Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

Music, 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:** Music, Levels 3 and 4

**Relevant content description:** Use voice and instruments to sing, play and arrange music from different cultures, times and locations, and improvise and compose music in different forms ([VCAMUM026](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCAMUM026))

**Existing activity:** Exploring the C pentatonic scale to improvise and compose original melodies.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Composing music for wellbeing and considering how professional musicians 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 |
| Teacher introduces the C pentatonic scale (C, D, E, G, A) and models improvisation by creating short melodic patterns using the notes from the scale. | Students watch a video of Bobby McFerrin improvising over a pentatonic scale (see ‘Additional resources’). Teacher explains that improvisation and composition are skills musicians use in their working lives and highlights that when we compose or improvise, we are being musicians and composers. |
| Teacher encourages students to play the C pentatonic scale and improvise melodic patterns of their own. | As students practise the pentatonic scale and create their own patterns, teacher discusses the importance of rehearsal. Musicians must rehearse and work hard, regardless of their experience or expertise. |
| Using the C pentatonic scale, students compose a short piece of music (for example, eight bars), exploring rhythm, pitch, structure and timbre. Students may work in small groups to plan and perform their compositions. An example of their ensemble may be a repeated rhythm pattern on claves, a simple melody on xylophone and a beat pattern on a low drum. | Teacher leads a discussion about how music is used by many people to improve their mood or help them feel calmer. Students can be asked to volunteer songs that make them feel happy or calm, and identify other things that make them feel this way.  Teacher frames the learning as an authentic ‘work’ project. Students collaborate to compose and record a piece called ‘Music for Wellbeing’. Teacher can devise a working brief that outlines the audience, the purpose and how the music might be produced and presented. For example, teacher explores how music can help people relax and feel better. The purpose of the students’ project therefore is to compose something that has this effect. Students think about other ways people can improve their wellbeing, and what jobs other than musician/composer can be involved in this process. Teacher may need to scaffold this reflection. |
| Teacher records groups throughout the rehearsal process. Students listen to and assess the recordings and identify ways they can improve their performance. | Formative feedback can be given by peers during the rehearsal process to allow for refinement of the product. When students give feedback, they can use the feedback protocol sentence starters ‘I liked…’ and ‘I wonder …’. Teacher frames the feedback process as one that would happen in a professional sphere, in the music industry and beyond. |
| Teacher records the final product and exports for file sharing. Students can use the recordings to critically analyse their work and identify strengths and areas for further development. | Teacher highlights that recording is an important part of the music industry and encourages students to share their knowledge of recording technologies. This might be as simple as using a voice recorder on a mobile phone. Students work with technology to record their final performance and export files for sharing.  Their reflection involves considering how their work met the original brief. |
|  | After the lesson, students reflect on how various aspects of the activity will help them in life. For example, where and how might this kind of technology be useful? In what jobs do people compose and use music as it was composed and used in the activity? Is this something that might interest students in the future? |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* Teacher may need to research recording options to produce music for wellbeing.
* This may be an extensive activity so time allocated will need to be considered.
* Developing effective collaboration protocols may be necessary. This can take time and practice. Teacher should be prepared to work on developing these skills with students.

Additional resources to help when adapting the learning activity

* World Science Festival, ‘[Notes and neurons: in search of the common chorus](https://www.worldsciencefestival.com/videos/notes-and-neurons-in-search-of-the-common-chorus/)’ (From 0:58:55 in the video linked, Bobby McFerrin improvises over a pentatonic scale.)
* Midnight Music, [Simplifying technology for music teachers](https://midnightmusic.com.au/)

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* Students develop collaboration and communication skills as they work with their peers to compose music and provide feedback.
* Students develop self-assessment skills and use these to improve their performance.

Know your world – career exploration:

* Students experience the work of a musician and composer.
* Students build skills in developing a product for a specific audience and purpose.
* Students work with recording technologies and understand that recording is an important part of the music industry.
* Students learn that skills can be transferred to various professions and situations, such as teamwork, communication, digital literacy and providing constructive feedback.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* Students practise critical and creative thinking to compose their music to meet the brief.
* Students develop their music skills by creating music using repetition and variation of rhythm, pitch, structure and timbre in the pentatonic scale. These are valuable skills for pursuing a career in music.