



# Career Planning Workbook

Expansion Module 4: Essential Skills

The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (Saint John), Anglophone South School District and the Work Room Career Resource Centres have developed a program to assist people in preparing their career plan. PACE (Plan to Achieve Career Excellence) is divided into 5 sequential modules that combine to create an effective career plan. This workbook supports the fourth module-“Essential Skills” by providing additional information, resources and activities to help people to identify their skills and develop a skills inventory that will help them in their job search and overall career management.

This workbook is designed as a follow-up to Module 3: Action Plan in the PACE career planning system. This is a useful resources to anyone who requires help in identifying their unique skills sets.

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A support website has been developed to provide additional resources. The web pages are colour-coded to correspond with the information contained in this workbook.

[www.setyourownpace.org](http://www.setyourownpace.org)

The PACE workshop and resources are not intended to be used as a substitute for professional career counseling. Instead, this workbook allows both youth and adults to do their own research and in the event they have questions concerning career planning, there are resources readily available to assist them.

For parents who are interested in receiving career coaching training, a 60 minute Introductory Career Coaching Workshop is available through The Work Room Career Resource Centres and select community partners. Expansion modules (such as this one) are available for those who complete the introductory workshop. For more information on PACE and related career products, workshops and resource material please visit:

[www.careerthatwork.ca](http://www.careerthatwork.ca)

# Skills Inventory

Please use this summary sheet to record your results from the following pages in this workbook. As you complete a section in the workbook, fill in blanks provided on this page. This will serve as your skills inventory when it is complete.

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|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Reading             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | Poor                     | Fair                     | OK                       | Good                     | Excellent                |
| 2. Writing             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | Poor                     | Fair                     | OK                       | Good                     | Excellent                |
| 3. Document Use        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | Poor                     | Fair                     | OK                       | Good                     | Excellent                |
| 4. Numeracy            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | Poor                     | Fair                     | OK                       | Good                     | Excellent                |
| 5. Computer Use        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | Poor                     | Fair                     | OK                       | Good                     | Excellent                |
| 6. Thinking Skills     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | Poor                     | Fair                     | OK                       | Good                     | Excellent                |
| 7. Oral Communication  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | Poor                     | Fair                     | OK                       | Good                     | Excellent                |
| 8. Working With Others | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | Poor                     | Fair                     | OK                       | Good                     | Excellent                |
| 9. Continuous Learning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|                        | Poor                     | Fair                     | OK                       | Good                     | Excellent                |

What are some career-specific skills you feel you are very good at performing?

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What are some career-specific skills you feel you would like to acquire or improve?

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## Nine skills you need to succeed at almost anything!

Do you wonder how some people become more successful than others? For many, it is a combination of hard work, a strong set of skills and a little good luck.

No matter what your measure of success (fame, fortune, happiness, etc) you will get closer to making your goals a reality if you practice and strengthen the following nine skill sets identified by the Employment and Social Development Canada.

<http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/les/index.shtml>

### 1. Reading

Reading refers to reading material that is in the form of sentences or paragraphs. It generally involves reading notes, letters, memos, manuals, specifications, regulations, books, reports or journals.

### 2. Writing

Writing includes: writing texts and writing in documents (for example, filling in forms) non-paper-based writing (for example, typing on a computer)

### 3. Document Use

Document Use refers to tasks that involve a variety of information displays in which words, numbers, icons and other visual characteristics (eg. line, colour, shape) are given meaning by their spatial arrangement. For example, graphs, lists, tables, blueprints, schematics, drawings, signs and labels are documents used in the world of work.

### 4. Numeracy

Numeracy refers to the workers' use of numbers and their being required to think in quantitative terms. These are your mathematic skills.

### 5. Computer Use

Computer Use indicates ones ability to use technology and being proficient at using a computer to communicate (email), research (internet) and use software applications effectively (for example; spreadsheets, word processing programs, presentation programs, etc).

## 6. Thinking

Thinking differentiates between six different types of interconnected cognitive functions:

- problem solving;
- decision making;
- critical thinking;
- job task planning and organizing;
- significant use of memory; and
- finding information.

## 7. Oral Communication

Oral Communication pertains primarily to the use of speech to give and exchange thoughts and information. This could be with another individual or ability to present information in front of groups of people..

## 8. Working with Others

Working with Others examines the extent to which employees work with others to carry out their tasks. Do they have to work co-operatively with others? Do they have to have the self-discipline to meet work targets while working alone?

## 9. Continuous Learning

Continuous Learning is an ongoing process of acquiring skills and knowledge. More and more jobs require continuous upgrading, and workers must continue learning in order to keep or to grow with their jobs. This could include things like;

- understanding one's own learning style
- knowing how to gain access to a variety of materials, resources and learning opportunities.
- training in job-related health and safety
- obtaining and updating credentials
- learning about new equipment, procedures, products and services.

**For more information, resources and evaluation tools visit;**

<http://www.esdc.gc.ca/eng/jobs/les/tools/index.shtml>

# Identifying Your Skills

Now that you are aware of the skills you need to succeed in your career, here is a chance to evaluate and document those skills. This exercise is important for four reasons;

1. Understanding your skills can help you decide on careers that compliment those skills.
2. The information you include in this exercise can provide you with information you can include in your resume.
3. This exercise will help you prepare for your interviews which are designed help an employer to understand your skills.
4. This may help you to see areas for improvement and skills you can work on to increase your competitiveness in the workplace.

**THIS IS NOT A TEST!** Fill it out as accurately as you can and it will help to provide a map of your skills.

## Reading Text

Books/magazines you have read in the past 6 months:

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How would you score your current skill level in this area?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor	Fair	OK	Good	Excellent

## Writing

Have you done any writing in the past 6 months (ie: essays, blogs, short stories, etc.)?

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How would you score your current skill level in this area?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor	Fair	OK	Good	Excellent

## Computer Use

List any software and computer applications (email, social networking sites, blogs, internet browsers) you know how to use.

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How would you score your current skill level in this area?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor	Fair	OK	Good	Excellent

## Oral Communication

List some examples of when you have presented information or performed in front of a group of people:

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How would you score your current skill level in this area?

Poor Fair OK Good Excellent

## Document Use

We live in an information age. You need to be able to find and apply information to perform a job task or solve a problem. This applies to print as well as non-print media (computers, instrument gauges, etc).

What kinds of documents and informational displays (graphs, tables, technology) are you able to use?

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How would you score your current skill level in this area?

Poor Fair OK Good Excellent

## Numeracy

We use math everyday in applications such as banking, sports, cooking, building things and playing games.

List some things you do everyday that use math skills.

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How would you score your current skill level in this area?

Poor Fair OK Good Excellent

# Identifying Your Skills

## Thinking Skills

Can you assess a situation and identify a problem? Do you like to find solutions to a problem or discover how things work?

List some problems, puzzles or difficult situations you were able to resolve.

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How would you score your current skill level in this area?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor	Fair	OK	Good	Excellent

## Continuous Learning

Learning should be fun. The more you know, the more adaptable and skilled you become (not to mention more interesting). Try to set a goal of learning something new every day.

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How would you score your current skill level in this area?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor	Fair	OK	Good	Excellent

## Working With Others

Do you work well as part of a team?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No

Are you able to take orders and accept criticism?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No

List examples where you were part of a team.

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How would you score your current skill level in this area?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor	Fair	OK	Good	Excellent





# Identifying Your Skills

Are you able to take a leadership role to help get a job done?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No

Can you plan, organize and manage a project from start to finish?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No

Can you resolve conflict and act as a mediator between group members if required?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No

List situations in which you had to assume a leadership role and/or had to resolve conflict.

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How would you score your current skill level in this area?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poor	Fair	OK	Good	Excellent

What skills do you plan to develop and/or improve?

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Describe how you plan to develop these skills.

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Detail your training plan.

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# Wrap Up

The goal of skill development is to gain a level of proficiency in the skill sets that are needed to succeed in your career plan. It is not about being the “best” nor should there be an expectation that a person must be good at every essential skill to succeed. That is simply unrealistic. Building a skills inventory based on the nine essential skills is a way in which an individual can measure some of the skills they are good at and identify areas that may need improvement. Making small improvements in all these skill sets can have a huge overall effect in one’s confidence and success in their career.

Seek out opportunities where you can acquire and practice these skills. As your skill level improves and you develop new skills, keep adding them to a skills inventory. This is a good motivator to measure progress and it will give you information that you can add to a resume and prepare for job search.

Here are a few suggestions to help you recognize the essential skills you already possess as well as a few strategies to hone these skills.

1. Work on the exercises and write a list of activities you have done, or continue to do on a daily basis that supports each of the essential skills listed in this section. This could include hobbies, school-based activities, homework assignments, subjects you take in school or just normal everyday activities. This will assist you in having material to work with when it comes time to create a resume. It may also help you in identifying interests.
2. Research shows that if you can establish an understanding of how the information learned in school can be applied to everyday life (and ultimately careers), academic performance improves compared to students who do not see the relevance of their education. A great way to help academic performance is to make these school to work connections.
3. Try to find activities that may strengthen employability skills of which you have limited or no experience.

## Preview of the next step: **Job Search Strategies**

- PACE participants will learn how to develop an effective job search plan.
- Resume and cover letter templates will be provided to aid in the development of effective marketing tools.
- Interview tips and links to frequently used interview questions will be provided so job seekers can prepare for their interviews.



Developed through the partnership of the Department of Post Secondary Education, Training, and Labour (Saint John Regional Office), Anglophone South School District and The Work Room Career Resource Centres.