



Hack Your Career Skills: Interactive Workshop

**ACE-WIL BC/Yukon & CACEE 2026
Joint Conference**

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Thompson Rivers University

Alison Gibson, Dean of Community & Careers, Okanagan College

Mariana Souza, Campus Administrator, Career Services,, Okanagan College

*Skills for Success:
Applying Design Thinking
to WIL and Career Skills
Development at Okanagan
College*



WORKSHOP OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT



SESSION OVERVIEW

Interactive Workshop Structure

The session is an 90-minute interactive workshop focused on the Skills for Success Hackathon model and career development.

Experiential Learning Emphasis

Participants engage in design thinking and experiential learning to build practical career development tools.

Adaptability and Scalability

Methods are adapted to Okanagan College's Career Skills framework, showcasing program scalability and adaptability.

Active Participation and Outcomes

The session promotes active student involvement and delivers actionable strategies for immediate implementation.

HACK YOUR CAREER SKILLS

Innovative Career Development

The session explores creative approaches to career skill-building through experiential, student-centered learning.

Work-Integrated Learning Focus

Emphasizes evolving Work-Integrated Learning and career education with hands-on, practical design models.

Hackathon Model Application

Uses a hackathon approach to creatively redesign how career skills are developed and recognized.

Interactive and Practical Session

Session is designed to be interactive, practical, and focused on real-world career skill applications.



DESIGN THINKING AS PEDAGOGY

Active Problem Solving

Engages students in solving real-world problems actively, enhancing learning relevance and depth.

Structured Creative Process

Guides learners through empathy, ideation, prototyping, and testing to develop innovative solutions.

Transferable Career Skills

Students practice and recognize key skills like collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity.

Bridging Learning and Careers

Helps link experiential learning to students' ability to transfer skills to career contexts.





THE CHALLENGE AND DESIGN PROMPT



OUR APPROACH

Hackathon as Learning Model

The Skills for Success Hackathon integrates design thinking and experiential learning to engage students in innovation.

Structured yet Flexible Framework

The hackathon model offers a structured but adaptable framework for problem-solving and creative idea development.

Practical Application in Education

This approach is applied in Okanagan College's Career Skills framework to develop student competencies practically.

Student-Centered Engagement

Active participation and collaboration empower students to create meaningful outcomes and enhance learning.



KEY STRATEGIES

Design Thinking Methodology

Central to the approach, design thinking empowers students to identify and articulate their skills actively.

Experiential Activities

Short, hands-on activities keep students engaged and maximize learning within limited timeframes.

Guided Reflection Prompts

Reflection questions help students connect experiences to skill growth and career readiness.

Facilitation Tools

Tools support collaboration and active participation, ensuring inclusive student engagement.

THE CHALLENGE

Abstract Skills Learning

Students often learn skills in abstract ways without practical opportunities to apply them.

Theory-Practice Gap

There is a significant gap between theoretical frameworks and real-world skill application.

Limited Student Engagement

Lack of experiential learning reduces student engagement and confidence in skills use.

Need for Innovative Solutions

New approaches are essential to connect skills learning with career pathways effectively.



THE OPPORTUNITY

Experiential Learning Activities

Short, high-impact activities promote deep engagement and real-time skill development within limited time frames.

Students as Co-creators

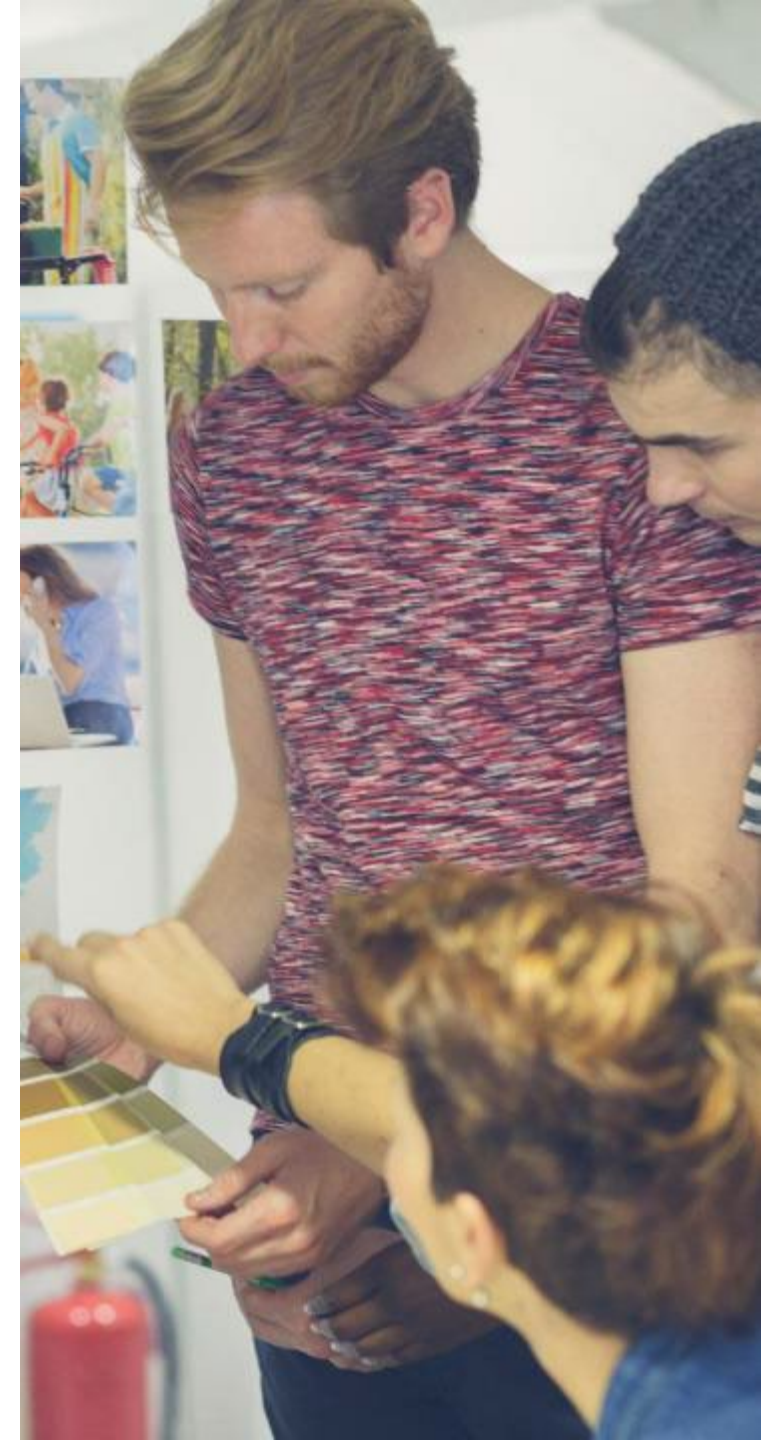
Positioning students as co-creators fosters ownership, engagement, and motivation in learning processes.

Visible and Measurable Readiness

Making career readiness visible and measurable helps students articulate skills clearly to employers.

Adaptable Student-centered Approaches

Dynamic, student-centered methods are adaptable across programs and prepare students for evolving careers.





DESIGN CHALLENGE PROMPT: 'HOW MIGHT WE'

Design-Thinking

Used open-ended questions to stimulate creativity and guide problem-solving in the hackathon model.

Empathy-Driven Problem Solving

Focused students on user needs and barriers to develop meaningful and relevant solutions.

Collaboration and Ideation

Used structured prompts to help teams align goals and encourage diverse approaches for innovation.

Skill Development Connection

Used process to build critical skills like communication, teamwork, and analytical thinking linked to career readiness.



HACKATHON EXPERIENCE

HACKATHON IN ACTION

Collaborative Problem Solving

Participants work in teams using design thinking to tackle real career development challenges collaboratively.

Rapid Ideation and Prototyping

Teams generate ideas quickly and develop prototypes within a limited timeframe to test and refine solutions.

Skills Development Focus

The hackathon emphasizes critical skills such as problem solving, communication, and adaptability through active participation.

Visual and Facilitated Learning

Visual aids like whiteboards and sticky notes, along with facilitator guidance, enrich the creative and reflective process.





INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES

Icebreakers and Team-building Exercises

Design-thinking activities to warm up the hackathon teams, design-thinking and action planning process.

Skills Mapping and Reflection

Rapid skills mapping and guided reflection prompts help connect experiences to career skill development.

Group Discussions and Collaboration

Group discussions and collaborative activities foster shared learning and idea exchange among participants.

Hands-On Experiential Learning

Active participation, experimentation, and reflection ensure engaging and transformative workshop experiences.

5:00

Welcome!

National Skills for Success Student
Hackathon

Bienvenue!

Hackathon national étudiant sur les
Compétences pour réussir



**Okanagan College, one of
16 Colleges across Canada
March 22 & 23, 2025**



COLLEGES &
INSTITUTES
CANADA

COLLÈGES &
INSTITUTS
CANADA

Mapping Skills
for Success

Cartographier
les Compétences
pour réussir



canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html

5:00

Participants Skill Building: Action Planning

Pick your Power Skills

Choose 3 skills you want to enhance during this Hackathon.

Think about why they matter to you – will they help you collaborate better? Solve problems faster? Adapt to new tech?

Build Your Action Plan

Use the worksheet provided in the next slide, write your answers, then share with the group!

Share & Commit

Share your plan with your teammates

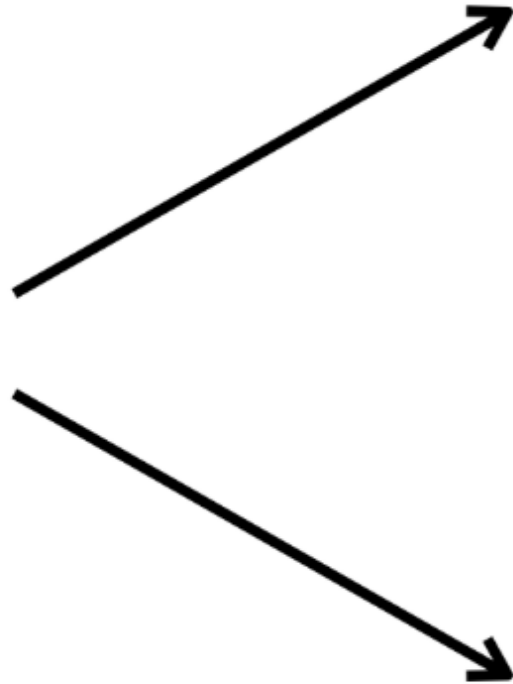
Provide constructive feedback to one another

Commit to this plan throughout the Hackathon

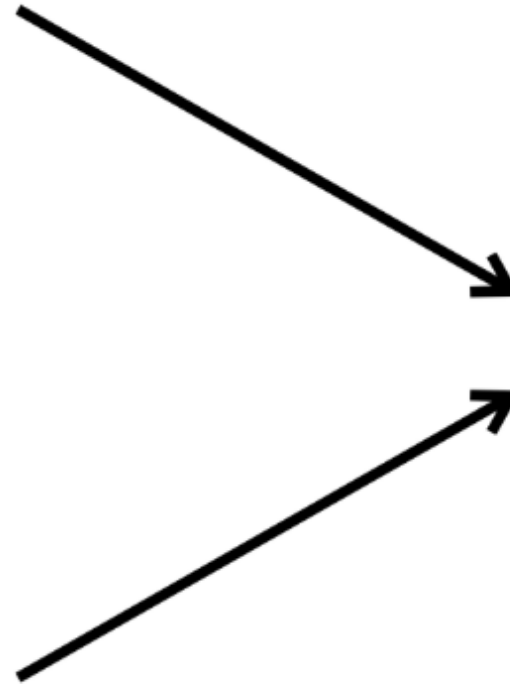
Approach

5:00

Diverge
Create Choices



Converge
Make Choices



Guidelines

Everyone participates

Write before you talk

There are **no bad ideas**

Stay **engaged**

Start on time, **stay on time**

Stay focused on the prompt

Supplies



5:00

Icebreaker: Your Skills in Action!

Now It's Your Turn to Shine!

- What's the biggest challenge you've faced adapting to new technology?
- Please share in 1-2 keywords and the facilitator will create a 'Word cloud' from it.

5:00

Bridging the Gap: From Classroom to Career!

👁️ Have you ever Wondered...

- How do the skills you learn in school actually translate to real jobs?
- What do employers really look for in new hires?

💬 Then let's discuss: 👉 Turn to a partner and share YOUR thoughts on the following:

- Think of a time when you solved a tricky problem, worked with a team, or used digital tools to get something done. What happened?
- If an employer asked you, "Tell me about a time you used an essential skill to succeed," what would you say?
- Which of these skills do you think will be most important in your future career?

5:00

Create Teams

- Find your assigned team, or
- Create a team of 4-5 people
- Choose a space for your team



REVIEW HOW MIGHT WE PROMPTS – BLACK Team, RED Team



CASE STUDY: BLACK TEAM

HOW MIGHT WE PROMPT:

Black Team

How Might We:
Leverage additional publicly available data on skill trends, job trends, and career pathways for learners to be receive better tailored career recommendations.



CASE STUDY: **RED TEAM**

HOW MIGHT WE PROMPT:


Red Team

RED-PROMPT #2

How might we highlight skills for success for learners to showcase their value, and inspire their adoption and integration into the learners' career development?

5:00

Identify Keywords

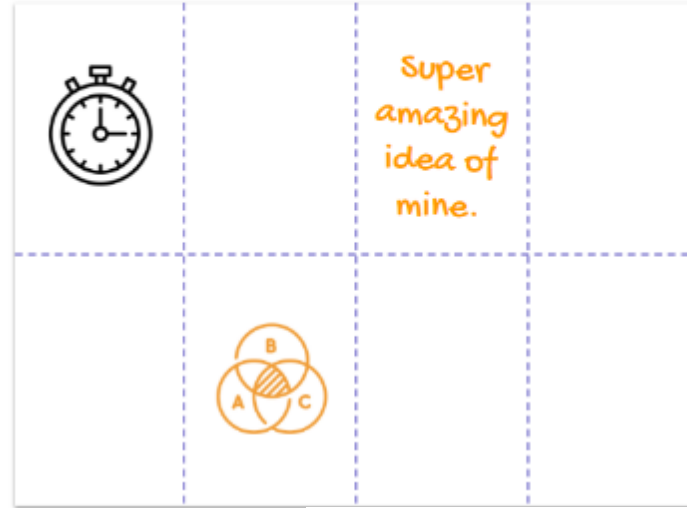
"Artificial Intelligence" ←  *"Post-secondary education"*

How might we integrate **AI for learners** in order to provide real-time, personalized guidance throughout their **career journey**?

"Lifelong Learning" ← 

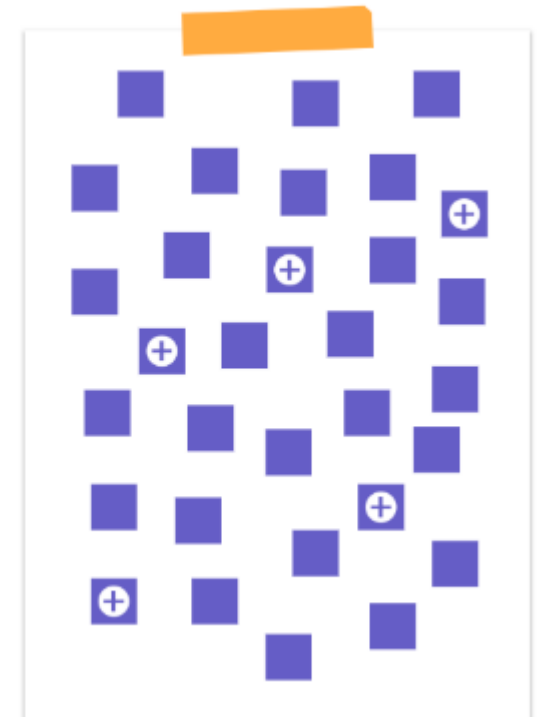
Play Crazy 8s

- Only 1 idea per square
- **30 seconds** per square
- Write or sketch idea



Add Team Notes to Poster

- Tape **poster paper** to wall
- Add all ideas to poster paper
- Continue to add new ideas
- Do not worry about duplicates
- Use multiple posters if needed



5:00

HACKATHON

PROCESS:

-DESKTOP RESEARCH

-IDEATION

-STRATEGIC

DIRECTION

-PROTOTYPE DESIGN

Black Team

The screenshot shows a 'Job Map' interface for 'AI Engineer' jobs. It features a map of British Columbia with several orange location markers. To the right of the map, a summary box indicates a 'Strong job outlook' with 3,885 expected job openings over a 5-year forecast. The interface includes a search bar, a filter dropdown, and the logo for 'COLLEGES & INSTITUTES CANADA' at the bottom.

Job opportunities | Job Map
We found 42 job opportunities related to AI Engineer near you

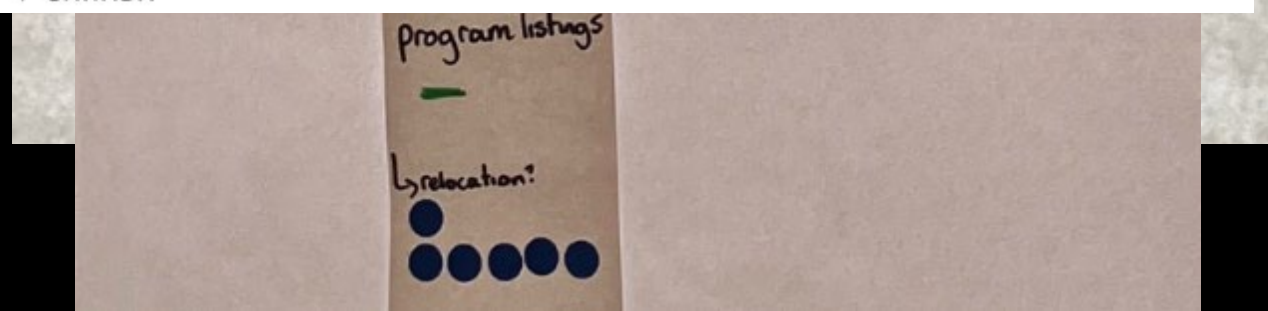
Filter By: Salary | C

Strong job outlook

British Columbia
3,885
expected job openings (5-year forecast)

COLLEGES & INSTITUTES CANADA | COLLÈGES & INSTITUTS CANADA

Taken from [Find Your Path](#)



DATA-DRIVEN CAREER DECISION MAKING: BLACK TEAM

Integration of Labour Market Data

The solution incorporates salary, job demand, and employment trends for informed career choices.

User-Friendly Features

Includes location filtering and program comparisons to enhance user decision-making experience.

Evidence-Based Decision Making

Emphasizes data-driven decisions supported by real-world information and user feedback.

Design Thinking and Continuous Improvement

Applies iterative design and integrates analytical skills to refine career guidance tools.



HACKATHON PROCESS:

- DESKTOP RESEARCH
- IDEATION
- STRATEGIC DIRECTION
- PROTOTYPE

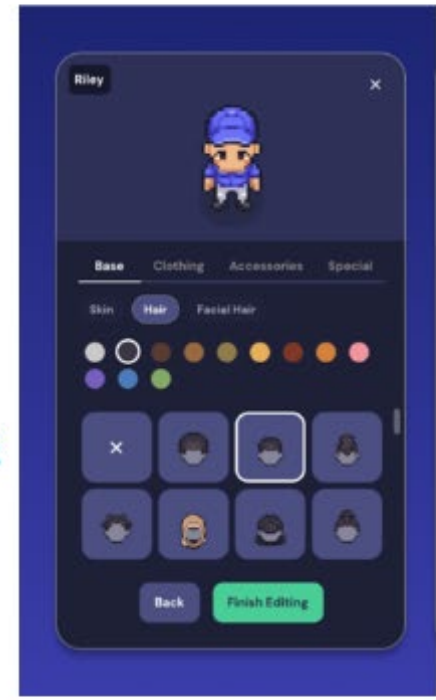
Red Tea



Gamifying: Progression & Retention

Having Score or XP as you progress:

- Increases retention
- Encourages completion
- XP / Score / that accumulate over time
- These Tokens / XP/ Score that can translate into real-world college dollars (scholarships/tuition credits), tax benefits, or credits toward certificates or programs to upskill / reskill
 - Online or In-person to promote accessibility
- These can be adjusted based on factors, such as low-income, proximity to education



SKILLS VISIBILITY THROUGH ENGAGEMENT: RED TEAM

Gamified Career Exploration

Engaging quizzes and games help users identify strengths, values, and interests effectively.

Personalized Self-Assessment

Self-reflection tools guide users to connect personal skills and values with career opportunities.

Storytelling and Identity

Narrative elements help users envision themselves within meaningful career pathways.

Motivation Through Gamification

Progress tracking and rewards enhance motivation and retention in career exploration.





IMPLICATIONS FOR WIL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

WHY THIS MATTERS

Engaged Skill Development

Active student engagement in real-world problem solving makes skills visible and meaningful.

Design Thinking Framework

Design thinking guides learners through inquiry, ideation, and reflection stages for effective learning.

Educator Impact

Educators use short, high-impact activities to enhance engagement and skill articulation.

Key Workforce Competencies

Design thinking promotes adaptability, creativity, and collaboration essential for workforce success.

OC Red Team was 1 of 3 teams selected to present nationally and was ranked #1 in Western Canada





IMPLICATIONS

Experiential Learning Activation

Participants activate Skills for Success frameworks through hands-on experiential learning, emphasizing practical application.

Facilitation Techniques

Learn facilitation methods that promote engagement and collaboration for leading effective workshops.

Adaptable Workshop Formats

Workshop formats, in-person and online can be customized to fit different audiences, disciplines, and institutional needs.

Practical Tools and Strategies

Participants gain concrete examples and tools to increase engagement and make career skills visible.

FUTURE-ORIENTED PRACTICE

Agile Experiential Learning

Static skills frameworks are limited; agile, experiential models better prepare students for evolving labour markets.

Transferable Skills Development

Developing transferable skills enables students to adapt across diverse work contexts and emerging career pathways.

Hackathon as Learning Approach

Hackathons provide real-time practice, reflection, and skill articulation, supporting WIL preparation, transferrable learning and dynamic career readiness.

Lifelong Learning and Adaptability

Preparing students for the future requires fostering lifelong learning, adaptability, and self-awareness.





KEY TAKEAWAYS

Replicable Hackathon Model

Participants receive a flexible hackathon model adaptable to diverse educational and career contexts.

Active Student Engagement

Focus on experiential and student-centered learning promotes active and meaningful student engagement.

Career Skills Articulation

Enhanced skills articulation helps students communicate competencies effectively to employers.

Career Readiness Visibility

Making career readiness measurable supports student success and program outcome tracking.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR OC CAREER SKILLS

Build Careers Skills Through Experience

Use videos and hands-on workshops (e.g., online modules, in-person training, pop-ups) to actively practice career skills in real-world contexts.

Active Student Engagement

Focus on experiential and student-centered learning to promote active and meaningful student engagement through Campus Life, Career-Readiness, Student Employment and WIL activities.

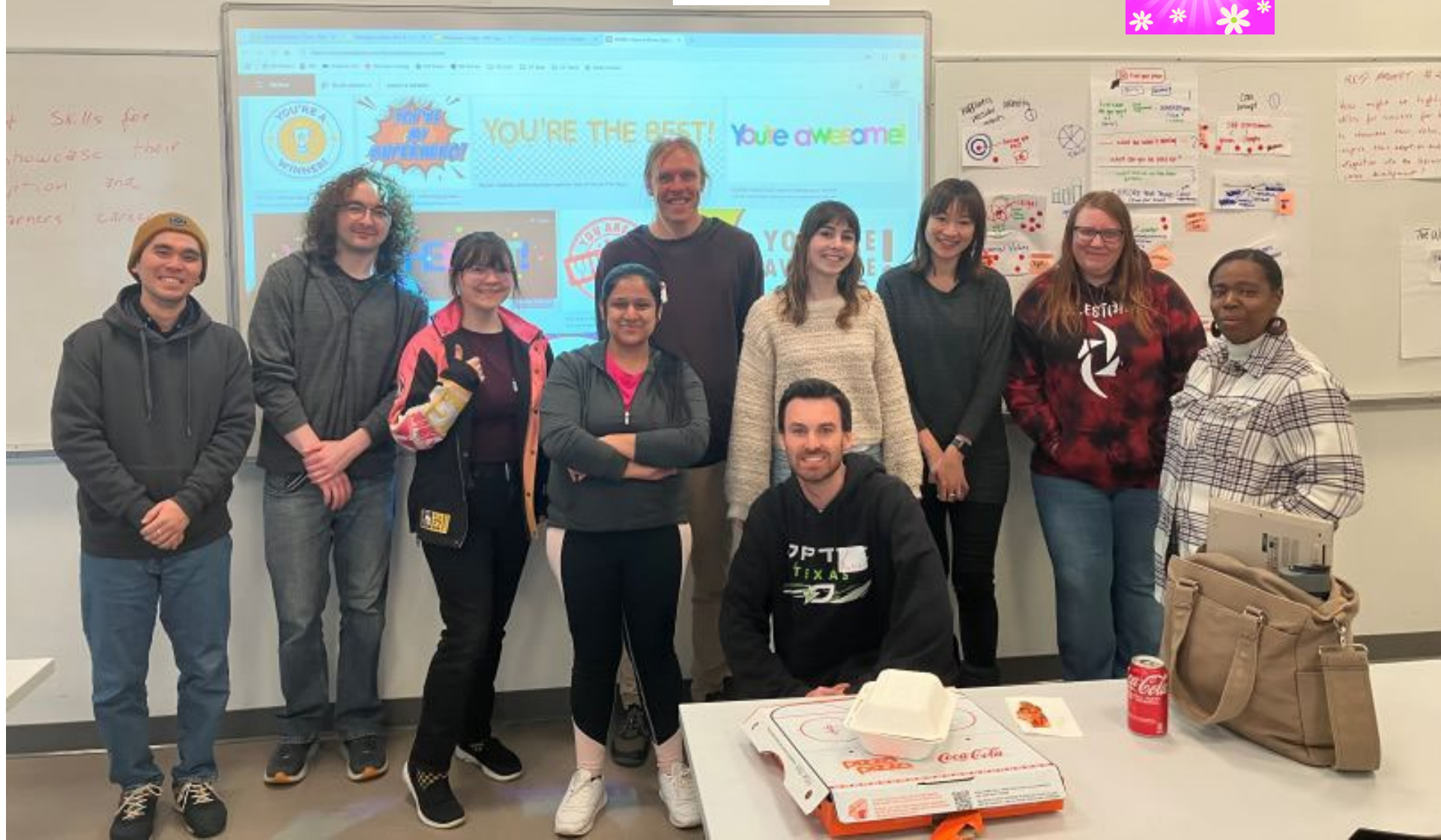
Career Skills Visibility

Enhance career skills visibility and application gained through WIL and experiential learning to employers through Careers Hub profiles and experience records.

Engage Students in Training

Involve students in career readiness measurable supports, student success, and program outcome tracking.







QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS TO OC CAREER SERVICES

- Alison Gibson, Dean of Community & Careers, Email: agibson@okanagan.bc.ca
- Mariana Souza, Campus Administrator, Career Services, Email: msouza@okanagan.bc.ca

