Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

Geography, Levels 3 and 4

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:** Geography, Levels 3 and 4.

**Relevant content description:** Types of natural vegetation and the significance of vegetation to the environment, the importance of environments to animals and people, and different views on how they can be protected; the use and management of natural resources and waste, and different views on how to do this sustainably [(VCGGK082)](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCGGK082).

**Existing activity:** Discovering the plants in the world around you and learning to look after them.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Discovering who plans a school garden environment and exploring some of the careers involved in their management and sustainability.

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 brainstorming session about what students know of vegetation and their environment, and why the environment is important to people, animals and birds. | Brainstorming session runs unchanged. |
| Teacher and groundskeeper/maintenance staff member take students on a walk around the school and discuss the different types of vegetation in different areas. Teacher and groundskeeper discuss the relationships between different plants in the garden and other parts of the environment, such as animals and insects.  Students take photos of the different vegetation and animals they see on their walk around the school. Groundskeeper teaches students names of plants and animals they see on their walk.  Groundskeeper discusses why they select certain plants for different areas, and what that does for the environment. For example, they could talk about how certain plants are planted to attract certain birds, the impact of natives and exotic species, and areas affected by climate factors such as sun and rainfall. | Groundskeeper also discusses elements of their role as they walk with students. For example, they share what they like about their job of managing the garden environment and ensuring its sustainability and how that affects their job. Students are encouraged to ask questions about the garden and the groundskeeper’s work during this discussion.  After the walk, the teacher leads students to explore other roles in the community that focus on sustainability and the environment (e.g. landscape gardeners, council representatives, nursery staff who nurture and supply the plants, greenhouse keepers, self-employed handypersons who mow private lawns and maintain private gardens). If the school has a community garden, the discussion could be extended to include roles relating to growing produce. |
| Students create an annotated visual resource, such as a photo story, about the plants found in the school, explaining how the plants help the school environment (now and in the future) and the different animals and insects that make it their home. | Extend students’ exploration of possible roles by having them include a small section on what they learnt about what the groundskeeper’s role and other careers they explored in the activity. |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* Teachers could extend the activity by having community members or students’ family members visit the class to share their experience working with natural vegetation/sustainability. The activity could be extended into different learning areas (e.g. students could interview visitors and learn how skills such as mathematics and art are used to plan gardens).
* Teachers could access photographic equipment to extend the plant (or animal) identification and discussion back in the classroom. There are also apps that can facilitate this (see Additional resources).
* Teachers should brief the groundskeeper and any other adults involved in the activity so that they are prepared to discuss their job/career in detail including: how they got their job; what they do each day; and what skills, knowledge and training help them to do their job well.
* This activity can be linked to Food and Fibre content descriptions in schools where there is access to a community or school garden, such as the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program.

Additional resources to help when adapting the learning activity

* [PlantNet](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/plantnet/id600547573) (iOS app for identifying plants)

Benefits for students

Know yourself - self-development:

* As they explore the school landscape, students develop their sense of wonder of the environment that surrounds them every day and the animals and plants that make it their home.

Know your world - career exploration:

* Taking photos of plants found in the school garden develops students’ fieldwork photography skills and their ability to use technology effectively.
* As the teacher leads a discussion on the various roles that involve working with the environment, students learn about a range of career paths they might not have previously considered.
* Students develop their communication skills and the ability to work with others as they ask questions of the groundskeeper and other adults who share their work experiences.

Manage your future - be proactive:

* By interviewing people about their work and career paths, students use initiative to gain insight into the world of work.
* With teacher support, students can begin to understand the changing nature of work roles as they learn about visitors’ career paths and the current emphasis on sustainability in landscape gardening (compared to priorities in the past, such as aesthetics).