



# Building the potential of young people



“ For the last ten years we have been working to not only raise student achievement in the basics of numeracy and literacy, but also in their ability to engage with employers. **Robin Staples** ”



**Robin Staples,**  
Principal

According to principal Robin Staples, Southern Cross Campus, located in Mangere East, is in a unique location, being positioned in one of the fastest growing employment opportunities areas in New Zealand. Southern Cross is in close proximity to Auckland International Airport, which is a high growth area with employment in the construction industry and a wide range of other possibilities.

Southern Cross Campus is using the Vocational Pathways curriculum design framework to develop pathways that connect learning to employment possibilities in the local area. By building partnerships between the school, tertiary providers and employers, students experience a more coherent, relevant and engaging curriculum that leads to successful outcomes.

## **How the Employability Skills Framework focussed effort**

The Employability Skills Framework has been very important for Southern Cross, because it has allowed them to focus their efforts with their students on building the specific skills they need for employment. In the past, when tackling employability, Robin commented that it was done in a general manner across the school. An employment programme was being run by Irene Staples, who is the Head of Department, Learning and Support. She noted that it was not in depth and students were getting a superficial understanding of employability and employment.



**Southern Cross students display their confidence at the YEP awards evening, singing in front of over 200 students and family members**

“ As a result of this programme we really went into depth and explored competencies in the classroom through project based work, going out through volunteer work and finally applying them to work opportunities. **Irene Staples** ”



Irene Staples, HOD  
Learning and Support

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The employability skills gave students more confidence to explore more in life in general. Irene Staples

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Sometimes we assume what students know, and it is not until young people experience employability skills in the workplace, and practice them in an authentic context that we see the skills really develop. Lagi Leilua

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Lagi Leilua,  
Pathways Manager

By having a specific programme, and by focussing on employability skills and attitudes, the delivery of employability training is more structured. Students and teachers work together, which enables teachers to monitor and support students' progress. Due to their success in 2016, Southern Cross have decided to train additional Youth Employability Programme facilitators to enable all their Year 12 students in 2017 to participate in the programme and benefit from the Employability Skills Framework.

### **The benefits of teaching employability skills to young people**

Irene noticed the change from the initial student focus on employability skills to tangible leadership skills. Students' confidence increased as they explored the skills and key competencies. They were able to practice those skills at school and then in their work and volunteer placements.

Pathways Manager Lagi Leilua found that the more involved the students became, the more their confidence increased in the workplace. "It created good interaction for both employers and students as the young people became competent to go beyond the original set of skills."

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This programme has brought me to a realisation that work has all these little values that I need to demonstrate and also how being positive plays an important role in your work. This programme has helped in such a way that now that all the key components have illuminated themselves, I am able to identify all important noticed and unnoticed information. Student graduate 2016

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