills and interests, and on how this will inform their own decision-making.
* Students gain insight into the nature of change and how decisions or chance events can create or respond to change.