

The “SCANS” Skills

In 1991 the U.S. Department of Labor published a series of documents outlining the findings of The Secretary’s Commission On Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS).

The Commission, comprised of leaders in business, labor and education, crafted a list of five “competencies” and three sets of “foundation” skills and personal qualities that summarized what they found to be required for individuals to succeed in the workplace – competencies and skills that all students should have before they leave school.

Many of the educational documents, assessment instruments and school-to-career materials that were subsequently developed refer to “the SCANS skills”. Therefore, for your reference, the five competencies and three-part foundation are presented below.

A THREE PART FOUNDATION

Basic Skills: reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens, and speaks

- A. Reading: *locates, understands, and interprets written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs and schedules*
- B. Writing: *communicates thoughts, ideas, information and messages in writing and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs and flow charts*
- C. Arithmetic/Mathematics: *performs basic computations and approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques*
- D. Listening: *receives, attends to, interprets and responds to verbal messages and other cues*
- E. Speaking: *organizes ideas and communicates orally*

Thinking Skills: thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn and reasons

- A. Creative Thinking: *generates new ideas*
- B. Decision Making: *specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks and evaluates and chooses best alternative*
- C. Seeing Things in the Mind's Eye: *organizes and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects and other information*
- D. Problem Solving: *recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action*
- E. Knowing How to Learn: *uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills*
- F. Reasoning: *discovers a rule or principle underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it in solving a problem*

Personal Qualities: displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity and honesty

- A. Responsibility: *exerts a high level of effort and perseveres towards goal attainment*
- B. Self-Esteem: *believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self*
- C. Sociability: *demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy and politeness in group settings*
- D. Self-Management: *assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress and exhibits self-control*
- E. Integrity/Honesty: *chooses ethical courses of action*

FIVE COMPETENCIES

Resources: identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources

- A. Time: *selects goal-relevant activities, ranks them, allocates time, and prepares and follows schedules*
- B. Money: *uses or prepares budgets, makes forecasts, keeps records, and makes adjustments to meet objectives*
- C. Material and Facilities: *acquires, stores, allocates, and uses materials or space efficiently*
- D. Humans Resources: *assesses skills and distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance and provides feedback*

Interpersonal: works with others

- A. Participates as Member of a Team: *contributes to group effort*
- B. Teaches Others New Skills
- C. Serves Clients/Customers: *works to satisfy customers' expectations*
- D. Exercises Leadership: *communicates ideas to justify position, persuades and convinces others, responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies*
- E. Negotiates: *works toward agreements involving exchanges of resources, resolves divergent interests*
- F. Works with Diversity: *works well with men and women from diverse backgrounds*

Information: acquires and uses information

- A. Acquires and Evaluates Information
- B. Organizes and Maintains Information
- C. Interprets and Communicates Information
- D. Uses Computers to Process Information

Systems: understands complex inter-relationships

- A. Understands Systems: *knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively with them*
- B. Monitors and Corrects Performance: *distinguishes trends, predicts impacts on system operations, diagnoses deviations in systems' performance and corrects malfunctions*
- C. Improves or Designs Systems: *suggests modifications to existing systems and develops new or alternative systems to improve performance*

Technology: works with a variety of technologies

- A. Selects Technology: *chooses procedures, tools or equipment including computers and related technologies*
- B. Applies Technology to Task: *understands overall intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment*
- C. Maintains and Troubleshoots Equipment: *prevents, identifies, or solves problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies*