

Bedford Industries

Bedford Industries provides supported employment opportunities for people with disability in a range of employment areas: furniture manufacturing, computerised timber cutting, hospitality, packaging, light assembly, building maintenance/cleaning, clerical duties, stock control and gardening/landscaping.

What did they set out to achieve?

Bedford sought to use the *Blueprint* to review its Job Ready (Furniture) Program and develop a targeted program that included the personal management, learning and work exploration, and career building competencies of the *Blueprint*. At the same time, they sought to assess the utility of the *Blueprint* within the disability sector.

Did they find the *Blueprint* useful?

It was found that some of the content of the Job Ready program focused largely upon the technical skills necessary for productive work, and that there were considerable gaps in terms of addressing the Area C: Career Building competencies. However, it was also discovered that the on-the-job training for Job Ready participants provided opportunities for the development of Area A: Personal Management Competencies and Area B: Learning and Work Exploration Competencies. The experience of the trial also strengthened the view of the project manager that schools needed to provide students with a disability with opportunities to learn about and develop their career management competencies.

It was concluded that some of the Area C competencies were difficult to incorporate within a disability service environment, which is focused upon practical tasks and relationships, rather than abstract discussion or reflection. The program was reviewed against the core competencies rather than a particular developmental phase as the project manager had also concluded that the developmental phases did not appear to add value in this situation.

The most useful component of the *Blueprint* for those working in the disability sector was found to be the matrix describing the career competencies, which was recommended to other disability service providers. However, targeted professional development was recommended as a necessary precursor to greater uptake of the *Blueprint* in the disability sector.

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