

Career Guidance and Decision-Making

Helping Learners Avoid Mismatched Career Choices

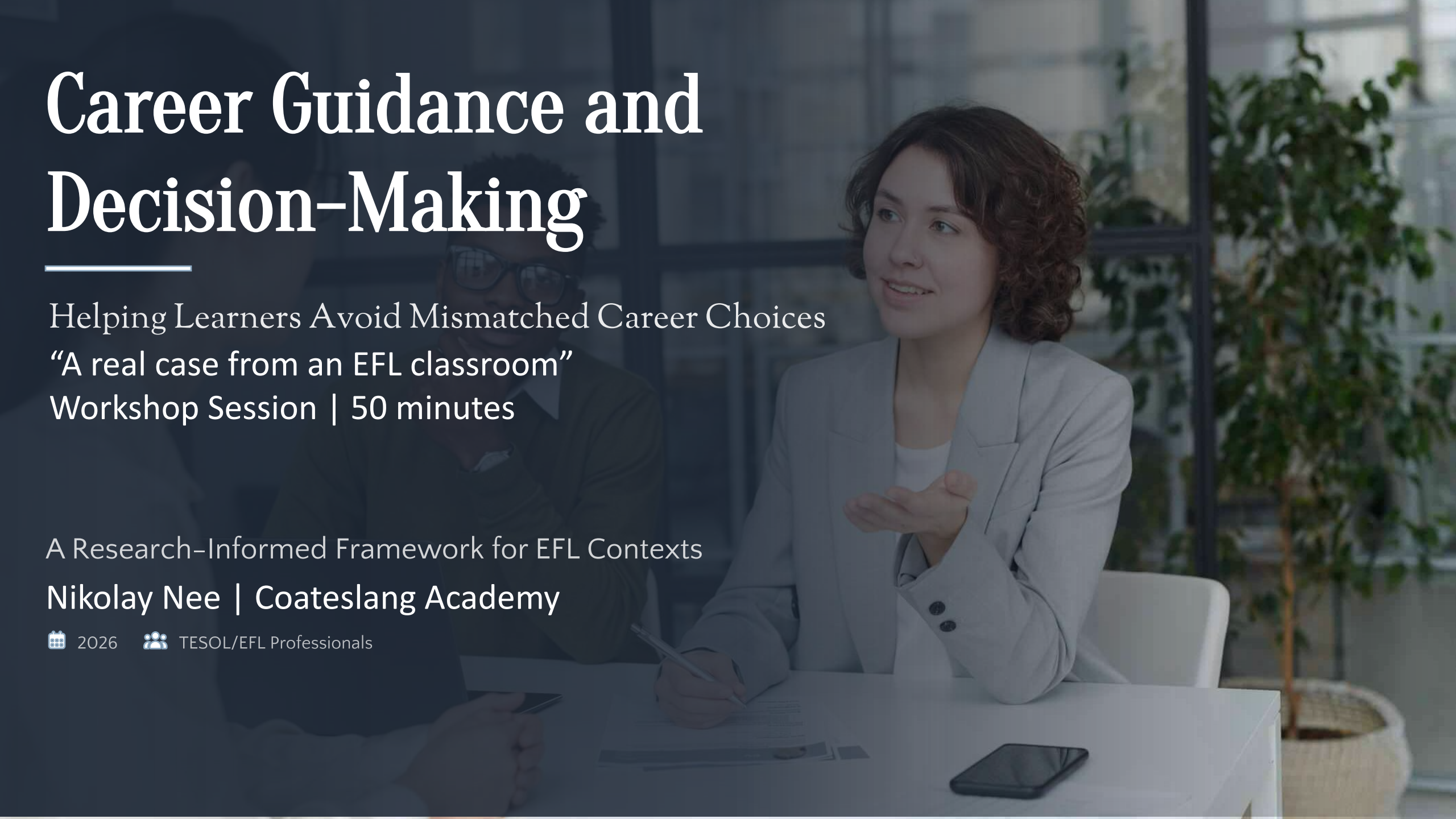
“A real case from an EFL classroom”

Workshop Session | 50 minutes

A Research-Informed Framework for EFL Contexts

Nikolay Nee | Coateslang Academy

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Session Roadmap (50 minutes)

01 The Problem

Why students struggle with career decisions

02 How Career Decisions Work

SCCT, RIASEC, and CDSE
(simplified)

03 A Practical Framework

Assessment, reflection, and decision-making tools

04 Real Classroom Case

Maxim Yugay:
from uncertainty to clear direction

05 Teaching Implications

How EFL teachers can support students

A background image showing two men in business suits sitting at a table, looking at documents. The man on the left is smiling and looking down at the papers. The man on the right is also smiling and looking at the papers, holding a pen. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red and blue gradient.

The Problem

Why many students choose the wrong career path

Career Mismatch: Why It Matters

What is career mismatch?

Students study for one field, but later work in another.
This often leads to frustration and unmet expectations.

Global mismatch rates

50%

In some countries

Individual Consequences

- > Lower income
- > Higher unemployment risk
- > Lower job satisfaction

Systemic Consequences

- > Wasted educational resources
- > Reduced productivity
- > Higher training costs

Career mismatch is not just a personal problem — it reflects a problem in the education system.

Key Challenges for EFL Learners

Limited Career Knowledge

Many EFL learners do not fully understand career pathways, workplace expectations, or available opportunities.

Immigration Constraints

Visa rules and work restrictions can limit career options, especially for international students.

Language Barriers

Career decisions require understanding complex information and communicating professionally in a second language.

Lack of Culturally Responsive Guidance

Traditional career guidance often does not address cross-cultural transition or the link between language learning and career development.

Cultural Pressure

Family expectations and cultural norms may conflict with personal interests and career goals.

Research Insight

Research shows that international students often face overlapping barriers in career development, academic adjustment, and social integration.

EFL learners need career guidance that is language - aware, culturally responsive, and practical.



How Career Decisions Work

Why do students make the wrong career choices?

SCCT: Why Students Believe They Can – or Cannot – Succeed

What SCCT explains

SCCT helps explain how students develop career interests, make choices, and build confidence in their future path.

Key Factors

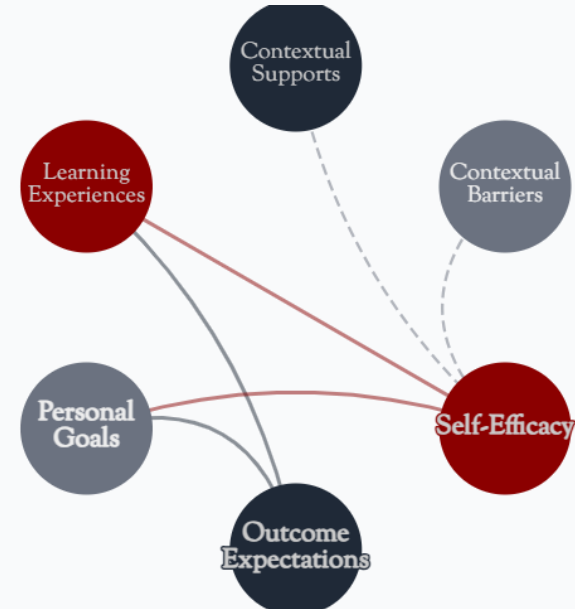
- 1 **Self-Efficacy**
"Can I do this?"
- 2 **Outcome Expectations**
"What will happen if I try?"
- 3 **Personal Goals**
"Do I want this enough to pursue it?"

Learning Experiences Matter

Success, feedback, role models, and emotional experiences shape career confidence.

SCCT shows that EFL learners' confidence and expectations directly shape their career decisions.

How the model works



SCCT helps us understand:

Interest

Choice

Performance

RIASEC: Matching Personality and Career

What RIASEC explains

People are more satisfied when their personality matches their work environment.

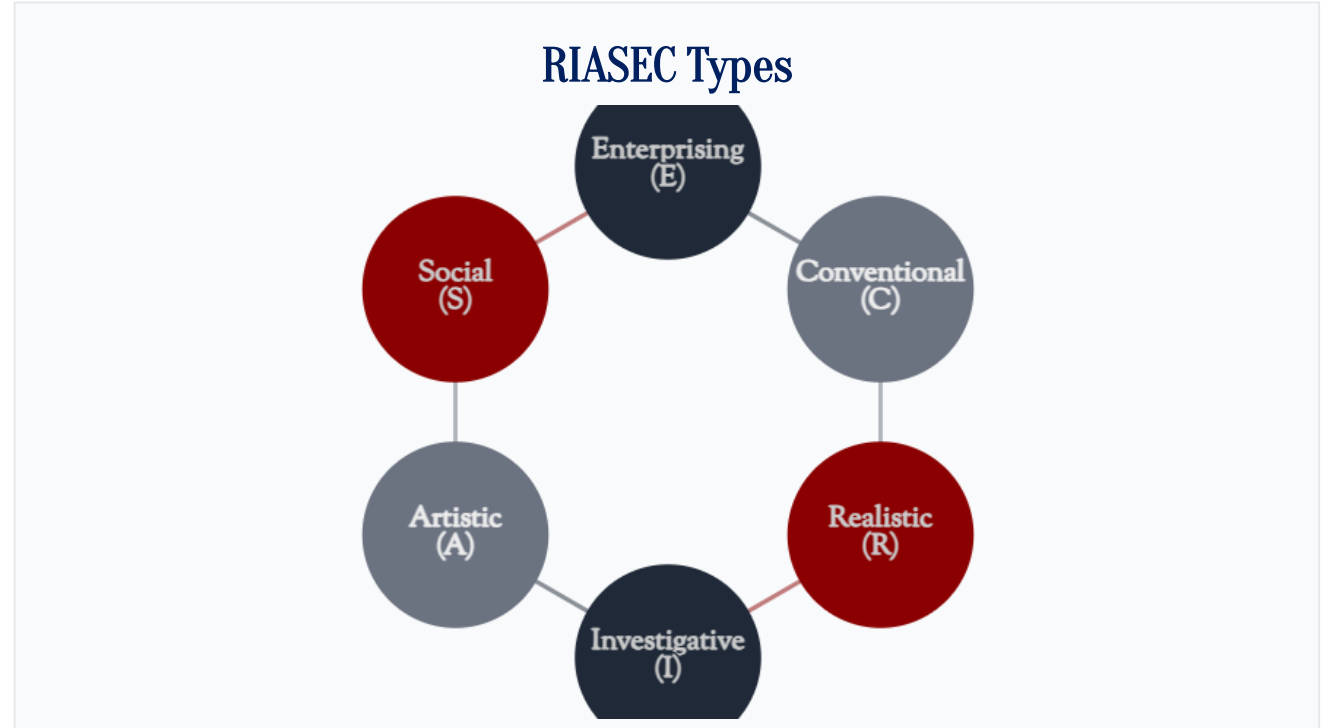
Why it matters

- ✓ Better career satisfaction
- ✓ Better performance
- ✓ More stability

Key idea

People are usually a combination of 2–3 types.

RIASEC helps EFL learners identify career paths that match who they are.



Realistic (R)
practical

Investigative (I)
analytical

Artistic (A)
creative

Social (S)
helping

Enterprising (E)
leading

Conventional (C)
organized

Why Confidence Shapes Career Decisions

What CDSE means

Students need confidence to make decisions

Without confidence – they avoid decisions

With confidence – they take action

Key skills students need

- 1 Understanding themselves
- 2 Finding information
- 3 Making decisions
- 4 Taking action

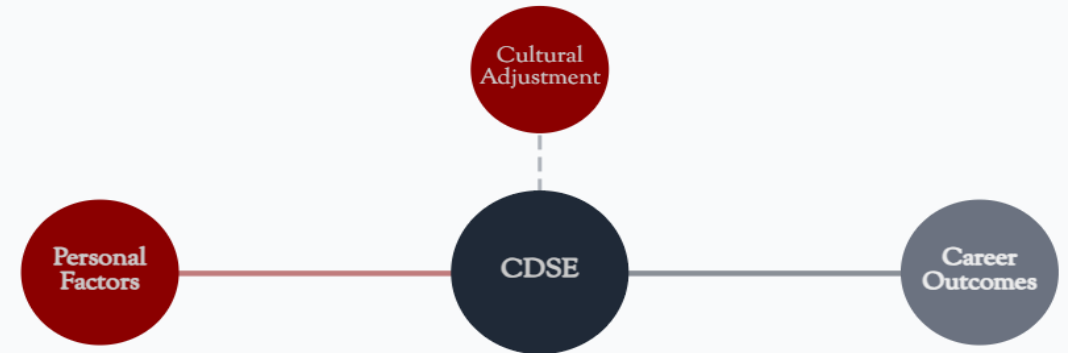
Key idea

Action builds confidence

Confidence leads to action

Confidence is the key to moving from thinking to action.

How confidence shapes career decisions



What research shows

Low confidence → indecision

High confidence → clearer choices

Confidence → faster progress

A woman with glasses and a grey cardigan is pointing forward in a classroom. Several students in the background have their hands raised, indicating an interactive learning environment. The image has a red overlay.

A Practical Framework

How students move
from uncertainty to direction

Understanding the Student Before Decisions

Cultural Adjustment

- Is the student comfortable in the new culture?
- Can they interact confidently?

Language Level

- Can they understand career information?
- Can they communicate professionally?

Immigration Reality

- What options are realistically available?
- Are there restrictions?

Psychological Readiness

- ★ Confidence level
- ★ Motivation
- ★ Ability to handle challenges

These factors directly shape students' confidence (CDSE).

Good decisions start with the right assessment.

Reflections – Making Sense of Results

Understanding Myself

What am I good at?

What do I enjoy?

What are my strengths and limits?

Making Meaning

What fits me best?

What doesn't fit?

What should I avoid?

Understanding My Reality

What options are realistically available to me?

What barriers do I face?

What is realistic for my situation?

Building Clarity

What direction makes sense?

What is my next step?

What will I try first?

Reflection turns information into direction.

Without reflection, assessment has no impact

Decision-Making – Choosing a Direction

Narrowing Options

- Which options match my strengths and interests?
- Which options are realistic for me?
- What can I eliminate?

EFL Tip: Provide sentence starters and vocabulary banks

Comparing Choices

- Pros and cons of each option
- Effort vs. reward
- Short-term vs. long-term impact

EFL Tip: Teach strengths vocabulary explicitly

Testing Decisions

- Try small steps (courses, internships, volunteering)
- Talk to people in the field
- Explore before committing

EFL Tip: Provide portfolio templates and examples

Making a Choice

- What feels right and realistic?
- What am I ready to commit to?
- What is my first step?

EFL Tip: Use future tense structures purposefully

Clarity comes from comparing, testing, and committing.

So what: Students don't need perfect answers—they need a process to decide.

Real Classroom Case: Maxim Yugay

Final-year student. No clear direction. What changed?

Final-year student in Korea • Strong in languages • Uncertain about career



From Uncertainty to Clarity: Maxim's Process

Assessment Results

- Strong in languages (English & Korean)
- Interests: Teaching, Translation, Sociology
- High communication skills
- Enjoys working with people

Why ACIP Works

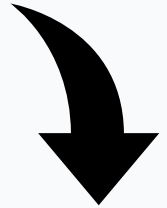
Research shows structured decision-making leads to better outcomes. Research shows structured

1. OPTIONS

Sunmoon University

Dankook University

Majors: Education / Translation / Social Sciences

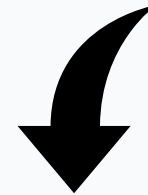


2. REALITY CHECK

Need for stable path

Language strengths

Realistic admission options



3. Decision

Chose a direction aligned with strengths

Focus on Language-related career path

Applied to universities with clear goal

Clarity came from structured decision-making

Why Didn't He Make the Wrong Choice?

Potential Risks

- Following others' expectations
- Choosing a "safe" but mismatched path
- Overthinking without action
- Limiting choices too early

What Helped Him Decide

- Structured decision process
- Comparing realistic options
- Focusing on strengths
- Taking small steps before committing

Guidance replaced guesswork

Focus on controllable factors

Took action instead of overthinking

Structure turns uncertainty into clarity.

A group of people, likely students or professionals, are gathered around a table in a meeting or classroom setting. They are looking at laptops and papers, engaged in discussion. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The text is centered over the image.

Teaching Implications: From Case to Classroom

How teachers guide students from uncertainty to clarity

From Awareness to Action: A Classroom Progression Model

1 Awareness (Assessment)

Help students understand themselves

- Identify strengths and interests
- Use simple career assessments
- Make results visible and understandable

Goal: Develop self-awareness

2 Reflection

Help students make meaning

- Ask guided reflection questions
- Connect results to real-life paths
- Discuss what fits and what does not

Goal: Deepen understanding

3 Decision-Making

Help students choose direction

- Compare realistic options
- Focus on strengths and constraints
- Encourage small test steps

Goal: Achieve clarity

4 Action

Help students take first steps

- Set simple, achievable goals
- Explore courses, majors, opportunities
- Support early commitment

Goal: Build confidence

Guided Student Progression

AWARENESS



REFLECTION



DECISION



ACTION

Without structure, students stay stuck — with structure, they move forward.

What This Looks Like in Practice

● Awareness

Activity: Career Profiling

- Short interest surveys
- Strengths discussion
- Visual result mapping

Goal: Help students see themselves clearly

● Reflection

Activity: Guided Reflection

- “What fits me?” worksheets
- Group discussion
- Teacher-led interpretation

Goal: Help students understand their results

● Decision

Activity: Option Comparison

- Compare 2-3 realistic options
- Discuss pros vs. constraints
- “What would I choose?” tasks

Goal: Help students choose direction

● Action

Activity: Real-World Steps

- Research universities
- Conduct informational interviews / watch career talks
- Set a clear first step

Goal: Help students take action

Simple structure

Clear decisions

Real progress

Students don't need more information — they need structured guidance to make decisions.

These are the names and sources:

SCCT: Lent, Brown, and Hackett, 1994; SCCT explains interests, choices, and performance/persistence.

RIASEC / Holland: Holland's vocational personality and environment model; widely operationalized in tools like the O*NET Interest Profiler.

CDSE: Taylor and Betz, 1983; later work linked CDSE to career indecision and progress.

Self-efficacy foundations: Bandura's self-efficacy framework; the four common sources are mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological or affective states.



Career guidance is not optional. It is our responsibility.

Structure turns uncertainty into clarity.

From language learning to real-life decisions



Nikolay Ni
Director
CoatesLang Academy

Helping students to:

- choose the right path
- avoid mismatched careers
- build confidence through structure

Free career orientation test:
coateslang.com