Guided Pathways

Integrating Skills for Success
into career development practice

Self-study guide

AWES

Canada

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Self-study guide

Contents

Introduction to Skills for Success

The Skills for Success (SFS) model is the modernized version of the Essential Skills (ES) Framework. The model is "responsive to the changing world and provides consistent language and a common understanding of skills constructs." [1]

In response to the evolving labour market and changing skills needs, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) convened a working group to re-visit the ES Framework and make recommendations for updates and changes. The group included individuals from the government, post-secondary institutions, essential skills organizations, and employers. After months of consultations with numerous stakeholders, the working group introduced the new SFS model.

Elements of the SFS model that are currently available include the definitions, components, and proficiency levels of the skills. We are transitioning to the SFS model. More work and research is needed to develop a more detailed proficiency scale and research-based assessments that reflect the skills in the model. AWES continues to be a part of the effort to transition from the ES Framework to the new model.

> **This section provides an overview of the Skills for Success (SFS) model and how you can use it in your practice.**

The Skills for Success are needed to participate and thrive in learning, work, and life. They are for everyone – employers, workers, training providers, government, and communities.[1]

The model is inclusive, can be adapted to different contexts, and is designed to be more sustainable over time.

Image from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Learn about the skills: https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success/understanding-individuals.html

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[1] Boris Palameta, Cam Nguyen, Wendy Lee, Hua Que, and David Gyamati, "Research report to support the launch of Skills for Success: Structure, evidence, and recommendations [Final Report]," 2021. https://srdc.org/project/Research-report-to-support-the-launch-of-Skills-for-Success-Structure-evidence-and-recommendations-Final-report

The SFS model and ES Framework

The SFS model is the renewed version of the ES Framework. The ES Framework had nine skills: reading, document use, writing, numeracy, working with others, oral communication, thinking, computer use, and continuous learning.

The SFS model also includes nine skills: reading, writing, numeracy, digital, problem solving, communication, collaboration, adaptability, and creativity and innovation.

What has been added?

To reflect the growing importance of social-emotional skills in the labour market, two new skills have been added:

- Adaptability
- Creativity and innovation

Skills for Success

Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Digital	Problem solving	Communication
Collaboration	Adaptability	Creativity and innovation

What has changed?

- Document use is no longer a separate skill. It is embedded in reading, writing, and numeracy.

- Working with others is now collaboration. It encompasses the increasing importance of diversity and inclusion in the Canadian workplace.

- Computer use is now digital. It reflects the technological advancements and digital adoption in the realms of work, learning, and life. It includes a wide range of basic and advanced digital skills needs.

- Oral communication is now communication. It includes both oral and written communication.

- Thinking is now problem solving. It is more action oriented.

- Continuous learning is now included in adaptability.

The nine Skills for Success

Below are the definitions, components, and examples of the skills.[2]

Reading

Reading is your ability to find, understand, and use information presented through words, symbols, and images.

Components	Examples
• Identify the task that requires you to read • Identify the information contained in the document(s) • Make connections between different parts of the document(s) • Understand and apply the information • Evaluate the document(s) • Reflect on the document(s)	• A job seeker reads postings to learn about job requirements. • A bricklayer reads and interprets blueprints to determine the height, length, and thickness of walls. • A truck driver reads a map of routes to learn how to get to their worksite.

Writing

Writing is your ability to share information using written words, symbols, and images.

Components	Examples
• Identify the task that requires you to write • Plan the writing task • Use written words and phrases to achieve the purpose of the writing task • Choose the appropriate language and style for the writing task • Choose the appropriate format for the writing task • Review and revise your writing	• A job seeker writes a resume or cover letter to apply for a job. • A health and safety officer writes recommendations after a serious incident at work. • A construction worker fills out an incident report after a near miss or an accident.

Numeracy

Numeracy is your ability to find, understand, use, and report mathematical information presented through words, numbers, symbols, and graphics.

Components	Examples
• Identify the task that requires you to use numeracy • Identify the mathematical information • Make connections between related pieces of mathematical information • Apply mathematical operations and tools you need to answer the question • Interpret and evaluate the information • Share the mathematical information, results, and implications	• A salesperson fills out travel expenses and calculates amounts and taxes. • A new employee calculates the total claim amount for tax deductions on tax forms.

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[2] Adapted from: Boris Palameta, Cam Nguyen, Wendy Lee, Hua Que, and David Gyamati, "Research report to support the launch of Skills for Success: Structure, evidence, and recommendations [Final Report]," 2021. https://srdc.org/project/Research-report-to-support-the-launch-of-Skills-for-Success-Structure-evidence-and-recommendations-Final-report

Digital

Digital is your ability to use digital technology and tools to find, manage, apply, create, and share information and content.

Components	Examples
• Use digital devices, including computers, tablets, smart phones, and other handheld devices • Use common digital tools to complete tasks • Use digital information • Use online tools and platforms • Apply safe and responsible practices online • Update and upgrade digital skills	• A job seeker applies for jobs online. • An office admin uses the search function to find information in documents. • A truck driver uses search engines, such as Google, to search for approved city truck routes.

Problem solving

Problem solving is your ability to identify and analyze issues, propose solutions, and make decisions.

Components	Examples
• Identify the issue • Gather information to help address the issue • Analyze the issue • Develop multiple routes of action • Address the issue • Evaluate the effectiveness of the solution or decision	• A job seeker decides what training sessions to attend to improve skills. • A long-haul truck driver decides if they are fit for work and well enough to drive based on symptoms they are experiencing.

Communication

Communication is your ability to receive, understand, consider, and share information and ideas through speaking, listening, and interacting with others.

Components	Examples
• Listen with intention (pay attention) • Listen to understand • Speak with clarity • Speak with purpose • Adapt to your audience and contexts • Adapt to other people's different communication modes and tools	• A job seeker requests information about job fairs by email, phone, and in person. • An office admin takes messages and shares information by phone and in person. • A spotter uses hand signals to tell the driver when to back up and when to stop.

Collaboration

Collaboration is your ability to contribute and support others to achieve a common goal.

Components	Examples
• Work well with other people • Value diversity and inclusion • Manage difficult interactions with other people • Facilitate an environment where you can collaborate with others • Reflect and improve on how well the team works together	• A municipal engineer works with technicians, inspectors, and suppliers to complete construction projects. • A driver hauling asphalt works with the site foreman and paver operators to pave roads. • A job seeker works with an employment counsellor to find a job.

Adaptability

Adaptability is your ability to achieve or adjust goals and behaviours when expected or unexpected change occurs.

Components	Examples
• Demonstrate responsibility • Persist and persevere • Regulate your emotions when appropriate • Set or adjust your goals and expectations • Plan and prioritize • Seek self-improvement	• An office admin creates a plan for the day to achieve goals and prioritize important tasks when something unexpectedly changes. • A job seeker plans trips to arrive at job interviews on time.

Creativity and innovation

Creativity and innovation are your abilities to imagine, develop, express, encourage, and apply ideas in ways that are novel, unexpected, or challenge existing methods and norms.

Components	Examples
• Use your imagination and curiosity • Identify opportunities for you to innovate • Generate ideas that are novel to yourself or others • Develop your ideas • Apply your ideas • Facilitate a creative and innovative environment for yourself and others	• A job seeker thinks of new ways to network to get a job faster. • A health and safety officer creates posters or materials for a new setup for remote work regarding ergonomics, posture, and eye strain.

Skills for Success and the CDP

As a CDP, you know well the impact of work success on the lives of adults. Gaps in skills correlate with success in the workplace. For example, employers may expect employees to search for information on the internet to resolve some work issues. A gap in problem-solving, digital, or reading skills may prevent employees from finding accurate information. This can result in wasted time and affect job performance.

You are in the perfect position to use the SFS model in your practice. As a CDP, you can:

- Recognize the skills your clients need to use when they look for a job
- Recommend a skills assessment to identify your clients' strengths and skills gaps
- Identify the skills requirements in job postings and match them with your clients' skills more effectively
- Understand your clients' skills gaps and refer them to programs and resources to improve their skills

As a result, your clients can make better career plans, get a job faster, retain the job, and thrive in it.

Stop and think

Read the scenario and reflect on the questions:

Sylvia is an employment counsellor. Her client, Maria, worked as a final inspector at a food processing plant for the last 12 years. Maria slipped on a wet floor at work and got an injury that makes her unable to do her job.

Sylvia and Maria discussed Maria's job responsibilities and skills to develop an employment plan. Sylvia understands that Maria has done a lot of reading, writing, and problem solving in her previous job. However, she wants to have objective information about Maria's skills levels.

Sylvia also wants to get objective information about Maria's other skills, such as numeracy, digital, communication, adaptability, collaboration, and creativity and innovation. She has recommended that Maria take a skills assessment. The assessment results will provide objective information about her skills levels. This will allow Sylvia to recommend jobs that match Maria's skills levels or refer her to programs and resources that will help her develop her skills.

- How will your knowledge of Skills for Success help you in your practice?
- Which Skills for Success do your clients need to use when they look for a job?
- When would you recommend a skills assessment?
- How would you use assessment results to help your clients?

Research on skills

Over the years, there has been sustained interest in knowing more about skills and their impact on well-being, education, employment, and international competitiveness.

According to the Canadian Council on Learning, "research shows that adults with low literacy suffer illness more often, experience more medication errors, have more workplace accidents, earn less, and are more likely to die at a younger age."[3]

In the workplace, skills development has shown to have a positive impact on employee performance. In research done by The Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC), results show that "even modest investments in workplace literacy and essential skills training can translate into substantial gains in skills and job performance of workers."[4]

The training also resulted in increases in employment, earnings, job retention, and productivity. There were also costs savings from reduced errors and waste. In other research by SRDC, companies that invested 40 hours of literacy and essential skills training have seen an average of 23 per cent return on investment. The key impacts of the training were increased productivity, quality, customer satisfaction, and employee retention.[5]

Survey results

Canada has participated in several international surveys that aimed to identify the literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills of participating countries. These surveys include the International Adult Literacy Survey (1994), International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (2003), and Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (2012).

The surveys consistently revealed that many Canadians' skills are below the level needed to function well in a modern knowledge-based society. **Almost half of working-age Canadians function at levels 1 and 2.**

Level 3 is the level at which individuals are able to fully engage at work and in the community. While many Canadians are successfully employed and able to participate in their communities at levels 1 and 2, this group within our population will struggle more with change than those with level 3 and above results.

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[3] Canadian Council on Learning, "What is the Future of Learning in Canada?" 2011. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED525042

[4] Heather Smith Fowler, Genevieve Mak, Kelsey Brennan, Taylor Shek-wai Hui, and David Gyarmati, "UPSKILL Health – Technical Report on Worker and Business Outcomes," 2016. https://srdc.org/project/upskill-health-technical-report-on-worker-and-business-outcomes

[5] David Gyarmati, Norm Leckie, Michael Dowie, Boris Palameta, Taylor Shek-wai Hui, Elizabeth Dunn, and Sophie Hebert, "UPSKILL: A Credible Test of Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills Training [Technical Report]," 2014. https://srdc.org/project/upskill-a-credible-test-of-workplace-literacy-and-essential-skills-training

The other significant discovery was the large gap between Canadians with low and high literacy skills. Compared to other countries, Canada has a higher number of individuals at level 4/5 than many of the other countries surveyed. Canada is also on the list of those with a high percentage of individuals at level 1. The discrepancy pointed to issues of inequity and raised concerns that Canadians were well behind many European countries in terms of overall literacy attainment.[6]

Here are some key findings from the survey results:

- Literacy skills levels are clearly linked to occupations and industries.
- Literacy levels affect employment stability and income.
- Educational attainment does not necessarily guarantee literacy proficiency.
- Literacy is a continuum of skills development.
- Literacy skills must be used to be maintained and strengthened.

Stop and think

- What are your thoughts about the state of skills levels in Canada?
- Do you see the research results reflected in your practice?
- How will the research results inform your work as a CDP?

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[6] Statistics Canada, "Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)," 2013. https://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/315/Canadian-PIAAC-Report.EN.pdf

Understanding skills levels

We use two terms to talk about levels: proficiency and complexity. "Proficiency" refers to your clients' skills levels. "Complexity" refers to the difficulty of a task your clients perform.

The current descriptors of the proficiency levels for Skills for Success are preliminary. For these descriptors, we use the information from *Research Report to Support the Launch of Skills for Success: Structure, Evidence, and Recommendations.*

For detailed information about skills levels, we use the *Readers' Guide to Essential Skills Profiles.* The information in the guide is based on the Essential Skills (ES) Framework, but it's a useful resource that can help you understand the skills levels.

> **This section is about the proficiency levels of skills and how they are reflected in tasks your clients do.**

> ✓ If you understand the proficiency levels of skills, you can recognize complex tasks and break them down into simpler ones to make them more achievable for your clients.
>
> You can match your clients with jobs more effectively. You can analyze the complexity of tasks in job ads and determine if your clients can complete those tasks successfully.

Proficiency levels

Reading, writing, and numeracy have five proficiency levels. We combine levels 4 and 5 because tasks at these levels require background and specialized information and are similar in nature.

Digital, problem solving, communication, collaboration, adaptability, and creativity and innovation have three proficiency levels: entry, intermediate, and advanced.

Reading

LEVEL 1	
Learners can:	Read relatively short texts to: • Locate a single piece of information • Follow simple written instructions
The text:	• Has a simple format • Includes familiar and concrete content
The task can involve:	• Matching • Identifying one piece of information in labels, forms, and text of one or more paragraphs
Examples:	• A job seeker reads job postings to locate information, such as pay rate. • A sales associate reads a shift schedule to see when their next shift is.
LEVEL 2	
Learners can:	• Read more complex texts to locate a single piece of information • Read simpler texts to locate multiple pieces of information
The text:	• Is more complex • Has a simple format but includes multiple pieces of information
The task can involve:	• Locating two or more (known number) pieces of information • Making a simple comparison • Making low-level inferences
Examples:	• A job seeker reads a list of employers to approach at a job fair. • A production worker reads work orders to find product specifications, such as measurements and quantities.

LEVEL 3	
Learners can:	• Read and locate multiple (unknown number) pieces of information from various sources or various parts of the same text • Integrate information, for example make a decision or a choice based on the information
The text:	• Is somewhat complex • May include tables, charts, and graphs • Can be specialized
The task can involve:	• Locating multiple (unknown number) pieces of information • Making moderate-level inferences • Doing analysis of the information • Integrating the information
Examples:	• A job seeker reads job postings to find the required qualifications for jobs, compares them with their own qualifications, and decides if they should apply. • A sales associate refers to manuals to process price overrides and returns.
LEVEL 4/5	
Learners can:	• Integrate and synthesize information from multiple sources • Evaluate the quality of the text
The text:	• Is complex with multiple sections • May include colour coding, rating scales, or symbols • Includes specialized information
The task can involve:	• Considerable inference • Synthesis of multiple pieces of information found from multiple sources • Using background and specialized knowledge • Evaluating the information for accuracy and omissions
Examples:	• A disability support worker reads legislation documents, such as the Vulnerable Persons Act to learn more about person-centred care. • A production manager uses information in monthly reports to create graphs for an annual presentation.

Stop and think

• What are some reading tasks your clients do when they work with you? What proficiency levels do those tasks require?

• What are some reading tasks your clients may do in the workplace? What proficiency levels do those tasks require?

Writing

LEVEL 1	
Learners can:	Write less than a paragraph to: • Organize • Remind • Inform
The written text:	• Is informal • Can have a pre-set format • Is addressed to a familiar audience, such as co-workers • Contains content on concrete and day-to-day matters of immediate concern
The task can involve:	• Writing a few pieces of information in a form • Writing reminders to oneself or a co-worker • Writing short comments using single words or short phrases
Examples:	• A job seeker fills out a program registration form with personal information, such as full name, address, and phone number. • A disability support worker writes a note to a co-worker about the tasks that need to be completed during the next shift.
LEVEL 2	
Learners can:	• Write one paragraph or longer for various purposes on routine topics
The written text:	• Can be addressed to audiences other than co-workers • Has an appropriate tone, such as friendly or official • Has standard spelling and grammar • Can have a pre-set format
The task can involve:	• Writing several pieces of information in a form • Writing memos or letters
Examples:	• A job seeker writes a thank-you email to the employer after a job interview. • A hotel clerk writes a short report to explain why a client received special services.

LEVEL 3	
Learners can:	Write either longer or shorter paragraphs to: • Inform • Explain • Request information • Express opinions • Give direction
The written text:	• Can have an established format, such as a lease or a contract • Can require structural elements such as headings, table of contents, and footnotes
The task can involve:	• Writing on non-routine topics • Writing multiple pieces of information in moderately complex forms, such as tables
Examples:	• A job seeker creates a targeted resume based on their general resume. • A health and safety officer writes a workplace inspection report.
LEVEL 4/5	
Learners can:	Write longer pieces to: • Evaluate and critique • Make recommendations • Present considerable information
The written text:	• Can include specialized vocabulary • Can be complex and organized into multiple parts
The task can involve:	• Comparing or analyzing information • Modifying the existing format • Gathering, selecting, and synthesizing information from multiple sources • Rewriting for a specific audience
Examples:	• A job seeker writes a functional resume to emphasize their skills for a job. • A training and development specialist writes needs assessment reports to make staff training recommendations.

Stop and think

- What are some writing tasks your clients do when they work with you?
  What proficiency levels do those tasks require?

- What are some writing tasks your clients may do in the workplace?
  What proficiency levels do those tasks require?

Numeracy

LEVEL 1	
Learners can:	• Complete tasks with one simple mathematical operation and only one step of calculation
The task can involve:	• Adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing
	• Counting, making change, and receiving payments
	• Entering costs in financial records and monitoring budgets and inventories
	• Measuring length, height, weight, and angles
	• Comparing to identify which is higher or lower, bigger or smaller
	• Estimating a dimension by eyeballing or weight by lifting
Level of translation:	• Minimal (all information is provided)
Examples:	• A production worker measures product dimensions, using simple tools.
	• A cashier makes change for transactions paid in cash.
LEVEL 2	
Learners can:	• Complete tasks with one or two relatively simple mathematical operations and only a few steps of calculation
The task can involve:	• Calculating discounts, interests, and taxes
	• Calculating rates
	• Calculating areas and volumes of simple and familiar shapes using one system of measurement
Level of translation:	• Low (not all the math operations may be clearly specified)
Examples:	• A cashier calculates transaction totals after taxes.
	• A line cook adjusts measurements in recipes for specific portions.

LEVEL 3	
Learners can:	• Complete tasks with a combination of different operations or multiple applications of a single operation
The task can involve:	• Totalling bills or accounts including calculating two or more of the following: discounts, interest, and taxes • Preparing pay cheques using rates of pay, deduction schedules, and bonus calculations • Measuring curved and irregular lengths or other dimensions • Calculating areas of shapes that are simple composites of simple, familiar shapes • Taking precise measurements using specialized measurement equipment
Level of translation:	• Some translation is required (information may need to be located from different sources)
Examples:	• A mechanical engineer uses calipers to take precise measurements. • A warehouse clerk totals bills including calculation of applicable discounts and taxes to prepare invoices for cash on delivery (C.O.D.) orders.
LEVEL 4/5	
Learners can:	• Complete tasks with multiple steps of calculation
The task can involve:	• Doing mental calculations with a high degree of speed and accuracy • Planning and monitoring project schedules • Auditing financial records for accuracy • Calculating areas and volumes of complex, irregular shapes • Forecasting prices • Making indirect measurements using trigonometry and geometry • Testing hypotheses • Conducting analysis using mathematical modeling
Level of translation:	• High level of translation is required (numbers for calculations may need to be derived or estimated)
Examples:	• A business analyst develops an annual budget for separate departments and the company. • An engineer uses trigonometry to calculate the slope, angle, and distance required for material handling conveyor systems.

Stop and think

• What are some numeracy tasks your clients may do in the workplace? What proficiency levels do those tasks require?

Digital

ENTRY LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Use basic functions of familiar digital devices
The task can involve:	• Limited number of steps • Turning a device on and off and restarting it • Simple formatting • Navigating online content using common features such as going to the previous or next page • Entering data in pre-existing structures • Logging in and out of an account
Examples:	• A job seeker saves their employment counsellor's contact information in their phone. • Cashiers enter product codes on the cash register.
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Use a wider range of functions of familiar and unfamiliar digital devices
The task can involve:	• Downloading and using an app • Changing settings • Creating and modifying templates • Experimenting and problem solving • Creating documents with extensive formatting features such as page numbering, headers and footers, and heading levels
Examples:	• A job seeker downloads and uses the transit app to be on time for interviews and appointments. • A production supervisor creates a spreadsheet to track inventories and plan future expenses.

ADVANCED LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Find and use relevant and reliable online information to improve digital processes, including online safety. They have an in-depth knowledge of digital device operations and information technology systems.
The task can involve:	• Assessing information technology needs • Designing, writing, and customizing software programs for specific needs • Creating computer networks • Creating database structures and forms
Examples:	• A data engineer conceptualizes, designs, and creates data management systems such as reporting and analysis tools and online transaction processing systems. • A web designer develops web pages with interactive features.

Stop and think

- What are some digital tasks your clients do when they work with you? What proficiency levels do those tasks require?

- What are some digital tasks your clients may do in the workplace? What proficiency levels do those tasks require?

Problem solving

ENTRY LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Make decisions and solve problems when there are limited or familiar variables
The task can involve:	• Basic troubleshooting or decision making • Matching the solution to the problem once it has been identified • Checking if the problem has been solved
Circumstances:	• All the information is provided • There is a decision tree to follow • Exceptions are clearly defined • Limited to no judgement is needed • The stakes are low with few consequences
Examples:	• A job seeker chooses a morning or afternoon training session based on their availability. • A kitchen helper decides how to clean equipment, choosing the best cleaning material and methods.
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Make decisions and solve problems when there are multiple but well-defined variables
The task can involve:	• Troubleshooting or decision making when the information is not provided but is easily identified • Selecting the best option from multiple solutions • Evaluating the effectiveness of the solution
Circumstances:	• Most information relevant to the decision is known • The stakes are moderate with some consequences such as loss of money or time
Examples:	• A job seeker decides what jobs to apply for considering factors such as transportation, pay, and available shifts. • An instructional designer decides what software features to use to meet design criteria such as content organization, usability, and learner engagement.

ADVANCED LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Make decisions or solve problems when there are many complex unfamiliar variables that can be unpredictable or contradictory
The task can involve:	• Troubleshooting or decision making when little information is provided or certain • Searching for information using diverse unfamiliar sources • Doing research • Analyzing and synthesizing complex information to determine multiple options • Selecting the best option • Determining how to assess the effectiveness of the process or decision
Circumstances:	• Little information is provided or certain • The stakes are high with significant consequences
Examples:	• A business analyst makes strategic decisions for new projects by researching, collecting, and analyzing data. • A health and safety officer investigates workplace accidents, then makes decisions about compliance with health and safety regulations.

Stop and think

• What are some problem-solving tasks your clients do when they work with you? What proficiency levels do those tasks require?

• What are some problem-solving tasks your clients may do in the workplace? What proficiency levels do those tasks require?

Communication

ENTRY LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Speak about, listen to, and understand a narrow range of topics • Use and interpret simple verbal cues, such as facial expression, eye contact, pointing, and demonstrating
Communication features:	• Predictable and familiar context • Factual and concrete language • One-on-one interaction
The task can involve:	• Responding to daily inquiries • Getting specific information • Following and giving simple instructions • Leaving and receiving short voice messages • Coordinating work with another person
Examples:	• A job seeker leaves their employment counsellor a voice message to confirm dates and times of employer events. • Housekeepers interact with the supervisor to get work assignments.
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Speak about, listen to, and understand a moderate range of topics • Interpret more complex verbal cues (including those with cultural implications) to better understand the speaker's intentions
Communication features:	• Less predictable context • Factual and abstract language • One-on-one or small-group interaction
The task can involve:	• Getting information by questioning multiple sources • Following or giving detailed multi-step instructions • Reassuring and comforting • Dealing with minor conflicts and complaints • Presenting and discussing simple options • Coordinating work with several people
Examples:	• A job seeker requests information about a rent-assist program from staff and peers who already get rental assistance. • A sales associate handles a disappointed customer in person or over the phone.

ADVANCED LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Speak about, listen to, and understand a wide range of topics • Interpret complex and subtle non-verbal cues • Use complex non-verbal cues to adapt to various communication styles
Communication features:	• Variety of contexts, from routine to unpredictable • Factual, abstract, and technical language • Familiar and unfamiliar audiences of various sizes
The task can involve:	• Providing, obtaining, or exchanging complex information and opinions • Giving and following complex instructions • Persuading, motivating, and negotiating • Resolving non-routine conflict • Advising and counselling • Leading, facilitating, and guiding meetings • Coordinating work with and for others
Examples:	• A job seeker answers questions at a panel interview to show that they fit the job. • A supervisor mediates conflicts between workers.

Stop and think

• What are some scenarios where your clients need to use communication skills when they work with you? What proficiency levels do those scenarios require?

• What are some scenarios where your clients may need to use communication skills in the workplace? What proficiency levels do those scenarios require?

Collaboration

ENTRY LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Interact with others to share information to complete routine independent tasks
Learners collaborate with:	• Familiar or a small number of unfamiliar people
Result:	• They maintain cooperative behaviour toward others and minimize conflict.
Examples:	• A job seeker informs their employment counsellor when they can't attend a program. • A machine operator shares information with other production staff about order specifications.
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Coordinate tasks with familiar and diverse unfamiliar groups of people
Learners collaborate with:	• Familiar and diverse unfamiliar groups
Result:	• They work together to achieve simple or well-defined goals. They support and adapt to others and manage conflicts.
Examples:	• A job seeker practices answering interview questions with other job seekers. They are respectful to those who take a longer time to come up with answers and offer to help them. • A supervisor in retail trains newly hired sales associates and gives them feedback to help improve performance.
ADVANCED LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Work in large teams of diverse people to achieve complex goals
Learners collaborate with:	• Large teams of diverse people
Result:	• They coach and motivate others, manage conflicts, evaluate, and improve teamwork.
Examples:	• A disability support worker helps clients set goals and motivates them to take small steps to achieve their goals. They also collaborate with other disability support workers who work with the same clients. They discuss possible ways of improving their clients' progress. • An employment coach works with clients to increase their job retention rates. They provide their clients with strategies to navigate challenging workplace situations. They evaluate the effectiveness of those strategies. If the strategies don't work, the employment coach adjusts them or recommends new ones. They also motivate their clients to stay positive during difficult times.

Stop and think

• What are some scenarios where your clients need to use collaboration skills when they work with you? What proficiency levels do those scenarios require?

• What are some scenarios where your clients may need to use collaboration skills in the workplace? What proficiency levels do those scenarios require?

Adaptability

ENTRY LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Follow direction and complete plans, tasks, and goals in response to expected and unexpected changes
Adjustment and learning:	• Minor (learning resources are provided)
Stress:	• Minor
Examples:	• A job seeker is able to get to an interview on time, with clear instructions from the employment counsellor about when to leave home and what bus to take. • A production support worker gets training and support from the supervisor to complete new tasks.
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Adjust and complete plans, tasks, and goals with some supervision in response to expected and unexpected changes
Adjustment and learning:	• Moderate
Stress:	• Moderate
Examples:	• A job seeker adjusts plans when there is power outage. They attend an online coaching session from the library instead of from home. • An office assistant asks for support to reprioritize when there are competing priorities.
ADVANCED LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Adjust plans, tasks, and goals independently in response to expected and unexpected complex changes
Adjustment and learning:	• Significant
Stress:	• High
Examples:	• A job seeker prepares to go to an interview at an unfamiliar location by looking up bus routes and schedules, doing a trial run, checking the weather forecast, and planning to take an earlier bus or get a ride if needed. • A support worker stays calm and uses effective strategies to handle physically and verbally aggressive clients.

Stop and think

- What are some scenarios where your clients need to use adaptability skills when they work with you? What proficiency levels do those scenarios require?
- What are some scenarios where your clients may need to use adaptability skills in the workplace? What proficiency levels do those scenarios require?

Creativity and innovation

ENTRY LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Generate a limited number of novel ideas under guidance and support
New ideas:	• Open to applying new ideas
When faced with failure or uncertainties:	• Revert to norms and habits
Examples:	• A job seeker uses the most common job search websites to look for a job. They also follow their employment counsellor's suggestion to find a new way to look for a job every week.
	• A fence installer follows installation procedures. Sometimes they discuss new ways to improve productivity with their supervisor and try them out if their supervisor approves.
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Generate a larger number of novel ideas on their own
New ideas:	• Receptive to new ideas from others
When faced with failure or uncertainties:	• Acknowledge and work with uncertainties, accept failures, and learn from failures to improve their ideas
Examples:	• An instructional designer finds and uses new applications to develop interactive instructional materials. They also try out applications recommended by co-workers.
	• A job seeker finds and tries out new ways of networking.
ADVANCED LEVEL	
Learners can:	• Generate a wider range of novel ideas, with diverse dimensions of originality
New ideas:	• Facilitate an environment for others to be creative and innovative
When faced with failure or uncertainties:	• Evaluate limitations of novel ideas and find ways to improve them to minimize failures and uncertainties
Examples:	• An employment counsellor facilitates networking groups to encourage clients to evaluate their job search strategies and propose new ways to look for a job.
	• A process engineer leads a productivity improvement team and conducts brainstorming sessions to create, approve, and implement strategies and programs.

Stop and think

- What are some scenarios where your clients need to use creativity and innovation skills when they work with you? What proficiency levels do those scenarios require?
- What are some scenarios where your clients may need to use creativity and innovation skills in the workplace? What proficiency levels do those scenarios require?

Analyzing task complexity

There are various factors that affect the complexity of tasks. Often, larger tasks consist of smaller tasks and require more than one skill to complete successfully. In addition, the scenario where the task is completed can affect the proficiency level of a skill required for the task.

Larger tasks consist of smaller tasks

Larger, overarching tasks often consist of smaller, simpler tasks. The overarching tasks are called **comprehensive tasks**. The smaller tasks that make up a comprehensive task are called **underlying tasks**.

For example, writing a resume is a comprehensive task. The main skill needed for this task is writing. However, to write a resume, your clients need to do these underlying tasks:

- Choose a resume format
- Create a digital document for the resume
- Input and organize their employment history from most to least recent
- Write highlights of qualifications
- Choose relevant skills to include
- Proofread

To do these tasks, your clients need to use their writing, digital, and problem-solving skills.

Proficiency levels vary, depending on the scenario

The proficiency level required for the same task can vary, depending on the scenario. This is often seen in scenarios requiring communication, adaptability, collaboration, and creativity and innovation.

For example, your clients often use their elevator pitch to introduce themselves at interviews and job fairs. The main skill required for this task is communication (to briefly talk about their skills, experience, and training) but it also involves adaptability (to stay calm and handle interview anxiety). The levels required can vary, depending on where your clients use their elevator pitch: one-on-one interview, group interview, or job fair. This is because the audience and its size (communication) as well as the level of stress (adaptability) are different.

> **Stop and think**
> - What underlying tasks are required to write a cover letter?
> - What skills are involved when planning a trip to get to a job interview?

How to make tasks achievable for your clients

It may be challenging for your client to complete a task because:

- The task requires a proficiency level that is higher than your client's
- The task requires more than one skill, and your client has a gap in one or more of the skills

If your clients have skills gaps, you can refer them to resources and programs for skills development. You can also use your knowledge of Skills for Success to make tasks achievable for your clients. You can do this by using these strategies:

✓ Break down comprehensive tasks

Break down comprehensive tasks into underlying tasks. Assign the underlying tasks to your clients one by one or in small chunks. For example, writing a targeted resume using a general resume is a level 3 writing task. You can assign it to your clients in these chunks:

1. Choose the format of the resume and create a digital document for it
2. Choose the relevant employment history on their general resume to transfer to the targeted resume
3. Write highlights of qualifications relevant to the specific job
4. Arrange the information based on the format of the resume
5. Proofread

✓ Separate then synthesize skills in tasks

Separate the skills in tasks that require more than one skill to complete. This can help you identify and address your clients' skills gaps.

For example, looking up bus schedules online to get to appointments on time requires reading and digital skills. If your clients have trouble completing the task successfully, they may have a gap in either or both skills. Here is how you can make that task achievable for clients who have skills gaps:

1. **Separate the reading skill**
   Ask your clients to read the schedules. Give your clients a paper printout or access the schedules for them online. If your clients still can't complete the task, help them practice reading.
2. **Separate the digital skill**
   Ask your clients to access the schedules online. If your clients can't complete the task, provide the steps for how to access schedules online and help them practice.
3. **Synthesize the skills**
   Ask your clients to access and read schedules online. Help them practice until they get proficient and can complete the task independently.

Scaffold levels

Gradually increase the proficiency levels required for scenarios or tasks. This is called scaffolding. You can scaffold by changing the levels of the factors that affect the proficiency levels of the skills.

For example, to scaffold the levels of adaptability, you can increase the levels of adjustment (minor to significant), learning (minor with support to significant without support), and stress (minor to significant).

Your clients often practice answering job interview questions. Here is how you can scaffold the levels of adaptability when they do this:

1. **Entry-level adaptability**

   Have your clients answer questions in informal settings, such as with you or other clients they know. This task involves entry-level adaptability because it is completed in an informal setting. There is minor learning involved and you have taught them how to answer such questions. This can cause minor stress.

2. **Intermediate-level adaptability**

   Have your clients answer questions at a mock interview with another employment counsellor that they haven't met before. This task involves intermediate-level adaptability because it is completed in a more formal, mock interview setting with an employment counsellor they don't know. This can cause moderate stress.

3. **Advanced-level adaptability**

   Have your clients answer questions in a networking group. This task involves advanced-level adaptability because it is completed in a formal setting with a group of people your clients don't know. This can cause significant stress.

Provide strategies

Provide strategies to your clients to help them develop their skills. Some examples are:

- How to handle anxiety
- How to use key words to find information in a document
- How to answer questions at interviews

Stop and think

- How would you scaffold the levels of collaboration?
- What strategies would you provide to your clients so they can collaborate better?

Connecting language and skills levels

There are connections between Skills for Success and language abilities. While skills enable individuals to complete tasks, language plays an important factor in expressing these skills. For example, a person may have suggestions on how to improve the team's performance (collaboration) but does not know how to express these ideas in English. The language barrier limits the person's ability to show their collaboration skills.

Looking at both skills and language can help you better understand the needs of your clients to prepare them for employment.

The CLB-ES Comparative Framework describes the connections between language and skills.

> **This section introduces the CLB-ES Comparative Framework and how it can be used to align the client's skills with employment opportunities.**

Canadian Language Benchmarks

The Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) is the national standard used to describe communicative ability in English as a Second Language (ESL). It was developed specifically for non-English language speakers to create a common scale to evaluate language levels throughout Canada. Many immigrant clients who had their language ability assessed in Canada may be able to describe their language level using the CLB scale.

There are 12 levels, ranging from basic to advanced. Each level has proficiency descriptors, indicators of task success, and example tasks.

The following table provides an overview of what an individual can do at the given levels.[7]

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[7] Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, "Canadian Language Benchmarks: English as a Second Language for Adults," 2012. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ircc/migration/ircc/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf

Stage I – Basic language ability

Benchmark and ability level:
CLB 1: Initial   **CLB 2**: Developing   **CLB 3**: Adequate   **CLB 4**: Fluent

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Interpreting simple spoken communication in routine, non-demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.	Creating simple spoken communication in routine, non-demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.	Interpreting simple written communication in routine, non-demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.	Creating simple written communication in routine, non-demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.

Stage II – Intermediate language ability

Benchmark and ability level:
CLB 5: Initial   **CLB 6**: Developing   **CLB 7**: Adequate   **CLB 8**: Fluent

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Interpreting moderately complex spoken communication in moderately demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.	Creating moderately complex spoken communication in moderately demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.	Interpreting moderately complex written communication in moderately demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.	Creating moderately complex written communication in moderately demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.

Stage III – Advanced language ability

Benchmark and ability level:
CLB 9: Initial   **CLB 10**: Developing   **CLB 11**: Adequate   **CLB 12**: Fluent

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Interpreting complex spoken communication in demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.	Creating complex spoken communication in demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.	Interpreting complex written communication in demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.	Creating complex written communication in demanding contexts of language use within the four Competency Areas.

For a detailed description of each level, you can refer to the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) website: **language.ca**

Comparative Framework

In 2005, the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) and NorQuest College published a comprehensive comparison of two national skills standards, the CLB and the Essential Skills (ES) Framework. This resulted in a framework that is useful for the development of workplace related curriculum. There are ongoing efforts to update the Comparative Framework.

Note that the Comparative Framework refers to the ES Framework and not the current Skills for Success model. However, the skills that the Comparative Framework include such as reading (with document use), writing (with document use), and oral communication are still part of the Skills for Success model. Therefore, the Comparative Framework is still a helpful resource for practitioners.

While CLB focuses on the language ability of a learner, the ES Framework describes the difficulty of the tasks that learners are asked to complete. It is important to note that the alignment between the two is not straightforward and the Comparative Framework was not designed to be an equivalency table.

Below is an example of how writing is looked at in the context of ES and CLB. Take note of the similarities between the two.

ES writing	CLB writing
The writing task is: • Less than a paragraph • Intended to organize, remind, or inform • Informal writing for small, familiar audiences	The individual: • Writes short letters and notes on a familiar topic • Effectively conveys an idea, opinion, feeling or experience in a simple paragraph • Takes slow, simple dictation with frequent repetitions

✔ When working with clients whose first language is other than English, it is useful to familiarize yourself with the Comparative Framework. Whether a person is a newcomer or an established immigrant, their language skills may impact their ability to demonstrate their skills effectively.

Referring to the Comparative Framework will help you see the connection between language levels and the skills required for success in the Canadian workforce. If the language level of a client is known and/or documented using CLB, comparisons can be made to their skills levels using this tool.

The tables below show how the skills levels connect to language levels.[8]

For example, someone with language abilities at CLB reading level 6 should be able to complete reading tasks at level 2.

Reading

ES reading level	CLB reading level											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1			■	■	■							
2						■						
3							■	■	■			
4										■		
5											■	■

Writing

ES writing level	CLB writing level											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1				■	■							
2						■	■					
3								■				
4									■			
5										■	■	■

Oral communication

ES oral communication level	CLB listening level											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1					■	■	■					
2								■				
3									■	■		
4											■	■

ES oral communication level	CLB speaking level											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1					■	■						
2						■	■	■				
3									■	■		
4											■	■

[8] Adapted from the CLB–ES Comparative Framework.

Using the Comparative Framework in CDP practice

Using the Comparative Framework will help you support your clients in workplace preparation, training, and career planning. Here's how you can use the Comparative Framework:

1. Find your client's CLB levels. Many clients who are English language learners will have CLB language proficiency scores.

2. Use the Comparative Framework to get an estimate of your client's skills levels.

3. Find the job skills requirements of the job your client is looking for.

4. Analyze the job skills requirements to identify the skills levels needed for the job.

5. Compare your client's skills levels with the skills levels needed. Identify if there is a match or a gap.

6. Determine the next course of action with your client. You can create an appropriate training or career plan, provide them with support, and discuss their skills in a way that focuses on their strengths.

Finding job skills requirements

You can use these resources to determine the skills needed in different jobs:

Essential skills job profiles
Use essential skills job profiles on the Government of Canada's Job Bank website for an idea of the tasks that workers in specific occupations do. The tasks are grouped by the essential skills they involve. The profiles have not been updated to reflect the Skills for Success but they can be a useful source of information. Job Bank website: **jobbank.gc.ca/essentialskills**

National Occupational Classification (NOC)
Use the NOC to find information on duties and other requirements for different jobs. Government of Canada website: **noc.esdc.gc.ca**

Occupational and Skills Information System (OaSIS)
Use the OaSIS for more comprehensive information on various jobs. Aside from job duties, it also lists work characteristics, skills and abilities, interests, and employment requirements. Note that the skills and abilities do not refer specifically to Skills for Success. Government of Canada website: **noc.esdc.gc.ca/Oasis/OasisWelcome**

Job descriptions
Visit employer or job search websites to find job descriptions.

Stop and think

- How will you use your knowledge of the Comparative Framework to better understand and support your clients?

Skills assessments and resources

There are times when you may suspect your clients' skills levels are not compatible with their employment goals. To get an objective evaluation of clients' skills levels, it important to use a skills assessment tool.

A skills assessment will provide a starting point from which you can help focus their career plans. When you identify skills levels, you are better able to match clients to jobs and refer them to programs or resources to improve their skills.

Below are some skills assessment tools and skill-building resources you can use in your practice.

> **This section features tools and resources you can use to incorporate Skills for Success into your practice.**

Skills assessment tools

AWES Online Essential Skills Assessment

This online tool assesses reading, numeracy, communication (listening), digital, and problem-solving skills. The assessment is adaptive, which means correct answers will lead to harder questions. Once the assessment is complete, users get a customized results report and learning plan.

The results report includes the client's skills levels and specific components of the skills. The learning plan includes a list of resources customized to the client's skills level. The client can use these online resources to strengthen their skills.

The assessment can be used multiple times so you and your clients can track progress. The assessment is appropriate for adult learners and can be used with clients at different levels and from different backgrounds.

More information about this assessment is available on the AWES website: **awes.ca**

RAD Science assessment

In partnership with Research and Assessment Design: Science Solution (RAD Science), AWES piloted a tool to assess the social-emotional skills in the Skills for Success model.

It is a science-based tool that can help you understand how the newly added or expanded social-emotional skills are demonstrated through specific behaviours. The tool assesses these skills using self-rating, forced-choice, and situational judgment questions.

The assessment report includes the following information:

- Assessment of each social-emotional skill, classified in three categories:
     Proficient/top notch
     Demonstrating/room for improvement
     Needs attention/strive to improve
- Job interest results:
     Most preferred interests
     Least preferred interests
- Recommended occupations:
     Best career fits
     Best career paths
- Resource recommendations:
     Ways to get there

More information is available on the RAD Science website: **radssolution.com**

Using assessments in your practice

Here are steps you can follow to integrate an assessment tool into your practice:

1. **Suggest an assessment of your client's skills**
    After consulting with your client and having conversations around skills, job profiles, and job readiness, suggest an assessment to identify their skills levels. You can explain that the assessment is an objective way for both of you to see the client's strengths and areas that need improvement.

2. **Schedule time for the assessment**
    It may be helpful to explain what the assessment will be like for your client, how long it will take, and what kind of questions to expect.

3. **Support and guide your client through the process**
    Assure the client that the results will be used to develop a more targeted development plan.

4. **Discuss the results with your client**
    Discuss the results of the assessment with your client and help them put it into context. Remind them that this is a positive step on their journey towards employment since they will better understand their strengths and discover areas that may need improvement.

5. **Develop an action plan with your client**
    The assessment results will help you and your client develop an individualized employment plan that best fits your client's needs. This plan may include skills upgrading and/or a re-evaluation of target jobs to find a good match for the client's current skills levels. You can use the report to better match skills to job profiles to improve chances for success. You can also use the report to find the appropriate resources to improve your client's skills.

Stop and think
- What are the benefits of using assessments in your practice?
- What are the challenges of incorporating assessment tools into your practice?

Skill-building resources

Guided Pathways: Online Self-study Resources

This is a collection of carefully selected resources to help learners succeed in their career journey. These workbooks, tutorials, industry-specific guides, and interactive online courses will help them prepare for work, evaluate their skills, and find resources to support their growth. Topics include:

- Training materials and assessments for essential skills vital for success in various careers

- Learning resources, plain language news articles, and engaging podcasts to enhance both language proficiency and financial literacy

- Resources to assist with navigating the job market, including guides for job search strategies, job retention, career transition, workplace safety, and effective career planning

You can find the collection on the AWES website: **awes.ca**

AWES resources

AWES has a variety of resources and tools to support clients in workplace skills development, including those for the hospitality industry, machine operators and heavy-duty mechanics, project management, and English language learning.

AWES website: **awes.ca/training-centre**

AWES also has a YouTube channel with helpful videos that explore a variety of workplace topics including documents at work, workplace safety, taking initiative, and many more.

AWES YouTube channel: **youtube.com/@awescanada/videos**

Skills for Success Practitioner Tools and Resources: Digital Resource Library

SkillPlan has developed a digital resource library for Skills for Success practitioners. This library is a curated collection of online resources recommended by the Skills for Success community.

Website: **sfs-tools.ca/digital-resource-library**

Community resources and supports

Another rich resource for training and upgrading to include in your client's employment plan can be found in your own community. Community Adult Learning Programs (CALPs) throughout Canada provide free or low-cost support to adults.

These programs offer a variety of opportunities in different delivery formats including classes and individual tutoring, in-person or virtual. Many of the organizations offer programming geared to various marginalized communities including: Indigenous, English language learners, French language learners, LGBTQ2S+, and those with learning challenges.

Programs and supports may also be offered by:

- Libraries
- Immigrant-serving organizations
- First Nations, Metis, Inuit (FNMI) serving organizations
- Community groups such as service clubs and churches
- School districts
- Post-secondary institutes
- Settlement agencies

Stop and think

- What resource can you use to help your clients build their skills?
- How would you support your client to get the most out of this resource?

Career development practitioners in Canada

Career development is a constantly evolving and growing industry. Staying current with the world of work is a challenge. Recognition and support of the important work done by career development practitioners can be found both nationally and provincially within Canada.

Creating a model of competencies and providing opportunities for accreditation is just a small part of the valuable work being done on your behalf. There are several provincial organizations that support CDPs locally as well as collaborate with the federal organizations. The following organizations provide valuable leadership, information, and resources for those in the CDP profession.

Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF)

CCDF works with organizations and governments to articulate core priorities and develop strategic solutions. They develop practical training, tools, and strategies that support the delivery of quality career services, promote evidence-based policy and practice, and build quality service systems for Canadians of all ages. The CCDF:

- Prepares youth for the workforce and ongoing learning
- Builds the capacity of workers to skillfully manage their careers
- Understands and helps address barriers that impede under-represented groups from accessing learning and work opportunities
- Helps employers create quality workplaces that maximize worker satisfaction and productivity
- Reintegrates adults entering or re-entering work or learning
- Helps older workers transition to alternative avenues for work, learning, and/or community engagement

More information can be found on their website: **ccdf.ca**

CERIC

CERIC is a charitable organization that advances education and research in career counselling and career development. The origin of the CERIC name is as an acronym for Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling. However, recognizing that the scope of career development encompasses counselling and more, the organization has adopted CERIC as its name and added the descriptor "Advancing Career Development in Canada" to communicate its purpose and impact.

CERIC funds projects to develop innovative resources that build the knowledge and skills of diverse career and employment professionals. CERIC also annually hosts Cannexus, Canada's largest bilingual career development conference, publishes a peer-reviewed journal, Canadian Journal of Career Development, and runs the CareerWise/OrientAction websites, providing the top career development news and views.

CERIC's activities are funded in large part by The Counselling Foundation of Canada, a family foundation that has actively supported career projects for 60 years.

More information can be found on their website: **ceric.ca**

Guided Pathways

AWES

Canada