Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

Design and Technologies – Materials and technologies specialisations, Levels 5 and 6

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 – Materials and technologies specialisations, Levels 5 and 6

**Relevant content description:** Investigate characteristics and properties of a range of materials, systems, components, tools and equipment and evaluate the impact of their use ([VCDSTC037](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCDSTC037))

**Existing activity:** Investigating the characteristics and properties of the school uniform and evaluating the impact of these choices.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Looking at the broader impact of clothing choices in relation to the world of work.

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 |
| Students are tasked with identifying the composition of items of the school uniform, such as natural fibres like cotton and wool, and/or artificial fibres like polyester and nylon.  A list of the clothes and the types of fibres they are made from is collated on the board. Students form small groups and are each allocated a type of material for further research. | Existing activity runs unchanged. |
| In groups, students research the key features of their assigned material, such as durability, breathability, and ease of care. They link these benefits to items of the school uniform to understand why the materials are used. Results are reported to the class. | Students research and identify where each material is made and where natural fibres, such as cotton, are grown. They identify jobs needed to create the materials and garments. |
| Student groups research the manufacture and disposal process for their material and consider the impact of the growth/manufacture.  Things to consider include water use, energy use, job creation and decomposition/reuse possibilities. Students create a flowchart showing the life of an item of uniform that uses their assigned material. | Students supplement their flowcharts by adding the jobs needed at each stage of production. This can include the design and sales process, as well as the work of growing natural fibres and making the material or item. Students assess what job opportunities exist in Australia for the manufacture of clothing. |
| Students consider their findings and discuss whether they think using different materials in the school uniform would have benefits (for students, society or the environment). They justify their choice to the class. | Students look at the impacts that consumers have on the production of clothing. For example, the desire for cheap clothing leads to clothes being made offshore, clothes being treated as disposable and poor conditions for workers (see ‘Fast Fashion’ in ‘Additional resources’).  Students consider how cost would be affected if their clothes were made in Australia versus overseas and the impact this would have on local jobs. They incorporate this consideration into their conclusions on whether they would advocate to change materials of their school uniforms. |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* This activity can be conducted with any materials, such as plastic blocks versus wooden blocks.

Additional resources to help when adapting the learning activity

* FUSE, [Issues related to materials used to make clothing](https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/ResourcePackage/ByPin?pin=8D5F8G)
* ABC TV + iview, [War on Waste, ‘Fast Fashion’](https://www.facebook.com/ABCTV/videos/1722650437757594/?v=1722650437757594)

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* Students build teamwork and communication skills by working in a group to research their materials and report their findings to the class.

Know your world – career exploration:

* Students gain insight into the labour market by researching the broad range of jobs associated with the production and distribution of clothing, and where these jobs are based.
* Students develop ICT skills by researching, collating and presenting their results.
* Students understand the links between work and society by considering the impacts of production processes on jobs and the environment.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* Students learn how to use information to make informed decisions about their own consumption as they consider the impacts of clothing production on a local and global scale.
* Students use opportunities to learn and explore as they research what jobs exist in fashion design, manufacture, distribution and sales on a local and global scale.