

St Mary's Catholic College

St Mary's Catholic College is a co-education secondary college with about 1 000 students aged between 12 and 18 years. The project team at St Mary's, headed by the career advisor and the deputy principal of curriculum, sought to develop and deliver a comprehensive career development program in the school that ensured gaps in the career development competency of students were addressed. The career development program included; career development activities integrated into the school curriculum; dedicated career lessons and in-service for teaching staff in the career development learning area.

The school has a history of inviting others to partner in the career development of their students. Through this project, the school expanded its network to include the local District Youth Achievement Plan, an organisation that brings together representatives from business, industry and education.

What did they do?

St Mary's followed the step-by-step processes for designing a comprehensive career development program outlined in the *Blueprint* and formed a steering committee.

Professional development sessions for teachers that created linkages between the competencies of the *Blueprint* and the objectives of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program were run, as were presentations on the *Blueprint* and the nature of the project.

The *Blueprint* Needs Assessment Survey, available in the *Blueprint Toolkit*, was modified to include explanations and examples and the language was simplified. The survey was administered to students in Years 8, 9 and 10, and sent home to parents. Although students willingly filled out the survey forms, the number of responses from parents was low.

Once the responses from the Needs Assessment Survey were analysed career lessons were developed for Year 8, 9 and 10 students. Local standards were developed by the team for some of the competencies.

We focused on performance indicators at the acquisition and application stages. Personalisation and actualisation indicators still need some development. The students, who see themselves as understanding workplace issues and not needing career education, have been difficult to engage, particularly in written activities. I am still trying new strategies each lesson. The Year 11 VET students struggle with engagement in most of their schooling – career education has been no exception

I had only just started in the job and when I came across the career management competencies in the *Blueprint*, I felt there were gaps in our current program. I liked the structure it gave and felt that other teaching staff and the administration would probably respond well to it.

The *Blueprint* provided the team with the means with which to, sell career development education to teachers, parents and students because it has validity, credibility and structure.



(although the first couple of lessons went well). I will need to continue to experiment with ways they can achieve the competencies and experience success in the school situation.

Did the *Blueprint* help?

The *Blueprint* provided the team with the means with which to “sell career development education to teachers, parents and students because it has validity, credibility and structure”. The marketing tools associated with the *Blueprint* also enabled the team to get teaching and administration staff interested in their students’ career development.

