Update on Career Education K–12

Context

Career Development is one of the three goals of BC’s education system. Career Education allows students to discover a bridge between classroom learning and workplace and post-secondary realities, making their learning meaningful, personalized, and relevant. The Career Education curriculum must therefore be designed to support students in the process of becoming successful, educated citizens by providing them with opportunities to explore a variety of careers and options for their future.

As part of the ongoing work of transforming the BC provincial curriculum, the Ministry of Education has brought together a group of K–12 educators to create an updated curriculum for Career Education. The team is composed of several BCTF members, a small number of administrators, and representatives from the Aboriginal community and the BC independent school system. All of the educators bring a wealth of experience and varied backgrounds in career development, and they are passionate about the importance of Career Education across all curricular areas and grade levels.

In the past, Career Education has been formally inserted into the Health and Careers K–9 curriculum, Planning 10, and Graduation Transitions, and has permeated the many experiential learning opportunities available to students, such as dual credit programs, youth apprenticeship, work experience, job shadowing, volunteerism, and leadership options. The review of all curricular areas has resulted in a number of changes, such as the health portion being moved from Planning 10 into the revised Physical and Health Education curriculum. These changes provide an opportunity for the Ministry of Education to re-examine the content, competencies, and requirements of career development for BC students, and how it aligns with the direction of the Graduation Learning Plan that is currently under development.

Students today are seeking an education that is personalized, purposeful, and relevant. Career Education fulfills this need by providing students with a unique opportunity for meaningful exploration and experiences that can assist them with decision making and long-term planning.

Career Education: Overview

The working group involved in this curriculum update envisions Career Education as an evolving process of inquiry that cycles through the stages of learning at every level, from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The working group believes there are three major elements of development — Awareness, Exploration, and Experience — and that all students need to transition through each one in their own community and context.

Initially, teachers may focus more on Awareness and less on Exploration and Experience. As students transition to the middle years and become more self-aware, they have opportunities for exploration and discovery, and for developing their own interests and passions. In the final years, students will hone their skills and deepen their explorations in order to gain experience in areas...
that could lead to future career paths and further learning. Transitioning through each stage of
the process is fluid and personalized; each element is applicable at all levels but the focus will
vary depending on the individual needs, skills, interests, and context for each student.

The graphic below illustrates the elements of Career Education. The learner is always at the centre,
and the three elements overlap and are flexible. The learner can focus on one element more than
another, depending on his or her developmental needs as he or she transitions to the next stage.

The Career Education Framework

The Career Education framework includes five stages, based on the developmentally appropriate
Big Ideas, Curricular Competencies, and Content that apply for each age group. Each stage
incorporates the three elements of Career Education — Awareness, Exploration, and Experience.

Stages 1 and 2 focus mainly on Awareness and Exploration. Students will develop an awareness
of their personal interests, strengths, and learning styles, as well as the roles and responsibilities
of family, school, and community.

Stages 3 and 4 focus mainly on Exploration and Experience. Students will explore concepts such as
identity, leadership, personal planning, and transferable skills. As students build on the foundation
created by the work from the primary and middle years and begin to plan for the final stage, they
will be able to use the competencies to explore in greater depth their skills and passions, and
determine possible pathways to their goals. Students celebrate the completion of each stage with
a capstone project that reflects the highlights of their Career Education learning to date.

Stage 5 focuses mainly on Experience for transition out of secondary school. As students
transition into the final stage of the Career Education curriculum, real-world experiences both
within and outside the classroom environment provide meaningful opportunities for students to
further develop and refine their understanding of career possibilities, through planning, practice, and application of competencies and knowledge. Again, students celebrate the completion of this last stage with a capstone project.

Students transition out of Grade 12 in several ways. They may explore and experience various options more than once before they discover the most appropriate and meaningful pathway for them. For some students, a successful transition will involve a direct path to further education or training, while for others it will involve a direct path to the world of work.

The following table identifies the central focus for each of the five stages and the factors that develop students’ understanding at that stage.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Curriculum development in progress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades K–5</td>
<td>Main focus is on Awareness. Understanding begins through Awareness of: - personal interests and strengths - family, school, and community - importance of learning - risk taking</td>
<td>Foundation and Awareness: • Big Ideas, Curricular Competencies, and Content by stage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Main focus is on Awareness and Exploration. Understanding deepens through Awareness and Exploration of: - decision-making and planning processes - learning styles - information acquisition and analysis - leadership - role of mentors in the learning journey</td>
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<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Main focus is on Exploration. Understanding deepens through Exploration of: - personal identity - relationship between students’ interests, attributes, competencies, and knowledge of career development - goal setting - community connections - transferable skills - leadership skills - first capstone project</td>
<td>Exploration: • Big Ideas, Curricular Competencies, and Content by stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 6–9</td>
<td>Main focus is on Exploration and Experience. Understanding deepens through Exploration and Experience of: - self-advocacy - flexibility and organizational skills - education and career options - identification and evaluation of resources - leadership development - social justice - presentation skills - second capstone project</td>
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| Grades 10–12 | Focus is on Experience for transition out of secondary school. Understanding deepens through Experience of:  
• informed decision making in relation to personal career development  
• job search skills and market trends  
• resumé building  
• post-secondary applications  
• volunteer experiences  
• leadership experiences  
• final capstone project | Experience and application:  
• Big Ideas, Curricular Competencies, and Content by stage |

**Next Steps**

The working group will use the framework to guide the development of curriculum in the fall/winter of 2015/16.

The Career Education curriculum will contain Big Ideas, Curricular Competency, and Content. These components define what students are expected to understand, do, and know by the end of an indicated stage.

**Career Education Rationale**

The complexity and fluidity of the modern workplace needs graduates who are able to navigate and build their own career paths while adapting to continual change. Through Career Education, students will develop the competencies, skills, and attitudes required for success. Furthermore, they will learn relevant planning, problem-solving, and collaboration skills, as well as core communication, thinking, and personal and social competencies.

From Kindergarten to graduation, the Career Education curriculum will offer students multiple interdisciplinary opportunities to explore and develop personal interests, passions, and competencies while making connections with learning opportunities, post-graduation options, and career and life path possibilities. The First Peoples Principles of Learning are reflected in the holistic, reflective, and experiential approach, as students are truly at the centre of their learning. Career Education facilitates community-based learning by providing opportunities for schools to create community connections, exposing students to real-life contexts, mentors, and experiences outside the school environment. Through these enriching experiences, students will be able to make meaningful connections that will equip them with the competencies needed to fully participate in and contribute to their communities and beyond.

Post-graduation options are becoming increasingly varied and complex. Consequently, students need opportunities to explore and research a multitude of education and career pathways. These pathways require graduates who can confidently self-direct, display initiative, set priorities, establish goals, and take responsibility for pursuing those goals in an ever-changing society.

Career Education will prepare students for managing their career and life transitions. It will support students to focus on their goals by developing a comprehensive career plan. Students
will discover that careers are not simply occupational destinations, but a journey that involves lifelong planning and learning.

**Career Education Goals**

The BC Career Education curriculum contributes to students’ development as educated citizens through the achievement of the following goals. Students are expected to

- develop an understanding of how personal skills, attributes, values, attitudes, interests, and passions support a variety of educational options and career pathways
- develop an understanding of how a network of resources, connections, and mentors will assist with career exploration and transition
- develop competencies for collaboration and valuing diverse thoughts
- acquire competencies that enhance innovative thinking
- develop an understanding of the fact that multiple experiential opportunities, including volunteerism, enhance and support career choices
- acquire competencies that support flexibility and transition for evolving careers and plans
- develop an understanding of the importance of advocacy, inclusivity, accessibility, and equity in the workplace
- acknowledge and understand how societal influences (cultural, ethnic, gender, etc.) shape life choices and career paths.