

University of Technology Sydney

UTS is a large metropolitan university, whose students come from diverse cultural, socio-economic and age groups. Knowing that career development curriculum initiatives face the challenge of competing for time in an already crowded curriculum, the UTS Careers Service developed a careers research project/module designed to be included within a first year subject, in any learning area. During the trial, the module was implemented with 1st year B.A. Organisational Learning students and with 1st year Environmental Science students.

What did the university do?

UTS used the *Blueprint* competencies for curriculum planning:

For our purposes, it was easy to find the relevant information in the Blueprint and we found that it was well laid out. It was helpful, if not easy, to have a framework to work with, and to consider which career development competencies may be being developed during this particular career activity. As this is only one module, it will also provide information on which competencies and performance indicators may be the focus of development of subsequent modules.

To assess the appropriateness of the career research module as a vehicle for development of specified *Blueprint* competencies this trial site:

- Assessed the module against the *Blueprint* to determine which competencies might be developed through the research activities. This necessitated becoming very familiar with the *Blueprint* itself
- Refined the objectives of the careers research module to accommodate the *Blueprint* competencies
- Developed a questionnaire to test the responses of the participants to the specified competencies after completion of the module
- Identified the major themes from the questionnaire, and
- Mapped the performance indicators against the resulting themes from the questionnaire.

A number of meetings with the educational researcher were scheduled to develop a tool to assess what the students learnt in relation to the competencies and performance criteria. Meetings with the academic staff were held to gain their support for the project and to brief them on conducting the evaluation. Meetings with the instructional designer were convened to discuss the online format. Next, the project was

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introduced to the two target groups of 1st year students (BA Organisational Learning and Environmental Science), and the career service staff facilitated the process of getting them into groups, introducing the module and setting dates for the completion and assessment of the project and the administration of the questionnaire.

How did the *Blueprint* help?

Improved career outcomes for students is part of the UTS Strategic Plan, and the *Blueprint* provides a tool for suggesting concrete ways in which the university could meet this objective.

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