



STRAIGHT A'S. BUT CAN YOU APPLY IT?

Knowledge, skill, ability, capability, competency the gap between knowing and doing and doing

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[_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _]

Anonymous. No sign-up. Keep it open for the whole session.



MENTI · WORD CLOUD

One word: what does the workplace expect that your degree didn't teach you?

Be honest. Nobody's marking this one.

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WHERE WE START

Straight A's matter.

They give you

The foundation. The credibility.
The room to walk in the door.

They don't give you

The ability to use it when the plan
meets reality in chaos, under pressure.
pressure.

They're only half the story.



THAT'S WHEN THE TYRE HITS THE TAR.

The exam asked: do you know it?

The workplace asks: can you do something useful with it — here, now, with what you've got?



THE NEXT HOUR

Our route

1 · The words

From knowledge to capability to competency, and the standard you're measured against

2 · Four lenses

DIKW, Cynefin, entropy and Ashby's law of requisite variety

3 · Six capabilities

Curiosity, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, complex adaptive thinking, resilience

4 · Apply it

A real crisis, your cheat sheet, and your own 30-day move



MENTI · MULTIPLE CHOICE

Which one do employers actually pay you for?

Knowledge · Skill · Ability · Capability · Competency

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PART 1 • THE WORDS WE MIX UP

They build on each other



Capability is what you bring. Competency is what you prove.



SAME FIVE WORDS, ONE EXAMPLE

Learning to drive

Knowledge

The rules of the road. You passed the learner's test.

Skill

You can parallel park. Most days.

Ability

Your reflexes, reflexes, focus and coordination n today.

Capability

You could drive any car, car, in any city, with practice.

Competency

You get everyone home safely
Example : N2, rain, night, taxis.



THE FOUR STAGES OF COMPETENCE

The road from capable to competent

STAGE 1

Unconscious incompetence

I don't know what I
what I don't know.
know.

STAGE 2

Conscious incompetence

I see the gap. It's
uncomfortable, and
that's progress.

STAGE 3

Conscious competence

I can do it, with
effort and focus.

STAGE 4

Unconscious competence

It's instinct.
The sixth sense.



COMPETENT AGAINST WHAT?

Find the standard. Nobody will hand it to you.

ASK YOUR LINE MANAGER, EARLY

1. Why does this role exist?
2. What value is it meant to drive?
3. What are the non-negotiables?
4. What is negotiable?
5. Where are the boundaries I can explore?

**Effort doesn't
equal value.**

And it's not one
conversation. Keep
recontracting expectations
expectations shift as you
you grow.



EXAMS MEASURE KNOWLEDGE. THE WORKPLACE PAYS FOR COMPETENCY.

The gap between the two isn't more content. **It's application.** So what does it take to cross it?



LENS 1 · DIKW, PLUS ONE

Data → Information → Knowledge → Wisdom → Value

Value

Value — turning wisdom into something that matters to someone else

Wisdom

Wisdom — knowing what to do, here and now

Knowledge

Knowledge — understanding how it fits together together

Information

Information — data with context and meaning

Data

Data — raw facts and numbers

Exams stop at knowledge. Work starts at wisdom. You get paid for value.



What kind of problem is this?

Complex

Probe → sense → respond · emergent practice. Cause and effect only clear in hindsight.

Most of real work lives here

Complicated

Sense → analyse → respond · good practice. There is a right answer; experts can find it.

Your degree trained you here

Confusion: not knowing which domain you're in

Chaotic

Act → sense → respond · novel practice. Stabilise first, understand later.

Clear

Sense → categorise → respond · best practice. Obvious cause and effect.

...and here



MENTI · MULTIPLE CHOICE

Think of your current or last job. Where do most of your days live?

Clear · Complicated · Complex · Chaotic

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Left alone, everything drifts toward disorder

Knowledge decays

What you learned in second year is already dating.
Without use, it fades.

Plans drift

The best plan starts decaying
decaying the moment it meets
meets reality.

Relevance fades

What's scarce and valued today
won't be in five years.

Competency is the energy you keep putting back in.



LENS 4 • ASHBY'S LAW OF REQUISITE VARIETY

Only variety can absorb variety

The variety of situations the world throws at you



The variety of responses you can bring



To stay in control, your range of responses must match the range of situations. situations. One brilliant answer isn't enough when the questions keep keep changing.



FOUR LENSES, ONE MESSAGE

Put together, they explain the gap

DIKW asks

Can you turn what you know into wise action
action and wise action into value?

Cynefin asks

Do you know what kind of problem you're in?

Entropy asks

Are you communicating effectively, or coasting
on your transcript?

Ashby asks

Do you have enough range for what the world
world throws at you?

Competency = knowledge that survives contact with reality.



PART 3 • CLOSING THE GAP

Six capabilities that close the gap



Curiosity

Pulls you up the pyramid.
Asks why, and what else?



Critical thinking

Separates signal from noise.
noise. Names the
assumption.



Problem solving

Cracks the complicated.
Breaks it down, tests it.



Creativity

Generates new options.
Grows your variety.



Complex adaptive thinking

Holds the tension. Probes,
senses, adapts.



Resilience

Absorbs the disorder. Jumps
forward, not just back.



RESILIENCE, REFRAMED

Not just bouncing back. Jumping forward.

The old idea

Bounce back to where you were. Survive the knock. Pass the pressure down the line.

The capability

Absorb the pressure without transmitting it. Learn from the knock. Come out further ahead.

FIVE PERSONAL PILLARS

Direction

Redundancy

Feedback loops

Relationships

Adaptive capacity



COMPLEX ADAPTIVE THINKING

**COMPLEX PROBLEMS DON'T
GET SOLVED.
THEY GET HELD.**

Hold the tension. Try something small and safe. Watch what happens. Adjust. Repeat.



MENTI · SCALES 1–5

Be honest: where are you today on each of the six?

Curiosity · Critical thinking · Problem solving · Creativity · Complex adaptive thinking · Resilience

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PART 4 • APPLY IT

Two days out. The supplier just failed.

A small township-based catering business has just just landed its biggest order yet.

Two days before the event, the fresh-produce supplier calls: **they can't deliver.**

YOUR JOB

You are the owner.
Three minutes.
No textbook.
What do you do?



MENTI · MULTIPLE CHOICE

Right now, in the first hour which Cynefin domain is the caterer in?

Clear · Complicated · Complex · Chaotic

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MENTI · OPEN ENDED

What's your first move?

One line. What would you actually do in the next hour?

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DEBRIEF

The same crisis, through the four lenses

DIKW

What do I actually know and what am I assuming?

Cynefin

Chaos first: act to stabilise. Then probe the options. options.

Entropy

Where will the next thing break? Build a buffer.

Ashby

How many responses responses can I generate? Suppliers, Suppliers, menu, network.

Nothing on this slide is in the textbook. **All of it is competency.**



A WORD ON AI

Gap-filler or thinking partner?

As a gap-filler

It hands you an answer. You skip the thinking. thinking. Your variety shrinks. You look competent until it's wrong.

As a thinking partner

It challenges your answer, generates options, options, runs scenarios. You get more reps, reps, faster. Your variety grows.



HOW YOU GET THE REPS

Don't bring me the problem. Bring me your thinking.

1 · Problem statement

"This is how I've defined the problem."

First, find out who knows what.

2 · Three recommendations

"These are the options I'd put on the table."

Ask for criticism. Don't defend. defend.

3 · The check

"Is my problem right? Are these practical? What am I missing?"

Ask for help, not for every step.



THE SIXTH SENSE

FRAMEWORKS, PRACTISED ENOUGH, BECOME INSTINCT.

Experienced people don't compare ten options. They recognise the pattern and act. That recognition is built one rep at a time.

Reps × reflection = competency.



WHO OWNS THE GAP?

Everyone owns a piece of it

Academia

Teach for application,
not only examination.
That's my part, and it's
only one piece.

Industry

Create the reps: real
projects, mentoring,
safe places to fail.

You

Go and get the reps. Reflect
Reflect on every one. Don't
Don't wait to be handed
handed competency.



YOUR CHEAT SHEET • SCREENSHOT THIS

Diagnose first. Then act.

If you notice...	You're probably...	Lens	So do this
" I know it, but can't use it"	Stuck at knowledge	DIKW	Ask " so what, for whom?" until it's value
Busy, but nothing lands	Effort without value	Standard	Recontract: why does my role exist?
Hunting for the right answer	Treating complex as complicated	Cynefin	Run a small, safe experiment. Adjust.
Fixes keep slipping back	Losing to entropy	Entropy	Build the habit, the buffer, the feedback loop
Surprised all the time	Out-varied by the problem	Ashby	Find who knows what. Widen your options.
Feedback stings	In stage 2. That's progress.	Four stages	Bring a problem statement and three options
Knocked flat by setbacks	Transmitting pressure	Resilience	Absorb, learn, jump forward



MENTI · OPEN ENDED

One thing I'll do in the next 30 days to turn knowledge into competency

Make it specific. Make it small. Make it real.

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STRAIGHT A'S GET YOU IN THE DOOR. COMPETENCY KEEPS YOU IN THE ROOM.

Questions? Drop them in the chat.

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