Embedding career education in the Victorian Curriculum F–10

Visual Arts, 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:** Visual Arts, Levels 7 and 8

**Relevant content description:** Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to explore and develop themes, concepts or ideas in artworks ([VCAVAE033](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCAVAE033))

Create and display artworks, describing how ideas are expressed to an audience ([VCAVAP037](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCAVAP037))

Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in artworks and how they are viewed by audiences ([VCAVAR038](https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Curriculum/ContentDescription/VCAVAR038))

**Existing activity:** Exploring self-portraiture and creating a self-portrait.

**Summary of adaptation, change, addition:** Using the process of creating a self-portrait to explore possible future career options.

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 what factors shape identity and a sense of self.  Teacher shows examples of artists’ self-portraits and the class discusses how the artists have symbolised their identities. A range of international and Australian artists from different cultures and periods of time can be shown. | Teacher expands the discussion by asking students to think about their own identities. What are their personalities like? What are their likes and dislikes? What are their hobbies? What subjects do they enjoy and dislike at school? Students list a range of their characteristics and choose symbols to represent them. |
| Using the given examples, students plan a drawing of themselves and the various symbols that could be used to show their identity.  Students create a self-portrait using a range of materials. | Students consider how they have represented themselves in their self-portrait. Based on how they see themselves now, students reflect on who they might be later in life, including what kind of job they might like to have. They do not have to nominate specific jobs but might be interested in a particular industry. For example, one student might say they want to be a nurse, while another might say they want to work in the health industry. Students add symbols to represent these industries or jobs to their self-portrait.  Teacher leads a discussion about the type of imagery used, particularly in relation to career and gender stereotypes. For example, doctors are often shown as male; teachers/nurses are shown as female; farmers/other manual workers are not as ‘smart’ as white-collar workers. Students are encouraged to discuss how they feel about these stereotypes, and the discussion should extend to refuting stereotypes – for example, farmers are often highly educated. |
| Students display the artworks and discuss how their self-portraits represent them. | At the completion of the task, students discuss with what their self-portrait means to them and reflect on how they have communicated ideas. Through the discussion, students think about how insights into their interests and strengths uncovered in the activity may inform their career planning. |

Considerations when adapting the learning activity

* Collage is a widely used career-counselling tool (see ‘Additional resources’). Cooperating with the school’s careers practitioner can create a powerful discussion or reflection stimulus. Using collage to draw out students’ thoughts and help express themselves may result in disclosures that may not usually form part of a Visual Arts class, so teacher should ensure they scaffold the activity appropriately.
* Time should be allowed for students to fully explore and research work options that interest them so that they can begin to create a personal interest in the activity.
* Teacher should be familiar with the FYA job clusters (see ‘Additional resources’) to help students identify areas of interest for different careers.

Additional resources to help when adapting the learning activity

* The Popularist, [20 beautiful self-portraits by famous artists](https://thepopularlist.com/beautiful-self-portraits-by-famous-artists/)
* ArtSlant, [Face Facts](https://www.artslant.com/par/works/show/638224-face-facts) (collage portrait examples)
* National Career Development Association, [Career collage](https://www.ncda.org/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/news_article/106638/_PARENT/CC_layout_details/false)
* The Foundation of Young Australians, [The cluster model explained](https://www.fya.org.au/2019/07/31/the-cluster-model-explained/)

Benefits for students

Know yourself – self-development:

* Students reflect on their understanding of themselves and how this is shaped by various factors, including family, friends, culture and society.
* Students create a visual impression of how they see themselves in the future, including a career that interests them.
* Students consider how others see their futures and identify ways that people are different but still connected.

Know your world – career exploration:

* Students link their personality and interests to possible careers, and challenge existing conclusions about options that are available to them.

Manage your future – be proactive:

* Students explore visual links between the self and the future, and interrogate how their interests can be developed into careers.
* Students develop an understanding of the role of family, culture and society in influencing the decision-making process regarding possible careers.