Skill Sets for Transition Designers

Conventional Ways of Designing	New Ways of Designing
See themselves as **'form givers' and/or problem solvers**	See themselves as **agents of positive social/environmental change** and transition
Design **one-off solutions** within finite horizons of time	Aspire to **transform whole systems** and commit to a long, iterative process designed to unfold over years/decades
Primary **focus is on the economic, for-profit system** within which most design solutions are embedded.	Understand the **interconnections between the economic, cultural, socio-technical and governance systems** that need to transition in order for societies to be sustainable.
Use templatized, linear design processes that aim to get to a **finished solution as quickly and economically as possible**.	Have a deep understanding of how change manifests in social /natural systems and leverage living systems theory as an approach to designing for complex problems. Focus is on **prototyping quick, short lived solutions that inform next generation solutions** (beta, error-friendly).
Designer is expert and pre-conceives solutions, based upon user research and 'imposes' solution upon the system.	Designer is a member of a transdisciplinary team engaged in a **co-design process that gives rise to 'emergent' and iterative solutions** that evolve over time.
Design solutions focus on **user-interactions within intentionally limited contexts** that are project-specific.	Design **solutions that protect and restore both social and natural ecosystems through the creation of mutually beneficial relationships** between: people, the things they make and do (design) and the natural environment; interaction design for transition.
Views the **consumer-based marketplace** and user needs as the **most important context for design**.	Views **everyday life and lifestyles as the most important** and fundamental context for design.
Develop project scenarios based upon short horizons of time, (often specified by clients) based upon fiscal or product development cycles. **Thinking is based upon months/ quarters/years**.	Develop **rigorous, future-based visions and narratives** for a sustainable future based upon the reconception of entire lifestyles that are place-based yet global in their awareness and exchange of information and technology. **Thinking is based upon year/decades.**
Contexts for solutions are intentionally limited and discreet in order to conceive and implement solutions quickly and efficiently.	Conceives **solutions to be situated at the appropriate level of scale (or levels of scale)** and looks for leverage points up and down systems levels for greater impact and leverage.
Assesses existing situations to ascertain what is not working and **sees the role of designer as 'fixing' the existing situation** by introducing a new remedy.	**Looks to leverage what is already working** and finds 'clues' for solutions **in grassroots/ad hoc solutions already underway** and views their amplification as a legitimate transition design approach.
Typically undertakes **discreet projects within finite periods of time** and sees no advantageous connection between similar projects and project teams.	**Connects exisitng service or social design projects together as a step(s) in a longer transition solution**. Seeks to build networks of teams to connect complementary/symbiotic initiatives to larger visions for greater leverage/impact.
Designs for the consumer-led/for profit marketplace which is based upon design for limitless wants and desires which are viewed in the same context as genuine needs. Primarily designs for **mass-produced goods, coneived for individual consumption.**	Following Max-Neef's theory of needs, **distinguishes between genuine needs vs. wants/desires and conceives solutions to satisfy multiple needs simultaneously** (integrated satisfiers). Looks for ways in which needs can be satisfied in sustainable, place-based ways, within community.
One's own experience and expertise goes unquestioned and is seen as a key to the success of a design solution. The designer's mindset and posture is considered to be either irrelevant to the process or already optimum. **Designs within a posture of certainty.**	**One's own values, posture and mind-set are seen to influence solutions in positive or negative ways.** Understands the importance of a holistic/ecological worldview and ongoing. **Designs within a posture of speculation and humility.**
Sees **education as a formalized means for attaining a degree** followed by a period of practice experience in order to **gain mastery as quickly as possible**. **Design is viewed as the purview of expert designers.** Further knowledge is usually attained from within the field/discipline of design.	**Committed to lifelong learning and looks outside the field and discipline of design** for new knowledge sets, theories and case studies that inform new ways of designing. Believes that **design is a way of viewing the world and is best practiced in a process of co-design with others**.
Knowledge from outside the field of design is normally seen as irrelevant or only minimally of use.	Views **design as an integrative discipline that can be useful in reintegrating and recontextualizing knowledge across disciplines** in order to conceive more sustainable solutions to complex problems.