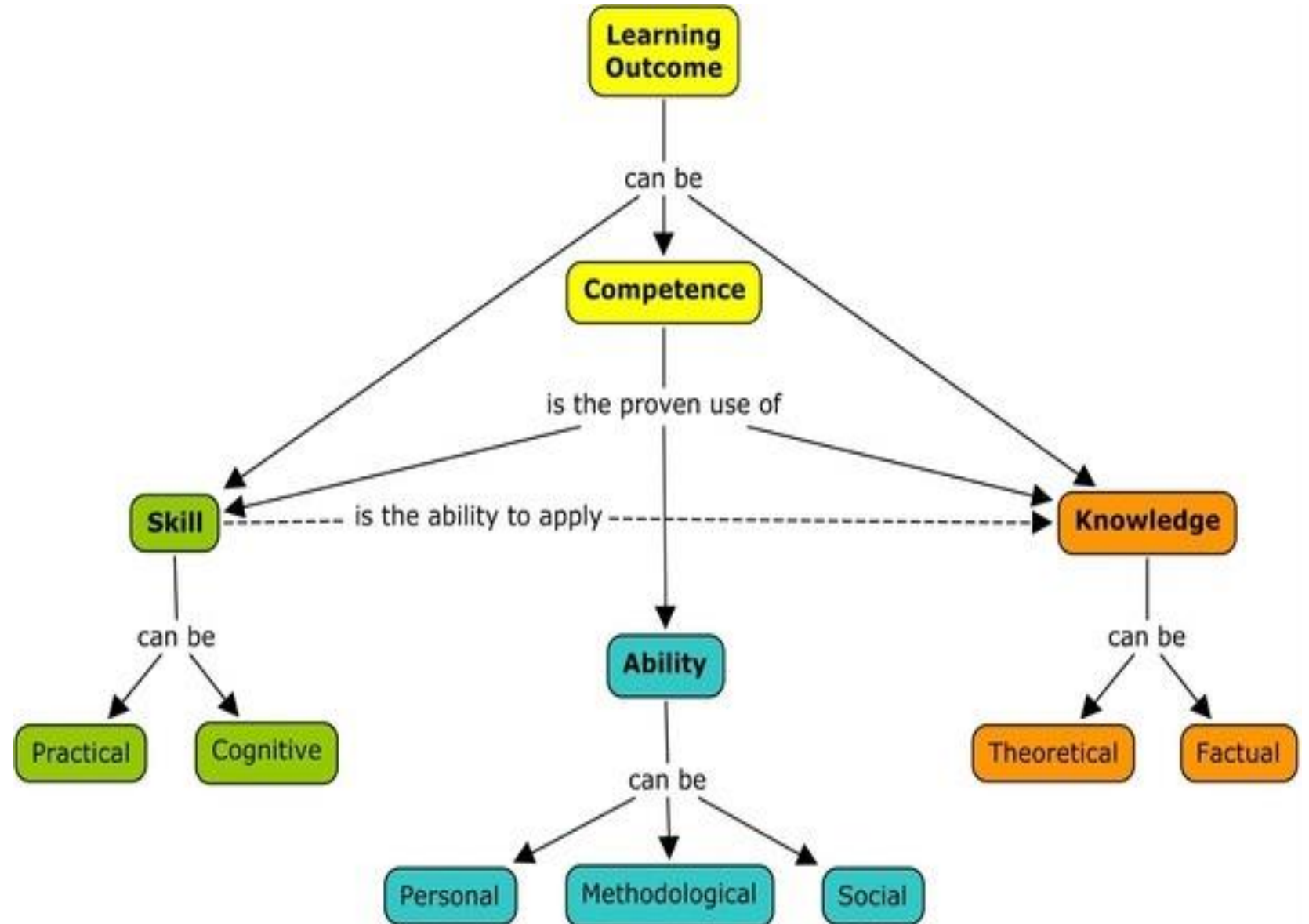# Competencies *versus* Skills

Competency versus Skill

Skills are the practical or cognitive things you can do.

Competence is the proven use of skills and knowledge to accomplish something. Competence is a noun that describes the ability of a person to be qualified to do a job.

Skills are the practical or cognitive things you can do. Competence is the proven use of skills, knowledge, and abilities to accomplish something.

Learning Outcome

can be

Competence

is the proven use of

Skill — — — is the ability to apply — — — → Knowledge

can be

Practical   Cognitive

Ability

can be

Personal   Methodological   Social

can be

Theoretical   Factual

How are Skills and Competencies Different?

Skills: Skills define specific learned activities, and they range widely in terms of complexity

Knowing which skills a person possesses helps us determine whether their training and experience has prepared them for a specific type of workplace activity.

In other words, skills give us the *"what."* They tell us *what* types of abilities a person needs to perform a specific activity or job.

Competencies: Skills give us the *"what,"* but don't give us the *"how"*

For example: *How* does an individual perform a job successfully? *How* do they behave in the workplace environment to achieve the desired result?

How are Skills and Competencies Different?

- **Skills:** Skills define specific learned activities, and they range widely in terms of complexity. ("Mopping the floor" and "performing brain surgery" can both be classified as skills.)

- Knowing which skills a person possesses helps us determine whether their training and experience has prepared them for a specific type of workplace activity.

- In other words, skills give us the *"what."* They tell us *what* types of abilities a person needs to perform a specific activity or job.

- **Competencies:** Skills give us the *"what,"* but don't give us the *"how."*

Skills + Knowledge + Abilities = Competencies

- Competencies take "skills, knowledge and abilities" and incorporates them into on-the-job *behaviors*. Those behaviors demonstrate the ability to perform the job requirements competently.

Competencies take "skills" and incorporate them into on-the-job *behaviors*.

Those behaviors demonstrate the ability to perform the job requirements competently.

What is a Competency?

- A cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable a person (or an organization) to act effectively in a job or situation

- Competencies refer to skills or knowledge that lead to superior performance

- Measurable skills, abilities and personality traits that identify successful employees against defined roles within an organization

- A competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context

- A measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully

- Competencies specify the "how" (as opposed to the what) of performing job tasks, or what the person needs to do the job successfully

- Competencies, therefore, may incorporate a skill, but are MORE than the skill, they include abilities and behaviors, as well as knowledge that is fundamental to the use of that skill

Examples of Core Competency

Analytical Thinking - Applies logic to solve problems and get the job done

Client Service - Ability to respond to the clients and anticipate their needs

Computer Competency - Is skilled at operating a computer

Conflict Resolution - Works to resolve differences and maintain work relationships

Competencies effectively fall in three groups

Behavioral (or Life Skills) Competencies

- Life skills are problem solving behaviors used appropriately and responsibly in the management of personal affairs. They are a set of human skills acquired via teaching or direct experience that are used to handle problems and questions commonly encountered in daily human life. Examples are: Communication, Analytical Ability, Problem Solving, Initiative, etc.

Functional (or Technical) Competencies

- Functional competencies relate to functions, processes, and roles within the organization and include the knowledge of, and skill in the exercise of, practices required for successful accomplishment of a specific job or task. Examples are: Application Systems Development, Networking and Communication, Database Analysis and Design, etc.

Professional Competencies

- Professional competencies are competencies that allow for success in an organizational context. They are the accelerators of performance or – if lacking in sufficient strength and quality – are a reason people may fail to excel in jobs. Examples are: Business Environment, Industry and Professional Standards, Negotiation, People Management, etc.

The ability, coming from one's knowledge, practice, aptitude, etc., to do something well

An ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills), and/or people (interpersonal skills)

A skill is the learned capacity to carry out pre-determined results

A learned ability to bring about the result you want, with maximum certainty and efficiency

Proficiency, facility, or dexterity that is acquired or developed through training or experience

So, a **Skill** is something **Learned** in order to be able to carry out one or more job functions

What is a Skill?

Top 5 reasons to use competencies

- **BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**
- **EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES**
- **ENHANCING DEFENSIBILITY**
- **ENSURING CONSISTENCY**
- **DELIVERING RESULTS**

1. BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

While job-specific competencies identify the behaviors that ensure success for each individual employee, core competencies can be used to identify the shared behaviors that drive organizational success. Identifying core competencies for the organization helps to articulate, reinforce, and communicate the behaviors that give the organization its core competitive advantage.

2. EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES

- Because they provide an objective basis for evaluating performance, competencies support a more collaborative approach to performance management and career development. In addition, competencies use a common language to describe every job in the organization, which encourages employees to take charge of their careers, direct their own personal development and explore their potential not only within their current role but in future lateral or vertical roles.

3. ENHANCING DEFENSIBILITY

By bringing greater objectivity to processes such as hiring, assessment, performance management, and promotion, competencies help organizations ensure the defensibility of their HR practices, providing a greater degree of protection from internal and external criticism or legal action.

4. ENSURING CONSISTENCY

Competencies form the basis of every activity across the talent-management life cycle, including hiring, development, and succession planning. With a consistent language in place to describe requirements at the micro (job) and macro (organizational) level, HR professionals can achieve greater

5. DELIVERING RESULTS.

Results-focused organizations with clear objectives are drawn to competencies because the research shows that they produce a measurable impact in the workplace. A meta-analysis of competency-based talent management practices recorded a median 63% reduction in turnover, 19% improvement in employee performance, and 12.5% increase in sales and profits.onsistency, co-ordination, and integration of all HR activities.

Want to Know More - References to Explore

- Skills vs Competencies. What's the Difference? - https://www.talentalign.com/skills-vs-competencies-whats-the-difference/

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