

xello

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Designing a Secondary School Careers Programme



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Introduction

Introduction

So you're new to the careers leader role? Or, maybe you're looking to give your school's career programme a face lift? This handy guide is designed to help you implement a whole-school careers programme, from year 7 to 13.

Featuring extensive mapping to the CDI framework and the Gatsby Benchmarks, the suggestions in this guide will help you to prepare your students for the future and a constantly changing world.



Introducing the Careers Education Sector

The CDI & their Framework

The [Career Development Institute](#) (CDI) is the professional body representing those who work in careers education, information, advice, and guidance in the UK. The people they represent include career advisers, coaches, and educators.

In 2021 the CDI redeveloped its framework for careers, employability and enterprise education - it now focuses on 6 learning areas. These are the key points which any career development strategy should aim to cover:

- 1 Grow Throughout Life
- 2 Explore Possibilities
- 3 Manage Career
- 4 Create Opportunities
- 5 Balance Life and Work
- 6 See the Big Picture

The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC)

[The Careers & Enterprise Company](#) is the national body for careers education in England, delivering support to schools and colleges to deliver modern, 21st century careers education.

Set up by the government in 2015, their mission is to help every young person to find their best next step.

Introduction

The Gatsby Benchmarks

The eight [Gatsby Benchmarks](#) are a framework for good career guidance developed to support schools in providing students with the best possible careers education, information, advice, and guidance:

- 1 A stable careers programme
- 2 Learning from career and labour market information
- 3 Addressing the needs of each pupil
- 4 Linking curriculum learning to careers
- 5 Experiences of workplaces
- 6 Encounters with employers and employees
- 7 Personal Guidance
- 8 Encounters with further and higher education

CASCAID and Xello

With over 50 years in the careers education sector, Xello is the flagship online careers education and future-readiness program from CASCAID. The program fully engages every student, from years 7 to 13, in building the skills, knowledge, and plans for future success -- regardless of background, ability, or pathway.



Year 7 - 13 Career Planning Journey

YEAR 7



Introduce students to careers education and explore interests.

Discuss options and future opportunities.

Students log in to Xello for the first time and personalise profiles. Take the *Personality Style* quiz. Explore different career options by subject.

YEAR 8



Consider how individuals will have unique pathways, set realistic goals.

Learn about different routes into different careers. Recognise and challenge stereotypes, which may impact pathways.

Students take the *Learning Style* assessment. Use *Goals & Plans*. Assign the *Discover Learning Pathways* and the *Biases and Career Choices* lessons.

YEAR 9



Explore career ideas for the first time and arrange visits to careers fairs.

Schedule Parents' Evenings to discuss GCSE choices. Explore students' options.

Students take the *Xello Matchmaker Quiz* to identify unique career matches. Explore how qualifications and subjects link with career pathways.

Educators involve parents/guardians in Year 9 option discussions using *Xello Family*.

YEAR 10



Arrange work experience visits and develop employability skills. Invite local employers into the school.

Prepare for mock GCSE exams and work on study skills.

Students take the *Skills Lab* assessment, complete the *Study Skills and Habits* and the *Getting Experience* lesson. Set custom lessons for students to record their experiences of careers fairs and employer visits.

YEAR 11



Arrange mock interviews with a local employer and instruct students to create CVs.

Arrange 1-2-1 guidance interviews with a level 6 adviser.

Visit sixth form or college open days. Discuss and research post-16 options.

Students build a CV, research college open days, record plans in *Goals & Plans*, complete *Transition to Further Education* and *Work Values* lessons.

Educators track results and refine employer encounters using educator tools in Xello. Invite parents / guardians to view progress in *Xello Family*.

YEAR 12



Prepare students for Year 12 mock exams and assist with personal statement and CV creation.

Research post-18 options.

Students research careers and higher education study options, complete the *Choosing a University* lesson, and use *CV Builder* to update their own personal CV.

Students complete the *Work / Life Balance* lesson and revisit the *Study Skills and Habits* lesson.

YEAR 13



Support UCAS and alternative post-18 course applications.

Arrange 1-2-1 meetings for students needing additional support.

Students research universities and courses and related career options. Update *Goals & Plans* to record courses and universities.

Educators identify students who haven't engaged or progressed with Xello and organise suitable intervention or support



Designing a Successful Careers Strategy

Designing a Successful Careers Strategy

So now that you understand the background of the CDI, the Careers & Enterprise Company, and the Gatsby Benchmarks, let's look at how you can connect the guidance provided by each to build a scalable careers strategy at your school.

Strategy

The CDI's new framework has been developed to help careers leaders and other careers professionals clarify the skills, knowledge and also attitudes that people need to have, in order to achieve what they describe as a 'positive career'.



A positive career will mean something different to different people, but it will typically include being happy with the way you spend your time, being able to make a contribution to your community and being able to have a decent standard of living.

– [The CDI New Career Development Framework](#)

Each of the framework's 6 learning areas can be used as a foundation on which to develop an ambitious and unique careers strategy. Together, they represent a set of targets or outcomes. They can be adapted to make them relevant for each key stage.

The 6 learning areas can be mapped across to the PSHE core themes, helping you to set specific careers learning outcomes. Below is a short preview of the PSHE to CDI Framework mapping. For the full table, please refer to the [Appendix](#) at the end of this guide.



Designing a Successful Careers Strategy

PSHE to CDI Framework Mapping

PSHE CORE THEME	FRAMEWORK LEARNING AIM
Key Stage 3	
H1. How we are all unique; that recognising and demonstrating personal strengths build self-confidence, self-esteem and good health and wellbeing	Grow Throughout Life
H9. Strategies to understand and build resilience, as well as how to respond to disappointments and setbacks	Grow Throughout Life Manage Career
L1. Study, organisational, research and presentation skills	Explore Possibilities
L2. To review their strengths, interests, skills, qualities and values and how to develop them	Grow Throughout Life

It is important to carefully plan how your own careers strategy will help your students meet and achieve each learning aim at the relevant key stage and across the PSHE core themes.

Some examples of this in practice could include:

- The use of online careers programs like [Xello](#) to deliver personalised learning at scale
- Inviting guest speakers, such as career experts or former students, to talk about their path
- Hosting or attending careers events/fairs to inspire your students
- Distributing engaging careers orientated resources. These could include resources aimed at key transition stages, such as year 9 options



Designing a Successful Careers Strategy

Careers Curriculum Planning

As well as helping to create a focused careers strategy, the CDI's framework can be used in the classroom. The 6 learning aims should be used both for guidance, when planning individual lessons, and as a tool to help set specific learning outcomes.



For example, at Key Stage 3, you might ask pupils to take part in activities which encourage them to begin thinking about their interests and skills. Once they reach Year 10, using Xello's Skills Lab assessment, those same students can explore where different skills lead them and the resulting career matches. This lesson helps students to progress towards both the 'grow throughout life' and 'explore possibilities' learning aims.

Each learning aim will focus on the development of a particular skill. It is important that students actively engage with all 6 learning aims throughout secondary school. Here are a few tips for classroom activities that help you encourage student engagement and assess how your students are progressing through their careers education:

- Structured group discussions
- Student presentations
- Student review and reflection activities
- Teacher observation
- Peer and self-assessment sessions

You might spend one lesson focusing on a single learning aim, and then move onto the next. Or, you might choose to spend more time exploring a particular learning aim in depth with your students.

CDI Framework and the Gatsby Benchmarks

As well as mapping easily to PSHE core themes, the CDI framework works in conjunction with the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks.

The difference between the CDI framework and the Gatsby Benchmarks is part of what makes them work so well together as a guide for structuring your careers provision. The

Designing a Successful Careers Strategy

Gatsby Benchmarks provide guidance on how to organise the delivery of careers education, while the CDI framework defines the expected learning outcomes.

Ultimately, the Gatsby Benchmarks help you to meet the criteria set out in the CDI framework, and focusing on both will make your careers programme stronger.

Gatsby Benchmarks Mapped to the CDI Framework

GATSBY BENCHMARK	CDI FRAMEWORK LEARNING AREAS
Learning from career and labour market information	Grow throughout life Explore possibilities Manage career Seeing the big picture
Addressing the needs of each pupil	Explore possibilities
Linking curriculum learning to careers	Explore possibilities
Encounters with employers and employees	Grow throughout life Explore possibilities
Experiences of workplaces	
Encounters with further and higher education	Explore possibilities
Personal guidance	Explore possibilities Seeing the big picture



Technology & Careers: How Xello Can Help

Technology & Careers: How Xello Can Help

As a comprehensive secondary school program for students aged 11 - 18, Xello provides thoughtful, age-appropriate career management lessons and the ability to create assignments that build critical thinking skills and equip students with the skills to handle life's transitions. Xello's lessons are unique and plug straight into your careers curriculum, saving you time and providing at-a-glance reporting that you can use to evidence progress to your senior leadership team and Ofsted inspectors.



Many of the lessons in Xello cover elements of both the Gatsby Benchmarks and the CDI framework. By working through the relevant lessons in the product, students will progress towards achieving the associated learning aims.

Below is a preview of a table illustrating how Xello's interactive, digital lessons map to the CDI framework. There's a lot of detail so for the full table, please refer to the [Appendix](#) at the end of this guide.

How Xello Lessons Map to the CDI Framework

XELLO LESSON	LEARNING AREAS	EXPLANATION
School Subjects at Work	Explore Possibilities	Explore the skills needed for different careers. Discover how the subjects you study can help you move into certain careers. Think about which subjects are important for different careers. Which pathways are now available to explore? Thinking about a career path can affect the way you think about and choose school/college subjects.
Getting Experience	Grow Throughout Life	The lesson encourages students to reflect on different experiences. This includes reflecting on negative experiences - what can be learned? How can negative experiences help you to develop and grow? Students can investigate ways of developing new skills.
	Explore possibilities	Learn about different ways of getting work experience and the benefits that can be gained. These include job shadow, work placement, summer or part-time job, and internships.

Technology & Careers: How Xello Can Help

XELLO LESSON	LEARNING AREAS	EXPLANATION
Work Values	Grow Throughout Life	Students are encouraged to identify the things they value when thinking about a career. Reflect on what is important to them.
	Explore possibilities	Students think about their favourite careers, and how they match their work values.
	Balance Life and Work	Students consider what is important to them, in terms of a career. Is work/life balance a priority for them?

How Xello Lessons Link to the Gatsby Benchmarks

Xello lessons can be an easy way to evidence progress towards achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks. Lessons can be assigned during form time, in a relevant subject lesson, or as homework.

Use the table on the following page to decide how and when to introduce Xello lessons into your careers programme. There are no right or wrong ways to get your students involved in lessons, but once you do, the advantages are numerous.

Xello’s educator tools has a specific Gatsby Benchmark report that is compatible with the CEC’s Compass+ tool. In addition, there are lesson reports that help you see which students are thriving and which students might require a bit more support.

Xello lessons are completely personalised to each individual students’ work in Xello, meaning you’ll be offering them personalised career guidance to suit their unique skills and interests. What’s more, the student profile in Xello’s educator tools gives you the deep insight into your students that makes your one-to-one careers guidance sessions incredibly meaningful.



Technology & Careers: How Xello Can Help

How Xello Lessons Link to the Gatsby Benchmarks

XELLO LESSON / FEATURE	GATSBY BENCHMARK				
	2. Learning from career and LMI	3. Addressing the needs of each pupil	4. Linking curriculum learning to careers	5. Encounters with employers/employees	7. Encounters with further and higher education
School Subjects at Work			✓		
Getting Experience				✓	
Skills	✓				
Work Values	✓				
Interests	✓				
Choosing a University					✓
Career Backup Plans	✓				
Career Demand	✓				
Exploring Career Matches	✓				
Career Path Choices	✓				
Learning Pathways					✓
Personality Styles	✓				
Workplace Skills & Attitudes	✓			✓	
Biases & Career Choices	✓	✓			
Defining Success		✓			
Self-Advocacy		✓			
Transition to FE					✓
Work / Life Balance	✓				
Jobs & Employers	✓			✓	
Picking GCSEs			✓		
Exploring Career Factors	✓				
Careers & Lifestyle Costs	✓				
Job Interviews	✓				

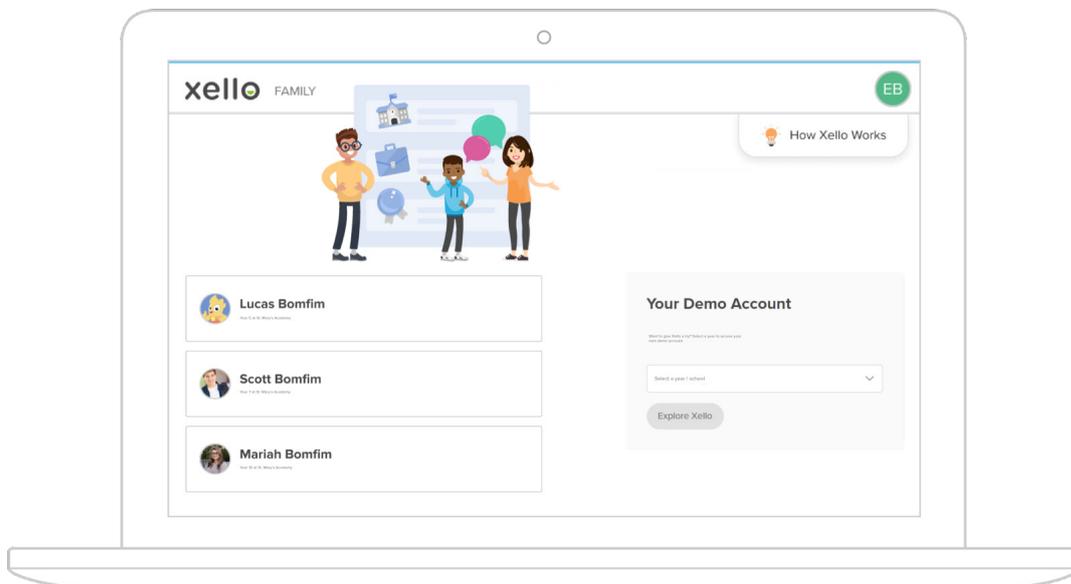
Technology & Careers: How Xello Can Help

As an example of how meaningful the connection between the CDI framework, the Gatsby Benchmarks and Xello can be to your careers strategy, by completing the Skills lesson in Xello, students will have worked towards the Gatsby Benchmark ‘Learning from career and labour market information’. This also means they’ve tackled the CDI framework learning aims of ‘Growing throughout life’ and ‘Exploring possibilities’ at the same time.

How Xello Encourages Parental Involvement

It’s important for students to take ownership for their future plans. But the caring adults in their life play an essential supporting role. That’s where Xello Family comes in!

Xello Family is a portal that enables parents and guardians to see their child’s work in future readiness and career planning. With parents and guardians on board, careers leaders have the opportunity to discuss and support students’ future goals and plans.



Xello Family Portal



Conclusion

Conclusion

Designing a secondary school careers programme can be a daunting but rewarding task. A well-organised, comprehensive, and engaging plan is the key to supporting your students to achieve their successful futures.

By mapping milestones and activities to the CDI framework, the Gatsby Benchmarks, and the PSHE core themes, you can be confident you are meeting the required criteria to deliver a personalised and inspirational careers programme.

And what's more -- technology can help! Leveraging a careers education and future-readiness program, like Xello, can really elevate your secondary school careers programme. Here are just a handful of the benefits of introducing Xello as part of your strategy:

- A truly engaging student experience with built-in careers education curriculum for years 7 through 13
- Alignment with the Gatsby Benchmarks and enhanced reporting for careers leaders
- Access for all teachers, students, and parents
- Accessible, age-appropriate content
- Seamless onboarding and data integration with your MIS
- Dedicated support and training - at no extra cost!

If you're keen to learn more about Xello, please contact the team by completing [this short form](#).



Appendix

Appendix

PSHE to CDI Framework Mapping

PSHE CORE THEME	CDI FRAMEWORK LEARNING AIM
Key Stage 3	
H1. How we are all unique; that recognising and demonstrating personal strengths builds self-confidence, self-esteem and health and wellbeing	Grow Throughout Life
H9. Strategies to understand and build resilience, as well as how to respond to disappointments and setbacks	Grow Throughout Life Manage Career
L1. Study, organisational, research and presentation skills	Explore Possibilities
L2. To review their strengths, interests, skills, qualities and values and how to develop them	Grow Throughout Life
L3. To set realistic yet ambitious targets and goals	Grow Throughout Life Manage Career
L4. The skills and attributes that employers value	Grow Throughout Life Explore Possibilities
L5. The skills and qualities required to engage in enterprise	Grow Throughout Life Explore Possibilities
L6. The importance and benefits of being a lifelong learner	Grow Throughout Life
L7. About the options available to them at the end of key stage 3, sources of information, advice and support, and the skills to manage this decision-making process	Explore Possibilities
L8. About routes into work, training and other vocational and academic opportunities, and progression routes	Explore Possibilities
L9. The benefits of setting ambitious goals and being open to opportunities in all aspects of life	Manage Career

Appendix

PSHE to CDI Framework Mapping *continued*

PSHE CORE THEME	CDI FRAMEWORK LEARNING AIM
Key Stage 3	
<p>L10. To recognise and challenge stereotypes and family or cultural expectations that may limit aspirations</p>	Balancing Life and Work
<p>L11. Different types and patterns of work, including employment, self-employment and voluntary work; that everyone has a different pathway through life, education and work</p>	Explore Possibilities Balancing Life and Work
<p>L12. About different work roles and career pathways, including clarifying their own early aspirations</p>	Explore Possibilities
Key Stage 4	
<p>H1. To accurately assess their areas of strength and development, and where appropriate, act upon feedback</p>	Grow Throughout Life Manage Career
<p>L1. To evaluate and further develop their study and employability skills</p>	Grow Throughout Life Explore Possibilities
<p>L2. To evaluate their own personal strengths and areas for development and use this to inform goal setting</p>	Grow Throughout Life
<p>L3. How their strengths, interests, skills and qualities are changing and how these relate to future career choices and employability</p>	Grow Throughout Life Explore Possibilities Balance Life and Work
<p>L4. About the range of opportunities available to them for career progression, including in education, training and employment</p>	Explore Possibilities
<p>L5. About the need to challenge stereotypes about particular career pathways, maintain high aspirations for their future and embrace new opportunities</p>	Explore Possibilities Create Opportunities

Appendix

PSHE to CDI Framework Mapping *continued*

PSHE CORE THEME	CDI FRAMEWORK LEARNING AIM
Key Stage 4 continued	
<p>L6. About the information, advice and guidance available to them on next steps and careers; how to access appropriate support and opportunities</p>	<p>Explore Possibilities See the Big Picture</p>
<p>L7. About the labour market, local, national and international employment opportunities</p>	<p>Explore Possibilities See the Big Picture</p>
<p>L8. About employment sectors and types, and changing patterns of employment</p>	<p>Explore Possibilities See the Big Picture</p>
<p>L9. To research, secure and take full advantage of any opportunities for work experience that are available</p>	<p>Create Opportunities</p>
<p>L10. To develop their career identity, including values in relation to work, and how to maximise their chances when applying for education or employment opportunities</p>	<p>Manage Career Balance Life and Work</p>
<p>L11. The benefits and challenges of cultivating career opportunities online</p>	<p>Explore Possibilities</p>
<p>L12. Strategies to manage their online presence and its impact on career opportunities</p>	<p>Grow Throughout Life</p>
Post-16	
<p>H1. Skills and strategies to confidently manage transitional life phases</p>	<p>Grow Throughout Life</p>
<p>L2. To set realistic yet ambitious career and life goals which are matched to personal values, interests, strengths and skills</p>	<p>Grow Throughout Life Manage Career Balance Life and Work</p>

Appendix

PSHE to CDI Framework Mapping *continued*

PSHE CORE THEME	CDI FRAMEWORK LEARNING AIM
Post-16 continued	
<p>L3. To evaluate the ‘next step’ options available, such as higher education, further training or apprenticeships, and gap year opportunities</p>	Explore Possibilities
<p>L4. The implications of the global market for their future choices in education and employment</p>	See the Big Picture
<p>L5. How to identify and evidence their strengths and skills when applying and interviewing for future roles and opportunities</p>	Grow Throughout Life
<p>L6. How to produce a concise and compelling curriculum vitae and prepare effectively for interviews</p>	Grow Throughout Life
<p>L7. How to recognise career possibilities in a global economy</p>	See the Big Picture

Appendix

How Xello Lessons Map to the CDI Framework

XELLO LESSON	LEARNING AREAS	EXPLANATION
School Subjects at Work	Explore Possibilities	Explore the skills needed for different careers. Discover how the subjects you study can help you move into certain careers. Think about which subjects are important for different careers. Which pathways are now available to explore? Thinking about a career path can affect the way you think about and choose school/ college subjects.
Getting Experience	Grow Throughout Life	The lesson encourages students to reflect on different experiences. This includes reflecting on negative experiences - what can be learned? How can negative experiences help you to develop and grow? Students can investigate ways of developing new skills.
	Explore possibilities	Learn about different ways of getting work experience and the benefits that can be gained. These include job shadow, work placement, summer or part-time job, and internships.
Skills	Grow throughout life	Reflect on the skills needed to perform certain tasks, including everyday tasks and certain jobs. Students will also reflect on transferable skills. Students will think about what they are good at.
	Explore possibilities	Students will think about their own skills and where they could lead them in terms of career choice.
Work Values	Grow Throughout Life	Students are encouraged to identify the things they value when thinking about a career. Reflect on what is important to them.
	Explore possibilities	Students think about their favourite careers, and how they match their work values.
	Balance Life and Work	Students consider what is important to them, in terms of a career. Is work/life balance a priority for them?
Learning Styles	Grow Throughout Life	Students begin to think about different methods of learning. They also think about their own learning style after taking the learning style quiz.

Appendix

How Xello Lessons Map to the CDI Framework continued

XELLO LESSON	LEARNING AREAS	EXPLANATION
Learning Styles	Explore possibilities	Students reflect on the careers they like and the different learning pathways into those careers.
Interests	Grow throughout life	The lesson encourages students to consider how learning, skills, and experience contribute to a career. They will learn how recording achievements can support lifelong learning and reflection.
	Explore possibilities	In this lesson students are asked to match a set of general interests to careers. They are then asked to reflect on their saved interests and how they match the careers they like.
Choosing a University	Explore possibilities	Students learn about the full range of educational and training pathways. The lesson explains labour market information and how to use it. It also explains the relationship between learning, qualifications, and work/ career choice.
Career Backup Plans	Explore possibilities	In this lesson students think about their dream career and consider why they like it. They then identify a backup career and think about how their skills and interests could help them get into that role.
	Manage Career	This lesson encourages students to have career backup plans and how to overcome obstacles by careful planning.
Career Demand	Explore Possibilities	Students think about their favourite careers and consider how demand may affect their chances of getting into the role in the future.
	Seeing the Big Picture	In this lesson students think about career demand and how different careers can disappear and emerge over time. Students reflect on the different factors that may affect career demand.
Exploring Career Matches	Explore possibilities	In this lesson, students are encouraged to think about the different aspects of a career, and to reflect on how they affect their career choice. Are those careers still suitable?

Appendix

How Xello Lessons Map to the CDI Framework continued

XELLO LESSON	LEARNING AREAS	EXPLANATION
Career Path Choices	Grow throughout life	In this lesson students reflect on how they have changed and how their interests can change over time.
	Explore possibilities	Students think about different career paths and to consider careers that may exist in the future.
	Manage Career	This lesson asks students to think about why some people decide to change careers. What are the different reasons? Why might they decide to change from their favourite careers?
Discover Learning Pathways	Explore possibilities	Students study the different pathways available to get into different roles.
Personality Styles	Grow Throughout Life	This lesson helps students to reflect on their own unique personality and the interests which stem from it. They are asked to think about how their personality style could help them to perform certain tasks.
	Explore possibilities	Students think about the tasks and associated careers that may suit a certain personality style.
Workplace Skills and Attitudes	Grow Throughout Life	In this lesson students learn to identify workplace skills. They begin to think about their own skills and how they can help them.
	Explore Possibilities	Students begin to identify which skills and soft skills are needed for different careers. What skills are required for their favourite careers?
Biases and Career Choices	Grow Throughout Life	This lesson begins by asking students to think about their workplace assumptions - what would they expect to see in a particular workplace? The lesson challenges some of these assumptions. Students learn how to identify different kinds of bias, such as gender, racial, ability, and class bias. This in turn can help them begin to challenge their own career-based biases and assumptions.

Appendix

How Xello Lessons Map to the CDI Framework continued

XELLO LESSON	LEARNING AREAS	EXPLANATION
Biases and Career Choices	Explore possibilities	Students are encouraged to pick a non-traditional career, and one that challenges existing biases e.g. gender.
Defining Success	Grow Throughout Life	This lesson encourages students to reflect on what success means to them as individuals. Everyone’s perspective is different and success can mean so many different things. Success looks different to everyone. Students are also urged to identify and reflect on the success they have had in the past.
	Explore possibilities	Students reflect on what success would look like in their favourite careers. How can a career help them to achieve their idea of success?
Self-Advocacy	Grow Throughout Life	This lesson encourages students to try new things and to explore different ways of speaking out and asking for help. Students are challenged with thinking about how this could work in a place of work.
Study Skills and Habits	Grow Throughout Life	This lesson challenges students to look at the way they study and also the way they approach problems.