

Real World Ready 5.0

Holistic Life and Career Launching for Youth and Young Adults

A Framework for the Next Generation

Developed by:

Life2Launch Institute Youth Researchers and Developers

Grounded in:

Context Institute's Bright Future Network (BFN) Foundational Keys

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This framework was designed through five years of intergenerational co-creation, weaving together wisdom from Indigenous traditions, developmental science, systems thinking, and regenerative principles to support the whole person in all their complexity and potential—not just their job readiness.

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Real World Ready 5.0

Holistic Life and Career Launching for Youth and Young Adults

Real World Ready for the Next Generation

Developed by Life2Launch Institute youth researchers and developers

Grounded in Context Institute's Bright Future Network (BFN) Foundational Keys

Executive Summary

Real World Ready 5.0 (RWR 5.0) provides a comprehensive, youth-centered framework for life and career launching that goes beyond traditional college-and-career readiness models. Designed by youth researchers and developers over five years through intergenerational co-creation, this framework weaves together wisdom from Indigenous traditions, developmental science, systems thinking, and regenerative principles to support the whole person in all their complexity and potential—not just their job readiness.

RWR 5.0 aligns with and enhances industry-validated employability skills frameworks, including Oregon Employability Skills, by providing the developmental context, belonging structures, and life design thinking that transform isolated skill-building into holistic, meaningful preparation for life and work.

The "5.0" represents:

- **Five integrated phases** of holistic development
- **Next-generation approach** that goes beyond traditional workforce readiness
- **Fifth-generation thinking** - preparing people for a world that doesn't exist yet
- **Future-forward framework** - built for today's reality, not yesterday's rules

The framework consists of:

- **Five Core Phases:** GROUND → DISCOVER → BELONG → DESIGN → LAUNCH
- **Five Cross-Cutting Dimensions** that inform all phases
- **Shared language** adaptable for all stakeholders

- **Both/and approach:** Youth-centered AND system-ready
- **Flexible age application:** Designed for youth beginning around age 14, but applicable to young adults at any stage of launching

Unlike linear models that prescribe a single pathway, RWR 5.0 recognizes that launching is iterative, non-linear, and deeply personal. It quiets the chaos people experience while providing structure, honors diverse starting points and destinations, and creates shared vocabulary across the entire ecosystem of support.

Note on Age Range: While this framework was developed with and for youth starting around age 14, we recognize that launching challenges extend well into the twenties and beyond. The framework is intentionally designed to support anyone in the launching process, regardless of age. Many young adults in their late twenties and thirties are navigating these same phases as they pursue career changes, further education, or life transitions.

Why This Framework Matters

The Challenge

Youth and young adults today face unprecedented complexity:

- **Rapidly changing world:** Jobs, technology, and pathways evolving faster than traditional institutions can adapt
- **Mental health crisis:** Anxiety, depression, and stress at all-time highs across age groups
- **Fractured systems:** Disconnected school, workforce, family, and community support
- **Conflicting messages:** Old rules breaking down, new patterns not yet established
- **Systemic inequities:** Unequal access to opportunities, resources, and support
- **Extended launching period:** Traditional milestones (stable career, financial independence, home ownership) happening later or differently than previous generations

The Gap

Current approaches often:

- Focus narrowly on college/career without addressing the whole person
- Prescribe one-size-fits-all pathways that don't fit most people
- Ignore developmental readiness and nervous system capacity
- Lack connection between inner work (identity, values) and outer work (skills, opportunities)
- Don't address belonging, community, and relational health
- Use different languages across stakeholder groups, creating confusion

- Assume launching happens by age 22-24, leaving many young adults without support

The Life2Launch Institute Solution

This framework:

- **Centers youth voice** - co-created with and for young people
 - **Addresses the whole person** - inner and outer development
 - **Builds from scientific foundations** - developmental psychology, neuroscience, systems thinking
 - **Creates shared language** - bridges youth, families, educators, employers, community
 - **Supports all pathways** - college, apprenticeships, direct-to-work, entrepreneurship, gap years, re-engagement, and more
 - **Enables stakeholder coordination** - everyone working from the same map with different roles
 - **Represents evolution** - Real World Ready 5.0 is the next generation beyond traditional, fractional life and workforce readiness approaches
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Framework Overview

The Five Core Phases

1. GROUND: Inner Foundation

Understanding your inner world and what makes you tick

Youth Focus: How you work best, what lights you up, understanding your triggers, how you show up with others

System Design: Personal Operating System (mind, body, inner compass), personal drivers, psychodynamic awareness, optimal zone literacy, relational patterns

Why It Matters: Without self-knowledge and nervous system regulation, youth can't make authentic choices or sustain effort. This phase reduces anxiety and builds capacity for everything else.

2. DISCOVER: Outer World Navigation

Building skills to navigate and thrive in the world

Youth Focus: Brain skills (executive function), adulting skills (daily living), people skills (relationships), reading the room (cultural navigation), dealing with uncertainty (complexity), taking care of yourself (wellness)

System Design: Executive function, daily living skills, relational skills, cultural navigation, complexity capabilities, wellness and resilience practices

Why It Matters: Youth need real-world capabilities beyond academic skills. This phase builds the full toolkit for adult life across all domains.

3. BELONG: Relational Ecosystem

Building your network of support and connection

Youth Focus: Who you are (identity), your people (relationships), being part of something (community), your support squad (mentors), working with others (collaboration)

System Design: Identity development, relationship quality, community engagement, support networks, collaboration competence

Why It Matters: Belonging is foundational for mental health, learning, and launching. Isolation is a risk factor; connection is protective. Youth need diverse, quality relationships.

4. DESIGN: Lifestyle Pathways

Designing your life based on who you are and what matters

Youth Focus: Your ideal life (lifestyle priorities), exploring options (multiple pathways), staying true to you (values alignment), mixing and matching (hybrid paths), your life blueprint (flexible planning)

System Design: Lifestyle priorities and life systems design, multiple pathways exploration, values-aligned decision making, hybrid and emergent pathway design, iterative life design

Why It Matters: There is no single "right" path. Youth need tools to design lives that work for them, not just follow prescriptions. Choice requires awareness (Ground) and options (Discover).

5. LAUNCH: Navigate & Adapt

Taking action, experimenting, navigating, adapting—continuously

Youth Focus: Doing your homework (research), finding your guides (mentors), going for it (opportunities), learning as you go (adaptation), tracking your growth (reflection)

System Design: Strategic research and systems investigation, mentorship network building, opportunity development, adaptive navigation and course correction, portfolio and evolution tracking

Why It Matters: Launching isn't one event—it's continuous iteration. Youth need support for experimentation, resilience for setbacks, skills for ongoing navigation, and understanding that launching happens repeatedly across life stages. This phase never truly ends; it cycles back through the other phases as people grow, pivot, and re-launch throughout their lives.

The Five Cross-Cutting Dimensions

These are lenses that affect ALL decisions across all phases

1. Developmental: Where You Are in the Journey

Youth at 14-16, 17-19, and 20-24+ have different needs, capacities, and opportunities. The framework adapts to developmental stage while honoring non-linear growth.

2. Cultural Evolution: The World is Changing Around You

We're in a major cultural transition (Empire Era → Planetary Era). Old rules are breaking down; new patterns are emerging. Youth are navigating—and creating—the new patterns.

3. Equity & Justice: Your Starting Point Affects Your Journey

Systemic barriers and advantages exist. The framework names reality, builds from assets, and supports navigation of inequitable systems while working toward equity.

4. Technology & Future Literacy: The World You're Entering Doesn't Exist Yet

AI, automation, and constant change require adaptability over specialization, critical thinking over rote learning, and human skills machines can't replicate.

5. Harmony with Nature: Your Relationship With the Living World

Youth need connection to nature for wellbeing. Win-win-win thinking (self, others, wider systems including nature) creates regenerative rather than extractive patterns.

Theoretical Foundations: BFN Foundational Keys

Real World Ready 5.0 is grounded in Context Institute's Bright Future Network framework, which provides scientific and philosophical foundations:

Foundational Literacies

- **Systems Literacy:** Understanding complex adaptive systems, relationships, and contexts
- **HumanOS Literacy:** How human nervous systems work (Optimal Zone/Defensive Zone)
- **Cultural Evolution Literacy:** Recognizing cultural transitions and patterns

Essential Capabilities

- **Savvy About Psychodynamics:** Understanding triggers, defense patterns, and healing
- **Skillful With Diverse Modes of Cognition:** Beyond categorical thinking to systems consciousness
- **Adept at Win-Win-Win Collaboration:** Moving from competition to collective thriving

Dynamic Outcome: Embodied Harmony

- **Harmony Within:** Self-regulation, authentic alignment, nervous system capacity
- **Harmony With Others:** Quality relationships, collaboration, community
- **Harmony With Nature:** Regenerative living, long-term thinking, planetary awareness

This grounding distinguishes RWR 5.0 from surface-level frameworks by addressing root causes (nervous system dysregulation, old cultural patterns, disconnection) rather than just symptoms.

How Each Stakeholder Uses This Framework

Youth (Primary Focus: Ages 14+)

Role: Center and Driver of Their Own Launching

How They Use It:

- Self-assessment across the five phases
- Decision-making tool for major choices
- Language to articulate their needs to adults
- Permission structure for non-traditional paths

- Framework for reflection and growth tracking
- Understanding that launching is ongoing navigation, not a one-time event

Key Message: "This is YOUR framework for YOUR life. It helps you understand yourself, build skills, find your people, design pathways, and take action—then navigate, adapt, and do it all over again as life changes. Whether you're 15 or 35, if you're navigating life transitions and launching (or re-launching), this framework is for you."

Parents & Guardians

Role: Facilitator and Supporter (Not Director)

Stakeholder Translation:

Ground Phase: "Supporting your young person's self-knowledge and nervous system regulation rather than directing their choices. Your role: create safe space for exploration of authentic self."

Discover Phase: "Youth need skills AND understanding of why skills matter. Help them see life skills as experiments, not tests. Model your own learning."

Belong Phase: "Your relationship is one of many your youth needs. Help them build diverse support networks. Let go of being their only guide."

Design Phase: "Support non-linear pathways. Question your own assumptions about 'success.' Trust their authentic drivers more than societal expectations."

Launch Phase: "Youth need mentors beyond family. Your role: help connect, not control. Failure is learning data, not shame. Remember: they'll launch many times across their lives, not just once."

Key Mindset Shift: From director/protector → facilitator/supporter of emergence

Schools & Districts

Role: Launch Platform (Not Sorting Mechanism)

How They Use It:

- Curriculum design across all five phases
- SEL programs grounded in developmental science
- Multiple pathways approach to post-secondary

- Advisory systems structured around BELONG phase
- Assessment beyond academics (whole-person development)

Stakeholder Translation:

Ground Phase: "Create conditions for students to develop self-awareness and nervous system regulation. Trauma-informed practices. Reduce shame, increase choice. Social-emotional learning grounded in developmental science."

Discover Phase: "Skills instruction + context for why skills matter. Life skills as legitimate curriculum. Executive function explicitly taught. Multiple pathways equally valued."

Belong Phase: "School as community, not factory. Belonging as achievement precursor. Peer mentorship formalized. Advisory systems that work. Relationship-centered."

Design Phase: "Move from college-for-all to pathways-for-each. Multiple post-secondary options explored. Life design curriculum. Career counseling becomes life counseling."

Launch Phase: "Internships, apprenticeships, real-world connections. Portfolio development. Industry partnerships. Alumni networks. Soft landings, not cliff edges. Support ongoing navigation, not just initial placement."

Key Mindset Shift: From sorting mechanism → launching platform for diverse pathways

Integration with Oregon Employability Skills: Oregon schools can leverage the free Oregon Employability Skills curriculum (oregonemployabilityskills.org) within the RWR 5.0 framework. OES skills—including Self-Awareness, Adaptability, Collaboration, Digital Literacy, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Communication, Empathy, Resilience, Social Diversity/Awareness, and Analysis/Solution Mindset—are developed holistically across all five phases rather than in isolation:

- **GROUND:** Self-Awareness and Resilience emerge from understanding Personal Operating System and Optimal Zone
- **DISCOVER:** All OES skills (Communication, Collaboration, Digital Literacy, Empathy, etc.) built with context and purpose
- **BELONG:** OES skills practiced in authentic relationships and community settings
- **DESIGN:** Entrepreneurial Mindset and Analysis/Solution Mindset applied to life pathway design
- **LAUNCH:** Adaptability and full skill integration enable iterative launching and course correction

This integration ensures employability skills are developed with developmental context, belonging, and life design thinking—not as isolated competencies disconnected from students' whole lives.

Workforce Development Systems

Role: Capability Cultivator (Not Credential Screener)

How They Use It:

- Program design that addresses all five phases, not just job training
- Recognizing that employability requires inner foundation and belonging
- Supporting diverse entry points (not just traditional education)
- Measuring whole-person outcomes, not just placement rates
- Apprenticeship and earn-while-learning models

Stakeholder Translation:

Ground Phase: "Hire for optimal zone capacity and self-awareness, not just credentials. Recognize that youth understanding their nervous systems makes better employees."

Discover Phase: "Invest in transferable capabilities development, not just job-specific training. Recognize diverse skill-building pathways. Value interest-based expertise."

Belong Phase: "Create belonging infrastructure in workplace. Mentorship programs. Employee resource groups. Psychological safety. Community care."

Design Phase: "Offer career lattices, not just ladders. Support whole-person wellness. Flexible pathways. Recognize life stage needs. Values alignment."

Launch Phase: "Create entry ramps beyond 4-year degrees. Apprenticeships. Paid internships. Learn-and-earn models. Support continuous navigation and adaptation, not just initial hiring."

Key Mindset Shift: From credential screeners → capability cultivators

Civic Institutions (Foundations, Youth Orgs, Community Centers)

Role: Capacity Builder and Community Anchor

How They Use It:

- Safe spaces for GROUND work (identity, self-knowledge)
- Skills workshops for DISCOVER phase
- Community building as core function (BELONG)
- Life design programming (DESIGN)
- Resource navigation and opportunity connection (LAUNCH)

Stakeholder Translation:

Ground Phase: "Safe spaces for identity exploration. Mental health literacy. Facilitated self-discovery programming. Optimal zone practices."

Discover Phase: "Skills workshops across all domains. Community-based learning. Maker spaces. Interest cultivation. Academic support."

Belong Phase: "Community building as core function. Cross-generational connection. Peer leadership opportunities. Cultural celebration. Found family formation."

Design Phase: "Life design workshops. Exposure to diverse pathways. Vision boarding that includes inner work. Values clarification."

Launch Phase: "Opportunity connection. Resource navigation. Mentorship matching. Network building. Advocacy support. Understanding launching as ongoing journey."

Key Mindset Shift: From service providers → community capacity builders

Employers

Role: Development Partner (Not Just Hiring Manager)

How They Use It:

- Hiring for capabilities, not just credentials
- Onboarding that supports nervous system regulation (GROUND)
- Recognizing diverse skill pathways (DISCOVER)
- Creating belonging and psychological safety (BELONG)
- Supporting values-aligned work (DESIGN)
- Offering growth pathways and mentorship (LAUNCH)

Stakeholder Translation:

Ground Phase: "Hire humans, not résumés. Self-aware youth are adaptive employees. Nervous system regulation = workplace resilience. Authenticity = innovation."

Discover Phase: "Recognize transferable skills from diverse experiences. Life skills = workplace success. Interest-based expertise is valuable. Multiple intelligences matter."

Belong Phase: "Psychological safety drives performance. Belonging reduces turnover. Mentorship retains talent. Community creates loyalty."

Design Phase: "Support whole-person employment. Work-life integration. Values alignment reduces attrition. Purpose-driven work attracts youth."

Launch Phase: "Create on-ramps beyond traditional hiring. Apprenticeships. Returnships. Grow your own talent. Invest in potential, not just credentials. Support career navigation over time."

Key Mindset Shift: From human resources → human development

Youth-Serving Community Organizations

Role: Asset Amplifier and Systems Navigator

How They Use It:

- Trauma-informed, strength-based approaches
- Whole-person support across all five phases
- Bridging between youth and other systems
- Advocacy and barrier removal
- Cultural wealth recognition and leveraging

Stakeholder Translation:

Ground Phase: "Trauma-informed, strength-based, youth-centered. Focus on nervous system health and authentic self-development. Healing as launching prep."

Discover Phase: "Holistic skill building across all life domains. Recognize existing capabilities. Build from assets, not deficits."

Belong Phase: "Community as intervention. Peer support models. Chosen family recognition. Cultural wealth honoring. Connection = transformation."

Design Phase: "Co-design pathways with youth. Non-prescriptive. Honor diverse definitions of success. Support experimentation."

Launch Phase: "Warm handoffs between systems. Case conferencing. Resource braiding. Advocacy. Systems navigation support. Continuous support through transitions and pivots."

Key Mindset Shift: From deficit fixers → asset amplifiers

Shared Language Across Stakeholders

Core Vocabulary Everyone Uses

Optimal Zone: State of nervous system regulation where learning, growth, and authentic choice are possible (vs. Defensive Zone where we're reactive)

Personal Operating System (POS): How each person's mind, body, and inner compass work best—unique to them

Authentic Drivers: Internally-motivated values and interests (vs. external expectations or "shoulds")

Launching: Ongoing iterative process of building and navigating adult life (not a single event like graduation)

Win-Win-Win: Decisions that benefit self, others, and wider systems (vs. zero-sum thinking)

Regenerative: Leaving things better than you found them; building capacity (vs. extraction)

Co-Evolution: Growing together; youth and adults learning and adapting mutually

Developmental Tasks: Age-appropriate challenges that support growth and capacity building

Complex Adaptive System: Understanding that youth (and all systems) are organic, evolving, interconnected—not machines to be fixed

Example Conversation Using Shared Language

Youth to Counselor: "I'm feeling in my Defensive Zone about college applications. My authentic drivers are about creativity and community, but everyone's pushing STEM careers. Can we use the DESIGN phase to explore options that align with my POS?"

Counselor understands: Youth is stressed (Defensive Zone), needs to reconnect with their values (authentic drivers), and wants to explore non-traditional paths (DESIGN phase) that fit who they are (POS).

Counselor to Parent: "Your child is developmentally on track but feeling pressure to follow a path that doesn't match their authentic drivers. Let's support them in the DESIGN phase to explore multiple pathways—not just college—that create win-win-win outcomes."

Parent understands: Child isn't "behind," there are multiple valid paths, and forcing one path could undermine their child's wellbeing.

Implementation Guidance

Starting Points by Stakeholder

Schools: Begin with advisory/SEL focusing on GROUND phase (Optimal Zone, self-awareness). Add BELONG through peer mentorship. Expand to full framework.

Youth Organizations: Start where youth are—often BELONG (they come for community) or LAUNCH (they need opportunities). Backfill GROUND and DISCOVER as trust builds.

Workforce Systems: Lead with DISCOVER (skills everyone recognizes) but integrate GROUND (nervous system capacity) and BELONG (mentorship, cohorts) for retention.

Parents: Start with understanding developmental stages and Optimal Zone (GROUND). Help them see their role shift from director to facilitator.

Employers: Begin with BELONG (psychological safety, onboarding) and show business case. Expand to hiring practices (DISCOVER capabilities) and mentorship (LAUNCH).

Cross-System Coordination

Shared Youth Success Plans: All stakeholders contribute to a unified plan organized by the five phases, not separate "school plan," "workforce plan," etc.

Case Conferencing: Regular meetings using framework language to coordinate support and avoid duplication or gaps.

Warm Handoffs: When youth transition between systems, handoff includes assessment of where they are in each phase.

Collective Outcomes: Measure success not just by individual system metrics (graduation rate, placement rate) but by youth thriving across all five phases.

Measuring Success: Beyond Traditional Metrics

Youth-Level Outcomes

GROUND Phase:

- Can youth articulate their strengths, values, and how they work best?
- Do youth demonstrate Optimal Zone awareness and self-regulation?
- Are youth making choices from authentic drivers vs. external pressure?

DISCOVER Phase:

- Have youth built capabilities across all life domains (not just academic)?
- Can youth navigate complex, uncertain situations with adaptability?
- Do youth feel competent and capable in real-world contexts?

BELONG Phase:

- Do youth have diverse, quality relationships and support networks?
- Do youth feel they belong in multiple communities?
- Can youth collaborate effectively and ask for help?

DESIGN Phase:

- Have youth explored multiple pathway options?
- Are youth making values-aligned decisions about their future?
- Do youth have a flexible plan that fits who they are?

LAUNCH Phase:

- Are youth taking action on their plans with appropriate support?
- Do youth demonstrate adaptive navigation when things don't go as planned?
- Are youth reflecting on and learning from their experiences?

System-Level Outcomes

- Are stakeholders using shared language and coordinating effectively?
 - Are multiple pathways equally valued and supported?
 - Are inequities being named and addressed systemically?
 - Is the entire ecosystem youth-centered in practice, not just rhetoric?
-

Frequently Asked Questions

"Isn't this just SEL or college/career readiness repackaged?"

No. While RWR 5.0 includes those elements, it goes much deeper:

- **Grounded in developmental neuroscience** (Optimal Zone, nervous system regulation)
- **Addresses inner AND outer development** (most models focus only on outer)
- **Centers belonging and relationships** (often missing from CCR models)
- **Supports ALL pathways** (not college-centric)
- **Creates shared stakeholder language** (vs. siloed approaches)
- **Regenerative and systems-oriented** (vs. individualistic)

"How do existing programs like YouScience, AVID, SEL, CTE, and Oregon Employability Skills fit into this framework?"

The RWR 5.0 framework is a container and organizing structure—not a replacement for good programs you already have. Think of it as the architecture that shows where each program fits and how they connect.

YouScience (Aptitude & Interest Assessment)

- **Primary Phase:** GROUND (understanding how you work best, what interests you)
- **Secondary Phase:** DESIGN (using aptitude data to explore pathway options)
- **What It Adds:** Scientific assessment of cognitive aptitudes and interests
- **What's Missing Without RWR 5.0:** Context for interpreting results (developmental stage, authentic vs. external drivers), connection to belonging and skill-building, pathway design beyond test results
- **Integration:** Use YouScience in GROUND phase for self-discovery, then revisit in DESIGN phase when making pathway decisions. Pair with Optimal Zone awareness so youth take assessment when regulated, not stressed.

AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)

- **Primary Phases:** DISCOVER (study skills, organizational skills, critical thinking) + BELONG (cohort model, tutorial groups)
- **Secondary Phase:** LAUNCH (college readiness, application support)
- **What It Adds:** Specific academic strategies, writing skills, college navigation support, peer tutorial system
- **What's Missing Without RWR 5.0:** Inner foundation work (GROUND), explicit nervous system regulation, multiple pathway options beyond 4-year college, life skills beyond academics
- **Integration:** AVID provides excellent DISCOVER phase support (executive function, academic skills) and BELONG structure (cohorts, tutorials). RWR 5.0 framework adds

GROUND work (self-awareness before strategy), expands DESIGN to include non-college pathways, and deepens LAUNCH to include adaptive navigation beyond college acceptance.

SEL (Social-Emotional Learning)

- **Primary Phases:** GROUND (self-awareness, self-management) + DISCOVER (relationship skills, responsible decision-making)
- **Secondary Phase:** BELONG (social awareness)
- **What It Adds:** Emotional vocabulary, regulation strategies, social skills curriculum
- **What's Missing Without RWR 5.0:** Developmental neuroscience grounding (Optimal Zone vs. general "self-management"), connection to life/career launching, pathway design, mentorship constellation, belonging as distinct from social skills
- **Integration:** SEL programs provide foundation for GROUND phase. RWR 5.0 enhances with Optimal Zone literacy (why regulation matters for launching), connects emotional health to career decision-making, and extends social skills to collaboration competence and cultural navigation.

CTE (Career and Technical Education)

- **Primary Phases:** DISCOVER (technical and hands-on skills) + LAUNCH (work-based learning, internships, industry certifications)
- **Secondary Phase:** DESIGN (career pathway exploration)
- **What It Adds:** Technical skill development, industry connections, real-world work experience, portable credentials
- **What's Missing Without RWR 5.0:** Inner foundation work (is this pathway right for ME?), belonging structures beyond classroom, understanding of whole-life design (not just job training), adaptive navigation skills
- **Integration:** CTE provides hands-on skill-building and direct workforce connections. RWR 5.0 enhances by adding GROUND work (self-awareness about career fit and values alignment), BELONG structures (mentorship constellation, peer and industry connections), and DESIGN thinking (CTE as part of whole life plan, not separate track). Students make more intentional pathway choices and see how technical skills connect to their larger life design.

Oregon Employability Skills (OES)

- **Applies Across:** ALL FIVE PHASES (holistic skill development)
- **What It Adds:** Industry-validated employability skills framework including Self-Awareness, Adaptability, Collaboration, Digital Literacy, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Communication, Empathy, Resilience, Social Diversity/Awareness, and Analysis/Solution Mindset (oregonemployabilityskills.org)
- **What's Missing Without RWR 5.0:** Context for when and how to develop these skills, connection to inner foundation (Optimal Zone), belonging structures for authentic skill practice, life design thinking that makes skills meaningful, and adaptive navigation

- **Integration:** OES skills are developed and practiced holistically across all five RWR 5.0 phases rather than taught in isolation:
 - **GROUND:** Self-Awareness and Resilience emerge naturally from understanding Personal Operating System and Optimal Zone
 - **DISCOVER:** All OES skills (Communication, Collaboration, Digital Literacy, Empathy, Social Diversity/Awareness, Analysis/Solution Mindset) are built with developmental context and purpose
 - **BELONG:** OES skills like Collaboration and Empathy are practiced in authentic relationships and community settings, not just classroom exercises
 - **DESIGN:** Entrepreneurial Mindset and Analysis/Solution Mindset are applied to real life pathway design decisions
 - **LAUNCH:** Adaptability, Resilience, and full OES skill integration enable iterative launching, course correction, and real-world navigation

Key Insight: OES provides the "what" skills that employers and industry need. RWR 5.0 provides the "why," "when," and "how"—grounding employability skills development in self-awareness, belonging, and intentional life design rather than teaching competencies in isolation. Together, they create work-ready young people who understand themselves, connect authentically with others, and can adapt to changing circumstances.

How They Work Together - Example:

9th Grade Student Journey:

1. **GROUND Phase**
 - SEL curriculum builds emotional awareness and regulation skills
 - YouScience assessment reveals aptitudes and interests
 - RWR 5.0 framework helps student understand their Personal Operating System and authentic drivers
2. **DISCOVER Phase**
 - AVID teaches study strategies, note-taking, organization (executive function)
 - CTE introduces technical skills and hands-on learning
 - SEL provides relationship and decision-making skills
 - OES skills (Communication, Digital Literacy, Collaboration, Empathy) are practiced with context
 - RWR 5.0 expands to include daily living skills, cultural navigation, wellness practices
3. **BELONG Phase**
 - AVID tutorial groups provide peer support and academic community
 - CTE connects students to industry mentors and professional networks
 - SEL builds social awareness
 - OES Collaboration and Social Diversity/Awareness practiced in authentic community
 - RWR 5.0 framework adds mentorship network building, identity development, community engagement beyond school

4. **DESIGN Phase**

- YouScience data informs pathway exploration
- AVID focuses on 4-year college pathway
- CTE offers technical career pathways and certifications
- OES Entrepreneurial Mindset and Analysis/Solution Mindset applied to real life design
- RWR 5.0 framework opens exploration to trade schools, apprenticeships, gap years, entrepreneurship, military, and hybrid paths (including college + CTE combinations)

5. **LAUNCH Phase**

- AVID provides college application support
- CTE offers internships, work-based learning, and industry certifications
- SEL supports decision-making and stress management
- OES Adaptability and Resilience enable course correction and pivoting
- RWR 5.0 adds iterative launching (experimentation, adaptation, continuous navigation), mentorship, opportunity development across ALL pathways, and support for re-launching throughout life

Key Insight: Without RWR 5.0 framework, these programs operate in silos. Students get:

- YouScience results with no context for what to do with them
- AVID college prep with no exploration of whether college is the right path
- CTE technical training disconnected from whole-life design and self-awareness
- SEL skills disconnected from life/career launching
- OES employability skills taught as isolated competencies without developmental context or belonging

With RWR 5.0 framework, these programs become **coordinated tools serving the whole person across all five phases**.

"Do we need to buy new curriculum or programs?"

No. The RWR 5.0 a free and accessible framework that helps you:

- **Organize what you have** - map existing programs to the five phases
- **Identify gaps** - see where students aren't being supported
- **Make strategic additions** - fill genuine gaps, not duplicate what's working
- **Improve coordination** - help programs talk to each other

Schools typically find they have:

- Strong DISCOVER phase programs (academics, some skills)
- Moderate GROUND phase (SEL, but often surface-level)
- Weak BELONG phase (few mentorship or community structures)
- Limited DESIGN phase (college counseling but not life design)

- Minimal LAUNCH phase beyond college-bound students

The framework helps you see this clearly and build from what you have.

"This seems like a lot. Where do we start?"

Start where you have energy and capacity:

- **Youth orgs:** Usually BELONG (it's why youth show up) or LAUNCH (opportunities)
- **Schools:** Often GROUND (SEL) or DISCOVER (life skills)
- **Workforce:** Typically DISCOVER (skills) or LAUNCH (placement)
- **All:** Begin with the shared language and cross-cutting dimensions

The framework is a map, not a mandate. You don't have to do everything at once.

"How is this different from what my parents did?"

Your parents launched into a more stable, predictable world with clearer pathways. Youth today face:

- Rapid technological and economic change
- Mental health and belonging crisis
- Breakdown of traditional institutions
- Need for adaptability over specialization
- Complex, interconnected global challenges

The RWR 5.0 framework equips youth for THIS world, not the world of 30 years ago.

"What if youth in my community face significant barriers?"

The framework is designed to work across contexts:

- **Equity dimension** names systemic barriers explicitly
- **Asset-based approach** builds from cultural wealth and existing strengths
- **Flexible pathways** honor diverse starting points and destinations
- **Community partnership model** leverages collective resources
- **Regenerative thinking** addresses root causes, not just symptoms

Youth facing the most barriers often need this framework MOST—they can't afford to waste time on paths that don't fit.

"How long does 'launching' take?"

Launching isn't a destination—it's an ongoing process of navigation and adaptation. The framework supports:

- **Early exploration (typically teens):** Building foundation, trying things out
- **Active launching (typically late teens through twenties):** Deeper development, testing pathways, making commitments
- **Sustained launching and navigation (any age):** Iterating, adapting, pivoting, re-launching, continuous course correction
- **Lifelong application:** The capabilities and mindset continue serving through multiple life transitions and re-launches

Important: There is no "too old" for this framework. Launching, navigating, and re-launching happen across the lifespan. Many people in their late twenties, thirties, and beyond are navigating career changes, educational pursuits, and life transitions using these same five phases. The LAUNCH phase in particular is never "done"—it cycles back through GROUND, DISCOVER, BELONG, and DESIGN as circumstances change and new opportunities emerge. The framework meets people where they are, not where society says they "should" be.

Getting Started: Next Steps

For Individual Stakeholders

1. **Familiarize yourself** with the framework and shared language
2. **Assess your current work** through the five phases lens
3. **Identify gaps** - where are youth not being supported?
4. **Choose one phase or dimension** to deepen/strengthen
5. **Connect with other stakeholders** using the shared language

For Communities/Regions

1. **Convene stakeholders** across all groups
2. **Map existing resources** to the five phases
3. **Identify systemic gaps and redundancies**
4. **Develop shared youth success plans** using framework
5. **Create coordination mechanisms** (case conferencing, warm handoffs)
6. **Measure collective impact** beyond individual org metrics

For Youth

1. **Explore the framework** - where are you strong? Where do you need support?
2. **Use the language** to articulate your needs to adults
3. **Find allies** who understand this approach
4. **Give feedback** to improve the framework
5. **Help other youth** who are behind you in the journey

Learn More & Get Involved

Life2Launch Institute

Researching and developing whole-system, holistic approaches that empower youth (14+) to design and navigate meaningful life and career pathways.

Contact: Denise Waldron, Life2Launch Institute

Website: www.life2launch.com

Grounded in Context Institute's Bright Future Network

Learn more about BFN Foundational Keys: <https://co-evolving.context.org/>

About This Framework Development

Real World Ready 5.0 was developed through a collaborative process involving:

- **Five years of youth-led research and design** - Life2Launch youth researchers and developers designed the foundational structure through intergenerational co-creation, weaving together wisdom from Indigenous traditions, developmental science, systems thinking, and contemporary frameworks
- **Grounding in developmental science** - Integration of Context Institute's Bright Future Network Foundational Keys (<https://co-evolving.context.org/>)
- **Stakeholder input** - Educators, workforce development professionals, community partners, and families
- **AI-assisted synthesis and documentation** - Claude (Anthropic) assisted in synthesizing research, organizing concepts, translating between stakeholder languages, and developing comprehensive documentation

The framework's five phases, cross-cutting dimensions, and youth-centered approach emerged directly from young people's experiences navigating life and career launching. The Life2Launch Institute team, led by youth researchers and developers, identified the core structure over five years of practice through intergenerational dialogue that honored ancestral ways of knowing alongside contemporary developmental science. Claude assisted in weaving together youth insights with BFN Foundational Keys and creating stakeholder-accessible documentation.

Appendix: Framework at a Glance

The Five Phases (Youth Language)

1. **GROUND:** Understanding your inner world and what makes you tick
2. **DISCOVER:** Building skills to navigate and thrive in the world
3. **BELONG:** Building your network of support and connection
4. **DESIGN:** Designing your life based on who you are and what matters
5. **LAUNCH:** Taking action, navigating, adapting—continuously throughout life

The Five Cross-Cutting Dimensions

1. **Developmental:** Where you are in the journey (recognizing that launching timelines vary widely)
2. **Cultural Evolution:** The world is changing around you
3. **Equity & Justice:** Your starting point affects your journey
4. **Technology & Future Literacy:** The world you're entering doesn't exist yet
5. **Harmony with Nature:** Your relationship with the living world

BFN Foundational Keys

Foundational Literacies: Systems, HumanOS, Culture

Essential Capabilities: Psychodynamics, Cognition, Collaboration

Dynamic Outcome: Embodied Harmony (Within, With Others, With Nature)

This framework is a living document, evolving through youth voice, practitioner experience, and emerging research. Real World Ready 5.0 Version 1.0 | 2025