

Young People and Meta-Skills Literacy

Background

Meta-skills are the skills that support a young person's ability to act with competence and confidence in the wider world. However, some young people struggle to self-recognise and discuss their personal meta-skills with others, which can negatively impact their employability and self-confidence.

Data Collection

Interviews with 30 young people aged 16-18 studying in the deindustrialised, semi-rural county of Clackmannanshire, Scotland.



Establishing Skills Literacy

The concept of skills literacy was developed from analysis of participants' descriptions of meta-skills development and use. The Skills Literacy Types suggests at a person's ability to self-recognise and discuss their personal meta-skills with others, with analysis of type distribution indicating that:

1. Having a more advantaged socio-economic background positively impacts skills literacy.
2. Participation in formal skills education, such as a leadership course, appeared to support young people from less-advantaged socio-economic backgrounds to develop greater skills literacy.

Skills Literacy Type	Shared Use of Language
Baseline Skills Literacy	Heavy reliance on “buzzwords” and appeared frustrated at lack of ability to describe thoughts surrounding skills.
Ambiguous Skills Literacy	Provided contextualised descriptions of skills use but required support from the researcher when discussing complex ideas surrounding meta-skills.
Critically Engaged Skills Literacy	Demonstrated competence and confidence in discussing nuanced skills use and development.

Takeaway for Stakeholders

Policymakers + Schools → create more opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to engage in formal skills education.

Policymakers + Businesses → develop more inclusive hiring practices that support young candidates in recognising and communicating their meta-skills to others.



About the Project

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