

Since you're enrolled in this course, let's assume that you have decided on, or perhaps are already engaged in, a managerial or professional career. And that you are developing, or have already developed the knowledge and skills necessary to do the job. That's great, but don't stop there. Experts agree that it will take a special set of competencies to succeed in tomorrow's organizations, which will be even more globalized, digitized, collaborative, and agile than those we see today.

Many have written on this topic. One of the best sources, we think, is a small monograph published by the Institute of the Future, titled, *The Future of Work Skills 2020*. Here is a brief synopsis of the 10 competencies that the Institute suggests will be essential for your career success and the years ahead. First, relating to globalization. The Institute stresses the need for cross-cultural competency, which has a couple of key components. One is the ability to work effectively with those from other cultures, perhaps in teams made up of many different nationalities. And the other is the ability to work effectively outside of your native land. And while most business probably will continue to be conducted in English, it certainly wouldn't hurt to have a familiarity with other languages as well.

Turning to the circle label digitisation, we see that there are four key competencies involved. One is sense-making. The future will be all about mass data. We will be even more inundated than we are now, so it will be necessary to have the capacity to work through tons of information and see the big picture. We'll have to be critical thinkers. But we also have to keep in mind that technology isn't good for everything. So we need to develop the capacity to decide when to rely on computers for assistance and answers, and just as important, when not to.

A second competency in this area is computational thinking. This includes developing a basic understanding of computer programming and simulation modeling. It doesn't mean that we all have to become computer geeks. In the era of big data, we can rely on specially trained data scientists to do the heavy lifting. But the rest of us will need to know enough about what the experts are doing to be actively involved in the process in two ways. One is on the front end, to frame questions and problems in ways that the data scientists can analyze a model. And two, on the back end, to be the ones who interpret the results and come up with value added answers and solutions.

Third, in this context, there is the issue of new media literacy. Here the reference is to becoming expert in the use of social media tools: internets, blogs, podcasts, videos, and so forth. In the future, many folks will be working remotely and will be called upon to create and share content through these technologies, and to do so in ways that not only help solve complex problems, but also engage and persuade our colleagues and other important people, such as customers and clients.

Finally in this area is cognitive load management. In tomorrow's world, it will be very easy to get overwhelmed by the mass of information that's bound to come our way. We need to learn how to avoid this. How to evaluate, rank,

and tag content so that we keep our eyes on what's really important and let the rest go. Somewhat ironically, computer programs are already available to help with this. They have the ability to sense when we are becoming overloaded or tired, and then, to automatically intervene, to slow down or simplify the flow of information we're getting.

Third, let's turn to the issue of collaboration. One essential competency here is social intelligence. This refers to the ability to connect with others in an emotional and deeply personal way to quickly assess the feelings of others and then adapt our words, tone, and gestures accordingly. Everyone agrees that this is a uniquely human competency that so far, at least, gives us a leg up on robots. Further, the Institute talks about virtual collaboration, meaning the ability to work effectively with, and eventually, perhaps, lead teammates we may never meet or even see in person. This involves becoming really good at turning in-house networks and new media into what some call social water coolers. Important tools helping to enhance a sense of camaraderie and social presence among colleagues who are all over the map. Online gamers already have a leg up on developing this competency, since this is, in large part, what they are learning to do.

And finally, let's consider agility, which really is the capacity to be comfortable with change. Three competencies are stressed here. One is novel and adaptive thinking. In a world of rapid change, it is essential that we never let the tried and true get in the way of being open to new ways of doing things. In the future, all of us will be expected to keep our eyes on developments that are going on in the world so that we can anticipate upcoming challenges. And most important, be on the leading edge of developing unique and creative ideas and solutions to deal with these challenges in real time.

Second, the Institute talks about design mindset. This is closely related to novel and adaptive thinking. It refers to being super familiar with our work situation, so that we can see when changes need to be made. But even more important, it refers to having the ability to make useful recommendations for redesigning the work environment as well as the processes and procedures being used to get the work done.

And then, there is what the Institute calls transdisciplinarity, which is a big word for a simple idea. In the future, the idea worker will be t-shaped. That is, deeply expert in one or more disciplines, which is the vertical part of the T, but also knowledgeable about and comfortable with many other disciplines, the horizontal part of the T. In other words, once your world class one thing, make sure you keep right on learning about a lot of other things.

Success in the future will depend on our willingness and ability to keep growing and developing to become more global in our thinking, more comfortable with the digitisation of everything, ever better it collaborating with colleagues and others, and above all, staying deeply committed to being adaptive, lifelong learners.