

Essential Skills

When talking about skills, it is crucial at the outset to differentiate between some of the potentially confusing terminology –

Knowledge: content which can be recalled, understood and explained

Character attributes: the choices individuals make, manifested as attitudes or behaviours

Skills: the ability to successfully enact a repeatable process

Understanding the differentiation, we then focus on skills, in which we define three broad types of skills:

Technical Skills: those skills that are specific to a particular sector or role, sometimes drawing off a particular body of knowledge. These skills are not easily transferred beyond the sector or role to which they relate.

Essential Skills: those highly transferable skills that everyone needs to do almost any job, which support the application of specialist knowledge and technical skills

Basic Skills: these are literacy and numeracy, and basic digital skills.

We use the term essential skills for three reasons:

1. People need these skills to do practically any job, in any sector, in any part of the world.
2. They are fundamental beyond the workplace, whether that's making life decisions, navigating relationships, or making personal choices.
3. They are non-negotiable in education and throughout a child's development.

The image below shows the eight essential skills from the Skills Builder framework (www.skillsbuilder.org).

Essential Skills


LISTENING


SPEAKING


PROBLEM SOLVING


CREATIVITY


ADAPTING


PLANNING


LEADERSHIP


TEAMWORK

Essential skills unlock learning in the classroom, boosting academic outcomes, perseverance and self belief. They halve the likelihood of being out of work, and increase earnings across a lifetime. They even boost wellbeing and life satisfaction.

But access to these skills isn't fair. And where they are missed, it undermines social mobility, productivity and wellbeing.

We think everyone, at every stage of their lives, should have the opportunities to build them.

