

The Spotlight taxonomic framework

Categories of commonly under-reported skills, and their elements, defined at five levels through which skills are extended or deepened on the basis of life and work experience.

The Spotlight categories of skill and their elements	The Spotlight skill levels				
	Orienting	Fluently performing	Solving new problems as they arise	Sharing solutions/ Applying expertise	Expertly creating systems
	Building experience through practice, reflection and learning to work with others	Applying experience in a practiced and self-reliant way	Providing resourceful solutions to problems as they arise in the course of work activity	Sharing developed expertise with colleagues or team	Embedding new solutions in work processes
Work activities performed at each skill level					
Contextualising/Building and Shaping awareness <i>Capacity to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceive contexts or situations Monitor and guide reactions Judge impacts 	Map unfamiliar job contexts	Consistently monitor job contexts and situations	Solve unfamiliar problems in interpreting contexts	Share new approaches to interpreting situations	Set up shared processes for monitoring contexts
	Learn to monitor & guide own and others' reactions	Consistently monitor and fluently guide own and others' reactions	Solve new problems in monitoring and guiding reactions	Share solutions to monitoring and guiding own and others' reactions	Introduce new approaches to monitoring and guiding reactions
	Learn to judge impacts	Consistently judge impacts	Solve unfamiliar problems in judging impacts	Share solutions to judging impacts	Establish new methods for evaluating impacts
Connecting/ Interacting and relating <i>Capacity to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiate boundaries Communicate verbally and non-verbally Work across diverse cultures and communities 	Find ways to negotiate work roles and boundaries	Negotiate work roles and boundaries effectively	Resourcefully solve problems in/by negotiating roles & boundaries	Share solutions in/by negotiating role boundaries	Implement shared processes for negotiating role boundaries
	Learn effective methods of verbal & non-verbal communication	Effectively communicate, verbally and non-verbally	Solve problems of/by effective verbal and non-verbal communication	Share solutions for effective verbal and non-verbal communication	Implement shared approaches to communication or relationship-building
	Learn to communicate across cultures	Communicate effectively across cultures	Solve problems of inter-cultural communication	Share solutions for inter-cultural communication	Establish systems for building inter-cultural relationships
Coordinating <i>Capacity to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequence and combine activities Interweave one's activities with others' Maintain or restore workflow 	Develop methods for organising your own work	Fluently link up your own tasks into a smooth work process	Solve new problems in scheduling and managing own work	Share new approaches to organising personal work roles	Create or improve systematic approaches to integrating individual work activities
	Develop ways of linking into the overall workflow	Interweave your activities fluently with those of colleagues	Solve problems in/by interweaving your activities with those of others	Share approaches to interweaving individual & team activities	Create or improve systematic approaches to integrating team work activities
	Learn approaches to preventing/ dealing with disruptions	Deal fluently with potential or actual workflow disruptions	Solve problems in maintaining/restoring workflow	Share approaches to stabilising workflow	Create systems for stabilising workflow

Table 2 The three Spotlight skill sets, containing nine elements

A. Contextualising/Shaping awareness: the capacity of the jobholder to:

- pay attention, notice and use cues and signals, and take account of contexts, including workplace and social roles, rules, resources, regulations, conditions, risks and emerging situations
- self-monitor one's own reactions, be aware of others' needs and responses, and guide the attention or cue the attention, thoughts, feelings and behaviours of self and others
- assess and use judgement in relation to contexts of awareness (situations in the workplace where the participants need to evaluate what is happening, in terms of antecedents, implications, impacts, outcomes or consequences)

Examples of contexts and situations include:

- participants – the jobholder, co-workers, clients, family, contractors or the public
- varying levels of awareness, feelings and attitudes, or the sometimes conflicting needs for disclosure on the part of participants
- factors in the physical or social environment, work goals, emerging trends or patterns, situational developments, or safety issues

B. Connecting/Interacting and relating: the capacity to conduct effective short-term interpersonal exchanges and to build longer-term working relationships – whether contractual, supervisory, collaborative, supportive, caring, educative or therapeutic. Under-recognised foundations of such interactions and relationships are:

- being able to draw and respect boundaries for oneself and others, including the ability to support, negotiate, persuade, de-escalate, advocate and influence in dealings with peers, people in authority, people under one's authority or care, and people outside formal lines of authority
- the ability to communicate effectively both verbally and non-verbally, deploying empathy, emotion work, a variety of aesthetic communication styles, appropriate use of touch, a range of language levels and registers and variations of pace, as well as observing, listening actively, interpreting, reflecting back and using silence and space
- the capacity to work with people from diverse backgrounds, based on ethnicity, class, disability, age gender or sexuality; developing a deep understanding of other backgrounds and cultures and of one's own cultural impact; understanding the dynamics of intercultural interactions and relationships.

C. Coordinating involves the capacity to contribute to the workflow by making individual adaptations and working out collaborative arrangements: that is,

- the capacity to make constant small adjustments to one's own sequences of activities, prioritising, switching between lines of work, dealing with interruptions, picking up threads and refocusing
- the ability to work out arrangements for getting things done by liaising with others in order to weave activities together into the overall arc or trajectory of work, facilitating, (re)scheduling, accommodating, tracking, systematising shared work processes, and balancing conflicting demands
- the capacity to work around obstacles, keeping things on track, rectify mistakes, pick up the pieces and put work back on track, restoring and stabilising the workflow.

Table 3 The five Spotlight skill levels

<p>1. <i>Orienting</i>: Entry into a job at any grade level, or experiencing significant changes to work requirements or technologies, requires a period of familiarisation and (re-)orientation in which the jobholder consciously learns to identify and adopt relevant resources, rules and roles. Through observation, practice and deliberation, the jobholder articulates (makes explicit) the actions that need to be linked together in order to carry out goal-directed work activities</p>
<p>2. <i>Fluently performing</i>: Through practice, the jobholder becomes increasingly able to undertake work activities proficiently, systematising actions into smooth operations without needing to give conscious thought to the procedures being followed</p>
<p>3. <i>Solving new problems as they arise</i>: On the basis of fluent proficiency, the jobholder can engage simultaneously in multiple activities, and piece together solutions to problems that arise whenever contingencies require automatic routines to be adjusted, responsibly applying initiative and discretion</p>
<p>4. <i>Sharing solutions/Applying expertise</i>: Through being embedded in a work team or network, the jobholder helps shares work approaches with less experienced colleagues and works collaboratively to address novel problems. Dialogue and openness to alternatives are the basis for shared learning</p>
<p>5. <i>Expertly shaping systems</i>: The jobholder helps embed new shared approaches or informally acquired practical expertise in the ongoing work system. The jobholder has now acquired a comprehensive conception of the work process being undertaken and a sense of what is achievable. The scope for shaping systems depends on delegation of authority and the degree to which work processes are standardised, but the jobholder may use supplementary informal systems, share in wider learning networks or assist in the local adoption of new methods, to improve outcomes.</p>