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Inclusive & Practical Assessment Tools for Guidance Practitioners

COMPETENCE ASSESSMENT CARDS FOR LOW SKILLED ADULTS

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Competence Assessment Cards for Low Skilled Adults

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Authors:

Amandine Bonnel (CESIE)

Rosina Ulokamma Ndukwe (CESIE)

Co-authors:

Viorica Ghinea, (Asociatia Consultantilor si Expertilor in Economie Sociala Romania)

Michaela Bacskorova, (Europersonal)

Maria Rubio, (Fundación Coremsa)

Babett Csokán, (Inova Consultancy LTD)

Petra Sulovska, (Europersonal)

Graphic design:

CESIE

Introduction

These cards have been created to help intermediary professionals identify their clients' competences as a first step for a tailored, more empathic and efficient approach to recruiting and counselling. To meet this objective, two sets of cards have been developed, one for adults and one for guidance professionals. Through pictures, simple descriptions of the competences and realistic scenarios, the adult users will be supported in the self-assessment of their skills. On the other side, the set for guidance professionals, enriched with questions based on the STAR interview technique, will help them to save time and be as close as possible to reality when assessing their clients' competences.

Who is this tool for?

This tool has been developed in order to support career advisors, guidance professionals and recruiters in their daily work with low-skilled adults. Therefore, it has been created based on interviews conducted with these stakeholders, taking into account the challenges they face while working with their clients. Then, the cards have been tested by the professionals and their evaluation has been used in order to make the cards even more tailored to their needs.

How have the competences been selected?

The competences included in the cards have been selected based on a research led in the local context of 5 countries (England, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Spain) which led to a Transnational Research Report. They correspond to the competences which are the most important for low-skilled adults in order to find a job in each context. This study has been conducted with professionals who have experience with low-skilled adults by organizations from these 5 countries: Asociatia Consultantilor si Expertilor in Economie Sociala Romania (Romania), CESIE (Italy), Europersonal (Slovakia), Fundación Coremsa (Spain) and Inova (UK). The participants in this research were university professors, educators, employees/president/project managers/volunteers/intern in NGO or public/private work guidance organizations, vocational education counsellors, psychologists, recruiters (HR experts and employers active in the in the fields of catering, manufactory, agricultural and building industries, machinery distribution, warehouse and goods delivery), socio-labour insertion technicians, social workers and trainers, career advisors and coaches. This diversity of profiles offered an opportunity to collect information from two main categories that may have different points of view on the crucial skills needed by low-skilled adults: on the one hand, some of the participants help low-skilled adults to make a CV, find a job and/or develop their basic skills. On the other hand, recruiters try to evaluate their skills during the recruitment process.

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What does this tool include?

This tool includes two different sets of cards. Each of them is composed by 5 different types of cards which are:

1. Personal skills
2. Social skills
3. Digital skills
4. Professional skills
5. Hobbies

These categories have been chosen in order to include the competences which are most often required when you are a low-skilled adult looking for a job, considering soft as well as hard skills. In order to help guidance professionals discover their clients' hidden skills, cards with hobbies have also been included in order to connect activities that their clients do in their spare time and that may help develop competences that are useful for a job. Therefore, this tool has also been conceived to facilitate the assessment of skills acquired in a non-formal and informal setting.. There are 53 competence cards and 12 hobby cards.

In addition to the cards, the Evidence Toolkit (a guide on how to use the Star interview technique) has been developed for guidance professionals. This tool is meant to be used to help them use the cards with their clients. On the one side, it will support them in the assessment of the adults' competences and on the other side, it will provide them with an opportunity to prepare their clients to job interviews using behavioural questions that are more and more often used by employers during the recruitment process. A Skills Portfolio has also been produced for the adults in order to support them in their learning path and help them reinforce their future candidatures.

Characteristics of these cards

These cards are a very flexible tool. It covers a large diversity of competences that can be used in different sectors according to the profile of the adult. Moreover, the variety of the hobbies also allows the guidance professional to connect the personal interests of his/her client to specific competences, answering their individual needs. This way, these cards can lead to very different assessment paths! The connections suggested with other competences on each card make their use fast, fluid and more adaptable to the time constraints of the session. They are user-friendly and very easy to use thanks to the pictures and the scenarios presented in the form of small quizzes.

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The composition of the cards

The target user is indicated of the front of each card under the names of "Adults" and "Professionals".

The elements on the back of the cards are different according to the target user. The cards for adults include:

➢ A description of the characteristics you need to possess in order to have a competence (A).
➢ A scenario under the form of a quiz (B).

The cards for guidance professionals include:

➢ A description of the characteristics his/her client needs to possess in order to have a competence (A).
➢ Questions based on the STAR interview technique in order to help the client understand if he/she possesses the competence (B).
➢ Suggestion of other competences to which the competence under study could be connected (C).

Cards for Adults   Cards for Professionals

(A)

PERSONAL SKILLS

I HAVE THIS SKILL IF...

• I am able to plan.
• I finish every task on time.
• I don't forget my tasks, meetings or deadlines.
• I am able to prioritise my tasks.
• I invent methods to avoid forgetting things if it happens to me (with to-do lists, etc...).

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

You start working as a caregiver for an elderly person. His/her family explains you which medicines he/she should take and at what time. Then, they also tell you about a few doctor appointments for which you will have to take him/her. You:
• Don't take any note. That is not useful, you have the best memory ever, you will remember everything.
• Take notes in the calendar of your mobile phone/ in your day planner. This way, you are sure not to forget anything. Also, medicines and doctor appointments are not things to joke about.

(B)

WHAT YOUR CLIENT SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO...
• He/she is able to plan.
• He/she finishes every task on time.
• He/she doesn't forget his/her tasks, meetings or deadlines.
• He/she is able to prioritise his/her tasks.
• He/she invents methods to avoid forgetting things if it happens to him/her (with to-do lists, etc...).

A QUESTION YOU COULD ASK TO HELP...
• Tell me about a time you had many tasks to carry out at the same time. How did you ensure to do everything in due time?
If your client needs to be guided:
• Tell me about a time you had many tasks to carry out at the same time. How many tasks were they and what did they consist of? (TASK)
• How much time did you have? Who gave you the tasks? Did you have to carry them out on your own? (SITUATION)
• How did you proceed in order to ensure having time to do everything? Did you use any tool or strategy? (ACTIONS)
• In the end, did you manage to do everything in due time? In hindsight, would you do things differently? (RESULTS)

YOU COULD LINK THIS SKILL TO...
Personal skills:
• Autonomy (n°3)
• Self-discipline (n°4)
• Sense of responsibility (n°16)
• Professionalism (n°17)
• Ability to observe a schedule (n°19)

(A)

(B)

(C)

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How to use the cards?

To use the set for adults, the users may start reading the characteristics that define the competence to understand if he/she could possess it or not. If the user thinks he/she may possess it or has a doubt, he/she can proceed with the scenario to understand how he/she would behave in a precise situation. He/she can share the behaviour he/she would adopt with the guidance professional in order to get an interpretation of the result.

The set for professionals includes the same elements of definition of the competence in order to help them follow and support their clients. The cards include questions based on the STAR interview technique. To check they really possess a competence, they can choose to ask the behavioural question a recruiter would ask. It would also be a preparation for the job interviews their clients will face. However, if their clients need to be guided a bit more in order to answer these questions in a structured and clear way, the professionals can ask the several questions corresponding to the different steps of the STAR interview technique. The Evidence Toolkit comes as an additional tool to the cards in order to help professionals use this technique with their public.

Each card has a number inside of each category in order to help the users navigate easily between the competence cards and make connections.

The steps to follow

After reading the introduction and the Evidence Toolkit about the STAR technique, you should follow these steps:

1. Read carefully your client's CV.
2. Try to identify the most crucial skills for the type of jobs your client could apply for (according to your client's profile).
3. Based on the CV, select the most appropriate cards from the "Professional skills" category (choose up to 3 different competence cards). If you have a hard time identifying relevant "Professional skills" or if you want to discover especially skills developed in an informal setting, you may start with the "Hobbies" as an alternative.
4. Provide the client with the cards and clarify the approach and objectives. Explain how to use the cards.
5. Let the client read the elements of definition and clarify the terms if needed.
6. Ask the client to read the scenario and to tell you what he/she would do in this situation.
7. If the client answers using examples from his/her CV or past experiences, you do not need to use the behavioural questions on the card for Professionals. If not, ask these questions to further assess the client's skills.
8. After completing steps 5 to 7, feel free to skip to another competence card using the suggestion of connections on the cards for Professionals or continue with another competence identified in step 2.
9. At the end of the assessment, complete the Skills Assessment and Evolution Table (within the Skills Portfolio) together with your client.

10. Help your client complete the Learning Table (within the Skills Portfolio) in order identify activities that he/she can participate in in order to improve the competences identified as areas for improvement.

Notes:

- You could carry out steps 1 to 3 before starting the assessment session or during.
- Do not forget to take notes in order to complete the Skills Portfolio together with your client at the end of the session.
- Try to limit the number of cards used in one session (i.e. 10 cards, depending on the time available) in order to keep focused on the most important skills.
- In relation to step 10, your client can then continue to fill in the Learning Table on his/her own.
- These steps aim to help you use the cards. However, they are a tool that should support you in your daily practice, so you are free to use it in another way according to your needs!

Competences included in the Tool

Number	Competence
Personal skills	
N°1	Understanding of ones' own preferred learning strategies
N°2	Perseverance
N°3	Autonomy
N°4	Self-discipline
N°5	Flexibility and adaptation
N°6	Ability to follow rules/instructions
N°7	Ability to cope with stress and frustration and to express them in a constructive way
N°8	Ability to judge and identify one's strengths and weaknesses
N°9	Ability to problem solve
N°10	Motivation and determination to meet objectives
N°11	Being on time
N°12	Acceptance of feedback
N°13	Being organized
N°14	Will to discover and learn
N°15	Accuracy and attention paid to details
N°16	Sense of responsibility
N°17	Professionalism
N°18	Patience
N°19	Ability to observe a schedule
N°20	Self-confidence
N°21	Hard-working

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Social skills	
N°1	Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
N°2	Interest in interaction with others and to establish interpersonal relationships
N°3	Understanding of the codes of conduct and manners generally accepted in different societies and environments
N°4	Awareness of basic concepts relating to individuals, groups, work organizations, gender equality, non-discrimination, society, culture
N°5	Tolerance
N°6	Express and understand different points of view
N°7	Negotiate and create confidence
N°8	Empathy
N°9	Ability to value diversity and respect of others
N°10	Reliability
N°11	Ability to work collaboratively in team
N°12	Positivity
N°13	Politeness
N°14	Active listening
N°15	Customer service skills
Professional skills	
N°1	General manual competences
N°2	General and basic mechanical knowledge
N°3	Basic selling skills
N°4	Warehouse management
N°5	Basic mathematical skills
N°6	Knowledge of the main hygiene and alimentary norms
N°7	Basic knowledge of care
N°8	Warehouse systems knowledge
N°9	Parts catalogue knowledge
N°10	Ability to work shifts
Digital skills	
N°1	Search on the Internet
N°2	Use the phone
N°3	Use a mailbox
N°4	Use social networks
N°5	Basic use of a computer
N°6	Make a CV
N°7	Ability to learn how to use basic software
Hobbies	
N°1	Sports/Team games
N°2	Manual creative and artistic activities, handicrafts
N°3	Artistic activities
N°4	Social networks
N°5	Interest in foreign languages
N°6	Animal care and gardening
N°7	Reading
N°8	Cooking and bakery

N°9	Volunteering
N°10	Computer games
N°11	Social games
N°12	Activities in nature (seaside, mountain)

Instructions to print the cards

The cards have been designed in order to make them easy to print and use. In order to get an optimal result, please select both "Print in both sides" and "Flip in the short edge" options in the "Settings" tab of the "Print" dialogue box. We advise you to print these cards on heavy weight paper or card paper.

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PARTNERS

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