

March 2013

Work Skills of the Future

Exactly how our jobs will change over the years is impossible to predict, but it's very clear that certain generic skills will grow in importance and value. The Institute for the Future conducted an in-depth exploration of the evolution of new skills that will be highly valued across all jobs and work settings. What are the implications for your department?

SENSE-MAKING is the ability not only to come up with a new idea but also to grasp its full significance and potential in order that the best use can be made of it.

SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE allows us to tune in quickly and accurately to those around us so we can adapt our behavior (words, tone and gestures) accordingly. This is key for building trust and collaborating.

ADAPTIVE THINKING goes beyond the habitual and responds to unexpected and unique circumstances. Whether the task is writing a persuasive proposal or creating a new recipe out of standard ingredients, the adaptive thinker is not bound by "but we always do it like this."

CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCY is required **for** effective functioning in environments with cultural variations in perspective and in style. This enables us to transcend differences, identify commonalities, and develop productive working relationships.

COMPUTATIONAL THINKING will be more and more necessary to cope with the constantly growing amounts of available data. Statistical analysis and quantitative reasoning skills will increase in value.

NEW-MEDIA LITERACY will grow in importance as the role of user-generated media expands in the workplace. We will need skills to produce content for the new media and will have to critically assess new-media information as well as we assess today's paper presentations.

TRANSDISCIPLINARITY will require that we bring to the table not only a deep understanding of one area, but also an ability to function well in a range of areas. This will replace the 20th century's encouragement of specialization.

DESIGN MINDSET will facilitate planning our physical work environments to enhance the likelihood that we'll get the outcomes we most want.

COGNITIVE LOAD MANAGEMENT will require effective techniques to filter masses of incoming information and identify what is most relevant and important.

VIRTUAL COLLABORATION skills, such as strategies for tracking progress, engaging and motivating a group whose members are not physically present, will be more frequently required.