

July, 2022

Spotlight on
Training and Adult Education Trends
and Jobs-Skills Insights

JOBS-SKILLS QUARTERLY INSIGHTS

SKILLS *future* SG

Executive Summary

In 2021, our workforce training participation rate reached a high of 50% amidst the pandemic, with a record number of 660,000 individuals participating in upskilling and reskilling efforts funded by SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG). Demand for workforce reskilling and upskilling is expected to rise in tandem with the needs of the Digital Economy, Green Economy, and Care Economy.

The aspiration is for lifelong learning to be the cutting edge of our workforce and our economy, to enable Singaporeans access to more and better jobs, and to adapt well to a shortening shelf-life of skills. To achieve this ambition, it cannot be business-as-usual for the Training and Adult Education (TAE) sector. For those involved in TAE, new skills and new capabilities need to be acquired.

This inaugural Jobs-Skills Quarterly Insights highlights three emerging trends that are driving the demand for TAE jobs and skills:

- 1. Education Technologies (EdTech) and related skills are powering the TAE business.** Today, our universities, private education institutions, and training organisations are amongst the top hiring companies for emerging roles such as *Instructional Designers and Technologists*. The top skills in demand for these roles include *Learning Solution Design, Technology-Enabled Learning Delivery, and Curriculum Design**, as organisations strive for closer integration between technology, learning and performance enhancement.
- 2. There is increased recognition of the criticality of workplace learning, and the need for capabilities to organise the workplace for learning.** Based on job posting data, demand for workplace learning roles such as *learning-performance consultant* has more than doubled between Q2 2021 to Q1 2022. The top skills in demand for these roles include *Project Management, Learning and Development, and Learning Mode Design*, as well as critical core skills such as *Creative Thinking, Digital Fluency, and Learning Agility*.
- 3. Career/learning counselling and coaching-related skills have risen in significance and demand, to translate industry trends and business transformations to tangible actions that can be taken by individuals who want to enhance their workplace performance or prepare for career pivoting.** With increasing need for personalised advice and coaching, the top skills in demand for these roles include *People Capability Development, Performance Management, and Workplace Performance Diagnosis*. More companies are investing in these in-house capabilities, spurring demand for new roles such as *Career/Workplace Coaches*.

* Please refer to the Annex for skill descriptions.

Introduction

The Training and Adult Education (TAE) sector provides upskilling and reskilling for Singaporeans across all sectors of the economy. It is a critical national enabler for lifelong learning and manpower development.

Skills associated with the TAE sector are relevant to three categories of people. The first category consists of employees of institutions and training providers whose primary role or business is training and adult education. The second category consists of people involved in in-house company training and development. They play an increasingly significant role, as we strive to strengthen workplace learning across all companies. At the broadest category, TAE skills are relevant for all individuals, in their capacity as co-workers, supervisors, or even subordinates, who want to positively impact the learning of their colleagues.

The Uniquely Singapore TAE Sector

If you google 'training and adult education', chances are you will see Singapore and SkillsFuture-related links appear among the top searches. This is not surprising for those of us who have been involved in workforce development in Singapore. TAE and 'Adult Educator' (AE) are two terminologies coined in Singapore in 2008, by then Workforce Development Agency and the Institute for Adult Learning (IAL). We recognised that Singapore needs an innovative and quality TAE community and professional AEs to support our nation of lifelong learners and nurture a society that values skills mastery.

Today, many look to Singapore for its Continuing Education and Training (CET) system that continues to innovate to be skills-centric and outcome-based. Over the years, our CET ecosystem has developed its strengths in classroom-based learning. During the recent pandemic, learning delivery has speedily pivoted to online learning. Moving forward, more learning innovations & related CET solutions are needed on a few fronts: (a) enabling organisations as learning workplaces to complement institution-based learning; (b) leveraging education technologies to enhance learning effectiveness and accessibility; (c) mobilising more practitioners to support the nation's upskilling agenda as AEs, Career Coaches, and Learning-Performance Consultants (part-time or full-time); and (d) strengthening research and development in adult learning so that Singapore becomes the frontier city for adult learning.

The July edition (also the inaugural) of Jobs-Skills Quarterly Insights is dedicated to our TAE sector and colleagues.

Dr Gog Soon Joo, Chief Skills Officer, SkillsFuture Singapore

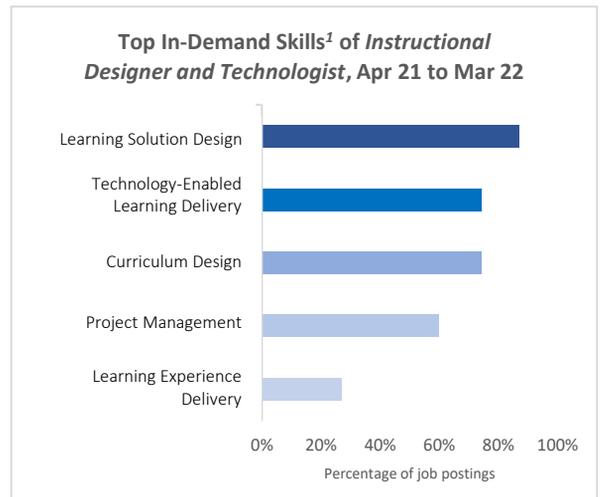
Trend 1: Education Technologies (EdTech) and related skills are powering the TAE business

The proliferation of EdTech has accelerated the provision of learning that is on-demand and just in time. Due to the lack of in-person contact during the peak of the pandemic, both enterprises and individual learners turned to various online and digital offerings to continue their skills development efforts.

The availability of online courses removes the barrier of in-person learning and opens access to many learning opportunities through various modalities. EdTech also allows learners to personalise their learning by matching relevant courses to their skilling needs and pace of learning. At the back end, these technologies can analyse learner data to devise targeted course offerings to different demographics of learners with different needs, including different assessment metrics. Such benefits brought about by EdTech further augment the effectiveness of learning.

Today, our universities, private education institutions, and training organisations are amongst the top hiring organisations for emerging EdTech roles such as *Instructional Designers and Technologists*. The top skills in demand for these roles include *Learning Solution Design*, *Technology-Enabled Learning Delivery*, and *Curriculum Design**, as organisations strive for closer integration between technology, learning and performance enhancement. Other fast-growing skills amongst *Instructional Designers and Technologists* include *User Experience Design* and *Agile Software Development*.

* Please refer to the Annex for skill descriptions.



Source: Salary Board and SkillsFuture Singapore

Demand for *Instructional Designers and Technologists*

The growth of EdTech platforms increases the demand for job roles such as *Instructional Designers and Technologists*. As the mode of delivery changes, Instructional Designers are needed to design content to include user interfaces that will enhance the learner’s experience. Job roles such as Instructional Technologists have also emerged to partner educators to deploy suitable EdTech. Hiring organisations include universities, private education institutions and training organisations.

Trend 2: There is increased recognition of the criticality of workplace learning, and the need for capabilities to organise the workplace for learning

Workplace learning has grown in importance as it continues to augment the organisation’s learning culture while addressing other urgent issues like tackling skills gaps and preparing the workforce



with skills required for changing business priorities. Over the years, learning design has evolved beyond formal in-person learning and qualification to include different modalities with direct relevance and application to work.

Today, workplace learning takes many approaches, including in-house training sessions, on-the-job coaching/mentoring and self-initiated learning, which is catalysed by digital/online learning. New learning partnership models have surfaced between massive open online course providers, Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL), and market leaders such as SkillsFuture Queen Bees, synergising their respective expertise in andragogy and industry domains to deliver industry-relevant programmes to adult learners.

As a result, the hiring demand for workplace learning roles such as *Learning Performance Consultants* has more than doubled between Q2 2021 to Q1 2022. The top skills in demand for these roles include *Project Management, Learning*

and Development, and Learning Mode Design, as well as critical core skills such as *Creative Thinking, Digital Fluency, and Learning Agility*¹ to drive change in organisations. With more online learning during the pandemic, digital skills such as *Programming and Coding* and *Machine Learning* also surfaced in employers' hiring requirements.

Specifically, the demand for learning and development-related skills is very strong in high-growth sectors such as Information & Communications Technology (ICT) and Financial Services, especially in functional roles such as:

- Human Resource (HR) and Learning and Development (L&D) professionals who lead workforce development plans and establish systems to enable skills acquisition and measurement of organisational impact
- Line managers and functional leads who train, coach and mentor employees at workplaces for more optimal work performance, or provide on-the-job training for new skills



How can TAE organisations and professionals support employees in their upskilling or reskilling?

Today, adult learners juggle between family, social commitments, working, and learning. If an adult learner must commit a large proportion of time to fulfilling the demands at work, it will be challenging for him or her to pay further attention to learning. As such, TAE organisations and professionals need to design bite-size learning.

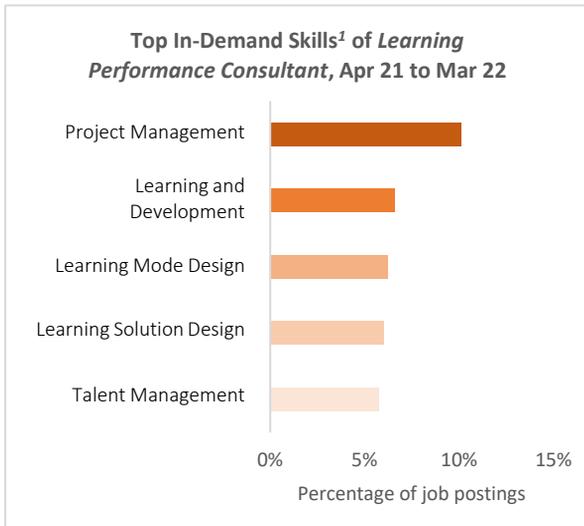
Research has shown that the bulk of the knowledge sustaining an organization is contributed by tacit knowledge. Therefore, it is also important for employees to enhance awareness and optimize up-to-date tacit knowledge. As such, TAE professionals can work with organisations to develop Community-of-Practice (COP) at the workplace, enabling employees to share best practices informally. This informal approach is more effective as research has shown that 70%-90% of learning in the workplace is done via informal learning.

Professor Lee Wing On, Executive Director, Institute for Adult Learning

* Please refer to the Annex for skill descriptions.

- Customer success management roles (e.g., *Account Manager, Customer Success Manager*) who need to understand customers’ needs to educate customers on the best options of their product offerings as well as conduct product training when needed

Trend 3: Career/learning counselling and coaching-related skills have risen in significance and demand, to translate industry trends and business transformations into tangible actions that can be taken by individuals who want to enhance their workplace performance or prepare for career pivoting



Source: Salary Board and SkillsFuture Singapore

With business transformation taking place in almost every industry, many job roles have undergone job content changes. This increases the need for coaching to help employees develop and utilise a mix of existing and new skills needed for workplace performance or even career pivoting. Therefore, *Career/Workplace Coach* is a key job role that takes on the main responsibility of identifying skills gaps, bridging skills gaps, and discovering opportunities for adjacent roles with similar skill requirements. Based on job posting data, hiring demand for career coaches has also increased by 93% between second quarter of 2021 to first quarter of 2022. The top skills in demand for these roles include *People Capability Development, Performance Management, and Workplace Performance Diagnosis*¹. Most of the hiring companies investing in these in-house capabilities are from energy, ICT, consulting & recruitment, and financial services sectors.

Demand for Learning Performance Consultants

To optimise upskilling for business transformation, *Learning Performance Consultants* conduct workplace performance diagnosis to design learning solutions that will optimise business performance. To do that, they must stay abreast of how business models will impact job content and influence the skills needs of the workforce. They need to know a wide suite of learning interventions, such as immersive learning through AR/VR, delivery of modular online courses and capabilities of learning analytics, to augment their learning needs analysis for effective solutioning.

These are positive trends as coaching can help individuals go through meaningful career switches. From an employer’s perspective, coaching identifies skills beyond employees’ current job roles and creates opportunities for them to use these skills to address career goals that are aligned to the organisation. From a macroeconomic perspective, career/workplace coaching facilitates workforce mobility amongst related sectors.

* Please refer to the Annex for skill descriptions.



How does a corporate academy like OCBC Campus support the transformation of people and organisation?

The OCBC Campus team acts as change agents, growth experts and learning architects. To prepare for the future, L&D teams partner businesses to articulate competencies needed to power business growth through a co-imagination of that future. This requires L&D teams to understand business trends, and work with businesses as an agent of change. Secondly, the global talent shortage makes retention a new priority for L&D teams. L&D teams need to rethink what work means and create not just a learning but a growth strategy that caters to a multi-generational workforce. L&D teams need to advocate growth and align personal aspirations and organisational growth to bring out the best in people and organisations. Finally, the scale of systemic complexity today overwhelms any command-and-control strategy. Instead of mandating learning or policing behavior, L&D teams must master the learning sciences and design the learning environment in organisations so that autonomous and inspired learning can flourish.

Ms Yap Aye Wee, SVP, Head of Learning and Development, Organisation Development, OCBC Bank



Source: Salary Board and SkillsFuture Singapore

Demand for Career/Workplace Coaches

A career coaching role may be assumed by trained individuals who are passionate about helping others in the career planning and career change journey. Demand for career coach will come from larger enterprises with sizeable employees, from CET providers that are providing career change programmes, and firms that specialise in coaching.

Call to Action: Lead the TAE Sector Innovation

The role of TAE sector is becoming more important as we expect the size of workforce participating in upskilling or reskilling to increase, and the frequency of participation to intensify. Singapore’s TAE sector and professionals will need to continue to innovate and transform, like the other sectors. We will continue to see changing work activities as the TAE sector embraces digital technologies, with the evolving demands from adult learners and learners with special needs. While this edition of Jobs-Skills Quarterly Insights only featured three emerging job roles, these trends will no doubt also impact other job roles in the sector, from communications to business development. Data analytics and tech tools can also help enhance the work performance of these roles.

Many of the skills spotlighted in this report are demanded in other adjacent jobs in non-TAE sector. This signals the growing impact of TAE jobs

* Please refer to the Annex for skill descriptions.

and skills that can be felt across almost every sector. SkillsFuture Singapore, as the National Skills Authority, will continue to advance the jobs and skills in this sector and foster a strong TAE ecosystem to support career advancement, to respond to a shortening shelf-life of skills, and to foster a national culture for lifelong learning. ■

Annex: Description of Skills

| Skill Titles Mentioned | Skill Description |
|---|--|
| Change Management | Manage organisational change management systems to drive organisational success and outcomes by preparing, equipping and supporting adoption of change |
| Creative Thinking | Adopt diverse perspectives in combining ideas or information and making connections between different fields to create different ideas, improvements and solutions |
| Curriculum Design | Design and develop overall curriculum structure and courseware materials |
| Digital Fluency | Leverage digital technology tools, systems, and software across work processes and activities to solve problems, drive efficiency and facilitate information sharing |
| Learning Agility | Deploy different learning approaches which enable continuous learning across different contexts to drive self development and the achievement of long-term career goals |
| Learning and Development | Manage employees' learning and development activities to maximise employee' potential and capabilities to contribute to the organisation |
| Learning Experience Delivery | Drive learning delivery activities to facilitate learning experiences, knowledge transfer and skills application |
| Learning Mode Design | Assess, design and integrate suitable learning modes to drive desired learning experiences |
| Learning Solution Design | Design and evaluate learning solutions which drive performance enhancement |
| People Capability Development | Develop individual or team to achieve current business goals, meet future challenges and build capacity for change |
| Performance Management | Establish organisation-wide performance management strategies to facilitate performance management, including identification of key performance indicators and employee performance assessment |
| Project Management | Execute projects by managing stakeholder engagement, resources, budgets and resolving problems |
| Talent Management | Drive talent management strategies and programmes to identify, develop, review and retain talent to meet the current and future organisational needs |
| Technology-Enabled Learning Delivery | Implement and integrate learning technology to facilitate learning experiences |
| Workplace Performance Diagnosis | Assess workplace, organisational and industry context to drive workplace performance |

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