

The Northern Corridor

Due to rapid population growth and subsequent pressures placed upon the labour market in the Brisbane North region, it became apparent to a number of organisations within the region that a heightened awareness of career and labour market issues was becoming increasingly essential.

In Brisbane North, Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Education Queensland schools, non-government schools, Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and Queensland Rail, formed a Community of Practice (CoP) for teachers delivering career education to students enrolled in schools and TAFE institutions.

What did the CoP set out to achieve?

The project was established to test aspects of the *Blueprint* including:

- Creating a Community of Practice (CoP) of teaching practitioners in Brisbane North, involved in delivering career education to school and TAFE students.
- Providing professional development to a cohort of teachers using Component One - *Awareness of Career Development* from the *Australian Career Development Studies* learning package and mapping knowledge against the *Blueprint*
- Providing professional development to a cohort of parents using Component One - *Awareness of Career Development*
- Reviewing the outcomes of the work of the CoP through a reference group that was established to provide advice on the reflections and findings of participating organisations.

The Community's focus was to align individual organisations' career education programs with the *Blueprint*, to enhance current practices, improve delivery and develop consistency, within and across the sectors.

The target groups that the CoP worked with included:

- Year 10, 11 and 12 students enrolled in the 14 schools represented in the CoP
- 15 – 19 year old students enrolled in Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and University
- A small representation of parents/carers of the above students

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What did the CoP do?

Early in the trial, the original steering group for the project was expanded to a reference group/community of some 20 decision-makers. Previous attempts had been made to set up such a group when the educational precinct was established but at that time there was no focal point for bringing people together. “This time we had the *Blueprint* –a tangible product that gave people something concrete to work with – something to operationalise.”

The *Blueprint* was used as a mapping and evaluation tool with the intention of enhancing career development programs in secondary schools, TAFE and universities across the region.

The CoP reference group met monthly for the duration of the project and undertook all the necessary preparatory work for the mapping exercise, which was undertaken by several schools and one TAFE Institute.

While the mapping exercise proved to be more resource-intensive than was originally anticipated, it did reveal some interesting situations. One school, for example, that mapped Year 10 learning activities, found that students were being asked to prepare résumés on four separate occasions, prompting the response that it is “hard to get even one school clear about what it’s doing! But, schools have started, and they are mapping their programs against the *Blueprint* – so we are helping to build capacity....slowly”.

The reference group also undertook the organisation of the practitioner and parent/community workshops. Ongoing review of the community’s activities occurred through this form and progress reports of all key activities were presented. Presentations made at meetings were also made available online to CoP members.

Some 70 educational practitioners attended the first practitioner workshop. At the end of the session, attendees gave really positive feedback about their learning claiming it to have been a “productive and thought provoking day”. The reference group, however, cautioned that it was really just an introduction and despite the fact that many people claimed that they were familiar with the *Blueprint*, it was felt that its breadth and depth was not appreciated by many.

Local Parents and Citizens associations promoted the workshop for parents to their members. The workshop, which introduced the *Blueprint* to parents was described overwhelmingly as ‘beneficial’ and the information “relevant”.



Did the Northern Corridor CoP find the *Blueprint* useful?

On the whole, the CoP felt that the *Blueprint* had the potential to bring about a paradigm shift in the delivery of career development services in the region:

Without the Blueprint we would not have been able to undertake the community process we were involved in. It gave us the context, the framework and the process to engage in the discourse we undertook. It was the vehicle that allowed us to better understand the needs of others in the education and training sector and for commonality across the silos to emerge.

The CoP concluded by reporting that as a “resilience building framework” the *Blueprint* should be “embedded across all education and training sectors.”

