Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

Personal and Social Capability, 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 and levels:** Personal and Social Capability, Levels 7 and 8

**Relevant content description:** Discuss the range of strategies that could be used to cope with difficult tasks or changing situations ([VCPSCSE036](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCPSCSE036))

**Existing activity:** Completing an independent task while recording barriers and challenges, and sharing strategies to overcome problems and develop resilience.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Exploring the links between independent work in the classroom and the workplace, with a focus on strategies to overcome barriers.

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 |
| For any given learning area program, teacher provides students with an activity or project that must be completed independently. For example, an art teacher could set a task of the completion of an oil painting, including the planning, painting and presentation of a completed art piece or an English teacher could set a task of a completed persuasive text, including the initial planning, drafting, editing, revision and publication. | Independent work activity to run unchanged. |
| Before getting underway, teacher elicits a discussion on ‘What is stress?’ to explore and define stress and to identify barriers and enablers to working independently and management of stress associated with this. This could include reflection on when a challenge becomes ‘stress’. Once established, students list the stress management strategies that they utilise when finding it difficult to work independently and identify one new strategy that they would like to try. Teacher then initiates the use of a journal for students to keep note of the enablers and barriers faced in working independently on the completion of the assigned project. | In the weeks before the task begins, teacher begins journaling their experiences working independently, including stressors, barriers and enablers. Teacher then shares their personal journal with the class to demonstrate that there can be challenges in completing work independently in workplaces and that everyone is faced with enablers and barriers in their lives. Parallels are drawn between the stresses faced during this project and stresses found in different industries and professions. |
| Throughout the task, teacher facilitates reflective discussion on how students are coping with working independently. Students can share their stress-management strategies with others and evaluate whether other people’s strategies might be more effective when dealing with the barriers that are making the completion of the independent task a challenge. | Teacher highlights how working with peers is like working with colleagues in a workplace. By sharing coping strategies with colleagues, individuals can learn ways to deal with stresses that are encountered throughout life and in the workplace.  |
| Teacher utilises reflection as a means of identifying the enablers and barriers that were present when completing the work independently. | Using student journals, the class explores the stresses inherent in working independently and elicits the link between the stresses felt throughout the duration of the task and the real-world stresses felt by people working in associated industries. Teachers could elicit these links by beginning with an example similar to the task they have completed that might occur in an associated industry, for example a journalist writing an article (linked to persuasive text student task) or working towards an exhibition deadline for an artist (linked to making an art work student task). |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* For students who demonstrate ambition in given curriculum areas and the desire to gain employment in their associated professions, teachers can further extend them by preparing them with the reality of the stresses that are faced in those workplaces. For example, teachers might like to consider exploring strategies that best cope with time restraints, leadership demands, prioritising workload, meeting high expectations and responding to constructive criticism in a specific industry.
* Teacher should ensure their personal journal remains professional and other school staff are unidentifiable if mentioned.

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* Students develop resilience and maintain a positive self-concept by understanding that life will throw challenges at them.
* Students develop a flexible mindset when responding to the challenges of the task.
* Students develop positive communication skills as they share stressors and coping strategies.

Know your world – career exploration:

* Students may increase their knowledge of work roles that include major tasks that are completed independently.
* Exploring similarities between school experience and real-world work helps students better understand work.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* Undertaking a task with multiple deadlines and the need to work independently helps students develop skills needed for the workplace, such as the ability to plan and manage their time effectively and work without ongoing supervision.
* By reflecting on their barriers and enables, students think critically and creatively about solutions to the challenges they face.
* Students use organisational and time management skills in order to find a balance between life and work roles and expectations.