



our local world of work



## Teachers Handbook

This teacher's resource has been developed by Career Connections – RMIT to support schools' delivery of the 'Our Local World Of Work' student investigation project.



Our Local World Of Work – Student Investigation of a Northern Business

Updated October 2014

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## Description

This project is an investigative activity designed to connect senior secondary school students with business leaders to increase their knowledge of a local business.

The companion project “**Face To Face**” should be considered when making your decisions about “**Our Local World Of Work.**” It can be used as an easier alternative or as a pre-requisite to “**Our Local World Of Work.**”

## Skills

- Increase knowledge and awareness of local businesses
- Research
- Interviewing and phone use techniques
- Note-taking
- Report writing
- Communication and presentation

## Hints

- Check the 'Face To Face' unit. Would this be more appropriate for your students?
- Make sure students are well-prepared for their interview
- Questions for the interview SHOULD be modified according to the size/type of business and the perceived capabilities of the students
- Practising of interview, note-taking, telephone and report writing skills are important prerequisites for the interview
- Students are to attend in pairs to ensure that each student has the opportunity to be an interviewer AND a note-taker
- Teachers will have direct communication with the employer
- Employers MUST be notified in advance if students cannot attend the interview
- Following the interview the students are to jointly write a report which MUST be checked by the employer

## **Outline of Project Duration: *seven to eight weeks***

### ***Step One:* Pre-interview (3 weeks)**

- Project outline including assessment criteria
- Contact business manager/owner to confirm time of visit
- Organise travel arrangements
- Prepare for interview activities
- Research on business

### ***Step Two:* Interviews with Employers (1 week)**

### ***Step Three:* Post-interview (3 weeks)**

- Write reports/articles
- Develop PowerPoint presentation
- Write thank you letters
- Conduct evaluations

### ***Step Four:* Presentation of students' work and organisation of event with employers/ businesses**

## Curriculum Context

*The project can be successfully incorporated into the following school contexts:*

- *Industry and Enterprise Studies (VCE)*
- *Business Management (VCE)*
- *VCAL: Personal Development & Industry Studies*
- *Commerce*
- *Economics*
- *Science*
- *Humanities*
- *VET programs*

## Assessment

- *School-based within context guidelines*

## Pre-Interview Activities

- *Mock Interviews (see Appendix 2: Suggested Activities)*
- *Short Interview with known employer (see Appendix 3: Proforma questionnaire)*
- *Internet search on local business (see Appendix 2: Suggested Activities)*
- *Phone skills (see Appendix 2: Suggested Activities)*

## Teacher Checklist (Ongoing)

Tick  when you have completed

### Step One: Pre Visit

1. ( ) Introduce and explain project
2. ( ) Introduce student checklist and explain how students use this
3. ( ) Explain how students will be assessed
4. ( ) Identify local employers to be approached
5. ( ) Contact employers to verify they are prepared to participate in project
6. ( ) Conduct preparatory activities (see above)
7. ( ) Match two students to a business (one to do interviewing and one to take notes.  
These roles can be reversed during the interview)
8. ( ) Organise students to phone their employers to confirm appointment times
9. ( ) Organise student travel arrangements
10. ( ) Go over questionnaire with students to make sure they understand each question.
11. ( ) Modify where necessary
12. ( ) Ensure students have a digital camera / phone with camera

### Step Two: Post Visit

1. ( ) Organise students to write a report based on their visits
2. ( ) Organise a follow up visit/phone call if required
3. ( ) Arrange to send employer a draft copy to check for errors
4. ( ) Assist students to organise a Power Point presentation to a defined audience
5. ( ) Students write and send thank you letter to employers
6. ( ) Both teacher and students complete evaluation forms
7. ( ) Arrange a relevant presentation event

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Background to 'Our Local World Of Work'

The 'Our Local World Of Work' student investigation of northern business' program was originally developed in 2005, with funding from the Federal Government under its Regional Partnerships Program.

The 'Our Local World Of Work' project is available to schools in northern Metropolitan Melbourne.

**This program was originally supported by many organisations, including:**

- Apprenticeships Plus (now APLus Apprentice + Trainee Services)
- Moreland City Council
- Inner Northern LLEN
- Hume Whittlesea LLEN
- Australian Industry Group
- Kangan Institute
- RMIT University

## **Appendix 2: Suggested activities to prepare for conducting interviews**

### **1. Getting students to ask the right questions**

**Start with the game 'Twenty Questions' - it is designed to sharpen and focus students'**

*attention on the type of questions that they ask.*

- Discuss 'open' and 'closed' questions
- Class exercise - select a famous person ( e.g. Julia Gillard, Barack Obama) and students design 5 questions they would like to ask
- Ask the class to discuss the merits of each question
- Come up with the 5 best questions
- Allocate a famous person to each student, e.g. pop star, sports person, or students can choose their own famous person
- Working in pairs students design ten good questions to ask each other
- Students will act as interviewee ( i.e. in the character of the famous person) and as interviewer
- Select pairs of students to come out in front of the class and conduct their interviews
- Class can critique the interviewer
- Summarise what makes a good interview
- An alternative could be to watch/listen to television/radio interviews and discuss the interviewing style

**A second activity could be to locate an object in the room by asking as few questions as possible**

- The teacher explains purpose of the game but gives no guidance as to what types of questions to ask.
- The teacher selects an object in the room and asks class to locate the object by asking questions which require a "Yes" or "No" answer.
- Record how many questions it takes to locate the object.
- After the first go, try to discuss with the class what kinds of questions should be asked to get the information required (e.g. is the object in this half of the room or in the other half?). Obviously in this game questions about location are the most important.
- The class may be divided into two teams who compete to locate the object. In this case the teacher would alternate the questions and score for each team.

## **2. Investigating a Business**

Once a business has been allocated to each pair of students they need to do some research.

***Research can cover the following areas:***

- Location of the business (using maps/street directories)
- Mission statement (What is this?)
- Core business
- Size of business
- Interesting facts about the business
- Any additional questions that students might like to ask
- Link the research to the interview questions

### **3. Phone Calls**

Although students are adept at social phone calls using mobile phones, a more formal phone call to an unknown business person can be difficult for some students. Therefore, it is important that students practise what they will say.

#### ***Some suggested activities:***

- Get the students to write a script of what they want to say on the phone
- Get Students to introduce themselves and their course, including their school  
(students may need to explain what their course is about)
- Get students to practise with a partner
- When on the phone, get students to record information such as person's name, title, place and time of interview
- Get students to thank business/owner manager for making time to talk with them

#### ***Possible Obstacles***

It is very likely that students will not be able to talk with the business manager/owner with their first phone call. It is, therefore, important to discuss what to do when 'obstacles' occur; e.g.:

- Message prompts
- Voice prompts
- Talking to a receptionist
- Leaving messages

## **Appendix 3: 'Our Local World Of Work' student interview questions**

NB: *Questions for the interview SHOULD be modified according to the size/type of business and the perceived capabilities of your students*

### **1. The manager**

1.1. Who are you interviewing and what is their job?

1.2. How did they get to where they are now?

### **2. The organisation - type and structure**

Type

2.1. What type of organisation is it?

- *E.g. Is it a commercial business, a government body, or a not-for-profit organisation?*

2.2. What sector does it belong to?

*If it is a non-commercial organisation:*

2.3. What is its purpose?

2.4. How is it funded? And by whom?

- *E.g. Local government - are there quarterly contributions from ratepayers (property owners) in their area and/or some state government funding?*

*If it is a commercial business:*

2.5. What is its business structure?

- *E.g. Is it a company?*
- *Is the business privately owned or publicly listed (on the stock market)?*
- *Is it family business or owner/operator (the person who owns it manages it)?*
- *A partnership?*
- *Is it a franchise?*

### **3. What does it do?**

#### **Products or Services**

3.1. What products or services does the organisation sell or deliver?

Provide a detailed listing of its products or services – collect brochures or pictures

#### **Customers & Clients**

3.2. Who are the businesses customers or clients?

3.3. How does its deliver its services or sell its products? Provide details

- *i.e. wholesale (to other companies) or retail (direct to the public)? Or both?*

#### **Competitors**

3.3. If it is a commercial business, who are the business' competitors? (Only if employer is happy to discuss)

### **4. Who does it?**

#### **Background and Organisation Structure**

4. 1. Provide a background on the organisation

- *E.g. When was the organisation established? By whom? How did it develop to where it is today?*

4.2. Who is the business managed by?

4.3. How many people does the organisation employ?

4.4. List and describe the different departments in the organisation and their function.

4.5. Draw an organisational chart showing the:

- management structure,
- departments and jobs,
- number of people in each area

## **5. Employment & Careers**

### **Recruitment - hiring new people**

5.1. Who in the organisation is responsible for recruiting new employees?

5.2. How does the organisation find new staff?

- *E.g. Do they hire directly – advertise in the local paper and online through MyCareer, SEEK or other job search websites, or*
- *use a recruitment agency,*
- *casual employees through a labour hire company*
- *or work experience students?*

5.3. List or draw the recruitment process

- *E.g. Firstly, a recruitment company is employed to advertise the job vacancy for the organisation, sort through the applications and then interview some of the applicants.*
- *Then, the Human Resources manager interviews the shortlisted applicants with two other managers, and then offers the job to a person.*
- *The whole process takes about six weeks.*
- *The successful applicant is given a three month trial period before having a permanent contract of employment.*

5.4. Does the organisation have any difficulty finding the staff they need? If so, what are the reasons?

**Entry level jobs - starting out**

5.5. Which jobs are entry level or a starting point in the organisation?

List these jobs in a table showing the preferred education level, approximate pay range and type of employment (i.e. permanent or casual)

For example:

Job	Education Level/ Qualifications	Salary range	Employment type
<i>Administration trainee</i>	<i>VCE or equivalent</i>	<i>\$15 - \$18,000</i>	<i>Fulltime 12 month apprenticeship</i>
<i>Graduate Engineer</i>	<i>Undergraduate Degree in Engineering</i>	<i>\$40 – 45, 000</i>	
<i>Engineer Apprentice</i>	<i>Year 12 preferred</i>	<i>First year \$17,000</i>	

**Apprenticeships**

5.6. How many apprenticeships/traineeships does the organisation have? Could the organisation employ more apprenticeships/trainees? How?

**Career paths and the industry**

5.7. Is there a career path within the organisation from these entry level positions?

Choose one job and draw a diagram of a possible career path/s through the organisation

5.8. What sort of skills or personal attributes does a person need to get a job and be successful in this industry?

- *E.g. Good communication and interpersonal skills, self-motivated, team work, good hand skills.*

5.9. Does the business provide training and/or support to employees undergoing training in order to progress in the organisation? Is it accredited training?

## **Benefits**

5.10. What are the opportunities or benefits of working in that industry?

- *E.g. Chance for overseas work, it develops skills that are valued by other industries, it offers secure, permanent employment*

## **Challenges**

5.11. What are the challenges of working in the industry?

- *E.g. Shift work, long hours, need for constant training, must be motivated.*

5.12. Does the employer have any advice to give young people about getting a job in the industry?

## **6. Managing its workforce**

### **Employment Conditions**

6.1. Do employees work under an award or an individual workplace agreement? If so, which award?

6.2. List the major employment conditions ie overtime, shift work, annual leave,

6.3. Are employees members of a union?

### **Occupational Health & Safety**

6.4. Who is the person responsible for managing Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) in the organisation?

6.5. Are there specific Occupational Health & Safety issues in this industry?

6.6. What does the business do to reduce OH&S risk and injury?

- *E.g. In house training; OH&S committees*

### **Culture / Work environment**

6.7. How would the employer describe the company culture?

- *E.g. Team oriented, family business, outcomes driven, friendly and relaxed*

6.8. What factors influence the culture of the organisation?

- *E.g. Long standing workforce with very little turnover,*
- *multi-cultural workforce,*

- *high level of casual workers.*

6.9. Does the organisation have any strategies to develop or maintain a 'happy' workforce?

- *E.g. Social functions, Friday afternoon pizza*

## **7. The Future (optional)**

### **Growth**

7.1. Is the business growing? Or is it maintaining its size or even downsizing?

- *E.g. Is its turnover (income from the sale of good/services) increasing?*
- *Is its workforce increasing or decreasing or stable?*

### **In five years time**

7.2. How is the organisation likely to be different in five years time?

- *E.g. Exporting, moving to a new location, expanding its current operations; new technology*

## Appendix 4: Teacher Evaluation Form

Name:

School:

Course:

Dates of investigation:

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### 1. Overall how, would you rate these student investigations as a learning activity?

Excellent     Very good     Good     OK     Needs improvement     Poor

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### 2. How was the experience of teaching/coordinating this activity? *(you can tick more than one box)*

Enjoyable     Very good     Valuable     OK     Challenging     Too Difficult

Comment

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### 3. Did the investigation content relate very closely to your course curriculum? If so, which aspects?

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### 4. What do you think could be done to improve the resource?

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**5. Do you have any other suggestions to improve this project?**

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**6. What did students seem to find most challenging about the investigation?**

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**7. What do you think students gained from undertaking this activity?**

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**8. Was there enough information provided for you to teach this activity effectively?**

- Yes       No       Improvement needed

Comment

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**9. Would you like to take a class through this activity again?**

- Yes**       **No**       **Maybe**

Comment

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**10. Did you learn any thing about local industry that surprised you?**

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**Please use this evaluation to improve the Project implementation for the following year.**

## Appendix 5: Student Checklist (Ongoing/Also in Student Resource Book)

Tick ✓ when you have completed

### Step One: Pre Visit

- Do you understand the purpose of the project and what you have to do?
- Do you understand how you will be assessed?
- Have you been matched with a business?
- Have you practised interviewing skills?
- Have you practised your telephone skills?
- Have you completed some background research on the business?
- Have you telephoned the business manager to confirm visit time?
- Have you organised your travel arrangements?
- Do you understand the questionnaire you will be conducting?
- Have you organised with your partner how you will conduct the interview?
- Have you organised a digital camera / mobile phone with camera?

## Student checklist (cont)

### Step Two: During Visit

- Did you: introduce yourself and explain what the interview was for?
- Dress appropriately
- Conduct the interview politely and professionally
- Ask permission to take photos
- Have a tour of the business
- Arrange follow up contact (email, telephone)
- Thank the business manager/owner for his/her time and help

### Step Three: Post Visit

- Check your notes to see if you have complete answers for each question
- Follow up with a phone call and/or second visit if more information is required
- Write a report on the business
- Develop a PowerPoint presentation
- Present your business profile to your class
- Send a thank you letter to the interviewee
- Complete the student evaluation form and return it to your teacher

## **Appendix 6: Organising a Local Presentation Event**

We believe it is very important for students to get the opportunity to showcase their work.

But we are sure this can be more effective if it is organised through a collaborative effort with the students, staff and the schools involved.

It provides:

- a more realistic mix of local business personnel, school principals, teachers and students
- greater interaction between all groups
- an opportunity for students to showcase their work to a local audience
- opportunities to extend contacts between local employers and the school
- very positive feedback from all groups

## 'Our Local World Of Work' Student Evaluation

**Student Name:**

**School:**

Year level:

Course:

Business

Name:

Address:

Person Interviewed:

Position:

Date of interview:

**1. What did you think of this investigation activity? *Please tick***

- Excellent     Very good     Good     OK     Not good     Bad

**2. What did you like about this activity?**

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**3. What was difficult about the investigation?**

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**4. What did you learn? Was there anything that surprised you? (E.g. different jobs)**

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**5. What did you learn more about local industries and local employment opportunities?**

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**6. Would you like to learn more about this industry? If so, why?**

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**7. Were there any jobs that interested you? If so, what?**

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**Please return this completed form to: .....**