



Construction skills course builds useful base for students

The Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation's (BCITO) introductory construction skills programme is giving secondary school students a chance to learn practical skills in the classroom.

Launched two years ago, the National Certificate in Introductory Construction Skills has been immensely popular in New Zealand secondary schools and is now offered at more than 80 schools nationwide.

Keith Ferrel, head of the technical department at Rongotai College in Wellington says the new technology achievement standard was not what many students needed or wanted. "It was too academic, and so we had to find a programme where they could get credits for practical work."

BCITO Communications Manager Rachel Winter says that the BCITO has received encouraging feedback from the students and teachers involved in the programme.

"Our courses are very popular with students. They enjoy the practical aspects of the programme and many students talk about how satisfied they feel when they see the results of their work. In turn, technical teachers love the attitude and great results the students produce," Rachel says.

"The BCITO is committed to addressing the skills shortage in the building industry. Our introductory construction skills programme is a way to help young New Zealanders take a positive step towards a worthwhile career," Rachel says.

Mr Ferrel says the programme has also been positively received by parents. "They are pleased their children are being given the opportunity to learn practical skills which will enable them to bridge the gap between school and the workforce, whilst also taking steps towards a qualification."

"A few years ago everyone talked about universities and tertiary education but for a good number of our students a better avenue is into the trades. Increasingly, building trades are seen as a priority for students... and an opportunity," says Keith.

For more information please go to www.bcito.org.nz

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